Conway, Maine
November 14, 1846

My dear Eugene,

I wonder what has become of you this long time: have you
forgotten that you have a brother at

On the contrary, have you forgotten how to write? I Hope not. I am sure for
I should be very sorry not to receive

You may suppose that I don’t take much
pleasure in reading what you have to tell

But you are mistaken. For not only do
I feel a great interest in everything you write about, but like to hear from you for another
reason. I think that a correspondence (as
another word for this means) conducted with
care is very improving. It not only gives
a young person the habit of expressing him
self with ease and elegance, but is of greater importance to teach him to arrange
his ideas with clearness and conciseness.
(You see that I have to use big words some-
times, but when they are explained to you,
it you needn’t think their meaning it will be to

Some persons are very apt to contradict
sometimes obstinately, the opinions of other


olders, on subjects about which they really have no fixed views of their own; but on the contrary, an hour after they have been hotly arguing on one side of a question are as bitterly disputing with some else on the opposite side. Now a great deal of this arises from self-conceit, and a fondness for controversy, and still more from a want of acquaintance with their subject, and ignorance of their own inconsistency. A good person with this habit often torments himself very foolishly disagreeable, as I know well, and nobody attaches any weight to his opinions; but I shall lay to his conscience Opinions. You see, then, how important it is to cultivate a different habit of mind; to learn to obey the old maxim, if you think it wise, think twice before you think once; that is, in other words, of learning to think well. Now, I think, that the best way to do this is to write a good deal, not for the purpose of stringing together big words without any meaning, but because in writing you are much more careful what you say than in speaking, and if you contradict yourself, you can't avoid seeing it, and this will make you still more cautious in future. If you thus acquire the habit of writing of reflect well on what you say, and
of express, yourself modestly, the same habit will show you in consideration, and you will cease to be enviable or disrespectfully. One of the greatest reasons that our lives were to well acquainted with the favorable influence of a modest manner, that he, were (except perhaps, on occasion) a nation against the treaty of Palatine, which, you will, I hope, some day, come to speak before a number of people, without an appearance of difference. This is very remarkable kind of advice, but you must try to understand it; and take it for what it is worth.

I need to write you with me at this moment, but I am very glad you are not with me here. A small rain in the tent, with a heavy thunder and a beating rain, would make your bones ache before morning, and a good while after. Now let anybody persuade you to be a soldier, for although, he might say to my cook who persists in putting onions in my soup, it's all very good for those that like them, yet I'm sure you are not one of them. There is a lad 15 yrs. of age, whom the volunteer officers were cruel enough to enlist. Her constitution is too weak to endure the hardships and exposures of a Campaign, and he has been sent to the Hospital with a chronic affection of the bowels, which is deadly but barely dragging him towards the grave.
I have exhausted all the means at my command to save, and am endeavouring to get his discharge, that he may go home and die in the arms of his mother. Poor boy, I fear that he will never see her again, owing to the culpable neglect of his captain, who has delayed furnishing certain papers, without which we cannot let him go—a very little longer and it will be too late. It is a very fine thing to see soldiers marching with colours flying and drums beating; the noise of cannon and musketry is certainly very musical, and the smell of gunpowder remarkably pleasant on Buck Hill. But on the field of battle there is a kind of music not so pleasant; it whizzes close to your ears, and carries the lips off your next door neighbour, or may be, it lips off one of your own lips. Now you need not desire anything of this kind; it is far better to spend a life devoted to the service of God, the interests of humanity, and to regard with horror the sufferings of man with his fellow creature. It is true that though War is an evil, it is an necessary attendant upon The Constitution of Society, and that mankind, not as individuals, but as a body, is responsible, when it is unjustly engaged in. It is also true that God bestows different talents upon his creatures: one man from his
exemplary character, and foreseen talents, may
be worthy of entering the Ministry: another
seems to have an intuitive perception of
and a ready adaptation of its proper remedy; such
as one as a Physician, may do much by the
help of God. To alleviate. The sufferings. In making
the life of his fellow Man: again, another
seems born to command Armies; he quickly
comprehends, the principles of Strategy, his charac-
ter is full of energy, and he is sensible of his
ability, under God, to gain great triumphs.
Would men gifted with such talents withdraw,
for some reason, from our armies, great results
would never be obtained in a campaign or battle;
and wars would consequently be greatly pro-
tracted; the actual amount of Mischief, that any
people incurred, in the scale of civilization;
heavy national debts contracted, to bear upon
future generations, and settle all the interests
of that State: And to conclude, indelible
feelings of animosity, engendered by alternate
triumphs and defeats, stretching through a long series
of years would be terminated at last only by some
instance, the interference of foreign powers
in the complete extinction of one of the contending
powers... What under such circumstances,
would be the acknowledged chief of a Man?
influenced by considerations external, but a sincere
philanthropy? It certainly seems to me that,
If the road were open, he should step forward, trusting in God to direct and bless his efforts, and by the exercise of his superior abilities, aid his country’s foe, and restore to his exhausted people the long desired peace. With this view it is that sincere Christians engage in these struggles, which are certainly contrary to the spirit of their religion. Yet being sometimes unavoidable, have been on more than one occasion commanded by God Himself. Some of the most eminent Christians that have our land, and the greatest benefactors of mankind were soldiers. Moses, Joshua, David, and many others are mentioned in the Old Testament; two Centurions in the New; and a multitude of devoted servers of God in more modern times; both in national armies and among those who defended their religion with their lives against the persecutions of Romanism or Semi-Romanism; thus we have the Hugenots, the Encanters; the so-called Round-Heads or Presbyterian, who, whatever the subsequent faults and follies of their ambitious leaders, under the guidance of pure men like Hampden, overthrew tyranny; established a toleration of every religion which, in its own declarations, was not inconsistent with the continuance of their own doctrines; from the highest, and to conclude, raised England to a greater height of glory, prosperity, and to a more enviable
...her relations with foreign powers than she had ever known before, and, in the latter respect, at least equal to what she has ever attained. Since I find, my dear brother, that in my *enquiries* I have wandered much farther than I had intended, and have carried you a little beyond your depth. As regards my defence of the military profession do not misunderstand my object. I would not for the world render it attractive to you, but a fear you, from my knowledge of your character and disposition, that you would find nothing to interest or gratify you in any way; on the contrary you would be cut off from every source of enjoyment exposed to dreadful temptations, thrown among uncomradly companions, and, unless your constitution be very strong, broken down by hard fare, disturbed rest, unhealthy climates, frequent exposures. Speak this freely at length on this subject, for fear lest the preponderant excitement, and the fact of my being in the Army, might have turned your attention in that direction; if it has, I beg you think no more of it, for, as I know you well, even at a much earlier age than yours, if a strong bent in that particular direction is given to the inclinations, it may continue through life a source of constant chagrin and disappointment, where gratification is impossible. For myself, I thank the Almighty that I am
Learning to feel more and more cheerful, I now redouble his dispensations, and to desire the further fulfillment of my plans and expectations only in so far as they may accord with the Spirit will hereafter be without the aid of the Holy Spirit. God only knows how dreadfully would be the impatience and rebellion of my wicked heart. By the way, on this very subject I wrote a short essay on truth, and I am tempted to say to another, to show her how, in the absence of religious service or reading, I manage to spend a portion of the Lord’s day.

I was glad to learn that your hearing was some what improved. I introduced a sultan into a soldier’s road for a chronic affection of the ear, and expect to perform the same operation on another tomorrow for disease of the brain. I lately applied the mora to a man for hip joint disease—better will remember. The application of it to Rodin in the Wandering Jew—an exaggerated description—I can’t say exactly how my patient felt, but I know that the heat of blowing the fire was quite enough to put me in a distressing perspiration. He has much relieved by the operation. Tell Sister Mary that I am thankful enough to believe anything she tells me, appearance to the contrary notwithstanding. I forgot whether I acknowledged the receipt of her letter from Alexandria. How did it happen that she did not acknowledge the receipt of $268. until two or three days after? Write to me soon a letter, my dear little brother, give my love to all, I believe one go affectionately, 

Lizzy 21st.
I have been expecting Mr. Newton
for that. I have been mistaken.
There are two vacancies among
the surgeons, but until one
applies there is nothing.
No vacancy among the surgeons
before promotion and examination
required, and as the officers entitled
to promotion are in the field now and cannot
step before this can be done. It is possible, however, that
at once without examination
she has not yet left town and asked him if he may come to bring a
request for medical
surgeon, doctor of medicine, and student in medicine.
Paid $20

Master Eugene M. Prentice

Care of Andrew M. Prentice

Philadelphia