

Phil^a Aug 17 1847

John W Dawson Esq
Dear Sir

Your note of the 27th instant together with the accompanying copy of your paper on the "Reproduction of forests &c" has been duly received & I have to express my own thanks as well as those of the Academy for this attention on your part. I herewith forward a number of our Proceedings in which your former letter is noticed, and the reception of your pamphlet acknowledged. I shall be much gratified with a perusal of your paper on the red sandstone of Nova Scotia. In connexion with it I hope you have noticed the subject of Gypsum. Is there any conclusive evidence that this substance is disposed in beds coextensive with the rocks of a sedimentary character with which it lies in contact? The few localities which I had an opportunity of examining impressed me with a contrary opinion. That the rock itself is not truly sedimentary at least in the ordinary acceptation of the term appears probable from several considerations which I have not now time to enumerate. I have been making some analyses of gypsums, - natural & artificial, which have

caused me to reflect on the circumstances under which the natural deposits present themselves, and also on the reagents by which they are precipitated or dissolved. Besides the geological interest of this subject it presents some questions of importance to the agriculturist & others to the navigator who relies on the steam boiler to furnish propelling power.

In regard to my observations in Nova Scotia I have not yet put them into the form which I consider most desirable for publication. Much of my time for several months past has been employed in the mineral districts of Pennsylvania & Virginia the former of which I have visited five times & the latter twice, within the last five months. Much interest is felt at present in the development of the mineral resources of both these states. Besides coal, Virginia is turning some attention to gold & copper, lead, manganese, Iron, Plumbago, Gypsum, & the resources of lime & marl. Her spirit for internal improvements is beginning to be roused, and manufacturing industry seems likely soon to begin to turn to account the immense ~~water~~ power of her almost innumerable water courses.

I have asked the attention of Mr Conrad to the fossils brought from Nova Scotia. They have for some time been, with other collections, in the same department, awaiting arrangement, owing to the new disposition of nearly all the collections of the Academy, consequent on the increase of our building.

When I have his views I will communicate them to you.

You had the goodness to present me with specimens of hydrate but I omitted to state its locality, - perhaps you could supply it, -

I frequently recur with pleasure to the time I spent & the acquaintances, I formed in your place & vicinity. Will you do me the favour to remember me kindly to all inquirers? I suppose Mr Brackett is still with you, - if so, please convey to him my thanks for his attention in forwarding my box of specimens.

I suppose this is a busy time at the mines.

To Mr Pool & family I hope you will express my kind regards when you see them. I have received all the specimens which I collected during my visit, except one box left in the care of Mr. Smith at Amherst, & a small package from St Johns N.B.

Permit me to subscribe myself
very respectfully,

Your obt servant

Walter B. Johnson

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