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Gilmore, Eliza OH (Mother), 11/13/1853

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West Point N.Y. Nov. 13th 53.

My dear Mother,

It has been a very long time since I have heard from you - Rowland says the same. I hope indeed you have not been prevented from writing by sickness, and yet I fear such is the case. I never have learned whether you received the copy of my oration or my subsequent letter - but this was not occasioned any delay on my part in writing - I write whenever I can get an opportunity. I have just finished answering a letter to Rowland and have yet one from Charlie unanswered. For the past weeks I have had more than I could do in the day time & have worked nights - three or four times till eleven & twelve o'clock. I got behind hand in my Engineering drawings for two reasons - one that I have to draw slowly & another that I made some mistakes after I had been some time at work & had the pleasure of rubbing out & beginning again. I have had a hard time this year. My instructor a peculiar sort of a man, choleric, arbitrary and passionate has not taken a fancy to me. This with my own peculiar failing, excitability has quite ruined my good standing, that I have reached by dint of industry & hard labor. It is somewhat discouraging, - but his jurisdiction will not last long. I have come back from recitation wholly unbettered for study for an

hour or more. Since I have been a member of this institution
I have invariably been treated with the consideration due a
gentleman, and it is something new to me to have a snow
break in upon me, hurt my feelings & totally unfit me
for my recitation. Others take such things coolly & with
apparent indifference, but as I cannot do it there is little
use in trying. I tell you this that you may understand
why I stand so badly in Engineering. I wish I could leave
but I am now so nearly through I shall endeavor to stick
it out to the end. Capt Smith has the Mexican ^{diarrhea} ~~diarrhea~~
& the dyspepsia, and these physical discowptions react upon
his mind - but I am sorry that this should cause him
to fall on me. Sometimes he goes to the opposite extreme
and is so kind that I get vexed at him. We are now
drawing what are called "stone cutting problems" - drawing
arches - Cloistered - Groined & single arches - such as are
built of Stone - We have no book on the subject - but take
our description from the mouth of our instructor & then
go to our rooms & make the drawings & bring them in the
next day to recite on them. It would be pretty work if
it did not take so long to make them - besides these
we recite in Geology & Kent's international law alternately.
I told you the other dy we were drawing Canal Locks - One
of these I finished - It took me about five weeks - the
second I have got about half done - I spend every leisure
moment on this - Our studies never were more useful
than those we have now - and I get my lessons just as

well as when I stood at the head of my class. I will come out bright yet, so do not be discouraged for me. I will tell you some other time perhaps in my next letter, some other things that have had a bad effect on my standing. We had an Episcopal service to day at the Chapel by Dr Kipp - Bishop of California (recently appointed there). His son is in the fourth class. He delivered a beautiful sermon to young men from the text "that they should glory in their shame".

There seems ~~to me~~ to be a little too much stress laid on the form in the Episcopal service to suit me - but after all it is very solemn & if one engages in it with the proper spirit, I should think the effect would be impressive & beneficial. I have taken cold lately by drawing in my room without my coat. I must not do it any more - though it is easier - gives more freedom to my arms. I am otherwise very well in good health & always in good spirits except after Capt Smith & myself have had a little time.

Give my love to Belle & Charlie, for I believe they are both with you by this time. If you are unwell & not able to write - Charlie must tell me - Lizzie's health has been far from good - she has been scarcely able to write me a letter since her return. Tell Charlie to sit down when he has time & write her a long cheerful letter.

I like my room-mate very much. He is not an extraordinary scholar, but he is always the same, mild cheerful & affectionate & peculiarly forgetful of self. You ought to know

Rime. He is what I call a perfect gentleman in the
true sense of the term. He denied himself the
pleasure of going home to Alabama because his
mother (who is a widow) had not the thought, enough
to spare to defray his expenses - so he took what
little was allowed him & went to Vermont with
his roommate little Casson. We make of each other
the perfect confidants - scarcely concealing any of our
thoughts & consequently live very happily together - I
never have been in the slightest degree impatient with
him and it would be against his nature to be so
with anybody. - How does father do - and ~~Paula~~ Rebecca
Alger? I should like to drop in upon you this
winter - and sit once more by the cheerful fire - or
sit at the no less cheerful board - I cannot have
the pleasure however, so soon - but it will not be
very long before I shall return to you. Be cheerful
my dear Mother & happy - as you trust in God you
may not be otherwise, and you & Charlie may be
happier now that you are linked still closer by this
new relation. Tell Charlie if he wishes to discuss
particular passages of Scripture with me - or ask my opinion
on any that does not seem clear to him - I am happy to
do so - give my opinion or consider his - Give my love to
all - to Uncle Ensign's family - Aunt Aurelia's Aunt Lucretia's
John Harrison's &c &c - I am as ever your very
Affectionate Son
O. D. Howard