

MSL 8/7

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My Dear Father & Mother

Not having received a line from England for at least 8 Months I conclude that your letters have been detained in some quarter as I feel convinced you would lose no opportunity in writing to me. That letters from friends should be obliged to pass through channels that forward them irregularly and sometimes not at all is extremely painful but that such has actually taken place I am convinced for I am sure that had Mr Longridge & Mr Joseph Pease received the long letters which have several times been forwarded, they would have answered them. Several months ago I sent Mr Pease a long extract from my journal, but so irregular is the post in almost every part of this country that nothing of consequence can be trusted without you have friends or acquaintance on the coast who receives and forwards packets with care. It is now some time since I gave up sending letters through the Col: M. association, but I have little hopes of having adopted a better mode of communication as all seem alike precarious. The last letter which I received from Jos. Pease contained the melancholy news of the misfortunes of their family, since which I have written twice to him -

The time is now drawing near when the period of my departure from this country must be finally fixed; hitherto I have been kept in anxious suspense. The Board after all was turned over to them by Messrs. H.G. & P. having refused to liberate me before the expiration of three years. Lately however through the recommendation of Mr Illingworth the agent for the Board, it appears they have consented to my return earlier; the next post from England will determine it finally, indeed from some recent letters of Mr Powles, it would seem that they would only require of me to remain and see the next party of miners settled at the different Establishments. This said party is now near Honda and will probably arrive in a month. I am therefore now engaged in preparing for their reception. The difficulty of conveying parties of men as well as luggage up the River Magdalena remains as great as ever. The Boats which were sent from England by the Board, constructed with paddles on each side and to be worked by men have completely failed. I have just this moment learnt this by a letter from one of the agents on the River. The Steam Boat which was built in the United States for the Magdalena has also completely failed. The first one they built was too large and drew too much water, and in constructing the second which has been tried, they have not avoided the same impediments; In consequence of the failure and the little progress made by the person who has the contract from Government it is likely the privilege will be taken from him altogether. The difficulties to be encountered in perfecting the navigation of such a river is beyond description and can only be appreciated by one who has witnessed the effects of the currents during the Rainy season. They are such as sometimes to alter the bed of the River; washing away sand banks from one place and depositing them in another blocking up