Washington Nov. 25 1816.

Dear Sir

I recei'd the inclosed letter lately from your father, who, I presume, informed you of whatever relates to your family. I had supposed that the service would have allowed you, to come the last summer to the academy, which I expected would have been of great advantage to you. Your education, in more early life, having been neglected, subjects you to disadvantages, which you must sensibly feel. There is no way of getting the better of these, than by close study for a year or two, or for one at least, and that may be better pursued, at the academy, than at a garrison, or other place. There you will learn many things, besides your profession. You may perhaps be able to get there, next spring, which I advise you to do, if in your power. Making the military life your profession you ought to indeavour, all in your power, to excell in it, and to gain respectability by your abilities, good conduct, & merit. What you may be hereafter, will depend on your exertions now. Your present defects, will be attributed to your youth, and allowances be made for them. But soon your character, will be fixed, and unless, you improve yourself, much, you will not be so much thought of as you might be. Intending to sell my land in Tondown, as soon as

in my power, and knowing the situation in which your parents would be, I have purchased a small farm in albemarle, 7. miles from me, of 325. acres, with a good house and other improvements on it, which I shall settle on them for their lives, and have plaid some stock there for this use, so as to make them comfortable. they will I expect move, in a fortnight, or three weeks & fix for life. they have some slaves, & furniture. the land goes to my children after their deaths. I shall move them with credit from fondoux, and place them there, in a great measure, free from debt, & in a better situation than they were ever before. To do this, costs me, a considera=ble sum, which is very distressing to me, but I bear it, to get them, a home, intending it as the last charge, I am to incur on their account. altho, it is probable your father will inform you of these things, yet I have thought it would be agreeable to you, to have this full explanati=on from me.

Having had much experience, I have explaind to you heretofore, your own situation & prospects, and given you friendly advice, how to conduct yourself, so as to avoid misfortune, & misery on the one side, and advance yourself in the world, and especially in your profession. I never had any right to exercise any authority over you, and never wished to do it; and had you remained with your parents, or been bound to a trade for a livelihood, as, having no property, you must have been, I should never have had cause to say so much to you as I have done. a labourer on a farm, or a tradesman or mechanic, if honest industrious & intelligent, is very respectable. But leav=ing your parents, and entering a profession, and mov=ing in a line, with which they are unacquainted, I thought it proper to give you advice as to every

step you took, to prevent your falling into error, & making blunders, which an inexperienced youth would be apt to do, to his great misfortune, if not to his ruin. Indeed too many are ruined, by indiscreet & improper conduct, in this first beginning, owing to the want of such advice. I will now state, wherein, you neglected, to take my advice, but I hope not much, if any, to your injury. I do it not to reproach you with it, but merely, to put you on your guard as to the future. If you have been mistaken, as to the past, in any instance, there is no reason, why you should be in future. and if my advice is, of any service to you, I shall be glad to hear it. When you went to New York, on your way to the Mediteranean, I introduced you, to my own connections there, who are of the highest respectability, who were attentive to you, and wished you to be always with them, when your duty would permit. Your first duty was, to be with your ~~for~~ troops, after you had a command when necessary. At other times, it was your interest, and for your credit, to be in the best company, or in it, you would avoid expence, and improve your understanding & manners. The company I had introduced you to, was the best, and as they were my friends, they might be relied on, for yours. You ought therefore, to have clung to it. Had you done so they would have been pleased, your expence diminished, & credit advanced. I find that you hardly ever went near them, accepted invitations, which you did not comply with, keeping them from dinner, waiting for you. That you kept at the coffee house, or tavern, in very low company, such as it was, at times, improper to be seen in. That you called for wine, when called on, and expended money improperly, even if your own, and still more so, if borrowed. a gentleman whom I have seen here, intimated that you kept company with worthless

women

at least, so I understood him. He mentioned low and bad company, which I understood in that sense, tho' he might mean, men only. I have heard the same thing of you at New Orleans, of living expensively, drinking wine & keeping improper company.

When in barracks, or elsewhere with your troops, you avoid expense. It is always creditable to an officer, to be with his men; he is then at his post, improving himself, if he tries to do it. When not with his troops, he ought to be, in the best, and most respectable company, he can be introduced to. In these two things, he should take pride, to be with his troops, or in the best company. To be, from his troops, in taverns, is to waste money & character; in short to destroy oneself.

You know that I have done more for your father & his family, than they had any right to expect; that his sons had still left claim on me. That nevertheless I educated your brother, & placed you where you now are. It was to give your brother and you, an opportunity, by a fair beginning ~~with opportunity~~ to advance yourselves, by your merit, in the world; not to fix on myself, a charge, which was to pay on me through life; not to encourage, or pamper vice, or idleness, and dissipation.

I have stated these things, to guard you against error, as to the future. I hope, the account of the last is more favorable, than you deserve. So much the better. If you have erred at all, correct it. Try to avoid errors, and to do in all things, what is right. This is all I wish of you. It is for your advantage to do so, and I am your friend in advising it. You are your own enemy, if you do not follow, the advice.

Consider how heavy my duties are, of a public nature, as well as my private concerns; that all your relations give me much trouble, and little satisfaction; that I have not a moment of leisure, to write

Lieut Jas Monroe
Mississippi Volunteers
Care of Thos Hinds Esq
Natchez

even on my most interesting private concerns, and you will see, that it is not reasonable, to expect, often, to hear from me. Nor indeed is it necessary, for having put you in the army, with a plain road before you, and given you the best advice I could, I can add nothing to it. It is useless to repeat continually the same thing. I wish you to keep this letter, and to read it often. You will see that I give you good advice in it, and am your friend. Do not, shew it, to any one, nor talk about it, or the. It is improper, and exposes you to ridicule.

Altho' I cannot often write you, yet, I shall be glad to hear from you frequently, and on all subjects interesting to you. If you want my advice, state in what, and I will give it. Tell me where you are, in what corps, who the officers in it, who the commander, where he is? What parts of the country you have seen, which you like best? and indeed write what you think proper, when you have leisure, without neglecting your duties. When I see that my advice can be useful, it shall not be withheld, as I sincerely wish your success & happiness.

Your friend
Jas Monroe

acknowledge this letter, as soon as recei'd. But do not notice, what I have stated of your conduct heretofore. It is not necessary; alter your conduct, if you have not already done it, and it will be known, & reported by others. Letters may miscarry & be lost, which expose things which do harm. Depend on your merit, and, I repeat, say nothing of me, which is consider'd, the proof of a weak mind, by those who hear you. It is the more so, because you know, that if your conduct is not correct & proper, I cannot respect or assist you. To rely on your connection with me, if you do not behave, as you ought, to protect you from censure, is not right, nor will it succeed. When you went to the mediterranean, I gave you

or wrote to him,
a letter of introduction to Commodore Decatur, & to major
Archer I spoke in your favor. Neither of them have ever men-
tioned you, from which it might be inferr'd, that they had not
been satisfied with your conduct. but it may be otherwise, & I hope
it is. It seems strange, that they should not mention you if
they had any thing to say in your favor.