

[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
1869 January 8

Richmond Va.
8 Jany `69

Dear Corbin,

I am grieved to hear my warning proved so true. This pocketing of losses in times like these, is a hard thing. Have you yet come to any definite understanding with W & E? I think it is time you should have a talk with them and a distinct understanding. If you have it so, the chances are that somebody I know will get fleeced. I'll send you next week one of my pamphlets, which you can give them to read, and then tell them what a great man it is going to make of me in the South, the prestige it will give you, and then tell them what you want.

The silver and the trunk came yesterday. Sorry you did not have time for a run to Richmond. The Gen'l came down from the 'Rugged' last night. He brought me a [cheese] of [--] from Sally. Have not seen him yet. Sue dined with us yesterday. Then Lucy and all hands spend the evening at 'Zoras' tonight. Tell Nannie she was at a party last night, they played "Chopin and Chopout" and she doesn't know what that is.

Love to Nannie
Yrs M.F. Maury

Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers
VMI Archives Manuscript # 00103
Letter to son-in-law, S. Wellford Corbin
1869 January 14

Richmond Va
14 January 1869

Dear Corbin,

I am sorry to have such an account of yr tenant. You will be lucky to get rid of him without more trouble. His contract shows that he is one of those who are unworthy of confidence - his London trip is I take it a sham.

I hope to send you in a few days copy of the Report. The Railway and Canal men have been watching the press and literally devouring the sheets as fast as they were printed. They think it will wake up a lively interest especially in the South and West. Smith - V.M.I. will be down to-morrow, we are going to send copies to Governors of the states and ask them to make it the subject of official action by calling it to the attention of legislatures &c.

The Report will I am sure tickle vox pop especially the planters, farmers and factors in the Mississippi Valley, and it ought to give you favor among them.

Indeed it may be worth considering whether it be not wise for you to look in the direction of Norfolk anyhow, for the Report makes a Dutch line of steamers from Flushing to Norfolk look very promising anyhow. In beating about the bush in my mind for something for Dick, I have been looking that way. I fancy this report will give us an influence which if we have the tact and the luck on our part may be made of commercial value. In the course of two or three weeks you will see by watching South-Western and N. Western papers how the thing works, and can then better shape your course.

If W. & E. have lost money it don't sound well for a partnership. Anyhow, I question whether it would not be better for you to be looking out for something else. I doubt whether a monthly salary would not be better than a partnership with them. A partnership would tie you down and in coming, as this Report and my other work here will bring, so [prominently] before your customers, I may have a chance in some unexpected way of helping you along, of which, if you're tied down by co-partnership, might be lost. In short the chances are that you may be able to do quite as well, South, pecuniarily and a great deal better socially than you are now doing. Therefore when the time comes for your talk, consider well the grounds you should take: a good monthly salary to be antedated: what think you? I suggest but don't [persuade].

This is my birth day tell Nannie. Sue's going up to F'bg next month. Mary Herndon is here, her brother is at V.M.I. We are all well and send love. I think that so called "conservative [Va.] [ca] impolite and foolish.

yrs truly
M.F. Maury

Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers
VMI Archives Manuscript # 00103
Letter to son-in-law, S. Wellford Corbin
1869 January 29

Richmond Va
29 Jan. `69

Dear Corbin,

Printers here are slow. The Reports are not all out yet. I sent you two of the past batch to read and then give to yr bosses.' I now send you one to keep.

It seems to have hit the public mind in Va anyhow. I hope you will have a talk soon about your pay. I do not much fancy a co-partnership - commercial - these times. For though you may put in nothing, financiers here are ticklish. Your house may break and so sweep away all of your Va. property. Moreover I think it worth something to keep yourself free, so that you may be in a position to take advantage of anything that may turn up.

Isn't the first payment due on those Minnesota lands? Please inquire of Hasbrouck. Love to Nannie and the children

Yrs
M.F. Maury

Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers
VMI Archives Manuscript # 00103
Letter to son-in-law, S. Wellford Corbin
1869 February 1

Richmond
1 Feb `69

Dear Corbin,

Brodie is here and I have yrs of Saturday. All well about Wade. [Still Sue doesn't care to travel]. Suppose you get two or three weeks leave - run down to Norfolk and try this:

I am urging Smith and his [] in the [] to send agents out to the states where interests are touched by preliminary No. 1 to ask the legislatures and the principle cities to order each a few thousand copies and so help to circulate the docs. If they will order we will get up a revised & improved edition especially for them. Norfolk, Petersburg and Richmond ought to order ea. 2000 copies so ought [Mahone] - begin by asking them to order 500 ea. Postmasters ought to order 1000, ditto Seaboard R.R.'s, and the line of steamers that ply between New York and Norfolk ought to order 500. I am proffering to Smith to put the New Edition @ \$2 per copy, and give his agents 50¢ per copy upon all orders. Now if he comes into this how would you like to drum up in Va.? The doing of it, would pay expenses at any rate - `twould identify you and make you acquainted with the Norfolk people, and so may be give a string to your bow to send an arrow at W & E with. Jansen is working like a horse with the Dutch Va. line of steamers. You could preach that up at the same time. Money has to be and is to be raised for that. You can try that too - somebody must be employed for this - and why not you? So turn the idea over in your mind, and in case Smith says the word, be ready to broach the [] to old [Wade]. You can then come here - we post you up, have a meeting called and so Launch you. I can fancy that this business may not be altogether agreeable at first blush. But all you have to do is to put on a bold face and teach those people what they ought to do. Am glad to hear the children are O.K. again. Tell Nannie her Ma is in bed with a cold. Dick is in Lexington and all the rest well.

Yrs truly M.F. Maury

I send you ten more pamphlets.

Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers
VMI Archives Manuscript # 00103
Letter to son-in-law, S. Wellford Corbin
1869 February 16

Richmond , Va
16 Feb. 1869

Dear Corbin,

Thanks to you and Hasbrouck for the \$925.56/100. Its welcome I tell you.

I understand Charles has made all things straight with your tenant touching past rents.

W. requires you to put more faith in him than he puts in you. "Take any "ipse dixit" and you make it all right" - he says to you. But why does he not let you know what his plans are? Suppose they turn to naught - then there you are. For that reason I wanted you to have two strings to your bow. Look at C.B.R. promises are bountiful, Wait, Wait, and [nary red] since I came back. W. may be all right and his intentions may be ever so good, but you have to look out for yourself and when he comes to [shout up] his plans you may find them [St py] with ifs." And would not have you break with him, but I would have you ask to be informed, so that if they don't strike your fancy you may be on the lookout for something else. Therefore I would take the first opportunity and ask him to tell you the precise character of the arrangement that he has in view.

The Reports are in great demand. I send you a couple. Love to Nannie and the children. All well.

Yrs
M.F. Maury

Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers
VMI Archives Manuscript # 00103
Letter to son-in-law, S. Wellford Corbin
1869 April 20

Richmond Va
20 Apr `69

Dear Corbin,

I feel uneasy about that warehouse swindling case. Let me know if you are in any way hurt by it. I suppose at any rate it interferes materially with your plans. I am told it ruins W & E. Please let me know all about. In haste,

Yrs
M.F. Maury

Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers
VMI Archives Manuscript # 00103
Letter to son-in-law, S. Wellford Corbin
1869 April 30

Richmond VA
30 Ap'l '69

Dear Corbin,

I have been very much engrossed. Have just finished for Mr. Johnson a notice of my blessed Davy Jones.

Yrs of 28th came duly to hand. Was relieved to know that Wade & [Estey's] misfortune did not involve you. You know better than I can suggest what to do now.

It is within the power of the people to be represented in the Norfolk convention to say whether they will have direct trade with Holland. If they say `yes' and give the right sort of earnest, then the Dutch will probably establish a large house in Norfolk. In that case they will probably want a businessman for associate, who is well acquainted in the South & West. Now the question is how can you manage to bring yourself to the acquaintance of the trading businessmen in Montgomery- Memphis - Knoxville, Chattanooga, Huntsville - Nashville, Louisville, Cincinnati

[and-].

If you or I had any authority to speak for the Dutchmen in the matter, it would be plain sailing, and we should know how to go to work. But there's no hurry, look out for the proceedings of the convention, & find out the leading houses in N.C. & the West, try as opportunity allows to get into correspondence of some sort with them- and if during the next 12 months you can bring yourself to their acquaintance, perhaps, if the Dutchman comes, you may have a chance to show him around.

Packing up for VMI.

I am afraid the day I'll move will not turn out so well. Nannie & Nan are very good friends now. Do you think that [boarding] them will make them any better? It's only in that aspect & the mosquitoes that I "has my doubts about"

All well and send love
yrs
M.F. Maury

Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers
VMI Archives Manuscript # 00103
Letter to son-in-law, S. Wellford Corbin
1869 May 22

Richmond VA
22 May 1869

Dear Corbin,

About the Piano- I wish you would get Ellen Lewis to help you and Nannie select a first rate one, to cost not over \$800 - eight hundred \$. Go for performance and richness of tone, not just for outside appearance. Bargain for freight paid here if they can, but for delivery on board steamer and packing up anyhow. It should be directed to Maury, Lexington, and consigned with bill o'lading, to Col. Dillon (DILLON) James River Canal Office. His office is right at steam boat landing. You can draw at sight on R. H. Maury & Co. where I have given you a credit for \$800. Yr draft to be signed M.F. Maury for yourself. Perhaps you may make a better arrangement with R. H. Maury himself who left last night for New York.

Please you and Nannie keep your eyes about you for carpets. They ought to be cheap now. Small figures and bright colors are [the] go for small rooms, small figures some [worsted]. [Then these] down stairs rooms should be good Brussels, or Wilton- the dining room and parlor the most costly, but none over \$2 the yard, including the making which must be done there, & including also packing and delivery on board str. consigned as the piano is to be. They can be made by the enclosed draft which please take care of.

Brave's and the up-stairs rooms should be cheap remnants, 3 ply or Brussels, according to bargains. You know I like variety, therefore don't go for matching the rooms. Rugs also, and carpet-[slips] I reckon for the upstairs passage. Dick has coloured it you see for oil cloth- We have oil cloth for the bare passage already on its way up there. I have shut up all the doors in the Parlour except one. Please enquire for bargains & report progress before going further. All well. We expect to get off next Tuesday.

Yr Aft.
P.T.O. M.F. Maury

(verso) Also inquire as to the price of a neat electroplate water pitcher and tea kettle such as the one we used to have at the `Sup'

Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers
VMI Archives Manuscript # 00103
Letter to son-in-law, S. Wellford Corbin
1869 June 17

V.M.I.
17 June `69

Dear Corbin,

Nannie's room is all ready, but we have heard nothing from her than what is mentioned in yours of 15th just to hand.

In re: carpets, I did not expect you to do more just now than to post me up as to prices & c. The girls wanted to have something to say as to colors, patterns, & c. Moreover I did not want to buy now, have no funds, no place to store them, and \$500 for Dining room & Parlour is beyond my mark. Therefore unless you are committed for them, I don't want them. If however you are committed for them, bargain that they are not to be sent until we are ready for them in the fall, and that they shall send with them all the scraps & pieces which are wasted in the cutting. We have already two rugs in the parlour & a [] []. I take it that you have not ordered any of the other carpeting *. {(*I do not want it) in margin}. You did right not to order the iron bedstead, for I did not expect you to do that upon what I said. Caution the upholsterer not to make the mattress a hair's breadth larger than the bed in the []- a little smaller it will still fit- an inch larger, no!. You do not say anything about the andirons, [fender] & c. We have none of them at all and fires at night are often pleasant. The canal is in repair, and will not be open again from Richmond before 1st July- Therefore I had rather these things & the mattress should not be sent till then.

Rutson wrote me last Saturday -12- that Stewart's man had been to him with a bill for \$500 odd for goods for me to know if I was good. R. said he would pay if I didn't- I replied to R. that I knew nothing about it, that I had authorized no such bill- not dreaming it was you & the carpets. If as I said you have made yourself liable for them insist that they shall be kept until called for. There is no place for them without putting them down. We don't want to do that- 1st because we prefer bare floors. 2. Plasterers and other workmen have work to do which probably will not be done for months- 3. There is no place to store them. Therefore they must not be sent till we are ready for them.

The Piano has come - all safe- Elegant. Everybody pleased with it, and Elie is now making it "talk"! Thanks.

Which way do you go on the 22nd. Can't you come this way? There's plenty of room for you- Dick is in W. V. He & Sue have engaged lodgings at the Pendleton's.

I am invited to take charge of the University of Ala. at Tuscaloosa. Have it under

consideration. My decision when they ask it will be something like this- Give me full swing and \$10 m {10,000} a year for 5 years and I'll try to build you up- Before the war it had 350 boys- vs 25 now- so you see it's right low. You may well consider I'm not anxious to go- they offer \$4m and I fancy they are not prepared to give \$10,000. Please put the prices on Edgerton's list & return it.

yrs truly
M.F. Maury

Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers
VMI Archives Manuscript # 00103
Letter to son-in-law, S. Wellford Corbin
1869 September 1

(probably in hand of daughter Mary Herndon Maury)

V.M.I.
September 1st '69

Dear Corbin,

Use the accompanying letter as you think best. I should like to have Gould sounded upon it & to know what he says. I send you the pamphlets. Please get from Stewart his carpet bill. It is getting most time for me to order them forward, but before I do that I want to raise the money for paying for them, & the first step is to know how much that is. Inquire also, if you please as to the discount he will allow if you pay him on the shipment of the carpets instead of forwarding his bill here to be paid when they are delivered to me.

Nannie & Sue did not go to the Baths, because I fancy, I was not here to make them, & now they are looking so well that I do not think it necessary for them to go.

All well & send love.

**Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers
VMI Archives Manuscript # 00103
Letter to son-in-law, S. Wellford Corbin
1869 September 9**

V.M.I. 9th/9/'69

Dear Corbin,

I suppose my letter last week in reply to yours about the Dutch steamers must have miscarried.

So here's at you about the carpets again. Have them shipped via steamer to Smith (Gen'l's brother), Norfolk- ask him to pay charges and forward by what the Gen'l calls his air[]- viz rail to Lynchburg & canal thence. If Stewart will allow discount, pay him there on presentation of bill o'lading. Rutson has been asked to honor your draft. Better see R. first to make sure for I am not in a hurry & don't care if the carpets don't arrive before the 25th. If he won't discount, then let T. ship on the 20th as above and let "charges follow". I'll pay on delivery.

I wish you would get from him & have them put up in the same* { (* to save freight) at bottom of page} bundle with the carpets, & have charged on the carpet bill - 12 doz. table napkins - not extra fine or extravagant - but such as a gentleman ought to have on his table every day - Such for instance as cousin Ann has; perhaps she or ['Quincy'] will select them for me. Of course I don't care where you get them so they are good, decent, and not extravagant & so they come with the carpets - inside - without extra freight. If possible & to save freight the carpets should all be in one bundle, or in as few bundles as economy suggests. Nanny & the children all well.

Betty with her aunt will leave us next Tuesday.
yrs M.F. Maury

N.B. It's 144 Table napkins that I want - linen all-

On reverse of second sheet:

"Messrs Paten & Co
My friend Mr. Corbin wants 12 Dz napkins similar to sample, please give him the right kind & price.

Yrs,
R.P. Richardson

Sep 12/69

Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers
VMI Archives Manuscript # 00103
Letter to son-in-law, S. Wellford Corbin
1869 September 10

V.M.I.
10 Sept. 1869

Dear Corbin,

12 doz. will be too many. 6 doz. napkins will do- Let them be all of the usual dinner size. If not too late therefore let the order be for 72 instead of 144 table napkins Dinner size.

Yrs,

M.F. Maury

Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers
VMI Archives Manuscript # 00103
Letter to son-in-law, S. Wellford Corbin
1869 September 16

V.M. I.
Lexington, VA
16 Sept. '69

Dear Corbin,

Yours of 13th rec'd. Napkins & consignment O.K. Thanks-

Nannie is still at the McD's. Is waiting till our new cook comes. Weather fine. Children well & my nerves distressingly 'shaky'.

Yrs,
M.F. Maury

Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers
VMI Archives Manuscript # 00103
Letter to son-in-law, S. Wellford Corbin
1869 December 12

V.M.I.
Lexington, VA
20/12/69

My dear Corbin,

I was sorry to hear that Edgerton has gone 'by the board'. My observations teach me that the merchants who never fail are comparatively few- and they are either men of means outside of the capitol embarked in their business- or men who have friends to back them. I should be exceedingly sorry to see you entering into mercantile business in any way except as an agent or employee- and that is a business that is desirable only until you come into possession of your inheritance so find out when you are. At any rate I hope you will enter into no "entangling [obligation] before we meet which I hope will be soon. I still look for you before New-Year. Xmas week is a holy-day time in New York.

Please jog Hasbrouck's memory about the St. Paul bond. I am hard up & should like to have the money on the very day it falls due, if possible. 'The Boy' is the life of the house-coming out every day with something original.

Yrs
M.F. Maury