

Washington Dec 24. 1873

Dear James

I received your letter lately and was very glad to hear of your safe arrival at the academy at West Point, and comfortable establishment there. The letter enclosed to your father, I forwarded the next day, and I have heard with in a few days past that he and your mother were in good health. Your brother was then from home, but was well when he left it.

You informed me that your complaint had returned, and that you were still unwell. You seem to think that you would not be able to advance yourself much during the winter, as few boys would remain, and that you had as well return home during that time. You wish my opinion on it. You will consider yourself, that if your complaint returned, in consequence of the cold to which you were exposed on the journey, whether it is not likely to be increased, by setting out & coming back, in the dead of winter. It will be impossible for you to make the journey, down the north river, and thence, on, by land and water, night and day.

without suffering very much. It seems reasonable to suppose, that even if you were in the best state of health, when you set out, that there would be danger of your getting sick, before you got here. A sick person who is in good quarters had better take care of himself, than expose himself by travelling. I am glad to hear however by a letter from Major P on Friday, of the 15<sup>th</sup>, that you had recovered your health and were satisfied with your situation.

If you come in and stay three months, the whole time will be lost; great part of it in travelling, and the rest at home. The expense too will be heavy. And for what object? you have just left home, and you know that your parents are well. You may write and hear from them very well, and the writing will be of use to you.

I will tell you what I did, under similar circumstances, when I first went to college. Soon after I got there, a vacation took place, which lasted two months. I had been examining in Latin & Greek and found well qualified to enter the philosophical school. In that, I was put to the study of mathematics, Euclid's, & composing declamations, for which I was altogether unqualified, being only 16 years of age. I made therefore a very ridiculous figure. The vacation taking place, I applied the whole

time to close study, so that when, the lectures were resumed, I had made such good use of my time, that I obtained the approbation & praise of the professors. I wish you to do the same. You have books, can have assistance, when you want it, and may every day improve yourself. Among other studies, should be that of the French language. In short I would take advantage of the opportunity to improve yourself, in every useful study.

You will do right to make your bed warm. This you may do by blankets; and I would get as many as will be necessary. Put one or two under you, and three or four above you. You had also, I expect, better get a couple of flannel petticoats to wear under your skirt next the skin. Take them off, at night, or they will lose their effect in the day.

I do not, by the above, forbid your coming home, if you are much inclined to it, or sell yourself, and think the trip will be serviceable to you. Consult the professor on the subject, and Dr. Graham if with you, or the doctor, who attends the academy, and follow their advice. I have given you mine, but not knowing your present situation, it may not be correct. I wish you to get a good education & to qualify yourself for a commission in the army. This depends on yourself. You have now a good opportunity which I hope you will improve. Let me know when your money is exhausted, and I will assist you. your friend

Jas Monroe

*Dear Sir*