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(E. P. C.)

Tuesday, Dec. 4

1877.

William

MCGILL UNIVERSITY	
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My dear Father,

All my thanks for your letter of Nov. 15. in return for which there is little at my disposal in the way of news. I can say with the papers here, "les nouvelles sont nulles" as they often have to confer in speaking of the War; but I am fortunately not obliged to add that all previous statements made up to date are "absolutely without foundation"

I am very glad to hear that George has returned, and it certainly would be very pleasant if he and Eva could come over in the Spring. It would hardly be fair that I should accompany them, as I have certainly had my share of travelling

but we could no doubt arrange to return together.

I used to think that the position of Professor would become monotonous after a time, but I now regard it as almost the acme of perfection, ~~as an~~ regard to occupation. In Engineering there would be no fear of sameness; the difficulty would rather be to keep pace with the rapidity of progress, and the new methods continually introduced in the best ways of arranging subjects in order to make their teaching logical and progressive. Indeed it is rather this that would deter me from undertaking such work, when one sees persons who have had a good education & a large amount of experience in practical work meet with only a very ordinary amount of success in teaching others. Yet on the other hand there is no need of having recourse to any mystic or magical arts in teaching as I used vaguely to imagine; but it is an occupation that falls within the limits of the powers of ordinary mortals. I have always been hoping

to find some kind of settled employment, and I place this above every other consideration, and would rather give up my profession altogether than relinquish the hope of succeeding in this.

If you were to succeed in obtaining a position for me such as you speak of, I would not need to leave here directly at the end of the session, but would have more time to see the Exhibition which would certainly be an advantage, and might come in very nicely with any report I might wish to make. I am not quite so eager about this, however, as I was when the idea first occurred to me, as I have found how tedious such work would be. A page of foolscap often represents the consulting of several books and the expenditure of two or three hours of time; and although the work may be very interesting as well as instructive, I have no wish to work for nothing. There are few things that an Engineer undertakes which are not of immense value to himself personally in affording him an opportunity to gain information and ex-

perience; but he does not usually throw
this into the opposite pan of the scale
to outweigh the dollars & cents. I be-
lieve I would have given up the
paper I am now writing, on more
than one occasion if I had not seen
the perspective before me of its possible
decoration with a "gilt edge". When
ones own instruction is the ~~st~~ only ob-
ject there are much more direct ways
of arriving at the result, as the same
elaborateness is by no means necessary.

My intentions are to apply to
M^r Page, M^r Fleming, and the Quebec
harbour Commissioners, as I have before
mentioned. My action respecting Paris will
depend on what you & George advise;
it would be well in any case to apply
as I have already said; and the less
chance there is of success the more reason
there is for doing so, as the "advertisement"
is all that remains to be got out of
the affair. I of course keep M^r Bovey's
offer in view. Please say to him that
I hope to hear from him in the course
of the winter as to how what his pros-
pects are in regard to employment.

With love to all, believe me
your affectionate son
William.