

86 Boulevard de Port Royal.

Saturday, Nov. 13, 1875.

Acc 976

My dear George,

I am now fairly started in my work at the 'Ecole des Ponts et Chaussées' and find myself ^{time} pretty fully occupied. We have only two lectures a-day the rest of the time being taken up in drawing or studying. The lectures are from an hour to an hour & a half in duration, so that as we go in at 9 the morning lecture ^{extends} ~~occupies~~ almost up to half-past 10, when we are let out for "breakfast." Then at 12 we have our second lecture usually, which after which the rest of the afternoon is occupied in drawing. We are at present executing a sheet of architectural designs which has to be handed in on Wednesday next.

I have now got pretty well into the way of taking notes in French, as I am now more accustomed to the Professor's voice & can follow more easily. I therefore find myself able to ~~not~~ write the notes at once in the class-room, leaving them to be looked

over in the evening. Our most important subject is the Resistance of Materials on which Prof. Collynon lectures. These notes I continue to copy as they are very mathematical. In this subject there is a text-book written by M. Collynon in which I read up the subject of the lectures before hand. For ^{some of} the other courses we are given lithographed notes. We have received those on Geology, and Roads; so far: and also a similar book on drawing. We have 6 courses of lectures this winter, Architecture, Irrigation, & General Principles in Construction, making up the list. The professors all lecture straight ahead without stopping either to ask us any questions or give us a chance of questioning them. Our drawing room is called a "Salle d'Etude" & in it we are each furnished with a drawing table & drawing board. The table has two long drawers in it, in which we keep our things. They have a very simple & efficient way of insuring punctuality at the school; it consists merely in shutting the iron gate in the archway which leads from the street into the quadrangle of the school, at a quarter before the hour. Any one who comes after this has to go through suitable formalities in

the way of writing his name in a register, &c. before being admitted. Then at 5 minutes to the hour an usher in brass buttons announces the lecture in our Salle d'Etude & also in the library; for this he uses the formula "Messieurs, le cours est annoncé". We then go down to one of the amphitheatres (of which there are three) in which the lecture is to be delivered, & when we are all seated the professor walks in & commences. Instead of calling a roll there is an "Officier de Service" who has the list of our names, & comes in either before the lecture commences or while it is going on & marks off those who are present. He can do so without knowing our names as we each sit always in the same order.

Besides these lectures we have a lesson in sketching once a week, and also lessons in German & English if we choose to avail ourselves of them. For the sketching we are given drawing books & are only allowed to use a pencil, ^{india-rubber,} and a pair of compasses. The object we sketch is a piece of machinery & it has to be drawn not in perspective, but in elevation plan & section. Our first object has been the "link" from a locomotive engine. I am going to take German as there is only one lesson a week

in it; & one or two of the others are taking English. In the first year there are 18 *élèves* Ingénieurs or Government pupils who come from the *École Polytechnique*, and who enter at once into the service of the Government when they get through. Besides these there are 9 *élèves externes* to which category I belong. We have exactly the same advantages in every way as the others. There are two Frenchmen among us, the rest coming from all parts of Europe. In the third year there are two *Externes* from Brazil, so that I am not alone as a representative of America.

I received your letter of Sept: 5 some time ago for which I am much obliged. I must say I do not remember the *M^r Combie* to whom you refer. I went from *Kimouski* to the *Mestigonche* in *M^r Hazlewood's* carriage accompanied by his son. I am sorry not to be able to follow your route on the map as I cannot find many of the names you mention. I would be much obliged if you would send me a sketch map of your whereabouts if it would not be too much trouble. — The weather here is usually wet and the trees are now nearly all bare; but the temperature still keeps high; indeed it is seldom even chilly.

Believe me your affectionate brother
William