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1908 5/1/1863

*From:* Otis [OO Howard]

*To:* Dearest [Lizzie Howard]

OOH-1857

Hd Qrs 11th Corps  
Near Chancelorville, Va

*Source:* Bowdoin

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[350]

Hd Qrs 11th Corps  
May 1st 1863  
Near Chancelorville, Va

Dearest

After crossing the two Rivers we have marched to this place with no loss thus far. We are now south west of Fredericksburg & on a plank road – 4 Corps are here. Monday & tuesday I moved my Corps 30 miles & crossed the river tuesday night. Wednesday night we crossed the Rapidan – the water of the ford was more than 3 feet deep, yet many of Gen Slocum's men forded. A bridge was made and all men crossed on it.

Give much love & many kisses to the Children. May God bless & strengthen you. May has come.

Lovingly  
Otis

Chas is well. Harry S also & with me.

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1912 5/7/1863

*From:* Jno. N. Jewett

*To:* Maj Genl O.O. Howard

OOH-1858

Chicago

*Source:* Bowdoin

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[351]

Chicago May 7 1863

Maj Genl O.O. Howard  
Dr. Sir,

It is scarcely a time now for congratulation. If it were I would congratulate you upon your elevation, undoubtedly deserved, to the highest military rank. Let this pass.

Today has been a sad one for the country as the news has been coming in over the wires. I confess it is such as I was not prepared for, and in the general gloom, I decidedly participate – in fact as it seems to me from the accounts that have reached us, we have lost if not another battle, at least another victory.

For myself, wholly without military knowledge or experience, I do not and never have, pretended to criticize the movements and conduct of our Generals in the field. The task of fault finding I leave to those whose sympathies with our difficulties are less active than mine. Especially was I sorry to hear that your own particular Army Corps should have so behaved as to lead some to say that the result is owing to strain. Everybody however acquits you of any responsibility for what is generally believed to be a cowardly abandonment of their position by the soldiers under your immediate command. No one, who knows you, at any rate, will make any question as to your action in so critical a crisis. But it is now quite immaterial by what particular accident or series of accidents, the result was reached.

Our Army is again on the North Bank of the Rappahannock, and as it must be there, I hope, in the absence of information, that the retreat was successfully made. Is the advantage lost? Has nothing been gained by another desperate Battle of 3 or 4 Days? Shall we hear nothing for the next three months, except, that our Army is terribly demoralized, and therefore unfit for any further service? I assure you I do not make these inquiries in any spirit of detraction, but, hoping that in the arduous labors now imposed upon you, you may yet, for old acquaintance sake, find time to give me, so much of a statement of the condition of affairs, as is consistent with your position, and for the purpose of ascertaining reliably, what our condition is & what we have to expect in the future.

It would be a natural enough inquiry for you to make - “why are you not in your country's service” - not to mention others. I have four reasons, a wife and two Babies, are three of them –the fourth is the particular in which I differ from you, viz. I am disqualified and unfit for a common soldier, and wholly incompetent from education and habit for an officer even if I could obtain an official plan. You are by education a soldier and I am not. I may be something of a Lawyer, but I have no doubt I should be a very poor general, or even Colonel, at least until after years of study & experience – and I had hopes that this war would be over in a shorter time than it would require to make me of much advantage to its service.

Now my Dr. Genl. of the physical evidence of your valor, which I regretted much to hear of, and your pressing duties will permit you to give me any account of present matters, I shall be extremely gratified. If not, please consider me as consoling with you in a misfortune, which no one will appreciate more than you – and still hopeful of better things and interested in your success – and believe me Genl,

Your friend &c  
Jno. N. Jewett

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1909 5/6/1863

*From:* Geo. W. Balloch  
Lt Col & C.S.

*To:* General [OO Howard]

OOH-1859

*Source:* Bowdoin

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[325]

May 5 [1863] 3.30 P.M.

General

I shall have the supplies all ready. Col Batchelder informs me that Gen Ingalls has ordered all the transportation of the army back to Potomac Creek. Our transportation is all here, as Col LeDuc has had no orders to move. If you want forage or tools, you will have to send here. Sedgwick is on this side having crossed at Banks ford this morning. The Bridge is up & the enemy have guns in position on the other side. Let me know as soon as possible how to reach you.

Yours truly  
Geo. W. Balloch  
Lt Col & C.S.

P.S. The Enemy hold Fredericksburg.

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1910 5/6/1863

*From:* Danl Butterfield  
Maj. Gen. Ch. Of  
Staff

*To:* Circular  
[OO Howard]

OOH-1860

Headquarters Army of  
Potomac

*Source:* Bowdoin

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[326]

Headquarters Army of Potomac  
May 6, 6 ½ am [1863]

Circular

Genl. Hd. Qrs. tonight will be at the old Camp near Falmouth. Corps Commanders will send their Staff Officer for orders at 6 p.m. to report their locations for the night as found on the old map of the Camp of occupation. For the present the 6th Corps will continue to cover the river as ordered & the 1st Corps will camp temporarily in the vicinity of the Old Camp of the 6th Corps, between the left of the old Camp of the 2nd Corps & the right of the 6th Corps.

By Command of Genl Hooker  
Danl Butterfield  
Maj. Gen. Ch. Of Staff

"Official" Wm. H. Lawrence  
Major & A.D.C.

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1911 5/6/1863

*From:* <Hakach>  
Col Comdg  
Brooke's Station

*To:* Maj [Eli.] Whittlesey

OOH-1861

*Source:* Bowdoin

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[327]

Brooke's Station  
May 6 1863

Maj Whittlesey

You may report to the Commd Gen'l that the 2d Brig 1st Div is in on its former Camp.

<Hakach>  
Col Comdg

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1913 5/9/1863

*From:* Otis [OO Howard]

*To:* Dearest [Lizzie Howard]

OOH-1862

Head Quarters 11th  
Corps near  
Brooke's Station

*Source:* Bowdoin

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[358]

Head Quarters 11th Corps near  
Brooke's Station  
May 9th 1863

Dearest,

It has been some days since I have written you and just at a time when I am very anxious on your account, but the exposure & inconveniences of our marches & battles for the last ten days are beyond description. We have been without wagons & without tents & much of the time in forests. The papers report so many things that are false that I am very anxious that you should know the truth. I heard that I was reported killed, wounded and missing - but, except in spirit, I assure you I was neither.

On last Saturday, Stonewall Jackson attacked my right, with a solid column & with great fury. Col Von Gilsa's Brigade occupied the point of attack and immediately gave way, broke up & ran upon the other troops with such momentum that they gave way too. Such a mass of fugitives I hav'nt seen since the first battle of Bull Run. Some of Col Bushbeck's brigade stood and for some fifteen minutes held the enemy in check. The batteries were used. My staff & myself worked as hard as men could to arrest the tide. Sometimes we would get a line behind a fence, or in the woods, but to little purpose. The most trying and dangerous position a commander can be in is when his troops have got a panic and are flying.

Poor Capt Dessaur was killed not far from me. Chas. saw him after he had fallen. His wife besought him to resign just before the march. To please her he did so, but I disapproved. He worked hard, generously & constantly to make everything go well. He was rallying broken troops when he fell. I presume I have never been more exposed than in the last battle, but a kind Providence has succored me. Charles & Stinson were in the thickest of the hail. I had sent Maj Whittlesey to bring up a train of forage and so he was not there during the disaster. Gen Barlow with his brigade had been sent away just before the engagement - by Gen. Hooker's order.

Now after several successive engagements the army has resumed nearly its old position.

How are Guy, Grace & Jamie & how is Lizzie. I am very afraid of these shocks & anxieties upon you, darling. I got a short letter from you saturday before the encounter, but I want to hear again. Give much love to the children and do not <> to pray & sweetly trust in God.

Lovingly  
Otis

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1914 5/9/1863

*From:* Otis [OO Howard]

*To:* Dearest [Lizzie Howard]

OOH-1863

*Source:* Bowdoin

Headquarters Eleventh  
Corps,  
Near Brooke's Station  
Va

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[352]

Headquarters Eleventh Corps,  
Near Brooke's Station Va  
May 9th 1863

Dearest,

I got Guy's letter last night and was delighted. Only I fear you made too much exertion to write so much that day May 3d. That was Sunday, the day of the most terrific battle I ever witnessed. We are now in the old camp. God is indeed good to us, my precious wife. I hope by this time you are getting strong. I am longing for the work to be over, that I may go home in peace. Poor Gen. Berry has gone. Kirby has been severely wounded & will lose his leg. He behaved with his usual gallantry. But there is perhaps yet too much intertwined in these events for you to bear.

Remember we are all quiet and safe now & in the hands of God. The battle was Chancelorville. Shant we call the little boy – Chancelor & dub him Chancy. Is he as big a boy as Guy was? How does Jamie take the little rivals coming? [Chancey Otis Howard was born 3 May 1863.]

Guy must write again – till mamma is able – so as to keep papa informed. God bless & strengthen you & me.

Lovingly  
Otis

Charlie sends love. He has don'd the Major's straps. He is Major Howard.

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1915 5/10/1863 *From:* Otis [OO Howard]

*To:* Dearest [Lizzie Howard]

OOH-1864

*Source:* Bowdoin

Headquarters Eleventh  
Corps,  
Near Brooke's Station  
Va.

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[354]

Headquarters Eleventh Corps,  
Near Brooke's Station Va.,  
May 10th 1863

Dearest,

Since I wrote you I have received a long letter from you containing a lock of the baby's hair: it is a little brown boy like the rest of us. Of course he looks wise. Number four is a good name but not one for an affectionate abbreviation.

Poor Capt. Dessaur was killed in that battle – a noble, generous hearted young man with a wife & one child in Brooklyn. I would like to name No 4 for him, either Dessaur Howard or Frederick Dessaur Howard. It would be a monument to my faithful young friend. I would not accept his resignation when his wife urged him to resign and may God bless & protect her.

Does the baby ever cry? Then three are to rock him, Guy when he can find time, Grace when she feels like it and Jamie for fun. This assistance well combined and arranged ought to take much of the rocking time, but perhaps there is no cradle.

Are you not getting along nicely? Do not write me more than four lines until you are fully able. Is Mrs Clark the nurse, and my good friend Abby still with you? I do not tell you much of the news. I have been through with a good deal in the last ten days, but as I am well and ready for action, the least said about all the disasters the better.

I will enclose you an order I published this morning which will show you my feeling and hopefulness. I believe my heart will never flag. God is good to us & blesses us. I long for my children to be his faithful followers.

We are having lovely weather now, though on our return to this place we had to wade through deep clayey mud. You must not allow the news papers to excite you. I must expect a few hits as my corps did not do well. Thus far I have escaped wonderfully. But when the body suffers the head suffers with it.

Kiss all the little ones for papa & tell me if you accept my last proffer of a name.

God bless you.

Lovingly  
Otis



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1916 5/12/1863 *From:* Rowland [RB  
Howard]

*To:* My dear Brother Otis  
[OO Howard]

OOH-1865

Farmington

*Source:* Bowdoin

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[355]

Farmington May 12/63

My dear Brother Otis

The papers are so full of lies that I am tired of reading them, but I do wish we could get some authentic news from you & Charles. I am anxious to know of your morale as well as your physique.

Allow me to congratulate you & join in your thanksgiving over the birth of a 2d daughter. We hear indirectly that she is a week old & the mother comfortable so all is not dark.

Indeed if you are well & have not lost heart nor faith under your reverse & the disgraceful conduct of your troops all is well. All we get from you is by the papers. Lizzie being too sick to send us any news. She may yet. We have had a rumor never contradicted that you were wounded, but we dont believe it as the Boston Journal Correspondent speaks of your appearance at the meeting with the President & Gen Halleck - and also gives a quotation from your letter to Gen Shurz. Some of Sigels friends evidently think that his cause will be advanced by throwing some blame on you tho' they hardly dare to do it. I do hope Charles will get time to write to the Boston or Lewiston Journal, a truthful statement of the affair of Sat. & the subsequent events.

A man might as well not be a Christian if reverses can dishearten him utterly, & the only reason that we ever feel like giving up, is because we are afflicted in our unexpected & particularly grievous way. "He Scourgeth Every Son whom he receiveth". Bacon calmly bequeathed the care of his fame to posterity. We can safely leave ours with God. Men are liars, cowards &c – God is not. Truth is forever. Tho Heaven & Earth pass, not one jot or little will pass from Gods law (will, pleasure, character, holiness, purpose). The Army of the Potomac must look small to God & its annihilation no great thing. But a proud selfish people are to humbled & brought to Christ. A wicked system of Oppression & Bondage is to be ended. A nation is to be raised up on fields that have been desolated – to show forth Gods glory. These are great things. How blessed to contribute a dollar, a drop of blood, a life, a friend, a prayer, a word, that will be used by God to extend the Kingdom of Jesus. "It is a good thing to both hope & quietly wait for the Salvation of the Lord," We gain in prayer by every defeat. Also in humility, also in genuine faith in God. "Be of good courage, I will strengthen thy heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord." O my Brother keep near to God - & He will bless & will use you.

Rowland

I expect to preach in Hallowell next Sabbath & to see Lizzie & the four children. Ella joins me in Oceans of love to you & Charley.

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1917 5/12/1863    *From:* Otis [OO Howard]

*To:* Dearest [Lizzie Howard]

OOH-1866

*Source:* Bowdoin

Headquarters Eleventh  
Corps,  
Near Brooke's Station

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[356]

Headquarters Eleventh Corps,  
Near Brooke's Station  
May 12th 1863

Dearest,

We are still here. I hope you are still doing well and are not "too smart". My Corps is much abused, but I think in a high degree unjustly. I trust the future may relieve us from obloquy. I am conscious of having neglected no precaution and yet our right was turned in the thick woods and an overwhelming force hurled upon the flank & rear.

For your sake I hope it is not quite so warm at Augusta as it is here today as I know you do not like warm weather very well. Guy's letter written Apr 25 was beautifully written. The letters even, all the words spelt correctly and what he said natural. The last one was like a field report written under the pressure of excitement and in haste. Guy & Grace must feel very proud of their two little brothers. Gracie remains the undisturbed professor of her rights as an only daughter.

I am hoping that you have not been allowed to read the papers lately. For they have contained all sorts of false reports. I have been reported as wounded and killed, but I believe not as missing. When the battle first struck us & I was trying to replace a regiment, my black horse stood so straight on his hind legs, that I had to come down, but I was soon up again. I got my hand scratched, my leg a little bruised but no wound. Charlie & Stinson are well. The mail is waiting.

God bless you all. Lovingly  
Otis

[CHECK ORIGINAL – last page may have very faint writing on it.]

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1918 5/14/1863 *From:* G. I. Kraft

*To:* Maj. Gen. O.O. Howard

OOH-1867

New York

*Source:* Bowdoin

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[357]

New York, May 14, 1863

Maj. Gen. O.O. Howard

Dear Sir,

Your letter of the 10th, in answer to my inquiry after the late Capt. Dessauer, is received, for which you will please accept my thanks. I have already written to Lt. Col. Asmussen in relation to his effects. If you wish to keep his horse you will please send the value of it to my daughter, Mrs. Dessauer, 127 Amity St. Brooklyn, or to me.

Very respectfully yours  
G. I. Kraft

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1919 5/16/1863 *From:* Otis [OO Howard]

*To:* Dearest [Lizzie Howard]

OOH-1868

Headquarters Eleventh  
Corps,  
Near Brooke's Sn

*Source:* Bowdoin

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[358]

Headquarters Eleventh Corps,  
May 16 / Near Brooke's Sn / 1863

Dearest,

I must write you this morning. It is now 14 days since the advent of our little stranger and I hope you have been so wise as to get very smart by this time. Mrs Barlow came to see her husband yesterday & I told him in her presence I envied him. I came across a family yesterday - Mr Green has a wife & 7 boys. He had a farm & was well off. Now he has nothing & starvation stares him in the face. He is almost crazy. His wife has a little one 6 weeks old in her arms. She is a nice looking woman & keeps up pretty good courage. They want to go to the West. Nobody can realize the misery this rebellion has caused - till he sees it. Would God we might end it, in some way.

Much love to Guy, Grace, Jamie and shall I say Freddie. Give him a kiss for his papa & commit him by prayer into the hands of God.

My kindest regards & warmest gratitude to the Dr., Abby, Mrs Clark & all who have been kind & attentive to you.

Lovingly  
Otis

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1920 5/16/1863     *From:* Otis [OO Howard]

*To:* My dear Brother [RB Howard]

OOH-1869

*Source:* Bowdoin

Headquarters Eleventh  
Corps,  
May 16th Near  
Brooke's Sn 1863

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[359]

Headquarters Eleventh Corps,  
May 16th Near Brooke's Sn 1863

My dear Brother,

I have just received your kind letter of the 12th Inst. I am surprized at the information you have received and more particularly at that you have not received. The 2nd Daughter was a 3d boy, yes born on May 3d the day of the terrible battle of Chancellorville. I have asked Lizzie to name him for a dear young man, Capt Dessauer, who was on my staff & killed while rallying the men. His name was Frederick. All the rest of this family were spared.

I cannot say anything that will be of service to you in allaying yr. anxiety. We made a Campaign of ten days, and have returned to the place of starting. The injuries inflicted on both sides are great. Both of us are boasting - but here we are & daily 9 months regts & 2 yrs regts are leaving the service. "Well, does your courage flag?" No. Hav'nt I passed through the first battle of Bull run, and was'nt I near the 2nd. If my tenet was in man, General or Armies I should have flagged long ago, but you know I trust in God. I believe He means something by this revolution. I believe I am right in standing by the Government and that Stonewall Jackson was on the wrong side, but would to God our kind Father, that he might give us more men & more leaders than we now have, who possess the virtues of that man. The hand of God seems against me. I know I am weak & unworthy, but I do trust in that strong arm.

At last if we will let him he will bless us. But we have a strange people, mercenary, boasting, ungodly. Gen Hooker is said to be impure. He swears. Gen Sickles is known - If God give us Sickles to lead us I shall cry with vexation & sorrow and plead to be delivered. Would that you would plead with our Father to convert the soul of Gen Hooker. It is just what we need. The Rebels are praising God & appealing to Him. We are despising God & trusting in fine looking soldiers. But His arm is not shortened that it cannot save.

We have not the rebel hate in our hearts and this makes me think we are truer than they - for while they hate us they cannot love really love God. My heart bleeds for the poor people who are impoverished by this rebellion & the war entailed by it. Large families know not where to look for bread. It seems as though sometimes that I was not able to do any good. But I feel cheerful & contented at all times.

Lizzie appears to be doing nicely. She has written me twice since the advent of "No 4" besides a few lines added to Guy's letter on the very day of the good tidings. I have not written much about the battle, for Charles has told you the whole story; besides he has written to the Portland Press. There have been indications of movements, but I do not think much will be attempted in this quarter right away. However it may be so.

Give much love to Ella. Lizzie has got more "olive branches". Ella must make haste. Kiss the boy. I do wish you could come out & bring Guy or Grace. You could have many opportunities for doing good in the various hospitals near us if we remain.

Affectionately  
Otis

I am sorry Mother's work troubles her and hope Father will retain his faculties unimpaired for many years yet. Pray for us.

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1921 5/17/1863 *From:* Otis [OO Howard]

*To:* My dear Mother [Eliza Gilmore]

OOH-1870

*Source:* Bowdoin

Headquarters Eleventh  
Corps,  
May 17 Near Brooke's  
Station Va 1863

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[360]

Headquarters Eleventh Corps,  
May 17 Near Brooke's Station Va 1863

My dear Mother

I received a letter from Farmington from Rowland yesterday. He speaks of your visit and of your health. He thinks you feel that your work is too hard for you. I think sometimes that I do very little for your comfort, but I know that you enjoy as much as anything the good name of your children and their real welfare, but if I can do anything to make life pleasanter for you & father I am anxious to do it.

I presume father's mind must be interested in public affairs, just now. My own thoughts lie in that direction so much & with so much attendant anxiety that I am apt to avoid the subject in all private letters.

We all have felt badly that my Corps did not do better, but that is past. If men were not afraid to die it would simplify matters very much. They are afraid & fear makes them run. I should certainly despair of my country, did I not know that there is an over-ruling power & that He will guide even amid the turbulent passions of men.

I fear there is something very wrong, perhaps radically wrong amongst us. We must yet be much humbled before we come any where near a dependence on God. We look to president to leaders but not to God. I know as well as anybody the value of instruments, but they are not the main thing. We will have to suffer, become poor & starving, have to appreciate our blessings by the loss of them, before we can come up to the Spirit necessary for us in this terrible crisis. Love of country must take the place of love of money.

I dont know what we shall try next, but since the two years & 9 months men are giving out or are already gone our numbers will be very much reduced. I hope the draft will be applied as soon as possible, for I am anxious to get this work done.

How is everything about home. I can hardly think of Jane Bates as gone. I hav'nt heard from George of late. Give my love to all our friends. I hope Roland, Cynthia and the children are well. Give love to father, & God bless you all. Pray for me.

Affectionately yr Son  
Otis

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1922 5/22/1863     *From:* Otis [OO Howard]

*To:* Dearest [Lizzie Howard]

OOH-1871

*Source:* Bowdoin

Headquarters Eleventh  
Corps,  
Near Brooke's Station  
Va.

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[362]

Headquarters Eleventh Corps,  
May 22nd Va.  
Near Brooke's Station 1863

Dearest,

At the request of Genl. Hooker, I went up to Washington two nights before last. I spent one day & one night in Washington & returned yesterday.

Day before yesterday I spent in running about with Chas. part of the time & part of the time with our friend Sen. Dean. Charlie & I met the President in his grounds before breakfast. He appointed a meeting with me after breakfast. In the meantime we visit Mr Farwell at his office. After about half an hour Chas. & I visited the President. He had a good deal to say about the campaign of nine days & a good many questions to ask. We saw then much all the secretaries – of whom Secretary Chase is my friend & favorite. Then we called on the Sec. of War at his office. After that, visited Admirals Foote, Smith, Davis & the Secretary of the Navy. I was very warmly received at Washington.

Dean took me to call on Mrs & Miss ex Gov. Davis where I had a very pleasant call & many questions about your health &c. Miss Davis is about the age of & much like Miss Blanch Berard and wants to know you. Dean has been sick & the Davis ladies have taken so much care of him & been so kind that he is filled with gratitude towards them.

I am writing this time more in haste than I like, but the time for the mail has come & I fear lest another day may elapse & you not get a letter. We found Perry Lee & wife in Washington. She came down with us. All well. Good bye. God bless you & the baby & all the little ones. I shall write you tomorrow.

Lovingly  
Otis

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1923 5/23/1863      *From:* Otis [OO Howard]      *To:* Dearest [Lizzie Howard]

OOH-1872      Headquarters Eleventh  
*Source:* Bowdoin      Corps,  
Near Brooke's Station  
Va.

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[363]

Headquarters Eleventh Corps,  
Near Brooke's Station Va.,  
May 23d 1863

Dearest,

I told you in yesterday's letter that Mrs Lizzie Lee came from Washington with us. Yesterday Charles took her to Falmouth, to see Fredericksburg & the troops on the way thither. She thinks she had a fine time notwithstanding the roughness of the roads & of the carriage. Last night we gave her a tea party, inviting all the ladies & a few gentlemen, i.e. Mrs Barlow, Mrs & Lt Parker (a wife & regular) Mr Hovey & Dr & Mrs Steinwehr & the Gen. Schurz & Col Von Gilsa. All the ladies did not come, viz Mrs B & Mrs D absent but the Band of the 33d Mass. came & played during the evening.

While I was gone our Hd. Qrs. were nearly trimmed with shade trees. Now the Germans are making me a porch of bows & wreaths. They have already made two long & rustic seats on the right & left of my door. Would'nt Guy & Grace have a fine place to play if they were with papa. All is very pleasant but it isnt home, is it Darling.

Rowland writes me a most excellent description of our little "branch". Very fine boy, quite advanced for a baby. Jamie is happy, fresh & handsomer than ever. Now if Mamma is only all well we have reason to be very, very happy & thankful.

Sunday morning. We are all very well this morning. Mrs Perry Lee is still here. Perry has tendered his resignation and has an appointment in the Navy. His resignation has not yet been accepted as he put it in yesterday. Charles continues well & so does Capt. Stinson. I have thought some about leaving the service, but I do not think it the proper time now. I cannot make up my mind to it. The work is not yet done.

On the Mississippi the army is now doing well. God grant us success in that quarter. I think we are to be led to a gradual success, so that we shall not be carried away by pride and arrogance and annihilate all the good points intended for us in this great scourge & affliction. I got Col Ames' promotion to a Brigadier General & have assigned him to a brigade in this Corps. Gen. McLean has gone to Gen. Burnside.

We are going to have services this morning. How very warm it is – no rain for many days. Much love to the children, and many kisses & not less to baby & his Mother.

Lovingly  
Otis

Mrs Lee is reading the Bible in the front part of the tent, says Give my love to her meaning you.



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1924 5/25/1863

*From:* [Elizabeth R.  
(Fiske) Lee]

*To:* My dear Mrs [Lizzie]  
Howard

OOH-1873

*Source:* Bowdoin

Headquarters Eleventh  
Corps,  
Brooks Station

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[364]

Headquarters Eleventh Corps,  
Brooks Station May 25 1863

My dear Mrs Howard,

Though I have not yet had the pleasure of meeting you I hope some day to claim a cousinship. And being a guest here I thought it might be pleasant for you to have a lady description of your husbands present camp home which is very pretty and comfortable. My visit here was so unexpected that I enjoy it all the more.

Maj Lee took a flying trip to Brooklyn and brought me to Washington last Tuesday. The next day I was most happily surprised by a call from Gen Howard and brother. Perry spoke half jokingly of bringing me down. Then your husband really gave me an invitation, which at first I could hardly realize could be possible & so I never thought I could come.

But Thursday noon I found myself at Head Quarters and after a shake off of a coat of dust, I look up & saw a beautiful little encampment, enclosed with a thick hedge of evergreen in the form of a square. Entering the opening it looked like a fairy's wood land - each side the white tents were partly screened by rows of pine and evergreen. In the center stood a flag staff. Opposite the gate way is the g. Generals tent which is of course the finest of any, being twice as large and containing some luxuries. All the tents look very nice & have floors and are very comfortable and pretty. You will be most interested to hear of the tent I am now writing in. The walls about six feet are of hewn logs, above which is stretched the tent making it quite high and as it consists of two a goodly sized apartment. The floor is of hewn logs, and half of it boasts of a bright carpet of which the legend is it came from the City over the <> river. A comfortable bed covered with a robe, a writing desk & table, and rustic hat, & towel stands, a stove & two pretty camp chairs complete the picture. I was surprised to find everything so nice, here, but I find all Head Quarters are not kept quite so neatly. The bell for dinner rang, and we adjourned to a side tent.

The table neatly laid and plates for eight when seated a colored woman Fanny stood suddenly in the back ground & a little girl of about twelve whose comical gravity in watching me is amusing. Her eyes are like some pictures where ever you turn they follow you. I feel that I have given you but a poor description of this place, but I heard some one speaking of having a picture taken of it, which I hope you will see. I have forgotten to speak of an evergreen arbor just by the tent door covered at the sides & top by weaving the branches thick <> poles. Each side is a rustic seat or bench.

Friday I rode to Falmouth and every mile had much of interest. That evening Mr & Mrs Maj Van Steinweher, & Mr & Mrs Dr Hovy here at tea and the 33d Band played for us that evening. I have enjoyed every moment I have been here, and it will be one of the brightest spots in future for me to think of. Gen Howard has gone out for the morning. But as I saw him writing you yesterday, his letters would give you all news of himself. Cousin Charles came in to sit here and write his French lesson but something has taken him away. I hope yourself the baby & children are well. I thought often how anxious you must have been during these fearful days.

In going by a hospital tent & seeing the hot sun beating down on the poor men, I felt I could not be half thankful enough that all dear to me were spared. My husband has sent up his resignation. If it is not accepted today I shall go and remain with him a while. It is not as pleasant in a house even I think as a good tent, as things are not kept so tidy about.

Yesterday came the good news "that Vicksburg is ours." We had service and Mrs Sampson was here to attend it on her way to the hospitals.

I shall hope to have the pleasure of having a visit from you some time & will do all in my power to try and have it

pass pleasantly. My home is but two <[CHECK ORIGINAL – Missing Closing]>

[Elizabeth R. Fiske married Samuel Perry Lee 10 Feb 1863.]

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1925 5/26/1863      *From:* Otis [OO Howard]      *To:* Dearest [Lizzie Howard]

OOH-1874      Headquarters Eleventh  
*Source:* Bowdoin      Corps,  
Near Brooke's Station

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[365]

Headquarters Eleventh Corps,  
Near Brooke's Station  
May 26th 1863.

Dearest,

I received a letter from you Sunday afternoon, and felt sorry indeed that seeing your friends had proved so bad for you, but I hope after a little quiet you are yourself again. I am not so sure that my coming might not excite you even though I belong there.

I do not think I can go home now. I will tell you my reasons. My Corps did not do very well at Chancellorville, now every body who is to blame tries to shift the responsibility upon somebody's else shoulders. The German's and the American's are many of them against me. It was my first trial with them. Now I must drill & discipline my command & get it in hand. I must work to get good officers in the command of Brigades and regiments. I must be here to head off wire-pullers. I want the command to learn me and I wish to learn it.

Again I rather apprehend an attack here, after the affair at Vicksburg which is so disastrous to the rebels. They will try some game to retrieve their losses. Most probably will accumulate a very large force against Rosecrants [sic] – in that case we should not be attacked - but perhaps now something desperate will be attempted and Lee will cross above us & attack us hoping to crush this army now that we have lost so many two year & nine month regiments.

I have meditated resigning (a little), but do not think this a proper time. The Christian people, who look to me as a sort of representative, would be disappointed if I deserted my colors now. Then I am under a little cloud – tenderly excused but yet unsuccessful and I have not been accustomed to succumb under difficulties.

Mrs Lee is still here. I have not quite given my consent that she may go to Gen Sickles Hd. Qrs. So Perry comes up here at night & goes back in the morning. She says she wants to write you & I believe she did yesterday. She would tell you so very many interesting details, that I have thought it would be a relief to you.

Balloch thinks I must be going home to see that little boy. I think we might make the name Chancey Howard. It is pleasant sounding, but I am afraid he will be a little rebel. I could almost see you all as Rowland described the home scenes, when he was with you.

Much love & many Kisses. God bless you & all

Lovingly  
Otis

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1926 5/31/1863     *From:* Otis [OO Howard]

*To:* Dearest [Lizzie Howard]

OOH-1875

Headquarters 11th  
Corps  
(Near Brooke's Sta.)

*Source:* Bowdoin

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[367]

Headquarters 11th Corps  
May 31st 1863 (Near Brooke's Sta.)

Dearest,

Your last letter received was written on the 22nd inst. It is now nine days since that & I am hoping to hear from you today. I have been hoping that you would not read the News Papers much, till the public mind had been turned to other topics than our defeat. I cannot escape censure in reference to that unfortunate affair of May 2d, and it is impossible to get along without <enering>. If my incompetency can be established, the 11th Corps throws a load of obloquy from its own shoulders on me. If the President will return Genl Siegel, superceding me, or sending me elsewhere, the Germans have gained their point and can abuse me with impunity.

Again some of my friends have thought I would be an available candidate for the Governorship of Maine and though I have already declined, still this gets around and makes for me political enemies; and the disaster gives a handle against me. Thus my little wife when she is not very strong ought not allow herself to read newspapers much. The Boston Journal & the Press are friendly I learn. General Hooker is a very politic man & I think will sacrifice me the moment he deems it necessary. If I could quietly go home where I am loved & be quiet I should like it, but one becomes so involved. My staff are dependent on me. The christian element in the Army & out of it expects much of me as a christian. My sense of duty in this crisis would keep me in the service. I said however to the President, Sec. of War & to Genl Hooker – if you have anybody else whom you deem better able under the circumstances to command this Corps you must not hesitate on my account to give him the command.

Major Whittlesey has put in his resignation. It is hard to lose such a fast friend from the Military family, and one with such good sound practical sense.

We have hardly had a rainy day since the 6th of May & the dust is everywhere abundant, almost as much so as in Florida. Since I began my letter we have had a preacher who came originally from the North of Ireland but is now located in Pennsylvania, discourse to us. Fearing he might not come as he belonged to the Christian commission and stopped at Falmouth, so Maj Whittlesey invited one other a chaplain of the 153d Penn. They both came strangers to each other. The former Rev. Mr Stevens preached a most excellent Gospel Sermon from the text there is joy in the presence of the Angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. After he closed, the chaplain said he had selected the same text for us & prayed over it, expecting to preach from it. It was a singular coincidence and I hope it was the means of bringing some one to the truth.

This afternoon Mrs Lee & Perry called. They have a room in a house now. Genl Ames came back from Washington today. He attended Kirby's funeral. Poor Kirby has gone. He was a brave and true soldier, and a good man. I told you I called to see him (I think) when in Washington. This evening Maj. Whittlesey & I went to the 153 Penn Regt to a prayer meeting. They have fixed up some seats of split logs out of doors, and had their prayer-meeting by moon light. They prayed in English & in German & they sang in English & then in German.

I wish I could see you this quiet sabbath evening. Guy, Grace, Jamie & Chancy all asleep. Would we have a good time ruminating, prospecting & chatting. I hope this will find you quite well. Much love from papa to Guy & Grace and kisses for Jamie & the baby. I think Guy has a great many studies - <> & thorough Guy.

God bless my lovely little family. Remember me kindly to Mrs Clark & Lottie. Have you heard from Mother of late. Dellie is somewhat troubled about my Generalship.

Lovingly  
Otis