

Washington 20th Dec. 1828

My dear son

I received your letter of the 16th instant. With respect to the disposition of yourself during the two months of the approaching encampment, I wish you to exercise your own discretion and to pursue your inclination. You shall be supplied with whatever sum you may want for a journey. I would suggest for your consideration a visit to the falls of Niagara, to Gen. Porter at Black Rock (to whom I will give you a letter of introduction, if you determine to take that direction) and thence on Lake Erie to the Bay of Sandusky and through the State of Ohio to Kentucky. Or you can come directly to Kentucky by Wheeling or Pittsburg and return by the first mentioned route. We shall leave here some time in March or April and you can inform me of your decision before our departure.

You are greatly mistaken my son in supposing that I entertained a low opinion of your talents. On the contrary I have thought very favorably of them, and I have seen that, by perseverance in that course of study and regard to what has given me so much happiness, you can make yourself any thing you please. When you shall complete your studies at West Point, were admitting that you remain there, as I rather think you had better do, during the usual period of time you will be arrived just at the proper period to commence the study of the Law, if that shall be thought advisable. On the termination of the four years, you can obtain the customary commission in the Army, and I think I shall be able to procure a furlough for you, during what you may