

London
Dec 1886

St. George's Club
London

Dec: 12. 86 -

My dear father,

Thanks very much
for your notes, which although
not as full or newsy as one
would wish, are frequent and
always welcome. I have
received two of the Weekly Times
& other papers which have
been sent, & have read with
much pleasure & interest
Joel Cook's articles on Canada.
He seems to have formed
very favourable impressions
of what he saw, & cannot
now at least see injuriously
if he continues to bend to
the times the very absurd
statements relative to Canada

27 affairs that he has been
in the habit of consulting in
Philadelphia. I have also
to acknowledge your photo
taken in Birmingham, which
reached me safely. It is sin-
gularly good, I consider, but
is badly mounted, the head
being too large for the size of
the card. Should you order
more, get them on the larger
square cards, larger than the
albums, which would suit
the size much better. Mother
sends a pamphlet in stiff cover,
by a King's College Man, which I
read through this morning,
I mention having forwarded
another, which I do not remember
having received - George forwards
a copy of Brit. Colonist, which in-
terests me. Kindly thank him
when you see him next -

3/ Having thus cleared the ground by
acknowledging some of my many recent
requisitions, I may I think proceed to answer
a few of your inquiries.
As regards Australia generally as a field for
engineers, I can only speak vaguely, as most
of what knowledge I have is second hand, &
applies of course to individual Colonies. Except in
W. Australia, the railway work is governmental
entirely & such appointments as occur from time
to time are given, & rarely, as appointments are
elsewhere to some friend of the man in power,
or falling this to the best man to be had
on the spot or at the time. In W. Australia there
have been a couple of small Colonization Railways
(250 miles each) started, on the land grant system
recently, & contracted for by London Com^{rs} -
Appointments for them are made by the directors
in London & sent from here, but they are small
& temporary affairs - Queensland & New Zealand
I don't know any thing of - In N.S.W. & Victoria
they have been rather over doing Railway matters
recently, & in the former especially are obliged to
curtail & cut down for a time - I never heard
of any preference being entertained for America
& should doubt the correctness of such report,
and all the R.R. are on the English plan &
built of English materials & on English methods -
All this sounds somewhat discouraging I think

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It is so, but so would any other similar discussion be, if spoken of thus, on general principles. Of course through influence or friends one might be fortunate enough to get a good berth, in which case it would no longer matter to one how the open market stood.

The only practical way, ^{I wd. think} would be to visit the country oneself & be prepared to spend a year or so in looking about. This of course would be expensive work, & might be entirely thrown away.

It seems to me useless to write to Agents general who are over-hundreded with their own work, & whose duty it is if any opening worth having occurs, to favour their own colonial fellow countrymen, of whom there are hundred

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in England here, studying
at all sorts of institutions,
& many of them quite independ-
ent in means & able to look
about at their leisure, or wait
until some suitable opening
occurs. Nowadays with
such facilities for getting about,
& such equalization of convenience
& material comforts, the world
is getting to a woeful dead
level. I fear there are now
very few bonanzas to be struck
in the professional line.

I shall however keep a sharp look
out, & shall be very pleased
to do anything I can, if I happen
to meet anyone likely to have
any valuable information or
influence. How about Kingston?
I see there is a death vacancy
there - One word, say anything of

a drive, if you will pardon it; one must
advertise one's wares: it is *infra dig.* & bad
policy - never pays, I always think.

Yesterday I met Lawford accidentally on
Crown street, & he came round to my
quarters at 16 Margaret. I gained in a cigar & chat.
He has moved up to Care. St. neighborhood, & looks
rather careworn, although I am not from over-
work, unless perhaps at the Hoop^e. He goes to spend
Holidays with M^{rs}.

Crows have asked me to go down to R. Ferry
for dinner, but I hardly know whether I can
manage it. M^{rs} Ruddy I hear is very ill, & not
likely to recover. M^{rs} Kemp also writes very kindly
wanting me to stay with her whenever, & as
long as I can. My own plans are a bit

uncertain as usual, I shall not return in the
"Carthage", I think. I don't like her; but may make
a voyage in another ship, or may spend a
few months here at Hoop^e work -

I mailed an illness card, New. (Xmas) to Anna
yesterday & Purch Almanack which I hope may
reach safely - I trust your expedition to Boston & N. Y.
may prove a gr. success, (what is more unlikely)
that you may not over tax yourself -

Love and best Christmas greetings to Mother, & to
all kindest remembrances & good wishes.

Your affectionate Son,
F. B. Johnson