

Near Cartersville, Va, 8 Sept.1865

My dear Captain,

I have just received your letter of the 8th. We have certainly not found our form of Government all that it was anticipated by its original founders. But that may be partly our fault, in expecting too much, partly to the absence of virtue in the people. As long as virtue was dominant in the Republic, so long was the happiness of the people secure. I cannot however despair of it yet. I look forward to better days; I trust that time and experience, the great teachers of men, under the guidance of an ever merciful God, may save us from destruction and restore us the bright hopes and prospects of the past. The thought of abandoning the country and all that must be left in it is abhorrent to my feelings, and I prefer to struggle for its restoration and share its fate than to give it all up as lost. Still I have a great admiration for Mexico. The salubrity of its climate, the fertility of its soil, and the magnificence of its scenery possess for me great charms; but I look with delight upon the mountains and rivers of my native state still.

To remove our people with their domestics, to a portion of Mexico which would be favorable to them would be a work of much difficulty. Did thy posses the means, and could the system of apprenticeship you suggest be established, the U.S. Government I think would interpose obstacles and under the circumstances there would be difficulty in persuading the freedmen to emigrate. The citizens who can leave the country, and the others who may be compelled to do so, will reap the fruits of your considerate labors, but I shall be very sorry if your presence be lost to Virginia. She has new need for all her sons and can ill afford to spare yours.

I am very much obliged to you for all you have done for us and hope your labors in the future may be as in the past; and that your separation from us may not be permanent.

Wishing you much prosperity and happiness,

Yours,

R. E. Lee