

ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
BOARD OF VISITORS  
TO THE  
United States Military Academy  
MADE TO  
Congress and the Secretary of War,  
FOR  
THE YEAR 1823.



# 1823.

ROBERT PATTERSON, ESQ. REPORT AS ONE OF THE BOARD OF VISITORS. JUNE 30TH, 1823.

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TO THE HONOURABLE JOHN C. CALHOUN,  
*Secretary of War:*

The undersigned appointed a member of the "Board of Visitors" to attend the annual general examination of the Cadets at West Point, which commenced on Monday the 2nd day of June, instant, respectfully reports—That the course of studies, instructions, and distribution of time as prescribed in a Book of Regulations containing the 78th Article of the General Regulations of the Army, with some additional "Regulations" published in 1823 and approved by the War Department, is faithfully adhered to in the Science of Artillery and Sword exercise.

#### IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE OF WAR.

The theory is well understood; the studies prescribed are carefully observed and faithfully and ably taught. The examination on this branch was very interesting and gratifying. The pupils manifested a degree of intelligence and observation exceedingly satisfactory; but it must be observed that a thorough knowledge of the Science of War and Engineering cannot be acquired without practice.

It would be very useful to the Cadets at West Point if a Modeller or ingenious Cabinet Maker, was attached to the establishment; it would enable the Professors of Engineering to illustrate occasionally the manner of constructing Bridges, Field Works, &c., also to shew models of Machinery used in Civil and Military Architecture, Mines, &c. The additional expense would be but trifling compared with the advantages. To enable the Graduates from West Point to complete their Military education, I would beg leave to recommend the establishment of a School of Practice, under the superintendence of an able and experienced Engineer, where Field Works could be built and demolished before the eye of the pupil, enabling him merely to witness the advantages of works of peculiar construction; and to discover the actual effects of Sapping, Mining, and Cannonading, and to render him competent to select the best means of attack and defence under any circumstances in which he may be placed hereafter.

The Plain of West Point is too confined for the establishment of a School of Practice, the range and effects of Field Artillery could not be exemplified fully, nor is their sufficient space for the construction of

Works; besides I should apprehend the great interest excited by the experiments would attract the attention of the young pupils from their proper studies; should such a School as I have recommended be established, it would be well to locate it at or near some Fort or Garrison; where the services of two or three Companies of Artillery could be had to aid the Cadets; very much to the advantage of both in constructing and demolishing the Works.

#### CHEMISTRY APPLIED TO THE ARTS AND MINERALOGY.

The examination on this branch was also very satisfactory. The Classes appeared to have faithfully studied the text book, the course of studies in this Science was a proper reference to its application to the Arts; more especially those essentially connected with the Military profession. It affords the undersigned pleasure to bear testimony to the talents, acquirements and industry of the Teachers, and Taught in this department.

#### GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY, AND MORAL SCIENCE.

The examination on more important branches, gives proofs of considerable application and proficiency, the Professor is very competent and assiduous, but I would recommend closer application on the part of the *Pupils* and a better knowledge of the American continent, than was shewn by some of them during the examination.

#### NATURAL AND EXPERIMENTAL PHILOSOPHY AND ASTRONOMY.

Is very ably and faithfully taught; the theories and principles are well understood, and the practical illustrations afforded satisfactory evidence of the most successful attention to this valuable branch; it would perhaps be well, if the experimental demonstrations, were afforded more frequently to the Pupils, with the Instruments in the Apparatus Room. The examination in this branch was very rigid and close and afforded conclusive evidence, of the ability and zeal of the Teachers, and of the application and talents of the pupils.

#### DRAWING.

In this department specimens were shewn the Board that reflect much credit on the Professor, and the young gentlemen under his Tuition; Drawing is an elegant accomplishment for a gentleman, and an useful one for a soldier.

#### MATHEMATICKS.

The undersigned cannot refrain from expressing his entire approbation of the manner in which this branch is taught. The examination was exceedingly close and unsparing, the result satisfactory in the highest degree, the Teachers and students in this department have sustained their reputation very fully.

## FRENCH.

The French Language is taught as prescribed; the classes read correctly, and translated freely and accurately; the pronunciation of some of the Students is deficient, enough is learned and understood for Military purposes, qualifying the Student to avail himself of the ablest Military works, which are principally to be found in that Language, for it must be admitted that the French under Napoleon, were something like a century ahead of every other nation in the art and science of War.

## SCIENCE OF ARTILLERY.

This department does not appear to be conducted according to the regulations prescribed. The Regulations require that the Captain or Commanding Officer of Artillery, stationed at West Point shall be the Instructor of Artillery. This regulation is very objectionable, as it may not always happen that the senior Officer of Artillery stationed at the Academy, should be a man of *Science* or *experience* or fitted to communicate instruction, and the liability to change renders it still more defective. It will be admitted by all military men, that the Artillery is a very important limb of an Army, that in very many cases the success of a Corps depends on the science, skill and experience of the Officers of this species of troops. Now if this be the case, and I am sure it will not be disputed; it follows that no expense or pains should be spared and every exertion made to place the Officers of Artillery on the most elevated footing, in point of information. I would therefore beg leave to recommend that a skillful, scientific and experienced Artillerist be selected and stationed *permanently* at West Point, as Instructor of Artillery, and Professor of the Science. At present the Assistant Instructor of Tactics is Instructor of Artillery, he appears to be a very attentive and intelligent young gentlemen and it is not intended by the foregoing observation to cast any reflection on him, on the contrary great personal respect is felt towards the Instructor, the observations are made solely with a view of calling the attention of the Secretary of War, to existing facts, with the opinion of the undersigned relative to those facts.

The Park of Artillery is kept on the open Plain, exposed to the sun and rain, the wood work of the pieces is very much dilapidated, and none fit for actual service unless remounted; it is very desirable that a Gun-House should be erected, such an establishment would not cost much, and would be real economy in the end.

## PRACTICAL MILITARY INSTRUCTION.

The course of Infantry Instruction is very perfect in strict conformity with the system adopted by Congress and the War Department for the Army of the United States, commencing very properly with the Elementary drill of the soldier, continuing with the School of the Company;

School of the Battalion, and a proper knowledge of the Evolutions of the Line. "The exercise and Manœuvres of Light Infantry and Riflemen, the duties in Camp and Garrison of Privates, Non-Commissioned Officers and Officers including Guard and Police" are also properly explained and well understood; the Cadets are required in succession to drill the Battalion and perform such manœuvres as the Instructor may direct, to state the utility of such movements and what manœuvre or manœuvres would be most advantageous to counteract and defeat certain operations of the enemy, from or on any given point, all of which they must perfectly understand themselves and be able to explain to others.

Such a course of Instruction must necessarily qualify each Cadet who passes the *final Ordeal* for any subordinate station to which he may be appointed in the Army, and with the light of experience render him competent to fill with honor to himself and advantage to his country, the more responsible stations to which he may hereafter be called.

#### SWORD EXERCISES.

The Sword is the Officers peculiar weapon, his instrument of attack and defence, and although he may not often be required to use it in strife, yet a thorough knowledge of its value and importance, in personal rencountres and engagements, and the most Scientific and efficacious mode of applying it, is considered an indispensable requisite to an accomplished gentleman and professional soldier. It is therefore with regret the undersigned makes known to the Honourable Secretary that in his opinion, the Students are miserably deficient in their knowledge of this exercise, it was painful to witness the loose and irregular manner in which the Pupils were taught, the little they do know appears to be more the result of personal application and frequent practice, than a regular system of instruction. Let it however be observed, in justice to the Students, that the sword Master does not appear to be competent to his duties. If he understands the scientific part of his profession he either cannot or does not explain it to his pupils, nor is the general appearance and deportment of the Sword Master exactly as it ought to be; let it also be observed that the Broad Sword Exercise (certainly very important to all mounted officers) is not taught in the Academy although the regulations positively require it. The undersigned inspected the Arms, Accoutrements, Quarters, &c., of the Cadets, and found them in a very neat and soldierlike condition, great attention is paid to personal cleanliness among the Cadets as well in their Barracks and Mess Rooms as on parade. The Mess rooms were examined during, before, and at eating hours, the provisions were abundant, of exceeding good quality and well prepared. The Mess regulations are very good and properly observed, it was gratifying to observe the uniform good order, regularity and decorum that prevailed in going to and returning, and remaining at the Mess House.

Immediately adjoining the public ground at West Point, is a tract of land with several buildings on it, the property of a Mr. Gridly, who resides there and is licensed as an Inn-keeper. His proximity to the Public Building, and the easiness of access to his premises affords so strong an inducement to violate the orders of the Superintendent against his house; it is true the penalties are severe and certain disgrace awaits the detected offender; but as the Government have it in their power to remove this dangerous neighbour, it ought to be done; we have the divine injunction before us "Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil." The tract of ground with the buildings thereon owned by Gridly could be bought for about \$12,000 and would give the Government possession of the entire plain from Mountain to River and completely exclude from the Post all persons not subject to the orders or control of the Superintendent.

An Hospital is much wanted at West Point, the health, comfort and convenience of the place renders it necessary that a house for the reception of the sick should be provided. Should the Government conclude to purchase Gridly's tract, the house he now occupies, would be extremely well calculated for that purpose.

The undersigned examined the clothing furnished the cadets; the quality is good and the prices moderate. The Post Adjutant and Quartermaster's books are kept with great regularity and neatness.

There is a store kept on the plain near the barracks, for the use of the Cadets, where they can procure such articles as are necessary for their comfort and convenience, the amount to be deducted from their pay as it becomes due. This establishment is subject to the control of the Superintendent, who appoints semi-annually a committee of Officers, who assess the prices to be charged for most of the articles to be sold, and the storekeeper is required to put a list of prices thus affixed in a conspicuous place in his store, and charge in conformity; this arrangement is an excellent one, enabling the young gentlemen at the Academy to procure such articles as are wanted for their convenience without difficulty; but as this storekeeper is secured a monopoly and the payment guaranteed, there should be a corresponding moderation in the profits charged; the undersigned examined carefully the goods kept for sale in this store, noted the original value or cost at New York or Philadelphia, and the retail prices at West Point; also the amount sold, and money received in a year, and it appeared to him that the profit on many articles was enormously great and the average profit entirely too much. In making the foregoing observations the undersigned wishes it to be distinctly understood as not casting any reflection on the Gentlemen who have regulated the prices, as it cannot be expected they were sufficiently acquainted with the value of goods to enable them to correct the Storekeeper's prices; and what might appear to them very trifling might wear a different aspect to

a man accustomed to close money calculations, as well as to the Cadets who have to pay it; this is noticed with a view to prevent dissatisfaction in the Institution, and misrepresentation and excitement among the friends of the Pupils out of it.

The police and internal organization of the Institution is admirable in all its details, reflecting great credit on the accomplished and intelligent gentleman who has been so happily selected to preside over it, the system of reward and punishment is excellent, placing the names of the most distinguished and intelligent on the head of the merit rolls, and reporting the smallest irregularities on the rolls of conduct; it is a system of Military control and scholastic excitement productive of the best effects such as no other Institution in this country unconnected with the Military establishment can possess. I consider the Academy at West Point to destroy the sectional feelings and local jealousies, that at present disgrace every part of our country and are a source of regret to all good men of all parties. The Students at West Point are selected from all parts of the Union; and in all probability will be as widely spread when they leave there, will form Friendships and attachments that will last through life; and when they leave there, will go with kindlier and better feelings towards each other and the rest of their fellow citizens they may come in contact with; their feelings and opinions will be national not sectional; and their political and moral influence will be used among their friends and connections, to destroy the Hydra of Disunion and sectional jealousies.

Much misrepresentation has gone abroad on the subject of expenses of the Institution, and the cost of educating the Cadets, much has been said on the floor of Congress too, of the extravagance and waste of the Public money at this place. Such charges caused the undersigned to examine closely the manner of administering the Pecuniary concerns of the Institution and from documents to ascertain the actual expenditures, and it affords him much pleasure to state that there is nothing like waste or profusion; everything is conducted on the most economical and systematic plan, and that including pay and all incidental charges, the average cost to the Government of each Cadet, that has graduated and joined the army under the present administration, is one-third less than under any former one, and not more than one-half what it was in the early days of the Institution. Great credit is justly due to the War Department for the internal economy and good arrangements of the establishment, also to the Superintendent and other Officers for seconding so fully the views of their Chief.

The undersigned would beg leave respectfully to recommend an increase of the number annually received for Instruction; whether they are wanted for the Army or not; it would be of immense advantage to the country to have spread over its face a number of men, possessed of correct Military knowledge, at all times a source of reference and informa-

tion to the Officers of Volunteers and Militia, and in the event of a war competent to take a responsible command in any new corps necessary to be raised, nor would their services be confined to the Military only;—the Graduates from West Point, possess great acquirements as Civil Engineers Chemists and Mathematicians, qualified to superintend the construction of Canals and other public improvements so extensively opening in various sections of the Union.

The undersigned looks forward with pride and exultation to the advantages to be derived from the pure patriotic spirit, exertions and intelligence of the Graduates from West Point; in private life, in the Army and in the Senate Chamber, maintaining our national honor and reputation; and developing and bringing into action, the natural and artificial advantages and resources of our Country.

All which is respectfully submitted.

(Signed) ROBT. PATTERSON,

Philadelphia, June 30, 1823.

PHILADELPHIA, July 10th, 1823.

SIR:

Herewith I have the honor to forward you a report of my observations on the present state of the Military Academy at West Point, with such suggestions for the improvement of the Institution as appears to be necessary at the present moment.

In making my observations and suggestions, I have felt the full weight of the responsibility I was under to you Sir; to the Institution and to my Country; and have endeavoured to place before you as far as my abilities and opportunities would allow, a clear, full, and impartial view, of the present state of the Academy.

If I have been able to throw any light or information on the subject, and my exertions meet your approbation; I shall feel peculiarly gratified. Be pleased Sir to acknowledge the receipt of the enclosed Documents.

I have the honor to be, Sir, With great respect,  
Your most Ob't. Serv't,

(Signed) ROBT. PATTERSON.

To the Hon. JOHN C. CALHOUN,  
Secretary of War, Washington.

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GEN'L GEORGE IZARD'S  
REPORT AS ONE OF THE BOARD OF VISITORS AT WEST POINT,  
JUNE 14TH, 1823.

PHILADELPHIA, June 14th, 1823.

THE HONOURABLE  
THE SECRETARY OF WAR.

SIR:

Conformably with the invitation which I had the honor to receive from you, I have attended the examination of the Cadets at West Point.

The inspection of the system adopted at that Institution has left on my mind a deep impression of the advantages which the country at large will receive from the permanance of the establishment, susceptible as it is of many ameliorations; whether viewed as the source of useful Instruction to the population at large, or as the stock from which are to be taken the individuals destined to organize and conduct the military strength of the United States. As the latter is the immediate object of the Academy at West Point, my remarks will be confined to that branch of the subject, and I submit them in the order of the exhibition as it was presented during my late visit.

The appearance of the Battalion of Cadets, under arms as Infantry is Military; they perform the manual exercise with considerable Precision and their movements are executed with sufficient correctness to illustrate the purposes of minor Tactics. But if critically viewed as the result of instruction regularly bestowed on a body of intelligent and able bodied youths during a period of not less than one year and extending to a large portion of the Cadets to two, three, and four years, their progress has not been such as to justify the subtraction of so much time from more important studies. Their training is uniform and strict, it is however susceptible of alteration both as to comfort and economy. The latter observation is perhaps superfluous, as the Regulation on this subject may be modified by the Superintendent.

The exercise of Field Cannon alone seems hitherto to have been taught with heavy and crazily mounted Pieces, with Carriages and Limbers of a Construction half a century old; without horses or Modern Implements this comparatively insignificant part of the exercise of Artillery can be but very inadequately practised under the best Instructors. In fact an equal number of Individuals partially acquainted with the Infantry Drill might learn in one week to perform as well or better all that is executed in this Department by the Cadets.

Practical Artillery appears here to have been the least attended to of all the Departments of Military Science; and I do not hesitate to assert that it is the one of all which ought to command attention in the Institution of an American Army. A Corps of Ordnance may indeed provide the Material of a well organized Park; but the persons who are to have the charge of these important engines of attack and defence ought to be versed not only in the Theory of Projectiles, but in its application to Practice and Construction.

Some knowledge of the French Language is almost indispensable for the acquisition of modern military science. The mode adopted at West Point of neglecting pronunciation and bestowing extensive attention on the Intelligence of words and phrases has its advantage; but these would be greater if the Instructors were intimately familiar with our vernacular tongue. Perhaps two classes of instruction would be in this instance useful; the first having for its object the Translation of French Phrases

and Idioms into *grammatical* English (and it would be difficult to find foreigners qualified for the latter purpose), the second for a similar reproduction of the English Text into the French Language. In some instances I remarked that the sense of the original was not exactly conveyed, and the incorrectness was ascribable to the imperfection of the teachers acquaintance with Idiomatic English. In matters of Mathematical demonstration this defect might lead to important errors.

Chemistry, particularly in its application to the Arts, will be eminently useful to the youths of this institution whatever may be their paths through life; and besides furnishing a relaxation to the severer studies while they remain at the Academy, will produce a diffusion of knowledge over the scenes of their future residence. But in this as in some other Departments, there ought to be combined with the best subject of Instruction a critical attention to purity of diction and pronunciation, the neglect of the latter, in masters as well as pupils, would furnish matter of just censure as well as often offensive sarcasm to observers, who might continue into a general deficiency in the elements of education what is probably sometimes only the fruit of inattention.

The examinations in Geography were unsatisfactory. In Fortification the Instructors and Cadets labour under the disadvantage of having no models by which to regulate the Theories which are discussed. The absence of permanent constructions for military defence except on the Sea board, renders for the present this objection insurmountable. The Text Book adopted at the Academy is one of several very good ones in the French Language, the original I am acquainted with; the translation, which I have not examined, was represented by the Professors as very defective.

Tactics as a theory, can be not otherwise a subject for examination than as accustoming the mind to seek the object of certain Institutions. It is not in a school that the superiority of one system over another can be tested, nor is it easy to imagine a code on this subject which would not require infinite modifications.

The progress made in descriptive Geometry and the Mathematicks in their application to levying plains and to the configuration of surfaces justifies the expectation of the most important services both in War and Peace from the Pupils of this Institution; were the advantage derived from the Academy limited to this single Department of Science I should consider it as an ample compensation to the Country for the expense of its establishment. What is here taught is thoroughly so; and when combined with Hydraulic Architecture, the result will be to supply every part of the United States with able Directors in all the branches of public works.

The foregoing brief statement of my observations at West Point comprehend its actual state; of its progress I can speak only prospectively. Several of the Professors are well qualified for their stations and in the

principal Departments the Academy can furnish from its own ranks a succession of able Instructors. It is questionable however if distinguished talents can be retained after a certain period, for the exclusive use of the Institution, without a gradual advancement in Dignity and Emoluments. The subject would carry me beyond the limits of such a communication as the present one; I must therefore restrict myself to the mention of what I consider *Desiderata* in the course of Instruction, these in my opinion, may be obtained without much difficulty or departure from the Economical Scale by which every public Institution must be measured.

The extension of the means of Instruction in the *Practice of Artillery* is indispensable, to make the Academy a School for Military Education; and this extension would enable it to embrace a branch which has been hitherto entirely neglected, I mean Cavalry. Besides the facility of forming Officers for that *Arm*, connected as it is with the Efficacy of Artillery in the Field, Equitation would afford variety in the exercises for the health, vigor and activity of the Cadets. It is demonstrable that the expense would be compensated by advantages in some of the details of the establishment; and probably, were a classification to take place, reducing the period of education for Cadets destined to some of the Corps of the Army, the general result would be to furnish with the same means a wider change for the acquisition of Talents devoted to the advancement of the public service and general instruction.

The discipline of the Academy is stern. The very circumstance which renders this severity remarkable calls for its being rigidly maintained. The unrestrained habits of the American Youth in every part of our Country, however the State of Society may be varied throughout its extensive Territories, require the Interposition of an unyielding Barrier against Irregularities in a great National School. In this respect much must always depend on the personal character of the Superintendent in Chief; but the maintenance of good regulation should be as much as possible taught in the Constitution of the establishment, independently of the Individual who is immediately entrusted with its administration. In its present Organization the Tribute of well earned praise is due to the incumbent.

I am very respectfully, Sir,  
Your most obedient, humble servant,  
(Signed) GEO. IZARD.

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HONOURABLE WILLIAM DARLINGTON'S  
REPORT AS ONE OF THE BOARD OF VISITORS AT WEST POINT  
JUNE—1823.

WEST CHESTER, Penn., July 18th, 1823.

DEAR SIR:

I had the honour to attend the examination of the Cadets, at West Point, agreeably to your invitation, from Monday the 2nd of June until

Thursday the 12th inclusive; at which time my domestic concerns required my presence at home. Since my return, a variety of urgent business, and especially the occurrence of Harvest, has delayed my report until now; which I mention as the best apology I have to offer for my seeming negligence.

Having never seen the Military Academy in the earlier stages of its existence, I cannot avail myself of the aid of comparison in judging of the *Progress* of the Institution. But as far as I am competent to judge of the *actual state* of the School, it gives me great pleasure to say that my report must, in justice to all, be one of almost unqualified commendation.

Although I had had considerable opportunities to acquire information respecting the organization, and objects of the Academy, previously to my late visit, I must confess I had no adequate idea of its real excellence.

The high qualifications, discreet management, and unvaried assiduity of Lt. Col. Thayer, as Superintendent, elicits the applause of every one who visits the Point. The intelligence, zeal, and abilities of the Board of Professors and Assistants, the harmony, and spirit of cordial co-operation everywhere apparent, were sources of great gratification to myself; and I believe to every other person who witnessed the examination. But the spectacle which above all others, engaged my feelings, was the Corps of interesting youths, assembled from every State in the Union, submitting with cheerful and manly deportment to the strict discipline, and with the most lively emulation, preparing themselves to become the accomplished defenders of the Republic.

The entire Institution, in short, was well calculated to impress the beholder with sensations of delight and admiration.

It will readily be inferred, from the preceding, that I can have but few suggestions to offer for the *further improvement* of the Military Academy; and I believe that even those have occurred to the minds of the Superintendent and Instructors, who, as far and as fast as in their power are endeavouring to reduce them to practice.

I may remark however, that it appeared to me the Cadets were not all as accurately and thoroughly acquainted with the English Language as was desirable. Their close application to their various other studies, seems to prevent that attention to, and acquirement of a correct, grammatical knowledge of their Mother Tongue, which every Officer ought to possess, who is liable to be called upon as the organ of his Government, to assert its rights and vindicate its claims by correspondence, &c., with foreign agents, as well as to communicate with the Department at home.

It is, in my opinion, an important though doubtless a subordinate consideration, that an officer of our Government should be able to sustain the character and dignity of the nation, by means of a correct style of Language, as well as by round argument. I thought there was a more palpable deficiency in the knowledge of our own language, among some few of the Cadets, than in any other respect.

I apprehend it arises principally from the circumstance of their being admitted young, and devoting their attention, as before remarked, to other, and as they are deemed, more important pursuits. As each class seems to be fully occupied with its prescribed studies, I do not perceive any mode of remedying the defect so practicable as that of embracing the qualifications for admittance. Perhaps it might be found advantageous with this view, to change the system so as to admit none under the age of 16 years or at least 15; and to require of them a correct, grammatical knowledge of the English language with such other qualifications as would enable them, without disadvantage, to devote their whole time to the studies now ordained. The Professors, however, seem to be fully aware of the importance of these considerations; and I believe the examinations for admittance, at present, are such as to require pretty respectable preparation, on the part of the Candidates.

I was much gratified on observing that an enlightened, generous, and patriotic attachment to the Institutions of our Country animated the bosom of every individual at the Academy; and it occurred to me that much might be done, in a National Seminary of that sort, towards diffusing and confirming correct notions and views of those great leading Principles, which peculiarly belong to our form of Government. I think it would have a highly salutary tendency in the Lectures and Instructions upon the nature and principles of Government, to set the advantages of our own Institutions in strong relief and to Fortify the minds of the Youth with all the potent arguments, and considerations, which shew them to be entitled to a preference over the corrupt and despotic establishments of the old world; instead of permitting them to repeat the hackneyed dogmas of European writers, relative to the supposed comparative advantages of Monarchy, and disadvantages of a Republican form of Government, &c. These doctrines are sent to us in foreign books, find their way into our schools, and become insensibly instilled, as truths, into the minds of the rising generation. The fact has long been regretted by many worthy patriots; and I am confident it would be extremely gratifying to all good citizens to know that in our *National Seminary*, at least, those trans-atlantic heresies were pointedly resisted, and exploded. I am happy to say, that the lectures and oral instructions upon that branch of the studies, in the Military Academy, are very much in accordance with my own views, though the doctrines of some of the Class Books, on these topics, being derived from abroad, are little else than sophistical apologies for the abuses and defects of the Governments under which the authors lived.

The mode of instruction, in the various branches of Science taught at West Point, appeared to me, so far as I was qualified to form an opinion, to be altogether excellent; and the proficiency of the Cadets, generally, was of a corresponding character. No doubt, the sagacity of the Teachers

aided by observation and experience, may from time to time suggest still further improvements. With respect to the Police, and other kindred regulations of the Academy, I perceived nothing but what was entirely in conformity with my own ideas of a sound, judicious, and salutary system of government. I have heard it suggested, indeed, by some respectable gentlemen who have occasionally visited the Institution that the hour of morning parade was rather too early for youths of the tender age of some of the Cadets; that they physically require more sleep than it was possible to obtain between the hours of 10 P. M. and 4 A. M., and that the privation had a tendency to impede the vigorous development, both of their mental and corporeal faculties. I have no doubt, myself, of the general proposition being physiologically true, that young boys require more repose than adults. But I believe, also, that less sleep is necessary *for either*, than is usually taken by those who are under no control, in that respect. Habit likewise, has very great influence in determining the extent of the real, as well as the artificial wants of the animal economy; and although the restriction referred to may, at first, operate somewhat severely upon those who have been previously accustomed to indulgences of that kind, yet, after viewing the ruddy health, and the sprightly activity of the Cadets at West Point, I should be slow to suggest any material change in the existing regulations on that head.

The buildings in which the Cadets are quartered, appear to be very commodious and comfortable. But there is yet another one wanted, to be used as an *Hospital* in cases of sickness amongst them. It would at all times, be highly advantageous to both sick and well, to have the former separately accommodated during their illness; and such an arrangement would be almost indispensable, in case any epidemic disease should make its appearance in the School.

The general healthfulness of the Corps has hitherto prevented the want of an Hospital from being severely felt, as it would be under other circumstances; but I have no hesitation in saying that such a building ought to be erected, (and that too, under the direction of, or according to a plan furnished by, a skillful and experienced Hospital Surgeon) as soon as the requisite appropriation can be obtained.

The Tavern owned by a private Individual, near the Barracks, is much complained of as a nuisance; and I have no doubt with justice. It would have been well if it, together with the land annexed, could have been secured to the United States before their value to the owner was so much enhanced by improvements, and by the flourishing condition of the Institution in the immediate vicinity. If the State Authorities of New York should decline to interfere and deprive the owner of the privilege of vending liquors by retail, it would doubtless be desirable to become possessed of the property, even at an extra price as soon as practicable.

Having thus hastily, and with much diffidence, presented a few remarks which have occurred to my mind, during my late visit to West Point, I beg leave to conclude by repeating the expression of my great gratification at the flourishing and promising condition of that National Seminary, and assuring you of the respect and esteem with which

I have the honor to be your sincere friend  
and Obedient Servant,

(Signed) WM. DARLINGTON.

Hon'bl. J. C. CALHOUN, }  
Secretary of War. }