Dear Cousin,

I must ask your pardon for not replying to your last letter much sooner. Do not think, however, that my long delay in writing is the result of mean carelessness or neglect, as such, is far from the truth. My real reason for not being as prompt as usual is that ever since the reception of your letter we have been reviewing our entire course of studies preparatory to our examination, which will commence...
on the first of next month
and continue until near
the close of the month, and
until yesterday our time has
been taken up with that part
of my studies, which my
classmates learned while I
was detained in the hospital
during the beginning of the
present term, who lecture
being twice as long as review
as when they were first given
out and being new to me I
was compelled to study almost
night and day to make up
for lost time, but everything
must have a beginning and an
end, so had this, we are now
in a comparatively easy part
of our studies and I again have
time to devote to my correpon-
dents. In my recent letter I gave
that no change whatever was
in my post-foul correspondence
made, or even is, in our bill

for the same reason that
I just gave you, but to-day I
have begun the pleasant task of
writing to you, dear Cousin. I am
in accordance with my own
inclinations I concluded
to let my fair Cousin be the
first of my correspondents
to whom I would write.

How Augustus do you fancy
togive me for not writing
letters? or must I say perfec-
tion, some task or finding
some punishment as
an atonement for any offense.

You asked me in your letter
what I intended to do on "Thank-
ying day" and if our bill of fare
would not be better than usual
at

the last question I answer-
dents. I have several letters this
morning that were turn over to me
made, or even is, in our bill.
Of late, except on Christmas and New Year's day when we have a slight improvement. As the "day" is passed, instead of telling you what I intend to do I will tell you what I did. During the day I attended to my studies and recreation the same as on other days but having been invited to a ball that was given in a little town a few miles down the "Hudson" I in company with some of my comrades concluded to go, but do not imagine that we intended to go with the consent of the Commandant and other authorities because we never have permission to go beyond a half mile from our "Barracks" we had to be in our rooms and in bed at precisely ten o'clock at night as at all other nights, as at that time.
an officer enters our room with a dark lantern to see that we are all present, but because we are so in bed at ten o'clock is no reason why we should remain there until sensible (6 o'clock) so, as soon as the officer left our rooms we hastily arose and insisted on wearing our uniforms as we are required at all times to do under a heavy penalty in case we do not, we arrayed ourselves in plain citizen's dress, in order to present recognition by an officer, and to enable us to elude the vigilance of the sentinels. The passed and who would not notice us in the dark as easily?
We had worn our uniforms before leaving our room. We had to place something in our beds resembling in size and form a funeral sleeping bag. This was necessary in case the officers would inspect our rooms during our absence, as it is frequently done during the night after having completed our preparations. We started for the "hall" a few minutes before midnight, reached home a few minutes before reveille. Changes in our citizens drill for our uniforms were thus safe, but I was in poor humor for hard study during the next day yet. I had to be done.

And under the circumstances, I was almost (but not quite) sorry that I had gone to the ball. Such was the way I passed "Thanksgiving night." If I did not observe Thanksgiving day instead of a "Thanksgiving dinner," I had a "Thanksgiving" dinner.

Are you fond of dancing? You ask me what scarce I know this winter. I am studying "Natural Philosophy," embracing "Mechanics of Solids," "Fluids," and "Molecules." I also take instructions in Drawing and Painting. I do this every other afternoon from two until four. Of the Languages I study French and Spanish. I will finish French the first of next month and shall finish Spanish the coming May. I take lessons...
in riding every day, this I enjoy very much. I will finish the branch of Nat. Philosophy when I now have the first of next month, then I shall take up the study of Astronomy, Optics, and Mechanics in its stead. I finished the entire course of Mathematics last June hereafter I shall only have the application of them to deal with our recitations in Philosophy and all similar branches continue one hour and a half, in the languages one hour, drawing and painting two hours, riding one hour. Infantry drill one hour and a half, sword exercise one hour. I am glad that you do not endure the sentiments of Giddings. I suppose I have written enough for one time. Remember me to your parents and please do not ask I have done but write soon and I will do better in future. Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy 

— Signature