

## [Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers](#)

**VMI Archives**

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**Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers**  
**VMI Archives Manuscript # 00103**  
**Letter to son-in-law, S. Wellford Corbin**  
**1863 May 1**

Bowdon England  
1 May 63

Dear Corbin:

I was glad to get your letter. It was very satisfactory and interesting.

I now fancy that I see no end to the war, until the Yankees get themselves into trouble with some other nation, or until after the 4th March of `65. John Bull is drifting into war and the public mind here is beginning to chafe under the doings of Wilkes and his [c     ]. Still if there is war it will not be through any the least spark of sympathy for us. I think the Government is determined to stop any more Alabamas if it can - and I think the feeling of the country is with the Government in that matter, as it is in all others that touch its conduct towards us.

Can't you find time to find a better place for our folks, as in Lynchburg or some other town a little further from the enemy's lines. They are now much nearer than is agreeable. Then they want to be in reach of schools and a little more society for the young ones than they can have in the country. Pray let there be a family council & then see what you can do to carry out what may be decided to be the best. If they board, let them if possible have a parlor to themselves.

Wilkinson don't come any further than the island nearest you, but I will bear in mind yr request.

I am trying now to get a box off for the ladies on a vessel that takes this - one that Crenshaw is sending out. I have a letter from him this morning dated 3 days ago, saying she would sail in a few days - So I have sent an express message to Ferguson in Manchester who took the lists more than a month ago with a promise to fill them - I have asked him to send all 3. Bob's, Lewis' and mine if he has them ready, if not ready, I have asked him to double my order for dresses and to make them suitable to the memory of my precious Davy Jones. He said the money was of no consequence when I gave him the lists, but perhaps the want of it prevented him from attending to it, however I sent him the money for mine - all I had, and told him that I expected in a week or 10 days to have the money for the others, and to send my box anyhow. I don't know the name of the vessel but it's Crenshaw's. They will tell you the name in Richmond and the box will be marked c . "R.H. Maury, Richmond". Do ask them to keep a look out for it.

Bobby Walker is here trying to raise a Yankee loan of £50,000,000. Moneyed men here

say some that he can't "place it" some that he can, if he will get Peabody and [Briggs] black & [ ] - to take hold and spend a £100,000 or so in floating it. My own notion is he will spend money like fury to get his loan to go - and I see what looks to me like a sign that he had already been "[ploughing]" with some of the yearlings of the Times. Saw them stepping out of the way in its city article of yesterday to explain away certain things. It looks suspicious. This "City Article" as it is called is more read by moneyed men than all other parts of the paper. The "City Article" is the first thing they look at.

So I am on the lookout for something [further]. This morning's Times will be here before the mail closes and if there be any more indications I'll clip them out for you.

Please let Nannie copy such parts of the letter as relate to public affairs and send them to Mr. Seddon. I wrote him Dec. 11 Jan 20- & 31 March - and ask him to see that the new Navy Bill does not operate prejudicially in one's absence.

Explain to R.A.M. about the boxes. I wrote nearly a month ago for money from [Jody] for him & L. as I had it not.

Where is Jack stationed now? Give my love to Jack - He is a kind hearted fellow.

This is May-Day. Some ladies called in their carriage to take me to see the country people - May-But I had not the [ ] and I proposed to stay at home and [ ] home.

Send also to Ludlow the slips that you think he would like to see. Love to Uncle Jordan and Nannie and all hands.

Yrs. truly  
MF

I go to London Monday of Tuesday and then to France. It goes hard to part with Brave. But he likes his school, is getting interested with the boys - and his vacation will commence 13 June - Six weeks hence when he will join me again.

**Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers**  
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**Letter to daughter Diana Maury Corbin**  
**1863 July 7**

London England  
7 July 1863

My dear Nannie:

Carter stopped in upon us today with your and Corbin's letter. Bless my Davy's sweet face - his [coal] is [quenched], his light is put out - his pitch broken, and his spirit returned unto God who gave it. I doted on that splendid countenance. Twas a rich pleasure to me always to steal glances at it when he knew it not. I read in it unutterable things and always a pleasant present and a pleasing future Oh-ho! Lord Wrottesley is in town. Brave called today to say we would breakfast with him in the morning. Brave said `Sir' to him and he took him up. We learn by Carter that Murdough had got in. Thanks for that - Corbin will find his pistol in the trunk sent by him, but not the saber. It is difficult to find one good [natured] enough to charge himself with such a piece of luggage. I saw his cousin in Paris. He was very civil. I liked him and his family very much. One of his daughters - the yellow haired one particularly quite took my fancy. I was miserable in Paris. Exceedingly depressed all the time - so much that Brave said to me one night in tears - that I had treated him with reserve ever since he come there. Bless the child's heart. I had no heart for anything. I was making no progress about my business I was doing nothing to help the case - and my actions were controlled by me, that were unequal to the task. All this and the fact that I am kept here all the time with hands tied for the want of means and that I am told to build this and buy that as tho' I had the Bank of England to draw from. All this - the fact that I am of no use - oppressed me exceedingly.

The small parcel by Hudson, Elie tells me has been received. The next was also a small one - say .7- by Ramsey in Apl- What became of that? The next by the [Venice]- [Crenshaw's] ship- in I know- the next was by the Advance- [Crosson's] ship in charge of Hughes the brother of Tom's friend. She was in Bermuda last month-and the last by Murdough who is in. I have had but two letters from you. Love to Corbin with thanks for his letter. I hear he is a great worker and gives satisfaction.

unsigned

**Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers**  
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**Letter to daughter Diana Fontaine Maury**  
**1863 August 4**

Bowdon (England)  
4 Aug 1863

My dear no. "dos",

Just as we were leaving Liverpool yesterday a parcel of home letters was handed to me. Yours of Jun 14, Corbin of 15, Totts 10th 13 and Elie's no date at all. Totts to the Brave. This is the second letter from you.

Just before we left London Mrs. [G ] with her youngest daughter "Carie" arrived there from Baltimore. They are great secessionists - you remember they used to give children's parties in the first ward and that Dave particularly and I believe Totts used to go to them. The first thing that Miss Carie said was an inquiry after Dave. She only remembered me as his father. When I told her - her mother exclaimed - + don't you believe he's drowned they've got him cooped up to spite you. You don't know their villainy or their spite against you. The idea and their positive air gave me a glimpse of hope, which started up, lasted for a moment and it was all dark again.

Another batch of letters. Lt. Carter brought them from L'pool just at 6. Meiklejohn was dining with us, so we put them away and have now about 10 just got through with them. I reading and [checking] over them to Brave. There is one from you of 25 May to me and of June 6th to Brave. One from Totts to him and one to me one from Nannie Belle to him. All on the thin blue paper and from his Ma to him and one to me with the copy by Elie of D's letter of the 14th Feb - giving all the account he could of the loss. It is singular that just as I was telling of Mrs. G. for I had only got to the +. D's letter should have come encouraging the same idea. 5th {pencilled in margin} I had never before heard of the cartridge boxes - the rubber cloth and the tracks of the mare as to or from a boat. Had I heard of that at first I should have clung to hope as you and Totts and yr Ma have done. It evidently gave D. hope for the flag followed. But what did Burnett think. Burnett the Texas Trailer. At what gait was the man going that two miles after having crossed the crevasse - at what gait when she returned - was there any sign of a scuffle, of a halting or a quickening of pace where the cartridge boxes were - what does he mean by cartridge `boxes'? cartridge papers? I think the trailer could tell by the tracks for two miles whether the horse was riderless. The tracks about the turning place would indicate that most likely. Then why should the mare keep along just two miles and then turn back.. The man in the boat might have seen him coming, and concealing themselves [till] he came up - and then calling a halt he might have found himself so completely in their power as to make all attempt at escape useless - and so he might have reined up. But then what would have been the use of the cartridges? On the contrary if he had been fired at or shot, the tracks would have showed a sudden change in the gait of the steed. I read from

this account of Bob's that on that two mile stretch below the crevasse, the horse as she went down was guided by the rider, and that therefore the probabilities, nay I should say the chances, the almost certain chances are that that precious boy was not drowned in the crevasse. When the mare returned to the brook, was she riderless? How near did the returning tracks go to it? Did they enter it? If they don't, he perished there - if not, then he was made away with, somewhere between the brook and the end of the two miles below. Thank my merciful Father for this precious crumb of consolation, for now I feel almost persuaded that my brave boy had a chance of fighting for his life, and if so, then I know he did quit himself like a man as he was.

You see my love I have been building up this theory on these straws that D almost casually as it were has held out. The tracks down the road, the cartridge boxes, the rubber cloth and the tracks down to the boats.

Let us suppose that D. means cartridge boxes and not paper, then the rubber cloth, was it Yankee? The boat party had taken off their cartridge boxes and spread the bit of rubber cloth to lie on. My Dave came upon them suddenly and so fell into their hands. Were there any signs of a scuffle of men in a high state of excitement moving about. And the rubber cloth - was it of the cartridge boxes [ ] - and did the tracks of the men pass them?

I say he rode the mare that far, because she was seen soon after he had crossed - by 3:30 p.m. near the canal without her rider- and was found then at 10 the next morning. She wanted to get back - and after she lost her rider on the 27 - she made for Vicksburg. Had he been taken alive he would surely have been taken up to headquarters. He would have been too great a prize - no He was dealt foully by and they were afraid to report it.

I send D. a letter written some days ago. I may not have time to add more - but any how send him copy of the copy of this, till you are he gets it. Ask him to send it to Major Burnett, and after discussing the whole case over with him, ask him to let us know what the Major says. Love to C. to Betty and 10 Tell N.B. hers was a sweet letter to the Brave.

Kiss everybody. I am worried about L.A.'s "spies"-

unsigned

**Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers**  
**VMI Archives Manuscript # 00103**  
**Letter**  
**1864 February 15**

England  
Feb. 15, '64

My dear "Nig":

That was a capital bargain. How came they to let him pay off? He ought to be made Sec. Treasury if he can financier in that way. The bonds that F.B. had? I hope he looked after them, and that they gave you and him a most comfortable fire to warm by.

Yesterday morning Brave brought down a Legendre\* that he had brought over with him-Davie's. In the evening he was criticizing some of the propositions and demonstrations and proposed to burn it up. I happen to look on the fly page in the book and there was my precious Dave's own hand writing "Charlotte is my dulce."

S-H- and in full below, and a sum that he had been doing. I suppose that the 'Dulce' was the 'Charlotte' that Kate or Sarah [ ] used to talk to him about. He had the book at the University. So Brave was ordered to put it away among our "preciouses" - I have written 2½ diverse times and grieve to know that he doesn't get my letters. My last was 26 Dec. It related to that famous brooch pin affair - was a great secret, and I hope that it has not miscarried. No further development has occurred in that matter and you may rely upon it. I shall suffer it to proceed no further, unless it be clear that I can be more useful there than I can be here, or rather than I am permitted to be here. Any premature disclosure would as you may readily imagine give rise to any amount of scandal- to encounter which with equanimity all those virtues which made Duncan 'so clear in his High office' - I must rely upon angels and " my Innocents" for defense, for if I enter into that scheme, my lips will be sealed. And in all this I rely upon the reticence, the prudence and the judgment of you all. If it comes to anything, you will know of it from other quarters long before you will from me. The possibility that you might so hear induced me to tell you of it before hand. I know it would set somebody to climbing the mountain, and I thought it was better to climb with the lights before you there in the dark.

Your Petersburg letter of Dec 11 to Brave is our latest date. ['Sophy'] is in New York having her old laces renovated.

\* a math textbook

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**Letter to son-in-law, S. Wellford Corbin**  
**1864 March 4**

4 March 6 p.m.

My dear Wellford:

I have just received this from Paris. It is a little scrap which you may like to preserve.  
I have no new developments in the matter of the brooch pin.

Brave and I are mourning over the loss of our things by [Cameron] in the Petersburg -  
Another pair of specs for Mary among them. It's always so Brave says with our Xmas  
boxes. Love to you - Yrs

{Bottom of page torn -apparently on opening by Wellford. No signature.}

**Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers**  
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**Letter**  
**1864 August 4**

Bowdon, England  
4 Aug. `64

My dear N:

I dreamed last night that your troubles were all over. I hope they are with all my heart. They have not only been the cause of the most tender and anxious solicitude but of many painful emotions also - which I would fain forget.

I send you the last I have heard of Corbin. I can't find out when or how he was made prisoner. I have asked R. to let him have any funds he may want, and I will return the same through his cousin [J.]B. in Liverpool. I do not know whether any exchange of prisoners is now going on. I am rather under the impression that there is another hitch of some sort in the way.

The first notice I had that he was certainly captured was by his notice from Pt. Look Out to R.H.M. cut from the N.Y. Daily News of 28 June and sent me by an officer in Paris. I rec'd it 16 July in the cars as I left London for Lland[ ]. Bob in his letter of June 23rd makes no mention of him. So I infer he must have been captured between that and the 26th or 27th. You however should not give yourself any trouble nor go to climbing any mountains on that score, for I have no doubt he will, with such assistance as I can give, be able to provide very well for his material comforts.

I went down to [A ] day before yesterday to get some tooth brushes to send by an officer who is going home, and I don't like to see such a good opportunity to pass without sending something. So I thought of tooth brushes- All the shops are in [Albrincham] none in Bowdon, Mit said, O don't get them here, get them in Manchester. You get them so much better. He got a friend to get them for you-all right. Tell him to get the best brushes as to hair, such as gentlemen and ladies ought to us, and add to them 6 nail brushes. They have just come, were bought at wholesale prices, and for the nail brushes behold the little shoe brushes. I wish they had been white, I should like 5 & 6\* to have a nice white one. But I reckon you can make them do.

Brave said the other day, "Sister B is an elegant woman I tell you. I should like to have such a one for my wife" "Why-?" " Oh she keeps her things in such nice order, and looks good in anything" So charge 5 & 6 to be neat and clean, but I fancy they are, and that they will look mighty good in one of these nail brushes set off by an ivory handled tooth brush. Bless their hearts I wish I could bring myself instead of sending these nice brushes for the narsty Yankees to get. Brave is commencing Greek and French this half. He is not quick, but has what is better than quickness viz. industry and perseverance, the will to make good resolutions and the force to carry this out. I now, since I have been sick

take 4 meals a day, breakfast at 8, lunch at 1½, dinner at 5½ and tea at 9, Brave breakfasts and teas and soups. God bless you. Love to Sr. E & S.F.M. and all hands.

\* 5 & 6 refers to daughters Mary Herndon Maury (5) and Eliza Hall Maury (6).

**Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers**  
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**Letter to son-in-law, S. Wellford Corbin**  
**1864 December 20**

The Parsonage  
Belsize Park  
London, N.W. [England]

30 Dec 64

My dear Corbin,

How are you and Jack these dreary times, well and bright I hope. I have no later dates, since I last wrote you. I saw Arthur Sinclair and Pegram last night. The latter left in Oct. I learned more from them as to how our folks get on, than I had learned before. My friend is named T r e m l e t t, not Triplett. Your first letter they knew was for me and sent it to Bowdon right away. I have settled with Rutson for the \$167.85 and the \$20 advanced by Jno W. to you and Jack the \$20 to Jack, the rest to you, total \$187.85. Brave grows fast and sends love. God bless you both

Yrs aftly M. Fontaine

{disguised signature?}