Reminiscences of life at West Point

By life came to be exceedingly pleasant
at West Point after I became intimate with John Neir. He & I commenced to
gather an Art & Literature—understood &
sympathized with each other. He helped
me to observe the beauties & peculiarities of
nature—The mountains, the rivers, the clouds &
infinite variety of sky, the trees, the
numerous variety of colors in wood, rocks,
shrubs & all growing things—not the least
the flowers.

For his sake (as well as for that of my
other West Point friends) I became more
appreciative of Episcopalians' jones, modes of
thought & feeling. Spent much time in
his & his father's study & learned to study
with something like a true artist's taste &
criticism. The fine models, to be seen there
& gained a taste & knowledge which
enlisted me to appreciate the domestics from
afterwards that year, in New York & Phila-
delphia. It was a great privilege to visit
New York as my stay at West Point enabled
me to do—a great city I had not been ac-
customed to—to hear the preachers, to others
The architecture & to learn from everything I saw on the streets, on the streets &c. I also made a visit to Philadelphia during the year. Of course I learned much of Army life, society, drift of thought & conversation. The distinction of rank, the pride of position & the disposition to despise certain classes of people, in short, a sort of caste that prevailed, was always very distasteful to me - at first exceedingly disagreeable. The religious work in which you were engaged & in which I became more or less conversant with you, was a source of satisfaction to me. I liked your efforts to carry the gospel to the soldiers' families & to the poor at Butternick's Stores. I preached there a few times to the Methodists for the Presbyterian ministers. Mr. Gray, at the Church of the Holy Innocents, I liked the quaker sect. Mr. Tilton used to go to luncheon with him with John. I liked his French Chaplaincy, I felt that he was just as good a pastor & faithful as if he had been a Methodist or Congregationalist. - John & I used to enjoy calling at the Grays where we got a view of the trials of a country parson's life. Jeanie Gray, too, opened up a new view of human nature & was used to find
a good deal of romance in our various
meets & talks with & about her & what was
suggested there. From these letters you will
see mentions of some of our (you & my) trips
up the mountains. We went mountain to Cold
Spring also, & had pleasant visits to New
burgh & Poughkeepsie. I have often thought
that a remarkable coincidence it was which
gave me so much familiarity with army
matters—Artillery, Infantry, Cavalry, Engineer-
ing, the Quartermasters & Commissary depart-
ment, etc. a Military Post—drilling of soldiers,
company & battalion etc. All this & a
pleasant acquaintance with many officers
just before the war which fitted me for
the duties of a staff officer & thus to be more
useful from the start than otherwise I could
have been.

The Library was a place of much virtue
to me. You will remember that I studied
there somewhat. For 4 or 5 I was constantly
reading good victorian tomes.

The historic monuments about the point
the first taken by West Point & that region
in the Revolutionary War, made my patriotism
rise.

I met there southern people & to get in
expressions of southern society at first hand—
The severity or bitterness of their hatred of abolitionists and their willingness to sacrifice the Union rather than have the policy of the Government dictated by them. Your new parks and outskirts characterized your simple religious faith and your Christian zeal and consistency all had great influence upon me at this time.

I enjoyed my home with Eliza Lizzie and the children, and did not get homesick. My natural love of domesticity was not quite as well satisfied as it had ever been. You all made me "at home."

My friendship with John A. was always kept up. I afterwards visited him in New York City while he was at the South end Studios a good many times - twice at New Haven. I enjoyed letters from him while he was in the P. H. T. Dept. at Washington, the early spring of 1861.

I went to West Point in the fall - though I think it was November, 1859, and remained until after the June examinations. About the first of September it took a High School at Holden, Ill. (not far from Boston about ten miles) outside the territory before I decided but stayed out until my school of three months was completed. Had many
Meeting scholars & a marked religious awakening connected with my school. Many convocations meetings in my school house in which I took a very active part.

In missionary families in that place having sons & daughters in foreign fields.

When I returned to Bangor Seminary Dr. Samuel Harris asked me to take a certain class of young ladies in the Battelle School of the central church where he & Dr. Shepard were the joint pastors. The class asked for me. I had seen Miss Kitty Foster before when visiting my father Portland while he was in the Seminary. She had told me that she was a girl of fine Christian character. She united with the church when she was five years of age.

As he informed me, she could remember a time when she did not lose his favour.

She was especially remarkable for a sense of conscience. Unless Dr. Harris had to explain to the minister, that in certain preaching, he had in mind reasons of an entirely different character, it troubled Miss Kitty at the application of the sermon to herself.

I felt my responsibility for to advance a class, but decided to take it, & this first became acquainted with this
I was in the class of six or more young ladies. The war then (Dec. 1860) not quite fifteen years of age. From the first, to see the most interesting scholar in the class, both as to looks and mind—though there were one or two others with whom I was more intimately acquainted—having met them out of the class. I became acquainted with her parents, and I remember that her presence at a certain reading club added much to the interest to see. She accepted my request to go to one of the public society meetings at the Democratic party for a few moments called at my house, which was my corner seat. She was a fine woman, missionary in Turkey.

About the first of May 1861 I was summoned to Augusta to meet you who had come there to take the Colonels of the 3rd Maine Regiment. I had seen one regiment five years earlier leave Bangor. Its city was more patriotic. In answer to my classmates who echoed towards 90 days prediction, I had said publicly that, if the South was to be conquered by force of arms, it might take ten years but I had no doubt that that would be the final issue. I found at Augusta that I could be useful to you, at least as you thought, in organizing the...