

My dear Father

I have not received a letter from you for a long time, but I have known too well your many engagements to expect one from you. You were, no doubt, surprised at my change of opinion, in regard to the propriety of leaving West Point, & with reason. It really appears to me, that the age at which I have arrived, is one of vacillation & perplexity: Daily my mind ranges over all the professions & occupations pursued by men; and as often it returns into itself with a feeling of abhorrence of many, & discontent with nearly all one of two Professions I believe I shall ultimately select: either the practice of Law, or the army. The army in itself presents no attraction whatever, other than that of a certain & an independent support: But it will afford me facilities of prosecuting literary studies in Europe - By the by, I have lately formed a very serious intention of obtaining a furlough for 1 or 2 years, to be passed in Paris or some other European metropolis in private study. \$800. per annum, the pay of a Lieutenant in the army, I hope will be quite sufficient for that purpose.

I am well aware that the advancement of a literary man to distinction is slow and must be loudly called for by the merits of the candidate before it is awarded, still there is something so pleasing in literary distinction, & even in the prosecution of literary researches, that life would pass