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Howard, Charles (Brother), 10/24/1857

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Some of Howard's
letters preserved
by his mother
1885

West Point N. Y.
October 24th 1857.

My dear Brother,

It is now five weeks
or will be tomorrow night since we arrived here
and I haven't written you a line. But we have
not approximated independence till now. We
commenced housekeeping yesterday afternoon. Our
affairs or "chords" as you please are still in a
state of confusion, but leave Sizzie to herself &
we shall soon have regularity. Last night four
of us "bundled" in our small 3/4 Bed & will be obliged to
try the same game tonight. Still, I say, we are comparatively
independent. I have got a table (even if it is also
our imp-table) to write on instead of a creeping stand.
We have got ten rooms, even if they are not much larger
than your board-chamber, instead of one narrow one filled
with two beds, a wardrobe, a cradle, a bureau &c. &c.
We sit down to eat at a private table. Sizzie's face
beams with smiles opposite & Guy is happy to be
restored to his high chair & a place at Mama's left
hand. We can have our blessing & our morning & evening
prayer undisturbed. We were content & happy at the
Hotel, & reasoning from the above-mentioned increase
of comfort & convenience I think we shall be happy
here. As the history of a day is the miniature history of

a lifetime. I will favor you with a brief account of
today. Arose a little past six, renewed the fires in the grates
after partially closing - ^{before} finished closing - studied a little "read"
baby till 7. breakfasted with Sizzie - read a chapter in James
with the notes & instructions of Edwards connected therewith -
went to recitation at 8 - heard the 3^d section recite on the
Binomial formula till 1/2 past 9. heard the 4th section from
1/2 past 9 till eleven - went to the post office - thence to the
post, got my news paper, returned to the cottage - made
out my section reports for the week embracing everything
but tomorrow's marks & the total. (This letter is taken down
by the forelock); dined at one, after dinner went to study
St. Thompson on some business, returned to cottage about
four. went shopping with Sizzie to the Sutter's store till
dark. returned. played with the children, had tea at 6 -
have been closing up accounts since. Spent some time
in perusing an old diary of Sizzie's, now am writing this
letter. Since I have been here I have read generally three
times a day in the Bible, morning noon & evening. I
had prayers, but now that we can call upon the
name of the Lord at the dinner table. I think I will
read chapters in the Bible only morning (after breakfast) & evening -
before retiring for the night. On Sundays I am superintendent
of a little Sunday School. On Wednesday evenings I lecture to
the soldiers who will come & others on the subject of religion - the
minister being gone, I read a sermon on "Religion in Common
Life" last Sunday night at the little Church. This little
Church is a building built near the houses & quarters of
of the soldiers. It is used by the Catholics for Mass in the morning

and by us for Sunday school in the afternoon - & by the
Methodists for preaching in the evening. After lecture Wednes-
day nights we close or intend to by a prayer meeting. The
first night appointed, we had but ten souls all told
but last Wednesday night, the house was nearly full. I
don't know all the notions of those who come, but I
trust the Spirit of God influences them. There is one
poor fellow at the Soldier's Hospital who will
live but a few days longer, but I never been able
to see that he cares whether he is reconciled to God or
not. I did visit him quite constantly - but lately I
have been less frequently. I have rather been in hopes
that he would wish to see me & send for me. I
shall try to see him tomorrow. My dear Christian
you can form the above from some idea of what
we have been doing here. I find abundant exercise for
Christian requisites, as patience, cheerfulness, love, justice
constant self-control, in the recitation room. How do we know
that we know him if we keep his commandments. It matters
little what our duties are - they will call into requisition
the Christian motive; if our heart is right with God &
we will find that we are growing in grace. If we do
these duties with fervency of Spirit, with diligence &
faithfulness serving the Lord. It is ten o'clock & as I
have duties for the morrow, I must close. I am sorry
not to cover the next page - Peter after an so far
as to fill a letter about yourself I write soon - The children
are nice. Jay talks quite plainly, is fat & heavy - Baby can
laugh & pull my whiskers - Lizzie says come; & good night from
Yr aff. Brother - Ohs