

My dear Jon

Wash<sup>g</sup> 6 Feb. 1828

I saw Mr. Worth who gave us the most flattering and encouraging accounts about you, concurring with those which we receive from all other quarters. Indeed my dear child you are a great blessing to me, and I am sure if you knew what a source of happiness you are to me, by your present praiseworthy conduct, you would persevere in it, if you had not the super-added motive of its conducing to your own lasting good. I find that you still occasionally perplex yourself with the question of what pursuit you shall finally engage in. On that subject I can only repeat, what I have so often told you, that when you quit West Point, if you improve the opportunities afforded you there, you may enter on any career you prefer. You may study the profession of law, if you should desire it. It is a mistake to suppose that it will be too late. If I had my choice, it would be to begin the study of that profession at 20 or 22, to persevere to any other age, and continue at it four or five years. But if you should like the profession of arms, you will have it in your power to continue in it. Calculating upon the ordinary course of human events, our country will be in War, when you are in the prime of life, say some where between 25 and thirty five. In that contingency how many opportunities of advancement will present themselves? I say, therefore, continue with assiduity your present studies. They will form a capital on which you may operate advantageously in civil or military life, according to your choice.

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