

Washington May 9. 1814

Dear James

I enclose you a letter from your father whom I have seen lately in Loudoun, in good health as was your mother. I visited that place, in the expectation of meeting some persons to treat for the sale of it, in consequence of my advertisement, but they did not come. I hope to sell it in the course of the year, my circumstances requiring it.

I will endeavour to send you by this mail twenty Dollars if I can procure bills of New York. That sum will I hope answer your purpose, as your pay must be coming in. When you left this, you had all necessary cloathing, and money sufficient to carry you to, and procure the necessary bedding, at west point. You drew three months in advance, but those three months had nearly expired, ~~when~~ when you left this, so that at the end of the second quarter, which must have been in March, you ought to have received nearly fifty Dollars. Great care, prudence, and economy are indispensable to all young men, but more particularly by those who have their fortunes to make. Your father will never be able to give you any aid, at least I think not. You must therefore depend on your self.



The school you have enter'd into, and the profession you have adopted, you prefer'd. It was your own choice and wish, to go to the academy at west point, and after gaining sufficient knowledge, obtain a commission in the army. Other plans were thought of by your father, such as being a clerk, in a store, and then a shop keeper; but finally he gave that out, as well as you, and you took your present course, by the advice of all. you ought therefore to rely on it, and do every thing in your power, to gain knowledge, to raise your reputation, and acquire the good opinion of the professors, and men of the young men, in the academy. Their respect in your favor will be of great advantage, and help you to get a commission. Some of the most promising and respectable young men in the nation are there. They come from all the States. The character which a young man gets there, will remain to him through life. Try therefore to establish a good one. The way to do it, is plain, and obvious. apply closely to your studies; improve, and enlarge your understanding. Study first, those branches of science that belong to your profession, mathematics in various branches, comprising, engineering, & the artillery service. Study also history, of different countries, England, France, the United States, and of other nations. Study the history of Rome, and Greece, which is called ancient history. History, is divided into two great divisions, ancient, and modern. The first comprises the epoch preceding the fall of the Roman Empire, including of course the history of Greece, Rome, Persia & other countries. The second, the

whole period of time since that event, beginning at about the fourth century, after the birth of Christ. Gouldsmith has written a history of Rome, and Gillies of Greece in English; the best ancient histories are written by Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Polybius, Livy, Sallust, Caesar and Tacitus, all of which have been translated into English. The best modern, are Robertson's history of Charles the 5th, Hume's history of England with Belsham's continuation, & Voltaire's Genl. History, and Muffet's Anacharsis is a good book on ancient history; and there are many other valuable books on modern history. I only mention some which you should prefer if you can get them.

Chronology ought to be attended to, that is, the account of time. We say this is the year 1814, but many who say, and write it, do not know what they mean by it. The meaning is, that it is now, 1814. years since ~~since~~ the birth of Christ, from whom the Christian religion took its origin. The Romans counted from the foundation of their city. If, for example, it was said, that Caesar, or Pompey, lived in the year, 560. or 650. or any other year, it meant, that they were born, that number of years after the building of the city. The Greeks counted by the Olympiad, which alluded to the Olympick games. Each Olympiad, was a term of four years, at the end of which all Greece assembled, to hold festivals & games. I merely mention these things to draw your attention to them. If you have already gained a knowledge of the subject, it is well. If not, you will turn your attention to them, and



gain more full information than I can give you  
in a short letter.

You may be satisfied that if you do are idle, and  
neglect the opportunity you now have, to improve  
yourself, all future prospect of success will be lost.  
But that if you are industrious, will study close,  
behave well, acquire considerable knowledge, and  
a good character you may do well.

I have said that your father will not be able  
to assist you. You must be sensible of this. He is  
an honest good hearted man, but advancing in  
years, and in a great measure helpless. When I  
sell out in fondour, I do not know when he will  
go. He don't appear to me to have any fixed plan,  
and I presume expects aid from me. I have  
twice before saved him from ruin; once, I  
bought most of his slaves, and left them in his  
possession. When he moved to fondour, I paid some  
heavy debts for him, and others since he came  
there. He has made nothing on the plantation  
for sale, and the aids heretofore given him, to  
your brother, and your uncle Joseph & other  
relations, with my own expenses & debts, had  
ing made bad crops, bear me down. I shall give  
him, when I sell in fondour, what help I can  
to settle him, on a small farm, somewhere, for  
his life. That will be the last aid, that I shall  
be able to give him. He will rather expect