

I shall lose my high hopes & my impulses that  
were generous towards all will become deadened,  
and my whole soul turned upon me & mine -  
Undoubtedly, a copper will soon increase in value  
& a dollar cause the muscles of my hand to contract -  
I will see & do see already what money can do -  
Now it sums the chief end and aim of almost  
every man's life. Don't think I have already  
got nervous, for I have not yet got up  
the prodigal - but you know you told me  
once what a treasure I have - She will be  
a check upon me - not as you may suggest  
by saying - no, no, don't do this or don't do that,  
but because she is that sort of a treasure,  
that requires & unconsciously solicits my devotion  
if I may use such a lower - like word (I believe the H. Moon  
is not set yet) - With something to care for besides  
myself, surely extravagance will abate. I will stop  
here - There was much I was going to write  
you - but gas has filled my sheet. I am planted  
now, take the place of that solid common sense  
that my dear Aunt Education positively  
injoins. But good night, God bless you - Lizzie  
is almost asleep - says she's got it up tonight for I  
woud to write a little in the morning.

Yours affectionate brother Eliza

Waterliet Arsenal

April 8<sup>th</sup> 1855-

My dear Brother,

Already having helped  
with two letters tonight you cannot expect me  
to finish a third. Your last letter was received today -  
I liked it very much, but to own up, I did not feel  
more pleased with it than with the former ever which  
Lizzie and I had quite a domestic contention &  
a hearty laugh. You depreciate our strong  
predilection to flattery & go straight to work to  
make your brother pleased with himself. This  
is hardly fair. I will not call it flattery for you  
seem too candid, but do not my dear brother  
draw too many comparisons & contrasts. You can  
always make yourself low in the estimate, but  
be well assured that you have no reason - You &  
I both seem predisposed occasionally to underrate  
ourselves, though if you could get at the actual  
amount of <sup>our</sup> self-esteem, you would not find it  
so very "small." - Monday evening - You perceive  
by that interloping phrase, Monday evening, that



I did not finish your letter yesterday evening. Now I confess if I had been a bachelor I should have done so, for I should have lighted my pipe or cigar and got revivified, but I am too polite to smoke in ladies society and our smoking room in the other tenement is not a fit place to write in. I took up your letter just now & reread the first page. Now the question with me is, is it earnest or not. You say I took the earnest part of your former letter for fun & vice versa. On the contrary I took neither the one part or the other for earnest, though undoubtedly under the guise of jollity there were a few sly hits. Now my answer from its very commencement, was intended as a serio-comic concern, pretending to abuse & complain of abuse. "Abuse" there was none in yours. This last I have written as if your 1<sup>st</sup> page was in good sober earnest. Yes, I lay no imperious condition upon you - nor do I intend to palm off upon you a harsh & pointless joke - (you can trace my chagrin in that underscoring) - I know, that handiwork is a sort of past-time between me & my companions, and that method of handbugging which consists in asking simplicity, and answering a slur

or cut, as though it ~~was~~ had no more meaning than its literal interpretation would warrant, is of every day occurrence. So you need not interpret all that, I say as dead in earnest. You say truly "a man must look forward to a progress in some direction or he will lose his ambition" & I would add his energy. But I fear this good-for-nothing quiet life will make me unfit for anything. I am getting clever, lame, kindly disposed, affectionately lazy. In short I am what they call in the army somewhat of an old foggy. But as you suggest there is what ought to be one of the chief aims of a man domestic comfort. You say, "You must be conscious of a clearness & power of mental vision which I shall always be a stranger to." You are mistaken, Your head is as clear as mine and very seldom do I realize in the least that my mind has been disciplined more than it was when I started for Brunswick the first time. Truly I do not feel so energetic as I did then, I don't seem to be accomplishing what my beating heart then was screaming over & cherishing as something a little more than ambition. As age creeps on, after having been deceived, handbugged, cheated & disappointed, after having become acquainted with the falsity, ingratitude & folly of men, I presume

I am only going to say that I don't know you because you laughed at me when I called you another man's handbugger.



118 4/8/1855

*From:* Otis [OO Howard]

*To:* Dear Brother [RB Howard]

RBH-083

Watervliet Arsenal

*Source:* Bowdoin

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Watervliet Arsenal  
April 8th, 1855

My dear brother,

Already having helped write two letters tonight you cannot expect me to finish a third. Your last letter was received today. I liked it very much, but to own up, I did not feel more pleased with it than with the former over which Lizzie and I had quite a domestic contention & a hearty laugh. You deprecate our strong predilection to flattery & go straight to work to make your brother pleased with himself. This is hardly fair. I will not call it flattery for you seem too candid, but do not my dear brother draw too many comparisons & contrasts. You can always make yourself low in the estimate, but be well assured that you have no reason. You & I both seem predisposed occasionally to underrate ourselves, though if you could get at the actual amount of our self-esteem, you would not find it so very "small".

Monday evening. You perceive by that interloping phrase, Monday evening, that I did not finish your letter yesterday evening. Now I confess if I had been a bachelor I should have done so, for I should have lighted my pipe or cigar and got revived, but I am too polite to smoke in ladies society and our smoking room in the other tenement is not a fit place to write in.

I took up your letter just now & reread the first page. Now the question with me is, is it earnest or not. You say I took the earnest part of your former letter for fun & vice versa. On the contrary I took neither the one part or the other for earnest, though undoubtedly under the guise of jollity there were a few sly hits. Now my answer from its very commencement was intended as a serio-comic concern, pretending to abuse & complain of abuse. "Abuse" there was none in yours.

This last I have written as if your 1st page was a good sober earnest. Yes, I lay no imperious condition upon you, nor do I intend to palm off upon you a harsh & pointless joke. (You can trace my chagrin in that under scoring [harsh & pointless were underlined]). Know that <fundinage> is a sort of past-time between me & my companions, and that method of humbugging which consists in aping simplicity, and answering a slur, or cut, as though it had no more meaning than its literal interpretation would warrant, is of every day occurrence. So you need not interpret all that I say as dead in earnest.

You say "truly a man must look forward to a progress in some direction or he will lose his ambition." & I would add his energy. But I fear this good-for-nothing quiet life will make me unfit for anything. I'm getting clever, tame, kindly disposed, affectionate & lazy. In short I am what they call in the Army somewhat of an old fogey. But as you suggest, there is what ought to be one of the chief aims of a man domestic comfort.

You say "you must be conscious of a clearness & power of mental vision which I shall always be a stranger to." You are mistaken. Your head is as clear as mine and very seldom do I realize in the least that my mind has been disciplined more than it was when I started for Brunswick the first time. Really I do not feel so energetic as I did then. I don't seem to be accomplishing what my beating heart then was dreaming over & cherishing as something a little more than ordinary.

As age creeps on, after having been deceived, humbugged, cheated & disappointed, after having become acquainted with the falsity, ingratitude & folly of men, I presume I shall lose my high hopes, my impulses that were generous towards all will become deadened and my whole soul turned upon me & mine. Undoubtedly a copper will soon increase in value & a dollar cause the muscles of my hand to contract.

I will see & do see already what money can do, how it seems the chief end and aim of almost every man's life. Don't think I have already got penurious, for I have not yet got up to prudence, but you know you told me once what a treasure I have. She will be a check upon me, not as you may suggest by saying no, no, don't do this or don't do that, but because she is that sort of a treasure, that requires & unconsciously solicits my devotion if I may use such a lover-like word. (I believe this H. moon is not set yet.) With something to care for besides

myself, surely extravagance will abate.

I will stop here. There was much I was going to write you, but gas has filled my shoe, & supplanted, no, taken the place of that solid, common sense that my West Point education particularly enjoins.

But good night, God bless you. Lizzie is almost asleep, says don't fold it up tonight for I want to write a little in the morning.

Your affectionate brother  
Otis

[Written by Lizzie] I am only going to say that I don't love you because you laughed at me when I called you brother on my wedding night.



The boat from N. York was delayed by the high water & fog. I got to the ferry just after the end of the little boats had pushed off. The boatman had to return for me. He had done so once or twice before. It appeared so he converted his impatience by cursing like a trooper. I feared to knock him down, but looked mildly in his face while he abused me & replied not. He exhausted his vocabulary of oath and rowed on, splashing us, (some ladies were with me in the boat at the time & were frightened). I quieted the bores by inquiring their employers name. I soon reached the wharf. The boat had arrived, and was letting off its passengers on a temporary staging. The wharf proper with all its appurtenances being under water.

I looked up and down stairs and in the ladies cabins but found no Laura. The Rip Van Winkle (the boat's name) had to go over to the opposite shore to deposit her freight. I thought I would hem a ride and save two cents perage. You shall hear the result of my economy. The Rip went along side of a wharf, where there were apparently three vessels in a row. The boat after snorting & splashing a long time got close to the superior vessel - a fair chance, I jump aboard. Captain cries you must get back. I look about me, water on all sides three or four rods to shore, wharf covered - no boat. Captain man & boy on board the craft. Captain says can't get ashore sir; from this vessel today. See a ship in the distance - call after it, no attention is paid, goes out of sight. Myself & boy - talk with the Captain, about nine o'clock, I should say, into the water - go

ashore and get me a boat - give him a quarter so to do. Was sure, saying before your work is done. They said it was done. I was on the land laugh & grow fat. I am much obliged to you for your advice. That craft. Am ships with & says what will you say to get ashore. I told him, get me when I will say, if you don't intend to try you must not trouble yourself. He was a sorry sort of man. I was a brother of a couple of jolly mechanics in climbing rope. I pushed myself about - along while making to get to the vessel. As I was that I could go ashore with that first to his purpose. I jumped ashore, I put my foot on the wharf & I was ashore. I received your letter last Wednesday and were surprised to learn that you had been sick and recovered without our hearing heard a word about it. I know a little of the comforts of being sick away from home and friends and can fully sympathize with you. I trust you will hurry up and recover your strength. It is bad indeed to have a vacation spoiled with that oppressive thought ever on your mind viz "making up". It never set well upon me. But your happy disposition can perhaps prevent anything that concerns this feature from taking off the flesh. It is good philosophy "laugh & grow fat." I think you were wise to decline the humor that they would extend to you at Lenoir. I was glad that my labors were so useful - in this, that you may grow wiser through my folly. Laura is with us. She came Thursday and we intend to keep her some little time, as long as she behaves well and enjoys herself in our delightful society. I wrote Uncle George, a short letter while Laura was resting after the fatigues of her journey & so it is before she pens one about it. I leave these communications to E. Otis Esq. his wife Martha is, as his heirs the following



verbatim (Laura's evidence) "I received John's letter last Tuesday evening at 5 o'clock and found the money safely enclosed. I started the next morning for Troy, where I arrived safe and sound. (I will add while Laura is telling our old mischiefs to Lizzie, that Laura's coming has let loose Lizzie's spirits. My guest room's formerly so quiet after being with the musical laugh & tongue-vibrations of the two united. Ah! now they pester me with the spring fashions - the bonnets, shawls, skirts - 'deceptions' &c &c. to say nothing of the quiet way they blackball those girls who don't wear the right kind of things.) Laura adds with some hesitancy & a peculiarly tell-tale laugh: "I am coming home sometime, some Monday. The two seem to decide. (You know Mrs H. is decided.) I ask what more answer, "I don't know; nothing important; O! Aunt Martha will say why don't she come?" "I will anticipate and give the desired answer in parenthesis [Every body at Ledy knows me "Chalanthus mullis"; I will not let her go till we have had a visit-] She says that the mud you speak of is frightful. They are "nice" people, those Philadelphians, you never see dirt there, I think they must <sup>map</sup> the streets & keep them forever put clean. Laura has forgotten an important item, an item that women and men sometimes dabble in, 'tis a certain nothing that is so light and airy that its going marks its coming, yet so heavy as to bring the frowny lover on his knees or prostrate a poor fellow on his back, so affecting as to make men sigh & women cry - Laura & Lizzie as the panic

takes them. I read. The girls, (hey pardon) the ladies guess - Lizzie affection, and Laura Love - Now I have a right to draw a sage conclusion from this - They answer quickly - The words on the tongue are the ones uppermost in their hearts. I don't confuse the two terms as I used to. My conclusion is that the state of affection follows as a segment to the state of Love. What think you - Girls overflow with Love, Mariams with affection, primarily for the husband, while he is young yielding and attentive, subsequently for the children, scarcely ever with the slightest alteration, or diminution of intensity while life lasts. I wrote a letter to Lizzie a short time since I mentioned every body but you. I didn't think you could be at home. I had some queer times in going after Laura - I was to meet her at the wharf in Troy - exactly when I did not know, so I went to meet their successive arrivals. The first day last <sup>Tuesday</sup> ~~Saturday~~ morning. I went to Troy at about 12 past 5 A.M. Waited till after seven, & returned; the river was so high I snift that they could not land with the big ferry-boat, the wharves all completely covered with water. The lower stories of houses near the river filled with water. The upper parts of the mansions being visible. I went in a little skiff. We were rowed nearly half a mile up river on this side and then took a diagonal course to Troy, where I didn't see go - at I started back. The



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119 4/29/1855     *From:* Otis [OO Howard]

*To:* Dear Brother [RB Howard]

RBH-084

Watervliet Arsenal

*Source:* Bowdoin

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Watervliet Arsenal  
April 29th, 1855

My dear brother

We received your letter last Wednesday and were surprised to learn that you had been sick and recovered without our having heard a word about it. I know a little of the comforts of being sick away from home and friends and can fully sympathize with you. I trust you will hurry up and recover your strength. It is bad indeed to have a vacation spoiled with that oppressive thought ever on your mind, viz "making up". It never set well upon me, but your happy disposition can perhaps prevent anything that concerns the future from taking off the flesh. It is good philosophy "laugh & grow fat."

I think you were wise to decline the honor that they would extend to you at Lewiston. I am glad that my labors were so useful in this, that you may grow wise through my folly.

Laura is with us. She came Thursday and we intend to keep her some little time, as long as she behaves well and enjoys herself in our delightful society. I wrote uncle Ensign a short letter while Laura was resting after the fatigues of her journey & sent it before she knew ought about it. Please then communicate to E. Otis Esq., his wife Martha Otis, his heirs the following verbatim (Laura's evidence) "I received John's letter last Tuesday evening at five o'clock and found the money safely enclosed. I started the next morning for Troy, where I arrived safe and sound. (I will add while Laura is telling over our old mishaps to Lizzie, that Laura's coming has let loose Lizzie's spirits. My rooms formerly so quiet often ring with the musical laugh & <tonguing>-vibrations of the two united. Oh! How they pester me with the spring fashions - tis bonnets shawls, skirts, "delusions" &c. &c. to say nothing of the quiet way they blackball those girls who don't wear the right kind of things.)

Laura adds with some hesitancy & a peculiarly telltale laugh: "I am coming home sometime, some Monday. The two seem to decide. (You know Mrs. H is decided.) I asked what more, answer, "I don't know; nothing important. O! Aunt Martha will say why don't she come?" I will anticipate and give the desired answer in parentheses (Everybody at Leeds knows me "Obstenantus Mulis". I will not let her go till we have had a visit.) She says that the mud you speak of is frightful. They are "nice" people, those Philadelphians. You never see dirt there. I think they must mop the streets & keep their horses' feet clean.

Laura has forgotten an important item, an item that women and men sometimes dabble in. Tis a certain nothing that is so light and airy that its going marks its coming, yet so heavy as to bring the fond lover on his knees or prostrate a poor fellow on his back, so affecting as to make men sigh & women cry or laugh & <> as the panic takes them. I read. The girls (beg pardon) the ladies guess - Lizzie affection, and Laura love. Now I have a right to draw a sage conclusion from this. They answer quickly. The words on the tongue are the ones uppermost in their hearts. I don't confound the two terms as I used to. My conclusion is that the state of affection follows as a sequent to the state of love. What think you. Girls overflow with love, madams with affection, primarily for the husband, while he is young, yielding and attentive, subsequently for the children, scarcely ever with the slightest alteration, or diminution of intensity while life lasts.

I wrote a letter to Dellie a short time since. I mentioned every body but you. I didn't think you could be at home. I had some queer times in going after Laura. I was to meet her at the wharf in Troy, exactly when I did not know, so I went to meet three successive arrivals. The second day last Tuesday morning, I went to Troy at about ½ past 5 A.M. waited till after seven, & returned. The river was so high & swift that they could not land with the big ferry boat, the wharves all completely covered with water. The lower stories of houses near the river filled with water, the upper parts of the windows being visible. I went in a little skiff. We were rowed nearly half a mile up river on this side and then took a diagonal course to Troy. Whew! Didn't we go [ bottom of page cut off] started back. The boat from N. York was delayed by the high water & fog. I got to the ferry just after one of the little boats had pushed off. The boat man had to return for me. He had done so once or twice before it appeared, so he consoled his impatience by cursing like a trooper. I forbore to knock him down, but looked mildly in his face while he abused me, & I replied not. He exhausted his vocabulary of oaths and rowed on, splashing us, (some

ladies were with me in the boat at the time & were frightened) I quieted the boors by inquiring their employers name. I soon reached the wharf. The boat had arrived, and was letting off its passengers on a temporary staging, the wharf proper with all its appurtenances being underwater. I looked up and down stairs and in the ladies cabin but found no Laura. The Rip Van Winkle (the boat's name) had to go over to the opposite shore to deposit her freight. I thought I would have a ride and save two cents ferriage.

You shall hear the result of my economy. The Rip went along side of the wharf, where there were apparently three vessels in a row. The boat after snorting & splashing a long time got close to the up-River vessel, a fair chance, I jump aboard, captain cries you can't get back. I look about me, water on all sides three or four rods to shore, wharf covered - no boat - Capt. Man & boy on board the craft. Capt. Says can't get ashore sir from this vessel today. See a skiff in the distance, call after it, no attention is paid, goes out of sight. Myself [bottom of page cut off] shore and get me a boat, give him a quarter so to do. Bad rule paying before your work is done. Boy didn't get ashore. Crows on the land laugh & jeer. Asked how much baggage have you aboard that craft. One steps forth & says what will you give to get ashore. I told him, get me ashore & I will pay, if you do not intend to try you need not trouble yourself. He was a rowdy sort of man, laughed & hooted, got a couple of joists - constructed a <skimpy> raft & it knocked himself about a long while trying to get to the vessel. He did not think I could go ashore on that but to his surprise I jumped on almost whacking him & we went ashore together & I gave him a 1/4 more and hastened to Lizzie to tell her of the dangers to which her beloved had been subjected.

Your br  
Otis



give his instruction. He will be likely to be general  
sooner than placare moi, but I don't believe he  
will be so situated as to have a sweet wife this  
many years. Politics I don't engage in you know  
but I am glad to see your zeal & earnestness  
in such things. I look upon Frank Pierce  
in a different light from yourself. He has used  
the army well, and I can find no material fault  
with his general administration. If I entered the  
political arena against him, the whole face of  
things would be changed. but now I hardly can  
remember the flaws that are picked. His Cabinet  
Why strange as it may seem they suit me well  
enough - "Gray Town". Why these accounts I believe  
full of humbug. I have not the least doubt he acted as  
chief prompter. You think me narrow minded - interested  
in the army & nothing more. Oh no, don't mistake me -  
I stand above party feeling completely I think upon such  
matters entirely independent of self interest. I believe the  
country will be no worse off at the close of Frank  
Pierce's administration than at the beginning.  
Popular Sovereignty notwithstanding. I would gladly  
have you express your opinions freely though I  
may not be political enough to answer them -  
All are well as shown by last accounts -  
Lizzie has left me for bed - gives her love to her  
brother. I sleep no more. I expect she is sleeping  
good night. Your affectionate brother  
Wm

Walden Arsenal

May 20<sup>th</sup> 1855

My dear Brother:

I have just finished reading aloud  
the first volume of Pendergast when it passed into my  
head. Rowland ought to have a letter, and as I am  
quick at acting, especially after "original suggestions" of  
this kind, here is at once. Your letter was received about  
a week since; it was welcomed & eagerly read by your  
admiring brother & sister. Extra news. It is one of  
your sister's weaknesses, in common with cousin Laura  
to style yourself very much of a man, and I always  
join them heartily in praises and forebodings of success,  
except when they run antagonistically against my own  
peculiar weakness and draw comparisons to my (as I  
in jealous egotism <sup>may</sup> fancy, to my own disadvantage). But  
you know me of old, and that next to myself even in the  
regions of talent there is no one that I place above my  
brother. I perceive there is truth and power enough in  
the above lines, the which, extended, would fill one  
letter. but your kind letter so full of information  
would be ill repaid & poorly answered. But I cannot  
write since as nonsense till I get a new pen. I was  
happy to learn that our Mother Mrs M. - was in  
so good health, and exhibited that true philosophy  
of life which makes one conform with a happy heart



to all the vagaries of fortune and young people. Again  
another secret between us. My mother may consider herself  
fortunate in getting such a daughter. You such a sister and  
I such a wife - and would not you think Mrs. West fortunate  
now, more than fortunate, could you take part with us  
a few short days - and see the manifestation budding  
and blossoming in her son-in-law. I don't like to boast  
and especially not to you, but I do consider myself as a  
model of a husband - but none of this anon. I am afraid  
some few of the opposite sex might take exceptions to  
this position - I had better be down at the office where  
bright eyes are no constraint, and the diffidence  
of a yielding nature has a respite. Lizzie is near  
me, she looks as she used to. (I must praise her, but she  
should by some mishap read it & get vain. I don't  
want a vain wife). She has her birds, her rose in the  
jar and her numerous flowers out of doors to amuse her -  
her husband to edify her & read books to her when he  
is not about in important duties. She has her duties too  
gives "shopping", makes visits when she can't help it,  
for she prefers home society and makes firings for  
the family. Does she make expense? what an unromantic  
question. This very night she has taken a card covered  
one side with figures most completely, and says this  
will cover my summer fit-out. Good Gracious! that's all.  
We're going to Albany tomorrow. I should like to have  
had a brief account of "Harrowood, the injured  
husband". I cannot reconcile the idea of a man being  
an injured husband, and if being about to pay a visit to

Thomaston. May be in retaliation he too did wrong,  
knocked down the injurer, even with a sword &  
bathing on his wife or some other innocent  
female in his rage (?) I have heard from Lerley  
~~twice~~ twice. He wrote in good spirits & seemed to  
be getting on finely. He says he gains in self-confidence  
which you know he needed much. It is a different thing  
he <sup>intimately</sup> ~~intimately~~ <sup>seemingly</sup> to stand up and plead where he  
now is, where he owns few equals & no superiors in  
knowledge, from what it would be among old heads  
at the East, where you are conscious of people  
that every opinion you advance is being criticized.  
I will be completely annihilated as soon as you  
sit down. But it seems to me if I was a young  
lawyer with a head as large as his, I should be  
apt to despise a weaker enemy - and prefer to  
clash still with the strong and brave, but again  
I will be silent for you understand my privacy.  
You speak of Henry Clay Wood - I would not  
like to go into the army thus, without preparation.  
But he will soon leave, the duties that appertain  
to his particular company. He will meet with  
crooked & irksome duties and hard fare. That  
a West-Printer would not think at all unpleasant,  
and his ignorance of army regulations, tactics, as well  
as of army life, in toto, may cause some of those  
who have been more fortunate to laugh at their  
sleaves at his mistakes & be a little tantalizing to  
a graduate of college - but he is young & experience will



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120 5/20/1855     *From:* Otis [OO Howard]

*To:* Dear Brother [RB  
Howard]

RBH-085

Watervliet Arsenal

*Source:* Bowdoin

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Watervliet Arsenal May 20th 1855

My dear Brother,

I have just finished reading aloud the first volume of Pendennis, when it pops into my head, Rowland ought to have a letter, and as I am quick at acting, especially after "original suggestions" of this kind, here is at you. Your letter was received about a week since, it was welcomed & eagerly read by your admiring brother & sister. Entré-nous, it is one of your sisters weaknesses, in common with cousin Laura to style yourself very much of a man, and I always join them heartily in praises and forebodings of success except when they run antagonistically against my own peculiar weakness and draw comparisons as I in jealous egotism may fancy, to my own disparagement. But you know me of old, and that next to myself even in the regions of talent there is no one that I place above my brother. I presume there is truth and nonsense enough in the above lines, the which extended, would fill one letter, but your kind letter so full of information would be ill repaid & poorly answered. But I cannot write sense or nonsense till I get a new pen.

I was happy to learn that our mother Mrs. W was in so good health, and exhibited that true philosophy of life which makes one conform with a happy heart to all the vagaries of fortune and young people. Again another secret between us. My mother may consider herself fortunate in getting such a daughter, you such a sister and I such a wife, and wouldn't you think Mrs Waite fortunate, nay more than fortunate. Could you take posts with us a few short days and see the mannishness budding and blossoming in her son-in-law. I don't like to boast and especially not to you, but I do consider myself as a model of a husband, but more of this anon. I am afraid some few of the opposite sex might take exceptions to this position. I had better be down at the office where bright eyes are no constraint, and the diffidence of a yielding nature as a respite.

Lizzie is near me, she looks as she used to (I won't praise her, lest she should by some mishap read it & get vain. I don't want a vain wife.) She has her birds, her nose in the jar and her numerous flowers out-of-doors to amuse her, her husband to edify her & read books to her when he is not about important duties. She has her duties too, goes "shopping", makes visits when she can't help it, for she prefers home-society and makes fixings for the family. Does she make expense? What an unromantic question. This very night she has taken a card, covered one side with figures most completely, and says this will cover my summer fit-out. Good gracious!

That's all, we're going to Albany tomorrow. I should like to have had a brief account of "Harvey Rose, the injured husband". I cannot reconcile the idea of a man being an injured husband, and of being about to pay a visit to Thomaston. May be in retaliation he too did wrong, knocked down the injurer, committed assault & battery on his wife or some other innocent female in his rage (?)

I have heard from Perley twice. He wrote in good spirits & seems to be getting on finely. He says he gains in self-confidence which you know he needed much. It is a different thing he intimates to stand up and plead where he now is, where he owns few equals & no superiors in knowledge from what it would be among old heads at the East, where you are conscious or fearful that every opinion you advance is being criticized & will be completely annihilated as soon as you sit down. But it seems to me if I was a young lawyer with a head as large as his, I should be apt to despise a weak enemy and prefer to clash steel with a strong and brave, but again I will be silent for you understand my precocity.

You speak of Henry Clay Wood. I would not like to go into the Army thus, without preparation, but he will soon learn, the duties that appertain to his particular company. He will meet with crosses & irksome duties and hard fare, that a West Pointer wouldn't think at all unpleasant, and his ignorance of Army regulations, tactics, as well as of Army life, in toto, may cause some of those who have been more fortunate to laugh in their sleeves at his mistakes & be a little tantalizing to a graduate of College, but he is young & experience will give him instruction. He will be likely to be general sooner than pauvre moi, but I don't believe he will be so situated as to have a sweet wife this many years.

Politics I don't engage in you know but I am glad to see your zest & earnestness in such things. I look upon



Frank Pierce in a different light from yourself. He has used the Army well, and I can find no material fault with his general administration. If I entered the political arena against him, the whole face of things would be changed, but now I hardly can remember the flaws that are picked. "His Cabinet." Why strange as it may seem they suit me well enough. "Greytown". Why those accounts I believe full of humbug. I have not the least doubt he acted as duty prompted. You think me narrowminded, interested in the Army & nothing more. Oh no. Don't mistake me. I stand above party feeling completely & think upon such matters entirely independent of self-interest. I believe the country will be no worse off at the close of Frank Pierce's administration than at the beginning. Popular sovereignty notwithstanding. I would gladly have you express your opinions freely though I may not be politician enough to answer them.

All are well at home by last accounts. Lizzie has left me for bed. Gives her love to her brother & says no more. I expect she is sleepy. Good night.

Your affectionate brother  
Otis



have never since reasserted their old supremacy.  
My vacation was passed without any special  
religious influences. Nobody seemed to care  
particularly ~~care~~ about these things & doubtless  
Christians did not take that interest <sup>in me</sup>  
that they would have done if I had informed  
them of my state of mind. but I have told  
no one out of college except Charles and  
yourself not even my mother. I have  
attended my Clasp Prayer meetings here  
and mean to continue to do so. Many of  
my Classmates & other friends have seemed  
to take a deep interest in my conversion  
and I know that they feel pained that  
my interest has in any way abated.

I might give you very many reasons  
Frank, beside the above for this decision -  
but I know you do not care to hear them.  
For your answer would be as every Christian  
should - Shall these "things" separate you from  
the love of Christ? You will say, think what  
you lose, and what you are exchanging  
it for! This consideration always staggers me

Bond. Coll. May. 23. 1855

My dear Frank

I don't know but that I  
might as well answer your kind and  
welcome letter while the first impression  
from its perusal is still vivid. About this  
matter of Religion I will tell you frankly  
my past & present impressions & thoughts  
in regard to it. I have had during my life  
several seasons of deep conviction. I have  
felt that I was doing wrong in the sight  
of God and in my own consciousness -  
but I never made known these feelings to  
any one until I was deeply affected  
by a view which was presented in a  
Saturday night's discourse on the folly and  
worthlessness of even the very best & highest  
of earthly goods. The view seemed to me  
a clear one, and the arguments new  
to my mind unanswerable. and from  
thinking of the subject. I was soon led to  
think of myself and to ask myself several



questions which I could not answer without doing violence to my self-respect - I said to myself - If these things are so, why do I act as I do? If the World & Self are so mean and contemptible objects of pursuit, why do I center my whole thoughts in them? If God & His Religion are only worthy of a true man. Why do I ignore them? I say, I cannot answer these questions without injuring my self-respect - for I had to acknowledge that I was that fool & that coward in dealing with these matters that I would be in regard to no others - I did not meet and follow my convictions of Right & Duty in regard to these matters as I did even in regard to the common avocations of life -

I felt ashamed & rebuked & resolved to no longer lead a life that was at variance with such plain principles & reasonable requirements.

After trying to pray (an almost vain attempt) I sought a classmate whom I had always believed to be a humble, sincere, conscientious Christian, and conversed with him on my

own state - I laid open all my feelings and was met with a truly meek & Christian spirit. He talked with me, prayed with me, and I felt a new earnestness in my endeavor - while under his influence. We separated & I conversed with a number of my classmates who professed Religion - I had a very interesting and instructive interview with Prof. Hitchcock. I kept up my habit of frequent prayer and readings of the Bible until I was taken sick - The Dr. said I was very sick - & the sick are proverbially selfish. At any rate my thoughts gradually drew themselves in from God, Religion & Eternity & became more centered in myself, my personal pains, wants, troubles &c. The young man who stayed with me (and he ~~cared~~ cared for me like a brother devoting his whole time and attention to me night & day) was not a praying man - & I felt some diffidence about pursuing my duties in his presence. These things combined led me to neglect them in a measure - I did not as at first feel their obligation & necessity and they



and I resolve anew not to abandon  
the service of God for the mean and  
and pitiful things of the Earth.

What I feel now the most near  
of is a desire for, and a pleasure in  
religious duties. The Bible & Prayer  
seem hard to approach and hard  
to enjoy. so that I feel convinced  
that my heart still craves the  
success & the honors, and is hurried  
in the selfishness of the world.

The daily class prayer meetings are  
to commence soon and I have about  
made up my mind to attend them.

The occurrences of the Term are  
peculiarly distracting. I am probably  
told you that I was up for President  
of the Athenaeum - & this fact and  
my knowledge of society matters -  
with the recent troubles has kept  
me employed all of the time  
lately that was not occupied  
with my studies. If you knew the



high state of feeling which these elec-  
tions excite in college you would  
understand the difficulty of my  
position - but I have pretty much  
concluded today that I will  
find room for my Religion -

I am sorry for the misfortunes of  
your House - and should be more  
sorry for your sake did you not  
seem to look upon the matter as  
regards yourself so calmly and  
philosophically. Easy duties & happy  
hours to you Frank, whenever your  
lot may fall - I have not answered  
much in your letter that I would  
like to - but have filled my sheet with  
the subject in which you manifest  
so much lively interest & real sympathy -  
Have I done right? Had a letter from Alis  
tonight - He speaks of himself as the happy  
husband of a happy wife - considers domestic  
bliss the crowning delight of a mans life - &c.  
Remember me to your friends & always  
thank as your true friend Howard



121 5/23/1855 *From:* Rowland [RB  
Howard]  
RBH-086 Bowd. Coll.

*To:* Dear Frank [Gilman]

*Source:* Bowdoin

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Bowd. Coll. May 23, 1855

My dear Frank

I don't know but that I might as well answer your kind and welcome letter while the first impression from its perusal is still vivid. About this matter of Religion I will tell you frankly my past & present impressions & thoughts in regard to it. I have had during my life several seasons of deep conviction. I have felt that I was doing wrong in the sight of God and in my own consciousness, but I never made known these feelings to anyone until I was deeply affected by a view which was presented in a Saturday nights discourse on the folly and worthlessness of even the very best & highest of Earthly Goods. The view seemed to me a clear one, and the arguments were to my mind unanswerable, and from thinking of the subject, I was soon led to think of myself and to ask myself several questions which I could not answer without doing violence to my self-respect. I said to myself - if these things are so, why do I act as I do? If the World & Self are so mean and contemptible objects of pursuit, why do I center my whole thoughts in them? If God & His Religion are only worthy of a true man, why do I ignore them?

I say, I could not answer these questions without injuring my self-respect, for I had to acknowledge that I was that fool & that coward in dealing with these matters that I would be in regard to no others. I did not meet and follow my convictions of Right & Duty in regard to these matters as I did even in regard to the common avocations of life.

I felt ashamed & rebuked & resolved to no longer lead a life that was at variance with such plain principles & reasonable requirements. After trying to pray (an almost vain attempt) I sought a classmate whom I had always believed to be a humble, sincere, conscientious Christian, and conversed with him on my own State. I laid open all my feelings and was met with a truly meek & Christian spirit. He talked with me, prayed with me, and I felt a new earnestness in my endeavor, while under his influence. We separated & I conversed with a number of my Classmates who professed religion. I had a very interesting and instructive interview with Prof. Hitchcock.

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My vacation was passed without any special religious influences. Nobody seemed to care particularly about these things & doubtless Christians did not take that interest in me that they would have done if I had informed them of my state of mind, but I have told no one out of College except Charles and yourself not even my mother. I have attended my class prayer meetings here and mean to continue to do so. Many of my classmates & other friends have seemed to take a deep interest in my conversion and I know that they feel pain that my interest has in any way abated.

I might give you very many reasons, Frank, beside the above for this declension, but I know you do not care to hear. For your answer would be as every Christian should. Shall these "things" separate you from the love of Christ"? You will say, think what you lose, and what you are exchanging it for! This consideration always staggers me and I resolve anew not to abandon the service of God for the mean and pitiful things of the Earth.

What I feel now the most want of, is a desire for, and a pleasure in religious duties. The Bible & Prayer seem hard to approach and hard to enjoy, so that I feel convinced that my heart still craves the success & the honors, and is buried in the selfishness of the World.

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Athanaean & this fact and my knowledge of society matters, with the recent troubles has kept me employed all of the time lately that was not occupied with my studies. If you knew the high state of feeling which these elections excite in College you would understand the difficulty of my position, but I have pretty much concluded today that I will find room for my Religion.

I am sorry for the misfortunes of your house, and should be more so for your sake did you not seem to look upon the matter as regards yourself so calmly and philosophically. Easy duties & happy hours to you Frank, wherever your lot may fall. I have not answered much in your letter that I would like to, but have filled my sheet with the subject in which you manifest so much lively interest & real sympathy. Have I done right? Had a letter from Otis tonight. He speaks of himself as a happy husband of a happy wife, considers domestic bliss the crowning delight of a man's life &c.

Remember me to your friends & always Frank as your true friend.

Howard