

MEISSEN, (Kingdom of Saxony,)
Nov'r 20th, 1848.

TO FRED'K A. MAYO, Esq'r,
Richmond Va.

DEAR SIR,

Permit me to address myself to you concerning the Eisenmenger possessions of land in the counties of Grayson, Monroe, Montgomery, Tazewell and Wythe, (Western Virginia,) of which you know more than any one else. Agents, and their whereabouts, of those lands are entirely unknown to me. As the confidential man of a great number of my countrymen here, who, like myself, intend to emigrate to America (U. States) next year, it is my task to make all possible enquiries for suitable lands for them to go to. Notwithstanding the flattering offers from Wisconsin, Iowa, N. Illinois, Indiana and Western Pennsylvania, I also thought to hear something of Virginia, more particularly of the Eisenmenger possessions in the west; and you, sir, were the fittest organ to apply to. Pardon, therefore, the liberty I take in taxing you thus with a letter! Should there be still unoccupied lands for sale, (of some extent and worth, to be sure,) I request you to hand to the agent the annexed questions for answering, and you will have afterwards the kindness to corroborate such answers and statements of the agents, and be pleased to add as much information as possible, not only concerning the above Eisenmenger possessions, but also about the chances of German emigration in Virginia generally. I am aware that many of your wealthy planters leave for the rich lands farther west and south; but such apparently exhausted lands they leave, seem to me just fit for the more careful tillage of our people. Please to give your own opinion on this. I look forward to it in these important considerations, for your high character for integrity is well known to me, and I shall place implicit reliance on all whatever you may be pleased to state. The responsibility I have taken upon me, renders the services of a gentleman, like you, very great, as great as they are needful.

In case there exist drawn plans of the above named Eisenmenger lands, I beg to have a copy sent; but should no plan be ready, no time should be lost in answering this, for my correspondence must be closed about the beginning of March. It will then depend upon the most favourable accounts from the different correspondents, whither we shall direct our course. Much may depend upon my own decision. I think I shall choose Virginia, but to turn the tide of emigration, the accounts must, at the least, be as favourable as from Western Pennsylvania, Illinois and Wisconsin. In the latter case, I would take the lead with the first body; leave directions for a second; and afterwards send reports and statements, and the tide of Saxon emigration would soon turn into Western Virginia, and the yet unimproved lands would soon be occupied. Great sums are now leaving this country for the

United States; but seven weeks ago, two families left for Wisconsin, with a capital of 150,000 Prussian thalers, ready money. I also desire the agents to reserve for my own use, a tract of 200 acres of fine land, in a choice situation, and to make some allowance as to the price, for I have to look to both parties for some compensation for my troubles, to the emigrants as well as to the agents; both will equally profit by my exertions. This latter point, however, may only be considered as settled, when the accounts should be favourable.

The following are the questions to be answered by the agents, and corroborated by your statements, as above desired:

1. What are the quantities of lands yet for sale of the Eisenmenger possessions? (to be sure with indisputable titles.)

2. How are they to be sold; in sections or in tracts?

3. What is the price of the same per acre?

4. What is the price of the cultivated rich uplands adjoining per acre? (with indisputable titles to be sure.)

5. What is the general surface and quality of those lands?

6. How are those lands timbered and watered?

7. What are the mineral resources of those lands, more particularly of iron ore, salt, saltpetre, lead, coal, &c.? Are such treasures reserved by congress, by state, or by the present owners? Or do they belong to the future owner by right of deed?

8. What has been done in those counties, respecting roads, the navigation of rivers, and internal improvements generally?

9. What are the present staples of those counties?

10. What branches of industry are carried on in the same, and the neighbouring counties? Which branches are still wanting, and may be carried on?

11. Of what character is the climate? What is the duration of winter? Does the climate partake more of the adjoining, Ohio or Kentucky? Are sudden changes of weather and temperature common?

(a.) Are there any foundries (iron) established in those or the neighbouring counties? If so, what is the price of iron ore per cwt. or ton? Of bar iron? Of cast iron and coal?

(b.) With what success has the silk worm been reared in Virginia, and in the neighbouring Kentucky? Is it still carried on, and profitable?

(c.) Has the cultivation of grapes ever been tried since some varieties do so well on the Ohio, and with what success?

(d.) What are the usual prices for teams of oxen and horses; what of first rate cows, sheep and hogs? What are they of all the most needful things for a farmer?

(e.) Is white labour desired in Virginia or not at present?

(f.) Is it advisable to work farms with white labourers? and is it not more profitable?

(g.) What is the wages of a first rate negro per annum? What is the day's wages of a first rate white labourer on a farm?

(h.) How do Saxon sheep in Virginia? Does their wool soon go down in quality? Or are the coarser wools preferred in the markets?

(i.) In what condition are the public schools? What is done for the same, more particularly in the above counties? Is slavery diminishing in Virginia, and do you think it probable that white labour may in future supersede slave labour?

Many of the foregoing questions are rather of a detailed nature, and would not have been proposed by myself, had they not been handed to me by the party concerned, for proposition. However, in so important an undertaking, no one will be thought hard of for enquiring minutely. What seems to me an important point, is to know whether you think it profitable and advisable to encourage white labourers as well as capitalists to settle in Virginia? For if the old plantation system is uninterrupted, I hardly think that small landholders will be in their proper place in Virginia; but how ought I to know? I never was there, except putting my foot ashore for half a day at Wheeling some 13 years ago.

As reference to myself, I call on your nephew, that promising young gentleman who left Saxony some months ago for your place. The enclosed is from his friend Otto, which I beg to hand to him, with the assurance of my best wishes for his welfare. I am sorry that I have no gentleman of your state to whom else I could refer you to respecting myself. I once knew a Virginia gentleman, a certain Major Talliaferro, whom the Sioux called "Mansa Boxa," the Iron-heart, some years ago (1838-39) Indian agent at Fort Snelling; he was a thorough gentleman, whom I still revere, although I know not where he is at present, whether he still lives or not. Captain, or perhaps now Col. Fremont, (a well known and famous topographical traveller,) knows me well. I was once under his command when exploring last the Upper Missouri and Mississippi territory. I stayed eleven years in North America, travelled much, visited the far west, and reached my native country, *via* St. Louis, Oregon, Sandwich Islands and London, in two years and four months.

Germany is on the eve of a tremendous eruption, though no one can tell how it will end. So much is sure, that the "Majesties, by the grace of God," are losing ground every day, nay hourly. Our bane is the standing armies; we are unfortunately two nations, the one within and the other without the barracks! One generation farther on, and then we shall have a pure sister to your republic; the elements are good, though there is at present no want of dregs, nor of foul skim! I confess I feel tired of the strife, seeing that now time must do the rest, and will do it. I rather long for a solitude in your peaceable country, and so many, many long for it. I am resolved to make myself in this respect useful to my fellow-sufferers, as I have experience enough to guide a colony.

By closing this I well feel the heavy tax I levy upon you. Pardon me, dear sir! Let this but find a small space of your much employed time, so great part of which you have already sacrificed for the benefit of your fellow-beings. Good-bye, my dear sir.

With due respect,

CHAS. ANDREW GEYER.

Meissen Neumarkt, 647.

☞ If those lands of Eisenmenger's cannot be got fit for cultivation, and on reasonable terms for cash, or only such which should be to your opinion unsuitable, please to state if other extensive tracts of land can be had in some of the western counties of Virginia, to which a good title can be obtained, and for what price land of reasonable good quality for cultivation may be purchased, as the principal quantity of emigrants are good farmers, and can soon make a considerable settlement. Under those circumstances, I hope and trust that you, as a Saxonian by birth, and for a long time a citizen of Virginia, will do the best you can, according to your experience and knowledge of the country, for us in this transaction, and in this present gloomy crisis in Saxony, as indeed all Germany is in an extreme unsettled state, consequently many of the best of our citizens will leave their native land for your country, in which their labour will support them without suffering, and in which they can live peaceful under a free government, and where the laws of the land are administered without distinction and oppression, shall be our home.

P. S. There are about one hundred families of well known industrious habits, as farmers and mechanics, from the heart of Saxony, that have all come to the certain conclusion, and will be ready after a favourable answer, to emigrate to the western part of Virginia, exclusive of a considerable number of single labouring men. Therefore, be so kind and give us the desired information as soon as possible, from your knowledge of the country. All will depend upon your answer, as it respects their destination for the state of Virginia. *All necessary preparations are in progress for a colony.* In which undertaking, from your acquaintance of land affairs in the western part of your state, I must ask the favour of your assistance, as I should, and most of them prefer to settle in Virginia; that is, provided a proper arrangement can be made within a reasonable time concerning tracts of land, as expedition is all important, and the great object is for us to leave Germany together in ships, if possible, either bound for Norfolk or Richmond, so all can at once travel on to any of the specified western counties. Your speedy attention is respectfully requested.

CHAS. ANDREW GUYER