

Chapter 2d

Leaving home for the first time to a boy not quite fourteen, to go a long distance and take up his abode with strangers, is a very serious affair. To part with parents, brothers and sisters, servants who are playmates, dogs, horses, boats, and shooting equipments and all the surroundings of a boy brought up on one of the luxurious Eastern Shore estates of that day was a severe trial; to step into what to him was an unknown world governed by harsh rules, and rigid habits of living was one that a child should not be subjected to if possible to avoid it. It is a very wise rule now established at West Point requiring the age of the candidate for admission to be 16 or 17 years old, and most parents now prepare the boy by sending him to one of the many preparatory schools established on the banks of the Hudson, and elsewhere before sending him to the Academy.

The step to me was lightened by my Father's going with me. The route then was from Baltimore by steamer to the Head of the Bay, then overland to Newcastle, and from Newcastle to Philadelphia by steamer. Thence by stage and steamer to New York. In N. York, the City Hotel, presided over by Mr. Willard was then the great Hotel of the U. States. The charges were only \$1.50 per day and Mr. Willard besides being the accountant, kept the bar, and mixed all the Juleps and other drinks taken in this much frequented Hotel. He was remarkable for his memory, never forgetting any of the many who visited his house. My surprise was great when he rushed up and greeted my father by name, who had once passed a day with him on his way to Saratoga. Mr. Willard and the Proprietor of the Hotel Mr. Jennings both retired with fortunes, the latter, it is said, to Italy where he acquired a title of nobility. The trip to West Point was made at night, on one of the famous steamers, which were then the talk and wonder of