

[Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers](#)

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Manuscript # 00103

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Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers
VMI Archives Manuscript # 00103
Letter to son-in-law, S. Wellford Corbin
1866 January 1

Mexico
1 Jan 1866

My dear Corbin,

My letter of the 18 ultimo, proposing start after present crop you should let or lease F.V. and come here to watch events - crossed yours to the self some time. It appears to me for reasons in my letter to Nannie that it's the best thing for her to come in the spring and for you to follow in the fall.

It will be more consistent with yourself respect to abandon that country at least for the present. Don't stay there and help fasten the yoke upon your own neck that my precious Davy Jones gave up his life in trying to shake off. Don't stultify yourself, but come here to look over - and then when you see what means of Govt. the victors will impress, you can decide whether you will accept it. For God sake don't you help them, whether others may. This looking on will last probably till `69, in the same time, you can't make anything at F.V. You can barely live - but that you can do here.

You mention the "ifs & ifs & ifs": I recd letters yesterday from England, that give a semblance of reality to one of those "ifs". It is probable that I shall be sent for by the New Atlantic Telegraph Co. and if be that I shall ask leave of absence till the fall and take the str of 1 Feb. But I shall have Dick and you in charge of the house, and my room for you and Nannie. But I am not gone yet. And you shall hear more about it before I do go. In the mean time continue to write care of Y.P. Oropesa, Colonization Agent Vera Cruz.

I have a letter asking here for room for 10,000 of those noble [Carolinian] families, that fought and lost as we did and who two years ago, left their desolated houses to the victors and sought refuge like me of true pluck in a foreign land. Bless their hearts I'll do my best to help them to homes in these lovely climes. Tell Nannie to swap this letter with Betty for one to Will. "So Tidem" Good night

Yrs
Maury

Sue & pip send words of New Years calls & gifts. They are great belles.

Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers
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Letter to Empress Carlota of Mexico
1866 January 18

→Send to Betty & Will

There's only this one copy (MFM's hand)
{in pencil}

So Betty after studying it must send it to Nannie

"To her Majesty The Empress.

Madam:

I have the honour to transmit for the information of your Majesty, the communication made to this office by Mr. T.C. Hindman of which I had the honour of speaking yesterday. It relates to colonization, in connection with a system of internal improvements, a land survey and a census of the Empire. The subjects are of high importance, and the suggestions expressed by the author of the paper, are worthy of careful consideration.

It has not escaped Her Majesty's observation, how the Empire is gaining ground and acquiring strength: That it is gaining the confidence of the people of stability, no better evidence can be afforded that the potent fact, that capital is leaving its hiding places, and seeking investments in various enterprises throughout the Empire.

The times therefore seem propitious for inaugurating those great measure of policy the adoption of which would impart new vigour to this nascent life.

The revenues of the Empire may be increased and its prosperity promoted by revision of the whole excise system; and one of the first steps towards this is a census which will tell the number of the people, and the value of the property.

Another step, requiring years for its accomplishment, but nevertheless redounding the glory of our Emperor; the good of His people, and the welfare of His Empire, is a land-survey: - for the two fold purpose of [cadastre], and of separating the lands of the crown from those of the subjects.

Another pillar in the edifice which I am so anxious to see raised up here by His Majesty, to our honour and His glory, is a judicious system of internal improvements, self supporting, and sustained by the wealth which itself [creates]

As an illustration, let us take the case of an imaginary farmer in Cuernavaca: - It costs him annually in freight alone to send his crop to market in the City, say \$10,000 - If there were a Railway, his freight bill would be perhaps \$1000 instead of \$10,000; and his hacienda

would probably be trebled in value. Now if the owner of such a hacienda, was required to invest, in the shares of the Company, a certain portion of in increased value given to his property by the road - and the law were applied to all lands within a certain distance of the road, its construction would be secured without further tax upon the public treasury. The people would find in a little while, that this so called tax, instead of being a burden, was really a benefaction; for the stock-holders thus created by the paternal care of His Majesty, would stand upon a different footing from any other stock holder; for they would draw treble dividends: - first, from the earning of the road; and next upon the principle that a "penny saved is a penny gained," in paying at the rate of \$1,000 instead of \$10,000 annually for transportation of produce to market: - and last, in the increase of value which their lands derive from the existence of the road. Certain states in my native "sunny south" adopted this system: it worked like a charm and produced magic effects.

Another pillar to the superstructure which His Majesty is so nobly striving to raise, is a revision of the revenue laws, in homage of free trade: and the establishment of the warehousing system.

These measures, with colonization, will make us great; and the undersigned having some little knowledge(of a practical sort, (penciled in)) connected with them, hold, it together with the homage due from the most loyal of subjects, at the service of Their Majesties

M.F. Maury
January 18th 1866.

Imperial Commissioner

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Letter from Empress Carlota [Charlotte] of Mexico
1866 January 29

[annotation: Send to Nannie & Corbin]

Cuernavaca, January 29th 1866

My dear Sir:

I have spoken to the Emperor respecting our conversation of Friday last, and he wishes me to tell you, first, that he grants you a complete leave of absence to arrange your affairs in England, and allows you to set off by the next French packet, but that if he returns to Mexico in the meanwhile, he hopes yet to have the pleasure of seeing you; secondly, that he quite agrees with your purchasing the instruments for studying the rainy season, and thirdly that he approves of any effort you may make to introduce the "cinchona" tree and authorized you to have sent from Kew a few specimen of this valuable plant.

Hoping to have fulfilled my errand to your satisfaction, I only want to renew my best wishes for your voyage and successful exertions in England whilst I remain

Yours sincerely,
Charlotte

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1866 February 2

Mexico

2 Feb. 1866

My dear children:

I have taken my seat in the coach of the 8th expecting to sail from Vera Cruz in the F'r Str. of 13 and to arrive at [San Nazaire] about 10 March to lie about till the fall say the last of Oct. I want send you Max and my Carlota's princely letters. I expect to bring all hands with me when I return and so to Corbin at that Corbin and Nannie may join us in Havana on the way.

I leave Dick in charge of affairs. He is writing a book for the information of those who wish to come to Mexico. He has his heart very much in it. Dick is a fine character and I admire its beauty more and more every day. He is very full just now of buying some of these beautiful islands that dot the lake with acre spots, and go into the market gardening business.

You see by the letter of the Empress that I am aspiring to the glory of planting a [tribe].

Colonization is going on in spite of the want of public lands; our projects are dotting the Empire with settlements here and there. My own Carlotta Colony at Cordoba is flourishing. The settlers there are now being joined by their families from your country. 'Old Jubal' is here and I have offered him a place as agent. He is writing a history which your masters will not allow to be read or believed.

I have various inexpensive irons in the fire still. Some of them may come to a welding heat some of these days. If they do, we'll all be glad; and if they don't we will be none the worse.

I think the best thing for Corbin to do is to come down next fall and watch events. I take it that the South will be all at sea at least until after the next President takes his seat. Love to Sr. E, Mary, Brodie, Jno, Bob and all hands. God bless you all,

Yr. affectionate M.F.

*Note by RM – New York 18 Feby - The press copy of this letter from MF goes to Bettie.--

Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers
VMI Archives Manuscript # 00103
Letter his children
1866 March 1

→mail to Will or Corbin
Havana Arrived 9

Veracruz, Mexico
1 March 1866

My dear Children

The English steamer in which I have paid my passage £49.10 is now over-due two days, and her day of sailing again is day after to-morrow.

I left Mexico Saturday the 24th at 2 A.M. arrived at [Puebla] at 7 p.m. when I "pernocted" in a room with diverse others for \$2. Was called at 1 A.M. and off again at 2, over a very rough road -a very fatiguing journey. Passed between long ridges of my lordly maquay shooting up it magnificent flower stalks, as large and as high and as straight as a common telegraph pole. Indeed unless you were near enough to see the wires I found it often difficult to tell one from the other. This "first of Flora" with its enormous height and proportions is pushed up in the course of 6 or 7 days. To compare great things with small, imagine an immense asparagus stalk say one day old and before its head has swollen out sufficiently to begin to burst and shoot out branches, well imagine it to 18 or 20 inches in circumference, 30 or 40 feet high and you have it as I generally saw them, rising out its magnificent tuft of foliage 30 feet around and 12 feet high. Occasionally the more forward ones had commenced to shoot out, from the top and horizontally their splendid flower brackets and to assume the appearance of splendid and gigantic candelabras from which the genie of the hoary hooded orizaba which with his night cap of snow was looking down upon us, intended to light up the plains through which the coach was **teetering** its toilsome way. Ascending the Western slopes of the [Cumibres], the highest range between Mexico and the Gulf, we left its "boast of Bacchus" and entered the cloud region.

It was blowing a furious gale, the wind was howling amongst the rocks and cliffs, and driving a cold and penetrating mist through a white darkness so thick that you could see nothing beyond the distance of a few feet. It was piercing cold: I had on 3 flannel shirts, but as we began to climb, I began to draw around and button tight and finally found myself wrapped in cloak and blanket and uncomfortably cool. Presently we dropped down through this thick cloud stratum into bright sun shine and the coolest air that is was possible for heart of men to conceive. This was the lovely little valley of [Acu] at our feet, and spreading out miles away into the plains of Orizaba which are 4000 feet above the sea. The valley was quilted over by swirling crops in all the stages of growth from the sprouting corn to the ripe grain. The reapers were in golden fields of the yellowest and the brightest barley I ever saw, the wheat was just coming up; and immense herds of cattle as they fed on the rich pasturage lent a charm to the landscape that made it altogether lovely. Passing a cascade of milk white foam as it leaped from the mountains.

We entered the valley and felt what old Job had said about the scent of water - we were in the midst of fruits and flowers. Orange trees loaded with ripe fruit. And the peach tree is all the glory of blossom. Hedges and copens of roses, fuschias, arborvitaes, rhododendrons. Oh a wilderness of the loveliest flowers and the gayest colors, and such only as I used to think in Tennessee had never grown anywhere except in the garden of "Beauty and the Beast" - and it too has its beast, for two months ago it had been then in the shape of an earth-quake and shaken down the adobe huts of the village, which owners were reconstructing of some rustic materials, such as bamboo, reeds - palm [fronds] straw and hides. After passing through these beauties for 12 or 15 miles, and at 6½ p.m. drove into Orizaba in the midst of a rain storm - Coffee, tobacco, the cereals, and the banana with other fruits seemed to be the principle article of cultivation. Here I per-nocted again in another [] whereas before there was little chance for sleep. Was called at 5, off at 6, and at 10 breakfasted at Cordoba, and I arrived at Pas del Macho where I pernocted again as unsatisfactorily as before. And so the next day at 6 started in the cars for this place. Total expenses \$45.50 the \$0.50 being spent for extra's such as a cup of chocolate or so between the early hours of starting and the late one of breakfasting. There were fresh arrivals of immigrants, all the hands were taken up. Cordoba looked lively & everybody in high spirits. Two ship loads had just arrived. Sheridan had refused to let them embark at New Orleans as he was determined to break up that Maury nest of Confederates which was agitating the public mind of the South & preventing the people there from quietly submitting to subjugation. I thank him for the encouragement. The Mexican plan is spreading over the South. We are going to have happy homes, a fine country, & a bright future here. Let those who lack gall or who having it, have steeped it in honey, stay. I seek to plant my posterity here.

Dick has got land in my Carlota colony, 640 acres. He has sent to China for labourers- 12 or 15 to work it, and to Virginia for young Crutchfield to take charge of it. I have such good irons in such good fires, that some of them will surely be got to welding heat. If so, I hope to find comfortable homes, and a bright future here for you all at last. Corbin and Nannie will come in the steamer that is to leave New York Oct 8. They will without stopping here a night, take the cars to Paso del Macho- 50 miles-they are then by stage 5 hours from Cordoba, where they will arrive say 21st or 22nd and wait a week for us. We will be due here say on the 27th. Corbin can spend this week profitably & both of them pleasantly in visiting the Colony, examining the coffee plantations & c. [Then] will take a [whole] stage for Puebla, by which time the railway thru to Mexico will be completed- so will teeter over the cumbres and among the maguey in a stage coach.

My letter to "the people at home" has never been published. It should be. So should the anachronistic one to Dr. Dabney. Let my brave backers- Nannie & Corbin- do the thing that is right and send copies of them to Jno Tyler of the Whig or someone else who has a bone in his back to publish. Among the misfortunes that have befallen our people, I regard as not the least, the advice that has been given by the best men among them, viz.- to stay at home & help the enemy to establish his power & complete our degradation. The Yankees have conquered Virginia, it's theirs, we are subjugated, & have no rights except such as the victors in mercy may vouchsafe to give. If the whole South is not a conquered territory then I have never read in history of one that was conquered, and

Dabney & them who like him consider it to be their duty & their interest to help build up that Yankee despotism called the Union, owe it to the grace and mercy of their conquerors, that their conquerors do not cross from the map the very name of Virginia, blot out all former state lines, make new provinces and call a part of what was Virginia the state of Winnepiscogee, South Carolina Peasquod, & such like Yankee innovations & that nothing should remain to remind the vanquished of the ancient renown.

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Letter son-in-law S. Wellford Corbin
1866 May 21

Paris
21 May 1866

My dear Corbin:

The last I heard of you was about two weeks ago, through a letter from Brodie Herndon, who thought Nannie was as earnest for Mexico as ever, but that you were cooling off a little. All right.

The banker with whom I had deposited my 'little money' went down in the London panic week before last, and I lost all the money & more too that I brought away from Mexico. I am here trying to make some more.

My last letters from Dick are up to Apl. 6th.

No sooner had I left, than intriguers set to work and colonization was going on so badly, and the opposition of the minister was so vexatious that he talked of giving up the office. Immigrants were returning in disgust and the very thing was happening that I told the Emperor would happen unless he acted with more energy. In short complaints were being uttered against me in the U.S. so I hear. Now I had as you know been discouraging any of our people from coming unless they could come with a little ready money. And I had long ago told them not to rely upon good lands but to buy abandoned Haciendas.

All the promises and inducements that I have held out to immigrants were made by authority of H. majesty, and if they have not been made good I am the aggrieved party. Now I tell you and Nannie confidentially, that what has happened since I left Mexico has shaken my resolution about going back. I don't see what good I can do there except in the way of colonization, and if our people are flocking back as rumor has it, with curses hard & deep upon Mexico, it will be more than I can do to change such a current. I have no alternative in view- nor am I decided- Indeed I have not said anything in this view to my wife & children, and am saying it to you now, so that you too may cast about & not be taken 'quite aback' should I decide that Mex. is 'no go.' I do not wish you to speak of it to any one, simply because my own mind is not made up nor can it be without further & fuller information. If I should be compelled to give Mexico up, it will be a hard blow I tell you. I know not where to go or what to be at. I shall be here a week or ten days, perhaps two weeks before I set off to return to England. I must be in London 5 June, when I expect to here from Dick up to the 1st ins. 'So tider' & sleepy. God bless you both, yrs.
M. F.

Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers
VMI Archives Manuscript # 00103
Letter son-in-law S. Wellford Corbin
1866 August 11

11 Aug. 1866

My dear Corbin,

I wrote you from Paris 21 May telling you to hold on, as I probably should not return to Mexico. I have as you know decided not to go back there in the face of bad faith to me, bad treatment of our people and bad turns that everything has taken. I have never heard that you received the letter. It is the only one within that time, that I have written to any of my children, except Dick. This onset upon us as soon as my back was turned in Mexico, was a terrible blow. It put me to sea again, and I have been so hard at work or so busy preparing to get to work that I have not had time for writing much. I suppose I shall stay here and write school books for a New York publisher. That will give something to do for a year or two- but will not interfere with my flirting with other matters wherein there are promises. Dick poor fellow is left in Mexico as flat as possible. I want to get him out of that. But where he is to go or what to do after that is a problem that puzzles me much. Perhaps I may find occupation for him in Central America. But I shall be able to speak more positively upon that point by the time the rains are over & it will be safe to come down to the sea-board. He must come away in the fall anyhow. The breakdown in Mexico damaged your plans as well as my own. What are you going to do now. I always as you know regarded F.V. as not the most judicious purchase in the world, chiefly on the score of health and locality. I don't think affairs in the U.S. as either settled, or stable. The government is obliged to be broken up as it now exists. Still I don't see what better you can do than to hold on, and try to make a living there. I hope indeed if the New York publisher- Richardson- be a responsible man, and I have no reason to doubt, I should be able to assist you with a few hundred \$ as far as that will go towards setting yourself up. I reckon I shall be able to let you have \$1000, but of this I can speak positively by the time I hear from you and hear what your plans, wishes, and wants are.

In the first place I hope you know exactly how you and F.V. stand with regard to the estate. I hope you have your release and consequently my security-ship touching your indebtedness in black and white and in regular ship-shape style. Not Mr. B's word & opinion merely but the regular Documents. If you have the note, urge the having of it, and if the plea will help you, say that the assistance promised by me depends upon that. I am afraid you will not live long enough to escape from the tangled inheritance imposed by that unfortunate estate. Even if the school-book plan goes well, I should not be able to let you have the \$1000 all in a lump, but by driblets, but say all between this and Xmas. See Charles Herndon and find out what sort of obligation - by lien if need be you ought to be given - (not by personal securities) - so in case of need. This loan may have purposes over other claims upon you. So if things turn out ugly, I can protest that money. We are

all well. Molly had this morning an invitation to visit Scotland and `not put her hands in her pocket. I am going to put Brave in a school of chemistry and Lucy to a boarding school. I have all the [other] news of family affairs to the rest and will [write] Love and blessings upon all yr. folks.

Yr aft M.F.M.

Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers
VMI Archives Manuscript # 00103
Letter to daughter, Diana Maury Corbin
1866 December 9

3 Belsize Square
London N.W.
9 Dec. 1866

My dear Nannie,

Your and Mary's letter afforded much gratification and did us a heap of good. Elie has all of Nan-na's pretty sayings at heart. She will repeat them to the congregation to night. I reckon for she Totts Lucy and the Brave have gone to church. Your Ma has a cold and is sitting by pouring over the maiden and married life of Mary Powell. The editor had a right to refuse to publish and Will did right to hand him my paper. Never my child tamper with principle for the sake of the expediency. I have no copy of that letter but the time will when you will wish you had & would give jewels for it. Suppose Sir Thos. More, [Harindon], Montrose (this last always calls up my blessed Davy Jones & his beautiful recitative) but supposed they had not acted up to principle because of fear when the time came, what should we have cared for them. Perhaps that letter would have strengthened the wavering, at any rate it would have shown that one at least could dare to speak.

It's as well- for I am not yet prepared to make Corbin the advances I spoke of-tho' I hope soon to be. I expected and still desire to kill 4 birds with that stone.

First to help you & him with a little left.

2. To enable him to stir B up and get his affairs & papers with him all right, for I fear that these payments made by him during the war do not, or rather have not cancelled the debt to the estate.

3. I wanted Charles' opinion in the matter, with the assurance that a lien could be so drawn as to make me a preferred creditor.

4. And in case of misfortune to enable me to step in and give that much to you & him.

I hope to sent the M.S. of the first geography off by xmas, and to be able to let Corbin have a part of the \$1000 at least by the time he can pick the above 4 named birds chosen and to our satisfaction. I do not think as I told him before the war that F.V. is a desirable place for him. I think so chiefly for the same reasons now that I thought so then. Events have vindicated the soundness of my views ante bellum. I presume therefore he is now on the look out for a sale or a swap. If he thinks the 4 birds are all right and want \$200 about Xmas `mighty bad' & will report to Rutson, I'll ask R. to advance him the money from me. Love to everybody Brodie-Charles-and ----- . I am quite proud to hear such good things of `Tim'. I always thought Tim with his big mouth would make a good preacher. God bless you. Yr affect father M.F. Maury.

Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers
VMI Archives Manuscript # 00103
Letter son-in-law S. Wellford Corbin
1867 May 19

3 Belsize Square
London N.W.
19 May 1867

Dear Corbin,

Rutson with his usual kind thoughtfulness and industry told me yesterday of your letter in reply to his offer to [use] his loan of \$200. I see by that that you are undecided as to your future plans. As far as I can make out, you have abandoned the idea at least for the present of rebuilding at Farley Vale. That seems to me to be a wise decision. The question with you, seemed to be, between buying and renting in town. In the present state of affairs buying does not commend itself to me, for two reasons: While that suit is pending, you do not know where you are. This fact, irrespective of the social, industrial and political whirlpool which is wracking the South, should give you pause about any such investment just now. Nannie I suppose will come to us, and that will give you time to look about.

But for that suit, I dare say the purchase of a house in town would be a good investment. You know better as to that than I do. I am not able - though I have tried - to see things thro' Brodie's & Rutson's & Will's and other friendly spectacles that have been so kindly offered. For me, the future of the South is very dark. I am no more able to look into it than you are. But I try to get an idea of it by looking quite in the opposite direction and examining those agricultural countries that once had and now no longer have, slaves, or serfs, or peon labour; and the conclusion that I came to is, that town property in the South may hold its own, and even rise, but land in the country must go down, down until the taxes will be intolerable. If you ask me to state the process of reasoning by which I arrive at this conclusion, I will ask you to say why do you think otherwise, seeing that in all those agricultural countries where slave labour once was & is not, the value of farming lands has gone down to nothing. In Spanish America & in Jamaica the most splendid plantations have gone back to the bush and are wild lands again. But the South, we flatter ourselves, is neither Spanish America, nor Jamaica. That's true. But they are beacons- and we must not shut our eyes to the light which their experience casts before us. But admit my reasoning to be wrong; and I am far from claiming clearness for it- there is still another view drawn from broader premises in favor of an enhancement in the South of town, as compared with country, property. I have travelled about the world "some", and have always aimed to have my eyes about me. And in no agricultural country, have I ever found any country society in which a gentleman or a lady of refined tastes and habits could find the least congeniality. The reasons are obvious. You have heard my anecdotes of "Mr. Smith, Brown, Jones" et.al- rich New York farmers, that had "retired to town" to live, because Mrs. Smith had got tired keeping boarding house for, and waiting on farm hands. Let me be not misunderstood- I am not speaking of

gentlemen of fortune who live in town or do business there and have their "country seats" but I am speaking of the farmers, the tillers of the soil, the bone and sinew of an agricultural country. How is it with the Pa. farmers? How with the Ohio & the West? Don't you know that a labourer in the country will not service your 'country farm' in the U.S. except upon terms of perfect equality? He must sit at the same table and warm by the same fire with the "boss & his gals". Go among the Pa. farmers, or any where else among the farmers of the far states, and you will see the colored labor & the white upon the most perfect terms of equality and the wife and daughters of the farmer serving meals to them both and standing behind their chairs, as they sit at [meat]. You and other Va. gentleman are not yet quite prepared for wife and daughter to do that. But that we who live in this country have to come to it is as clearly indicated as is the march of any other human want. Barriers have already been broken down between the blacks & the whites which two years ago, your wisest statesmen did not have the sagacity to think were in the round of possibilities. And do the lines of demarcation between the races- [vouch] only the skin and certain antipathies (antagonisms shall I call them?) are being done away with, & that too with a rapidity that the whole South deemed impossible. Is it to be presumed from what you have already seen, and from what everybody who has studied human nature knows, -?-is it to be supposed, that white & black hirelings are, in the end, going to work side by side in the field upon any other terms but that of perfect equality? If our [lots] & [ships] in the "great House" so must wish the other. I can readily imagine that many a country gentleman, [piercing] the shadows of these events- for they are very plain- is already for "returning to town". Therefore I say it's more likely that town property will increase in value than the country property. And but for that suit, I should be less disinclined to say buy a house in town now.

Many changes have come over our people which they did not expect; and in my judgment, many more are in store for them, for which they are not even now prepared. All that refined and elegant country society which was the pride & boast of Va. has, sooner or later, to abandon the country and "retire to town." In sea ports of the world that I have been, have I never found among the farmers, in the farm house, in the country, any society at all comparable for intelligence and cultivation to the country society of the South. On coming here to England, where there are so many industries besides agriculture, one of the first things that would strike you, would be its high state of cultivation and improvement. Elegant fields, wide domains, flocks and herds (splendid plantations you would think they were) and then you would begin to look for the Mansion, the splendid house to which all this belonged, as contra-distinguished from the "Country seat" of some gentleman of fortune who is not a farmer. But you would not find it. Most of the people whose labour made the landscape so [ing] are grouped together in a little village. I remember in passing through Indiana with Dick in 1857, that I was reminded of what I saw in Germany in 1855: a country under superb cultivation but scarcely a farm house - and never one at all in keeping with the manor. But you were amazed at the number of small towns and little villages. You remember how that the census of New York and other Northern States which are taken intermediate as [between] the U.S. census, astonished the whole country in 1855. In many parts, the rural population appeared to be actually decreasing while the actual population was largely on the increase- It was the farmers "retiring to town"- not actually giving up farming, but coming to town for the sake of society, and to buy [exemptions]. And instead, as the political

economists argued, its being a sign of decreasing prosperity, it was the very reverse. Instead therefore of your lordly plantations and large farms at the South, the country as it is filled up in the process of time by natural increase and immigration, is to be dotted over with villages like all the free labour agricultural countries that I have ever seen. And whether you are to have any sudden immigration is to depend upon the wisdom and sagacity of your law makers.

I have thought it as well, dear Wellford, to lay these views before you, that you might ponder them, sift them, and if they embrace anything worth the having, that you may [turn] it to account in your own private affairs. These are views that would shock many of our people. But I don't write them for the vox pop. I write them for you, and the personal friends around you such as Brodie Herndon et al who may care to know them. I hope I shall always have the courage to look things in its face and draw legitimate conclusions. Nothing can keep up the value of land in the South but a large influx of people to [till] there. Since I went to Mexico the subject of immigration has been a speciality. And I can tell you that there must be some steps taken by you wise men and [

] very different from any yet, else you will not live to see enough to do you any good. Cousin Anne has indefinitely postponed her trip, Nannie I hope will have set off to us before this reaches you. If not let her come in the same liner her Ma did. Rutson will see her on board and Cousin Ann will speak the Captain and the Stewards, and I will meet her at L'pool, and so she can come without an escort. Give our best love to Brodie and Lucy, and tell her I'd give anything for one of those cosy little chats with her - Brodie to listen. Mit is still in L'pool. All hands send love,

Yrs truly M.F. Maury

My love to [Sandy Little]

May 21 Mit came to us last night - Here's something for you to turn over in you r mind. I am not sure, but I believe that Dick has to manage for his Co. a cocoa or a coffee plantation. I don't know which - How would you like to [put] yourself up about it with the idea of taking charge of it. I'll mention it to him and you can [] by str of 10 June. [Yr M]

Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers
VMI Archives Manuscript # 00103
Letter son-in-law S. Wellford Corbin
1867 September 22

No. 3 Belsize Square
22 Sept 1867

Dear Corbin-

Tremlett and I thought we were on a good trail for you the other day. Semmes wrote that there was no English insurance agency in Memphis. Off we went to beat up the [] & some of these solid fellows and put them to the establishment of agencies in Tenn., La., Va. etc. for Semmes, Dabney you & c. But we found that 4 of the more venturesome ones were already there. Nannie wrote you about them, and told you how to proceed in case there was an opening in Richmond & the place seemed inviting to you.

The pay is on per customer or business done and therefore I cannot advise one way or another as I have no idea as to the amount of business that might be done in Richmond. It is better as you know to work for nothing than to rust and though the wish to help to put you in the way of something that will pay is ever present it does not seem likely soon to be gratified. Elie is still forging ahead slowly. She has been very ill. Nana is very bright a sort of privileged character & pet of the parish. Her mother is very sobersided and loath to take as much outdoor exercise as health seems to require in these latitudes. Lucy is at school and Brave sets in tomorrow week. Brave is getting a fine education. Molly is not very strong and her mother is pulled down a good deal by nursing. As for me "I'm right smart". Love to Betty all at Brodie's- Charles & everywhere. Your affectionate,

M.F. Maury