

if I do as well in English Studies, as I did in Mathematics on the examination. I shall pine for the strong between this & next June: but it is awful if I rise Mr. Abbott. He has never studied French, but he is a splendid Latin & Greek scholar. There are five or six men in our class, that can speak French, as well as they can speak English. Don't you think I shall have to be active? It is such a prominent place to stand at the head of a class here, that there always will be fighting for it. I would give much to do it: but if I can't, I can't. Write me as soon as you can, and tell me every thing you hear from home. I see by the papers that our States Prison too, came near burning up. Maine is indeed unfortunate. How is Vaughan getting on? Have you heard from Maria? Where is William this winter. I wrote a letter last evening to Mr. Jewett. My respects to Mr. Robinson. Perhaps I shall get a letter from you this noon. I hope so at any rate. Lizzie wrote me that she was on her way to Livermore. She wrote at her Uncle's in Lewiston. Do you know whether she has returned? or <sup>whether</sup> she made mother a visit? Uncle Henry & Maria is in Portland and with his family boarding at the United States Hotel. If you see Poley, just give him a schooling for not answering my letter. — How much money did R. A. G. bring home with him; 1800 (?) —

Write as soon as you can your affectionate brother.

Oliver C. Howard

P.S.

My letter is so long & tedious that cannot read it over to correct errors. Please make allowances for laziness.

West Point N.Y. Jan 3<sup>d</sup> 1851.

Dear Brother,

You must be aware that I am now writing two letters to your one. Are you sick, lazy, or seriously engaged in study? If sick or lazy, you are inexcusable: but if imperative duty prevents you from writing, I cannot complain. Since I have written Christmas & New Year's have passed in succession. I told you that Uncle Ward had written a request to our Superintendent, Capt. Brewerton, that his Cadet Nephew might visit him & spend Christmas with him & his family. A day or two before hand I went with my permit to the White-headed old one. He took it, read it over, shook his head and said: "I am disposed to let you go on Christmas, but hardly the day before". Why, Capt. Brewerton I have no recitation and am on no duty: "Very well we will consider it, Mr. Howard." And Mr. Howard takes his hat & leaves. I went again the day that I wished to go. "No! Can't let you go till Christmas day". O. C. Howard bit his lips, looked respectfully angry & left his office. In the afternoon after I had given up all hopes of going when I wished, the officer of the day, came to my room with my permit signed — as follows

West Point N.Y. Dec 24<sup>th</sup> 1850

Cadet O. C. Howard has permission to visit his Uncle at Parksville from 1/2 past 3 o'clock on the 24<sup>th</sup> to 1/2 past 7 on the 25<sup>th</sup> inst.

Signed, B. H. Alden

Comdt Corps Cadets

H. Brewerton

Super<sup>d</sup> Corps Cadets

I changed my shirt & was off in less than no time for the ferry & crossed the river with two other Cadets to Cold Springs. One Mr. Rundell went down river with me. To our surprise we found that we could not go down that night in the cars on account of some breakages in the track. Whereupon we got a horse & sleigh. And what a ride. It was more than half bare ground, and by the road we took the distance was about twelve miles. Maine can't produce hills half so high, or roads half so rough. The poor horse had to go, though, in my hands. Mr. Rundell left me at my Uncle's & promised to call for me early the next evening. He came at the time, but said that his mother did not wish him to return that night, that we could not cross the river that night if we should return to Cold Springs. I gave up going that night, but not with a very good grace. However the evening passed very pleasantly. One of the prettiest young ladies of the village came in & we had a game of Whist. Your cousin Augustus continues to have those horrid fits or spasms five or six times a day and often during the night. He can get no sleep. Our Cousin Elizabeth is between 28 & 30, as plain as any of the Howards, but good hearted, lively & agreeable. The other, who is perhaps a year younger than you is a little pale boy. He has a very <sup>good</sup> situation in a store in his native village.

Uncle says that he has been rich several times, but that he is now "devilish poor". He is a "Staunch old democrat". I believe a candidate for Representative to Congress. I went to bed that night, only to dream of Courts-Martial & of walking extra-tours of Guard duty. I arose about half past three o'clock, found Rundell & off we came. We reached

Cold Springs about day-light & immediately crossed the river. I ran & reported my return to the Commandant, the Adjutant & the Orderly Sergeant, & afterwards to the Old Superintendent. They directed me to write an explanation, I did so after I was reported <sup>being</sup> absent without leave from tattoo on the 25<sup>th</sup> till 7 A.M. on the 26<sup>th</sup>. No good luck will have it I was excused. It is dangerous business, this staying over time. One young man for stepping into a room when he was on post (in <sup>is</sup> regarded as a sentinel), was sentenced to walk 12 <sup>common</sup> tours of Guard duty: 12 tours of Sunday Guard duty: & be confined in the Guard room from the time of coming off post till tattoo (at 10 o'clock at night). Some are confined in the light prison, some in the dark prison, some are put in arrest, others in confinement, all according to the degree of the offence. If any less demerit was the result of these punishments they would be endurable, but the demerit increases in due proportion. I have escaped as yet unscathed. Yesterday the January examination commenced. The first section of the fourth class was the first on the floor. I was fortunate enough to do first rate in Mathematics. In English Studies we have not yet been examined. Just before the examination, Mr. Abbott was 2 marks ahead of me, Mr. Lee three tenths. Mr. Lee & myself did better on examination than Mr. Abbott, but we cannot rise him this time. 3 is the mark given for a perfect recitation. From the first of November the whole number of recitations was 31, hence the maximum marks for the whole time is 93. Mr. Abbott's mark was 91, Lee's 89, & Howard's 88, & I shall stand No (3) in Mathematics & No (2) in General Standing.

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71 1/3/1851 *From:* Oliver O. Howard

*To:* Dear Brother [RB  
Howard]

RBH-035

West Point N.Y.

*Source:* Bowdoin

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West Point N.Y. Jan. 3, 1851.

Dear Brother

You must be aware that I am now writing two letters to your one. Are you sick, lazy or seriously engaged in study? If sick or lazy you are inexcusable, but if imperative duty prevents you from writing, I cannot complain.

Since I have written Christmas & New Year's have passed in succession. I told you that Uncle Ward had written a request to our Superintendent Capt. Brewerton, that his Cadet Nephew might visit him & spend Christmas with him & his family. A day or two beforehand I went with my permit to the white-headed old one. He took it, read it over, shook his head and said: "I am disposed to let you go on Christmas, but hardly the day before". Why Capt. Brewerton I have no recitation and am on no duty: "very well we will consider it, Mr. Howard". And Mr. Howard takes his hat & leaves. I went again, the day that I wished to go. "No! Can't let you go till Christmas day." O.O. Howard bit his lips, looked respectfully angry & left his office. In the afternoon after I had given up all hopes of going when I wished, the "officer of the day", came into my room with my permit signed as follows:

West Point N.Y. Dec. 24th, 1850

Cadet O. O. Howard has permission to visit his uncle at Peekskill from ½ past 3 o'clock on the 24th to ½ past 7 on the 25th inst.

N. Brewerton

Superdt Corps Cadets

Signed: BH Alden

Comdt Corps Cadets

I changed my shirt & was off in less than no time for the ferry & crossed the river with two other Cadets to Cold Springs. One, Mr. Rundell, went down river with me. To our surprise we found that we could not go down that night in the cars on account of some breakages in the track. Whereupon we got a horse & sleigh. And what a ride. It was more than half bare ground and by the road we took the distance was about 12 miles. Maine can't produce hills half so high, or roads half so rough. The poor horse had to go though in my hands. Mr. Rundell left me at my Uncle's and promised to call for me early the next evening. He came at the time, but said that his mother did not wish him to return that night. That we could not cross the river that night if we should return to Cold Springs. I gave up going that night, but not with a very good grace. However the evening passed very pleasantly. One of the prettiest young ladies of the village came in & we had a game of whist.

Your cousin Augustus continues to have those horrid fits or spasms five or six times a day and often during the night. He can get no help. Our Cousin Elizabeth is between 25 & 30, as plain as any of the Howards, but good hearted, lively & sociable. The other, who is perhaps a year younger than you is a little pale boy. He has a very good situation in a store in his native village. Uncle says that he has been rich several times, but that he is now "devilish poor". He is a "staunch old democrat". I believe a candidate for Representative to Congress. I went to bed that night, only to dream of Courts-Martial & of walking extra tours of guard duty.

I arose about half past three o'clock, found Rundell & off we came. We reached Cold Springs about day-light & immediately crossed the river. I ran & reported my return to the Commandant, the Adjutant & the Orderly Sergeant & afterwards to the Old Superintendent. They directed me to write an explanation. I did so after I was reported for being absent without leave from tattoo on the 25th till 7 AM on the 26th.

As good luck will have it I was excused. It is dangerous business, this staying over time. One young man for stepping into a room when he was on post (i.e. on guard as a Sentinel) was sentenced to walk 12 common tours of guard duty: 12 tours of Sunday guard duty: & be confined in the guard room from the time of coming off post till tattoo (at 10 o'clock at night). Some are confined in the light prison, some in the dark prison, some are put in arrest, others in confinement, all according to the degree of the offence. If any less demerit was the result of these punishments they would be endurable, but the demerit increases in due proportion. I have escaped as yet unscathed.

Yesterday the January examination commenced. The first section of the fourth Class was the first on the floor. I was fortunate enough to do first rate in mathematics. In English Studies we have not yet been examined. Just before the examination, Mr. Abbott was 2 marks ahead of me. Mr. Lee three tenths. Mr. Lee & myself did better on examination than Mr. Abbott, but we cannot rise him this time. 3 is the mark given for a perfect recitation. From the first of November the whole number of recitations was 31, hence the maximum mark for the whole time is 93. Mr. Abbott's Mark was 91. Lee's 89 & Howard's 88.7. I shall stand No. 3 in mathematics No. 2 in general standing if I do as well in English Studies, as I did in mathematics on the examination. I shall pull for No 1 strong between this & next June: but it is doubtful if I rise Mr. Abbott. He has never studied French, but he is a splendid Latin & Greek scholar. There are five or six men in our Class that can speak French, as well as they can speak English. Don't you think I shall have to be active? It is such a prominent place to stand at the head of a class here, that there always will be fighting for it. I would give much to do it, but if I can't, I can't.

Write me as soon as you can and tell me everything you hear from home. I see by the papers that our State's prison too came near burning up. Maine is indeed unfortunate.

How is Vaughan getting on? Have you heard from Maria? Where is William this winter. I wrote a letter last evening to Mr. Jewett. My respects to Mr. Robinson. Perhaps I shall get a letter from you this noon, I hope so at any rate. Lizzie wrote me that she was on her way to Livermore. She wrote at her Uncle's in Lewiston. Do you know whether she has returned? Or whether she made mother a visit? Uncle Henry I learn is in Portland and with his family boarding at the United States Hotel. If you see Peleg, just give him a schooling for not answering my letter. How much money did R. A. G. bring home with him, 1800 (?).

Write as soon as you can. Your affectionate brother  
Oliver O. Howard

PS

My letter is so long & tedious that cannot read it over to correct errors. Please make allowances for laziness.

O O Howard  
June 10th 1851

When I folded this I was not aware  
that I had any wrappings - I was so joined  
one. I like father if he thinks of it: when  
he buys himself some Letter Stamps.  
I send me some: for I am out, &  
it pleases to change the same to the account  
of O O Howard - Edward W. S. M. M.  
We shall be examined in French next  
Wednesday or Thursday. Only 10 places  
were found deficient this morning: two  
having anticipated its event by resigning.  
The class was very much smaller than  
ours to begin with.

It matters not to be surprised at my stand in drawing  
I am going to rise in that between this & June.  
Good bye & Good health  
Good luck to you  
Dear brother  
West Point. N. Y. June 10th 1851 Ohs.  
I received your letter yesterday with  
mother's, & Belle's. and was somewhat startled to find that  
you had been so sick; I thought you might have a very bad  
cold & cough. It was bad as to unfit you for your duties as  
teacher, but I did not imagine that you had been so  
much prostrated. Yet since you are convalescent I will  
not censure anything but hope that ere this reaches  
you you will be entirely well. It may be all for the  
best, perhaps for your ultimate good mentally &  
physically. I am thus, I repeat up I sent to home. A  
class in Mathematics is held in the morning & will continue till the  
close of next week if not longer. The examination of our  
class in Mathematics commenced yesterday & ended to-  
day: the standing in this branch was read out before the  
battalion this evening. Your hard-earned servant could not  
help again in mathematics; I have not been accomplished  
with ease, however. I have crowded into my head since last  
September 600 pages of pure Mathematics, & the most of it  
entirely new to me, which amount is more than enough  
mustard. That it is at my tongue's end Mr Lee has risen me  
for two months in succession, and bid fair to dislodge me from  
my position. He tried his utmost, but some way or other I kept  
my place. All the corps began to think I was down, and I  
began to find many a winking smile where I least  
expected it. You can't imagine the interest betrayed among  
the cadets respecting us two, at the approach & closing of this

This examination. All eyes were upon us; his friends excited & hopeful.  
mine I did not observe. When we came from the examination-  
hall; we were met by: "How did Howard do? How did Lee do?  
How did you do? How did Lee do? Till I got provoked & would  
answer none of them. We were both too much excited to do  
quite as well as usual; but excitement never drives real knowledge  
from my head; hence I did full as well if not a little better  
than Lee. It is rumored that I have studied Calculus &  
therefore the only hope of Lee's friends was that he would  
get above me this January; for they said it would be useless  
to try hereafter. You see I can pull steadily. When I do all  
why? I will not give up in despair, but "bore" a little harder.  
You may think it odd that I feel satisfied to be ahead in  
Mathematics alone; when Geo. Clement & Edsawing will throw  
me in General standing. But ah! we graduate in Math.  
this year & this counts towards the final graduation. You  
know all I ask is to be 1<sup>st</sup> or second two years hence.

Mr. Browne has had another hard trial; but he is again  
soured; whilst three of his section mates are found deficient.  
You can form no idea how that man will study as the  
examination draws near. I have been over & over again  
with him problem after problem. After taps last night  
I questioned him through the course, lying on my bed  
& he on his. He could answer everything, all the hardest  
most puzzling questions, and after all he did poorly at  
the examination, and came back swearing he was found  
But he was not; he came out next to the foot. I don't think  
he shall be found deficient while he is with me.  
He does not lack in talents; for if he did he could not get

this stuff any how; but he is remarkably unfortunate;  
When there is one thing out of five hundred in the course  
that he does not know; he seems bound to have it given to  
him. And another thing, when he does not know a thing  
well; he often says to his instructor, "I cannot do it Sir!"  
This I seldom do. I watch my teacher's eye & language, & often  
by an indirect answer, appear perhaps not to have  
precisely ~~com~~ understood the question - by the time he puts  
it again I have reflected upon it or he puts it plainer.  
Often by some such expedients I avoid betraying the true state  
of my head; but if I really did not know any thing about  
the question asked; I would plainly say I do not know -  
but this has not occurred I think more than once since  
last September. Don't you think your brother has got a  
little perseverance? How would you like to try a game at  
West Point? If you will be no 1 in Mathematics, you cannot  
relax your efforts for a single week. If you feel sick,  
forget it; if tired, run mind it; if you begin to feel discouraged -  
shake yourself, hold up your head & go on. - But after  
all I enjoy this strife. I begin to take pleasure in taxing my  
intellect to its utmost. Thus you see I have filled my  
letter with myself; but the time of an examination is a selfish  
season & you must pardon me. Give my love to all, Don't  
let Mother exert herself too much; for I want to find her  
in good health and spirits next June. Tell Della he writes  
very legibly; & his brother Ohio keeps soon to please a long  
letter from his pen. Tell him & Charlie to be good boys &  
learn all they can & be sure & help father all they can - for  
nothing is lost & every thing is gained by industry & kindness.  
Perhaps I shall write Mother tomorrow, but be not surprised  
if none of you hear from me till after the Examination is over.

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72 1/10/1851 *From:* Otis [OO Howard]

*To:* Dear Brother [RB Howard]

RBH-036

West Point N.Y.

*Source:* Bowdoin

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West Point N.Y. Jan 10th 1851

Dear brother

I received your letter yesterday with mother's & Dellie's and was somewhat startled to find that you had been so sick. I thought you might have a very bad cold & cough, so bad as to unfit you for your duties as a teacher, but I did not imagine that you had been so much prostrated. Yet since you are convalescent I will not assign any thing bad, but hope that you ere this reaches you, you will be entirely well. It may be all for the best, perhaps for your ultimate good mentally & physically to be thus tripped up & sent home.

Our examination is still in progress & will continue till the close of next week if not longer. Examination of our class in mathematics commenced yesterday & ended to-day. The standing in this branch was read out before the battalion this evening. Your humble servant came out best again in mathematics. It has not been accomplished with ease, however. I have crowded into my head since last September 600 pages of pure mathematics & the most of it entirely new to me, which amount is now so thoroughly mastered that it is at my tongue's end.

Mr. Lee has risen me for two months in succession, and bid fair to dislodge me from my position. He tried his utmost, but some way or other I kept my place. All the Corps began to think I was down, and I began to find many a welcoming smile where I least expected it. You can't imagine the interest betrayed among Cadets respecting us two, at the approach of & during this examination. All eyes were upon us. Lee's friends excited & hopeful, mine I did not observe. When we came from the examination hall, we were met by "how did Howard do? How did Lee do? How did you do? How did Lee do? Till I got provoked & would answer none of them. We were both too much excited to do quite as well as usual, but excitement never drives real knowledge from my head. Hence I did full as well if not a little better than Lee.

It is rumored that I have studied Calculus & therefore the only hope of Lee's friends was that he would get above me this January, for they said it would be useless to try hereafter. You see I can pull steadily, when I do all. Why! I will not give up in despair, but "bone" a little harder. You may think it odd that I feel satisfied to be ahead in mathematics alone, when demerit & drawing will throw me in general standing. But ah! We graduate in math this year & this counts towards the final graduation. You know, all I ask is to be 1st or second two years hence.

Mr. Browne has had another hard trial, but he is again saved, whilst three of his section mates are found deficient. You can form no idea how that man will study as the examination draws near. I have been over & over again with him problem after problem. After taps last night I questioned him through the course, lying on my bed & he on his. He could answer everything, all the hardest most puzzling questions, and after all he did poorly at the examination, and came back swearing he was "found". But he was not, he came out next to the foot. I don't fear he shall be found deficient while he is with me. He does not lack in talents, for if he did he could not get this stuff any how; but he is remarkably unfortunate. When there is one thing out of 500 in the course that he does not know, he seems is bound to have it given to him. And another thing, when he does not know a thing well, he often says to his instructor "I cannot do it sir!"

This I seldom do. I watch my teacher's eye & language, & often by an indirect answer, appear perhaps not to have precisely understood the question. By the time he puts it again I have reflected upon it or he puts it plainer. Often by some such expedients I avoid betraying the true state of my head, but if I really did not know anything about the question asked, I would plainly say I do not know, but this has not occurred I think more than once since last September.

Don't you think your brother has got a little perseverance? How would you like to try a game at West Point? If you will be No 1 in mathematics, you cannot relax your efforts for a single week. If you feel sick, forget it, if tired never mind it, if you begin to feel discouraged, shame yourself, hold up your head & go on. But after all I enjoy this strife. I begin to take pleasure in taxing my intellect to its utmost.

Thus you see I have filled my letter with myself, but the time of an Examination is a selfish season & you must pardon me. Give my love to all, don't let mother exert herself too much, for I want to find her in good health and spirits next June. Tell Dellie he writes very legibly; & his brother Otis hopes soon to receive a long letter from his pen. Tell him & Charlie to be good boys & learn all they can & be sure & help father all they can, for nothing is lost & everything is gained by industry & kindness. Perhaps I shall write mother tomorrow, but be not surprised if none of you hear from me till after the Examination is over.

When I folded this I did not know that I had any wrappers, but I found one. Ask father if he thinks of it, when he buys himself some letter stamps to send me some, for I am out & if he pleases to charge the same to the account of OO Howard, Cadet U.S.M.A.

We shall be examined in French next Wednesday or Thursday. Only 10 plebes were found deficient this January, two having anticipated the event by resigning. The class was very much smaller than ours to begin with.

Warren was well when I saw him last. He had a little ill-time, but very soon recovered from it a few weeks since. You will receive my standing at home very soon after the examinations. Write me as soon & as much and as often as you can consistently with those weak legs of yours.

Tell mother not to be surprised at my stand in drawing. I'm going to rise in that between this and June. Good bye, good luck & good health to you.

Your affectionate brother  
Otis

respect him, because I think his intentions honest, & his principles good, though unending. Be respectful & kind to him, and you will like him as an instructor & as a man. Do you take as much interest in political news as you used to do? Uncle sends me papers almost every day. It appears that our rulers are not doing much. However, the more they reduce the postage, & the sooner, the better for me & my friends at a distance. This is the business which seems to be agitating the House, together with the existing Patent Laws. Uncle John made quite a speech on the bill for the reduction of postage. Although not a production of great genius, still it is characterized by good reasoning, & good common sense. Think you or I will ever have the opportunity of raising a voice in the halls of Congress? Perhaps we may: such unaccountable things have happened. But we will not anticipate too much, especially as I am in a fair way to be a warrior, and you have just to get through College. My respects to all my friends & acquaintances. I believe you said you went into Portland & returned, without making Lizzie a call. All I have to say is, I should not have done so.

Tell me how you like Lizzie. I shall not be able to write more to day. Study hard, but take sufficient exercise. Try and do as much better than your brother as you can, while you are following in his track. This will please him & be of lasting benefit to yourself.

Yours affectionate brother

(Chas. A. Howard)

Please omit Mr. A. B. in your direction.

Dear Brother, West Point, N.Y. Jan 19<sup>th</sup> '57

I received your letter in good season this time, and another at the same time, both of which gave me much pleasure. I believe I have got all your letters; some of them, however, being much delayed. Sometimes I have written you a letter, scolding you for not writing, & the very next mail has brought me one from you. My recitations, as well as yours are all in the forenoon. Like the arrangement, since I can spend the afternoon in writing letters. Our afternoons are, however, very short, i.e. if we eat dinner, noon; as we dine a little after one, <sup>scarcely</sup> hardly ever getting fairly back to our rooms till two. Our parade is a little after four: so that I have two spare hours, in which I usually write, sometimes read, at other times study. I think Roland, whether he gets married or not, would hardly have the courage to make another voyage to California. He will be taken considerable notice of in the town of Leeds, where he will find so many eager listeners to California tales, and so many admirers of the hero, who has visited that far famed country. This will please him. Our young ladies, few though they be, will meet & greet him with a sweet smile & open arms. This charming flattery always makes a man swell with his own importance & seldom fails to make him content with self, & on good terms with the world. Now speak of Mother, I have averaged more than one letter a fortnight, written to her; and seldom as I write less than four pages, hence, you see, I must crowd in a great many words, be the ideas what they may. I expect Mother will be lonesome, both of us being away. But she will be obliged to reconcile herself to our absence; for I am very certain that I, at least, am destined to spend but precious few days at home again. While in College, you will go

Home at least once in three months. Sons are sons; and if they are ambitious, the wide world must be their home. Peace, quiet & the family circle must be renounced by the youth who would carve his fortune, or satisfy the cravings of <sup>an</sup> ambitious spirit. You gave me a few hints respecting your companions & the feelings that they entertain & sometimes show towards you. This is bad. You are independent. That I like. But sometimes when we aim at independence we overstep the mark. The most independent man is he, who can mould others to his will; and to this end it is far better to have both the respect & the favor of others. You know how to gain both, and it is better to do so; for unpopularity, or rather a feeling that you are neglected, has first a bad effect upon your heart; it is attended with a sort of bitterness, which has an unfavorable reaction upon the whole character of a sensitive young man. I have noted its effect; both here & in College, and therefore I seek first the respect & then am careful not to excite the jealousy & enmity, which a very little action will sometimes excite. Here, there is more jealousy than elsewhere, because there is more rivalry. Almost any every action as well as every word of the man who stands at the head of the class, has to be repeated noticed & spoken of. He will be disliked the best he can do. And it is somewhat the same with those who stand near him. I have, however, as yet managed to get the good will of my classmates. There is scarce any doubt of your being able to enter College next fall; but the better preparation you have, the easier will your College course become, & the higher you can stand. Who is your Chum?—If you see Deley, tell him I have already written him two letters, for which I have received no answers. I heard that Mr Jewett went into Portland

to hear a lecture from Grey Woods, but, was disappointed. (Wednesday Jan 21<sup>st</sup>.) As you perceive by my change of date, I have, somewhat after your fashion laid aside my letter half finished, and resumed it again, after skipping one day. I received a letter yesterday from Mr Gargant (Sarah's lover). He writes a fine letter, says Silas is well & doing very well. I received a letter from Deley to day, filled to the brim, just as much as could be crowded into six pages. He writes after the same old fashion. You would be fortunate indeed if you could get such a chum, to be your companion & friend through your College course. He says, he has attended the Portland Lyceum several times, but has not been able yet to listen to a man, who could equal our old President.

Our section in mathematics is now running over Geometry (Series Legendre) at the rate almost of a book to a lesson. Every man but one in our section has studied it before. How I wish now that I had been obliged to get mathematics in College, as we get them here. I could stand higher with half the exertion that I now am obliged to make. But what is past, is past; & it is the height of folly to be looking back with vain regrets.

There is hardly any snow; the hills bare; the weather like spring. The winter in fact does not begin with ours in Maine, as you may judge when I tell you that I have no great coat and have worn no vest. Remember me to Jewett. Berley thinks he will not stop in Maine much longer. Give my respects to Mr Robinson. I used to like Robinson very well, while we were together in College. He is not, however, very prepossessing nor at all times very agreeable, owing perhaps to a want of ease of manners, & more to a certain inflexibility of character, which he shows often, when your views clash with his own. But still I

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73 1/19/1851 *From:* Oliver O. Howard

*To:* Dear Brother [RB Howard]

RBH-037

West Point N.Y.

*Source:* Bowdoin

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West Point N.Y. Jan 19th '51

Dear Brother,

I received your letter in good season this time, and another at the same time, both of which gave me much pleasure. I believe I have got all your letters, some of them however being much delayed. Sometimes I have written you a letter, scolding you for not writing & the very next mail has brought me one from you. My recitations, as well as yours are all in the fore noon. I like the arrangement since I can spend the afternoon in writing letters. Our afternoons are, however, very short, i.e. if we call dinner noon, as we dine a little after one o'clock hardly ever getting fairly back to our rooms till two. Our parade is a little after four, so that I have two spare hours, in which I usually write, sometimes read, at other times study.

I think Roland, whether he gets married or not, would hardly have the courage to make another voyage to California. He will be taken considerable notice of in the town of Leeds where he will find so many eager listeners to California tales, and so many admirers of the hero, who has visited that far famed country. This will please him. Our young ladies, few though they be, will meet & greet him with a sweet smile & open arms. This charming flattery always makes a man swell with his own importance & seldom fails to make him content with self, & on good terms with the world.

You spoke of mother. I have averaged more than one letter a fortnight, written to her, and seldom do I write less than four pages, hence, you see I must crowd in a good many words, be the ideas what they may. I expect mother will be lonesome, both of us being away. But she will be obliged to reconcile herself to our absence, for I am very certain that I, at least, am destined to spend but precious few days at home again. While in College, you will go home at least once in three months. Sons are sons, and if they are ambitious, the wide world must be their home. Peace, quiet & the family circle must be renounced by the youth who would carve his fortune, or satisfy the cravings of an ambitious spirit.

You gave me a few hints respecting your companions & the feelings that they entertain & sometimes show towards you. This is bad. You are independent. That I like. But sometimes when we aim at independence we overstep the mark. The most independent man is he, who can mould others to his will, and to this end it is far better to have both the respect & the favor of others. You know how to gain both, and it is better to do it, for unpopularity or rather a feeling that you are neglected has first a bad effect upon your heart. It is attended with a sort of bitterness, which has an unfavorable reaction upon the whole character of a sensitive young man. I have noted its effect, both here & in College, and therefore I seek first the respect & then am careful not to excite the jealousy & enmity, which a very little act will sometimes excite.

Here, there is more jealousy than elsewhere, because there is more rivalry. Almost every action as well as every word of the man who stands at the head of the class, has to be noticed & spoken of. He will be disliked the best he can do. And it is somewhat the same with those who stand near him. I have, however, as yet managed to get the good will of my classmates. There is scarce any doubt of your being able to enter College next fall, but the better preparation you have, the easier will your College course become, & the higher you can stand. Who is your Chum? If you see Peleg, tell him I have already written him two letters, for which I have received no answers. I heard that Mr. Jewett went into Portland to hear a lecture from "Prex. Woods", but was disappointed.

(Wednesday Jan 21st) as you perceived by my change of date, I have, somewhat after your fashion laid aside my letter half finished, and resumed it again after skipping one day.

I received a letter yesterday from Mr. Sargent (Sarah's lover). He writes a fine letter, says Silas is well & doing very well. I received a letter from Peleg today, filled to the brim, just as much as could be crowded into six pages. He writes after the same old fashion. You would be fortunate indeed if you could get such a chum to be your companion & friend through your College course. He says he has attended the Portland Lyceum several times, but has not been able yet to listen to a man, who could equal our old President.

Our section in mathematics is now running over geometry (Series Legendre) at the rate almost of a book to a lesson. Every man but one in our section has studied it before. How I wish now that I had been obliged to get mathematics in College, as we get them here. I could stand higher with half the exertion that I now I am obliged to make. But what is past, is past, & it is the height of folly to be looking back with vain regrets.

There's hardly any snow; the hills bare, the weather like spring. The winter in fact does not begin with ours in Maine, as you may judge when I tell you that I have no great coat and have worn no vest. Remember me to Jewett. Perley thinks he will not stop in Maine much longer. Give my respects to Mr. Robinson. I used to like Robinson very well, while we were together in College. He is not, however, very pre-possessing nor at all times very agreeable, owing perhaps to a want of ease of manners, & more to a certain inflexibility of character, which he shows often, when your views clash with his own. But still I respect him, because I think his intentions honest, & his principles good though unbending. Be respectful & kind to him and you will like him as an instructor & as a man.

Do you take as much interest in political news as you used to do? Uncle sends me papers almost every day. It appears that our rulers are not doing much. However, the more they reduce the postage, & the sooner the better for me & my friends at a distance. This is the business which seems to be agitating the House, together with the existing Patent Laws. Uncle John made quite a speech on the bill for the reduction of postage. Although not a production of great genius, still it is characterized by good reasoning & good common sense. Think you or I will ever have the opportunity of raising a voice in the halls of Congress? Perhaps we may. Such unaccountable things have happened. But we will not anticipate too much, especially as I am in a fair way to be a warrior, and you have first to get through College.

My respects to all my friends & acquaintances. I believe you said you went into Portland & returned, without making Lizzie a call. All I have to say is, I shouldn't have done so. Tell me how you like Lizzie. I shall not be able to write more today. Study hard, but take sufficient exercise. Try and do as much better than your brother as you can, while you are following in his track. This will please him & be of lasting benefit to yourself.

Your affectionate brother  
Oliver O. Howard

Please omit the A. B. In your direction.

✓  
West Point. N. Y. Feb 8<sup>th</sup> 1857  
Dear Brother,

Saturday afternoon has come again, after another week's toil, and it is surely welcome. I opened my portfolio just now and found no less than six unanswered letters: this superabundance of labor before me almost staggered me; for writing letters, although but a pleasant recreation compared with mathematical study, requires time. I was in a dilemma too, not knowing where to begin, or rather whom to write to first. But as I have already addressed myself to you, you shall have the first effusions of my lazy intellect. I took a letter of Mother's from the Post-Office this noon, and am happy to find our family all well. You appear to have taken your unexpected ride to Portland rather coolly, notwithstanding your dirty shirt and dishabille. I believe I told you how I once went to the same place, somewhat out of order - in the outer man: when I started from Brunswick in the dirt-cars; when the engine belched forth muddy water & smut, and blackened my white coat, my white dicky, my white bosom, and more gowns than all my new, nice book, just purchased for a present - all this between ~~between~~ the towns of Brunswick & Yarmouth; how at Yarmouth a Paddy woman furnished me with a Paddy shirt, collar eight inches wide; how, notwithstanding my pride, I was obliged to visit my lady-love with a tilted dicky & a spoiled present; how I came away in a little better trim than I went. Well: no matter about that for it is an old story, while your pleasant surprise is of comparatively recent date. There is one part of your story that appears a little like exaggeration,

Mr. Rowland B. Howard

Yarmouth  
Me

1857  
R. B. Howard  
Feb 8<sup>th</sup>

and that is, where you speak of walking very swiftly up one street & down another. The "swiftly" I object to, for that must be (pardon me) a moral impossibility(?). Well: you say Mr Perley comes, à propos, and takes you to a private dwelling, containing people, kind, hospitable; very good! What next: you advise a United States Officer (in embryo) not to slight this place. This is funny: Who thinks of slighting those kind, hospitable strangers. After a sermon one half mile long on the utility & expediency of patience well exerted, I find you among my dearest friends - and now the road becomes perfectly clear, for notwithstanding your dirty shirt, you stay over Sunday, stay away from Church, reading all day with Lizzie from Religious books(?), and in the same breath tell me you are scarcely acquainted with her. I don't object to all this: but you must remember, that it is wise, both in fact & in fiction, to make your stories "hang well together": — You said Mr Jewett was sick! Has he yet recovered? It <sup>is</sup> ~~seems to be~~ something unusual for Jewett to be the least indisposed, I hope for his sake that it has amounted to nothing more than a bad cold. Give him my best respects & best wishes, & tell him a little for not having written me lately. Yes: most certainly I remember Mr. Spaulding Pike & Webb. Give them my best respects if you see them. Mr Webb is one of my especial favorites. I consider him a fine scholar and smart fellow. Pike is a wild one. How does he carry himself at Yarmouth? Mother describes her cold journey to Hallowell, her visit to the Reverend Donation Party with Holand. It seems from this that the latter must have become a little more polite & domestic than of yore, since he can carry

mother to a donation party & that at the Ministers. Mother laments Mr Martin's course, especially his unnatural, niggardly conduct towards his children. How different this man, from the humble scrupulously pious Mr Martin, whom I used to revere ten years ago in his blue broad-cloth suit & bright buttons!

Mother says she has been writing to you to get you to carry Lizzie home with you when your term is out - I have forgotten when that period is: - Lizzie said she should visit mother when her school was done, but whether she would go before or not I don't know. --

Mother writes also that it is rumored that Orville Jennings (little John) has married a lady owning slaves & that he finds the animals very convenient to write on him. &c —

I'll warrant you <sup>that</sup> if our friend Orville is married, that there is something more than love at the bottom of the matter. He is thoroughly practical, & in such matters very friendly to expediency. Mr Sargent's brother is Sarah's Frank's brother - was here to see me last Thursday from New York City. His name is Ephes. He has a medicine store of his own in the city & is a pretty smart young man. Elias is well & as steady as one can expect. It appears that William Ellis has not had very good luck with his school: do you know Mr. Trimble. Maria wrote me a letter from Gotham which I received the other day. She writes an easy pretty letter. She says she shall spend her vacation in Bath. — You never have said anything about Dr Carey's family but once: are William, Joseph, at Yarmouth? I cannot write any more this afternoon; so good bye  
Yr Affectionate Brother  
O. C. Howard.

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74 2/8/1851 *From:* Oliver O. Howard

*To:* Mr. Rowland B. Howard

RBH-038

West Point N.Y.

Yarmouth  
Me

*Source:* Bowdoin

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West Point N.Y. February 8, 1851

Dear Brother,

Saturday afternoon has come again after another weeks toil, and it is surely welcome. I opened my portfolio just now and found no less than six unanswered letters. This superabundance of labor before me almost staggered me; for writing letters, although but a pleasant recreation compared with mathematical study, requires time. I was in a dilemma too, not knowing where to begin, or rather whom to write to first. But as I have already addressed myself to you, you shall have the first effusions of my lazy intellect. I took a letter of mother's from the post office, this noon, and I am happy to find our family all well.

You appear to have taken your unexpected ride to Portland rather coolly, notwithstanding your dirty shirt and dishabille. I believe I told you how I once went to the same place, somewhat out of order - in the outer man. When I started from Brunswick in the dirt cars, when the engine belched forth muddy water & smut, and blackened my white coat, my white dickey, my white bosom, and more & worse than all my new, nice book, just purchased for a present. All this between the towns of Brunswick & Yarmouth; how at Yarmouth a Paddy woman furnished me with a Paddy shirt, collar 8 inches wide; how, notwithstanding my pride, I was obliged to visit my lady-love with a wilted Dickey & a spoiled present; how I came away in a little better trim than I went. Well, no matter about that for it is an old story, while your pleasant surprise is of comparatively recent date. There is one part of your story that appears a little like exaggeration, and that is, where you speak of walking very swiftly up one street & down another. The "swiftly" I object to, for that must be (pardon me) a moral impossibility (?).

Well, you say Mr. Perley comes, a propos, and takes you to a private dwelling, containing people, kind, hospitable. Very good! What next? You advise a United States officer (in embryo) not to slight this place. This is funny? Who thinks of slighting those kind, hospitable strangers.

After a sermon one half mile long on the utility & expediency of patience well exerted, I find you among my dearest friends - and now the road becomes perfectly clear, for notwithstanding your dirty shirt, your stay over Sunday, stay away from Church, reading all day with Lizzie from religious books (?), and in the same breath tell me you are scarcely acquainted with her. I don't object to all this, but you must remember that it is wise both in fact & in fiction, to make your stories hang well together.

You said Mr. Jewett was sick! Has he yet recovered? It is something unusual for Jewett to be the least indisposed. I hope for his sake that it has amounted to nothing more than a bad cold. Give him my best respects & best wishes, scold him a little for not having written me lately.

Yes, most certainly I remember Spaulding, Pike & Webb. Give them my best respects if you see them. Mr. Webb is one of my especial favorites. I consider him a fine scholar and smart fellow. Pike is a wild one. How does he carry himself at Yarmouth?

Mother describes her cold journey to Hallowell, her visit to the Reverend Donation Party with Roland. It seems from this that the latter must have become a little more polite & domestic than of yore, since he can carry mother to a donation party & that at the Minister's. Mother laments Mr. Martin's course, especially his unnatural, niggardly conduct towards his children. How different this man, from the humble scrupulously pious Mr. Martin, whom I used to revere 10 years ago in his blue broad-cloth suit & bright buttons!

Mother says she has been writing to you to get you to carry Lizzie home with you when your term is out. I have forgotten when that period is. Lizzie said she should visit mother when her school was done, but whether she would go before or not I don't know.

Mother writes also that it is rumored that Orville Jennings (tell John) has married a lady owning slaves & that he finds the animals very convenient to wait on him &c. I'll warrant you, if our friend Orville is married that there is something more than love at the bottom of the matter. He is thoroughly practical, & in such matters very friendly

to expediency.

Mr. Sargent's brother i.e. Sarah's Frank's brother, was here to see me last Thursday from New York City. His name is Epes. He has a medicine store of his own in the city & is a pretty smart young man. Silas is well & as steady as one can expect. It appears that William Otis has not had very good luck with his school. Do you know the trouble? Maria wrote me a letter from Gorham which I received the other day. She writes an easy pretty letter. She says she shall spend her vacation in Bath.

You never have said anything about Dr. Carey's family but once. Are William, Joseph, at Yarmouth? I cannot write anymore this afternoon, so good bye.

Yr affectionate brother  
O.O. Howard

[Envelope]  
Mr. Rowland B. Howard  
Yarmouth  
Me  
[Postmark] WEST POINT N.Y. 11 FEB

Ol Howard  
March 13<sup>th</sup> 1854

West Point N.Y. Mar. 23. 1854.

Dear Brother,

I perceive by your letter to Warren that you were & perhaps are laboring under a sad mistake. I should have written to you at West Point long before this had I not thought that you must have been at home when my first letter arrived there after I began to recover. I never have been so that I could not read or be read to. What in the world gave you the impression that I was so badly off? They put us in the Hospital here for a cut finger, or for a bad headache. I have recited now over a week & scarcely any body in the class has got better marks. But for your special information I will give you a short account of the time I have had. I was exercising as Warren said in the Gymnasium, with a few others, & trying on a pretty high pole, (perhaps 9 feet from the ground) an exercise which I often try. The pole turned & my head brought up on the ground "full tilt" giving a gash probably from a sharp stone of about four or five inches in length. I got up bleeding profusely. Every body was frightened, but Ol Howard & myself. I found that I was hurt somewhat; felt my wound & saw if my skull was fractured. Thought it was not; called for my great coat; drank some water & started for the Hospital attended by two young men. I got there found the Surgeon - had my head half shaved

sowed up & dressed, which operations took over an hour. I slept the following night very well & got up as bright as a dollar. Studied some, wrote a letter to Sarah Lee of three pages, thinking I was going to be entirely well in a week or less.

But as good or bad fortune would have it. The erysipelas got into my head & face & soon put it out of its natural shape. The Drs. for there were two of them, had to cut open my wound which was already closed up, run their probes down the well side of my head & made incisions. My head was so unaccountably out of fix that it would not lie on the softest pillow. I could have had a leg or arm taken off with half the pain I was obliged to suffer, from their various operations. They burnt my neck with caustic to keep the dangerous friend from visiting my chest. They burnt the skin all up about ~~for~~ half an inch wide. They burnt me between the brows & on the side of my cheek. All this was done to fix the limits of the disease. Well I had a serious time. My classmates watched with me & I was treated very kindly by all, especially by Dr. Cuyler, the principal Surgeon. He staid with me two or three nights over half of the night. Uncle Ward heard that I was hurt & wrote Lane to see me. Now I am in most perfect health. Just as soon as I could crawl I begged the Dr to let me return to the barracks, & go to recitations. He did not think I would study or recite. But I did. But I did I soon made up what

I had lost & went on fairly. My head being shaven is a funny looking thing & pretty well cut up. I keep it bound up yet & wear a little figured skull-cap which I never take off. I am now a very independent man. I don't have to get up at "Keville" (morning roll call) nor attend any duty, except Academic, & that I attend from choice. These are the good fruits of my accident.

I have written to mother two or three times. I told Warren to write, that my injury was nothing, but that I had no communications to write while in the hospital. I wished to prevent all anxiety on the part of mother, till I was well: but it appears that I could not do it. News spreads from this place like wild fire. But let this subject drop. I am glad Charlie is with you. Be very, very kind to him. Every unpleasant word you speak to your brother will ever after give you pain. Tell him, his brother Otto, wishes to see him a fine scholar & a fine man one of these days. Then he must improve all his time. If he can help it, he must not irritate his brothers in one respect: he must try not to get angry and out of patience. Give my love to him & to John N. Tell him I shall answer his good long letter soon. Warren sends his best regards to you, & thinks that it is better that I should write you than he, & speak for myself. Perhaps you cannot make out the above, for my pen has got out of order, but here is a few words that I will write better. Your brother is ~~is~~ well but he has a queer looking head. Affectionately  
D. Howard

75 3/23/1851 *From:* OO Howard

*To:* Dear brother [RB  
Howard]

RBH-039

West Point N.Y.

*Source:* Bowdoin

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West Point N.Y. Mar. 23, 1851

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OO Howard