

If not, I assure you they may be, for I don't think there is any grade yet created, high enough to induce me to volunteer in that line. Even "Iron Stars" would be rejected with contempt. I am too much with regular officers to fancy any thing of the kind, even supposing I had any desire that way, which I most certainly have not.

I have an offer now which I am strongly tempted to accept, but have not yet decided upon. You may have heard me while in N.Y. speak of the Billingshurst & Regne Gun. It is a new thing, & intended to answer the purpose of Light Infantry in some degree. It fires 25 rounds at once & can be fired 16 times per minute, thus throwing 400 balls

ORDNANCE OFFICE,

Headquarters Department of the Gulf.

New Orleans Feb 21st 1863.

Dear Father

Nothing has happened since my last letter to Mum on the 20th inst., so that this afternoon my letter will be full of "little nothings." I don't think it can be a very long one either unless I finish it after supper, for the "Shacks of Night" are a coming down swift & it is rapidly getting dark. The mail closes at six o'clock for the North, but as the vessel does not go until tomorrow morning, I shall have this sent on board in the last Official Bag - it being of course an important Government Business. The loss of the *Elle Warley* with our mails was a great appreciation & we are all in

the ducks about it, for nearly every
one was expecting letters by her.
But one of the mail bags was saved,
and from that I have received two letters
as my share of the spoils, instead of
the dozen odd I was hoping for. Neither
of them was from home, so until I got
Mother's letter of the 10th I was almost
in the dark concerning 164th. I hardly
understand how it was that one of the letters
was dry & all right, while the other was
wet through, torn & soiled. I could read
it & that was all. The entire bag has not
been examined yet, for they dry so slowly
that the clerks at the Post office can
only separate a very few letters at
a time. I hope for more, but am
afraid it is but a galaxy & delusion.
The Roroko has arrived, & by her I hear
from Brattleboro & New Bedford, but not

from New York, as I am expecting lots
of letters by the next steamer whatever
it is. There is something wrong with the
mails between this & N.Y. for I have never
got several of the letters you & Mum
spoke of, & not half the papers. The
maps have not arrived but I hope will
come to light before long. I don't think
Mother's last letter has any questions
to be answered save in a general way.
I am saving all the Postage Stamps
which come to hand, but so many of
our letters are franked through, that
the collection does not mount up as
quickly as I would wish. I will mail you
some when I have enough to make it
worth while. I presume your minds
are quite at rest by this time as far
as ^{only} joining or taking any Commission
in a Major Regiment is concerned.

You have of course heard all about the secesh demonstration on the 20th, not only from my letters to Mamma, but John Crewe's reports. I'm not so certain you will have heard of the joke that was played on a number of the rebels on that day. The steamboat Laurel Hill lay at the Levee, close to the boat which was receiving the exchanged prisoners. Of course very many crowded on board to get a better view of what was going on, & when the Capt. of the Laurel Hill had a sufficient load he dropped off into the river & let go his anchor. The boat was crowded with men women & children & he kept them there all night & until 11 A.M. the next day without anything to eat, or any place

per minute ⁵ should occasion require. It was accepted by Gen. Banks & the ammunition ordered to be made in N.Y. It was then under charge of 18th Regt. Battery, composed entirely of Regular men. On arrival out here the six guns came to hand, but not the Ammunition, without which they are of course useless. After waiting some weeks the Chief of Artillery ordered Capt. Duck to turn them over to Ordnance Dept. & to take the Battery of 20 pdr. Parrotts instead. Towards the last of Jan. the last ammunition came to hand, so that now the ^{Battery} guns are ready for service & only waiting for some one to take it. The Sec. of War has written to Capt. Arnold Chief of Artillery for a report on the gun, as Gen. Berry has been trying them in Washington, & gives a favorable discussion, & it is now a question as

to them being admitted into the
United States service. Lieut. Mum-
ford, whom I have before spoken of,
as one of the officers I am living with,
has made application for the Bat-
tery, and next Sunday has been appointed
for a trial. Capt. Arnold, Lieut. Hill,
Capt. Meek, & Lt. Mumford & myself
are going out. If the result is in
its favor, & the Chief of Artillery decides
to leave the Battery, Mumford wishes me
to join him as first Lieut. We should
raise the men necessary from the
nine mos. men now here, & six weeks
drill would put us in the field. If it
succeeds it will undoubtedly be a
very good thing for all of us con-
cerned, - if on the contrary it fails,
we shall either draw other guns,
be transferred to another command,
or honorably mustered out of service.
As I said I am uncertain what to do

as yet. For Lieut. Hill does not
wish me to leave him, & it would
be hardly fair I must say. I like
the Ordnance very well but want
a position higher than my present
one in point of rank. I care nothing
about the straps, & am willing to sign
a bond not to wear them, but I'd want
a more recognized position. To all
intents I am "second of ord." Now but at
same time it is a place where I can
not expect to rise higher. I did hope
our advance to Port Hudson would have
commenced by 1st March, but I see
no more chance of its coming off
now than I did a month ago - not so
much in fact if the last news from
"up river" is true. We here some hard
work before us yet at Rosedale, Bio
Blaquemin & Butte La Rose, and
the last news from Red River is
not cheering by any means.

I have had a bad cold but
am rapidly getting over it,
and shall be all right in every respect
in a day or two. Tell Tom I have
got his second letter & am very
much obliged for it, & will try
to answer before long. As I am
eighteen days in debt now how-
ever, it will be some time first
I'm afraid. I hope he will write
again without waiting an answer
for I shall be very glad of the letters.

Please give my best love to your
Grandmother, & the boys. Remember
me to Mary Ann & Bridget.

Your affectionate son
Appleton.

to sleep. You never saw a
more foolish looking crowd
in your life than those three
hundred here. Our work at
the office here is about over I
am happy to say, - that is the Extra
part of it, and now we have got
things a little straight we can
afford to take a little leisure.

For the last three days I have
had a very easy time, with nothing
to do but make out a Daily Report,
& answer the few official letters
received. The first of the month
will of course make me busy a-
gain for a short time, but I think
we have got through with evening
work, for the present at least.

I generally pass my evenings now in
studying, reading & playing Chess, with
theater occasionally to break
the monotony. It would be hard

to imagine more beautiful weather than we are having.

It is too warm in the sun for comfort, & one cannot walk much in the middle of the day, but there is a pleasant breeze & crays blowing, & the early mornings & evenings are very jolly. We shall have it hot enough by & bye however.

I am afraid Sugar Cane season is over, but I will make every inquiry I can & if possible send you a good supply by the Merino when she comes in, as Mother says she will have the things I asked for, & as I presume you know the Capt. well. I suppose she will be here by Monday next. The oranges are nearly gone, & sell now for five or six cents a piece, or I should try to send you a box of them. You know there is nothing used here

in the shape of money smaller than five cents. No one will take cents because they do not know what they are, so the eighty nickels I saved with so much care, & brought from N.Y. are entirely useless. I shall have to buy stamps with them, for I don't want to carry so much dead weight around. It can rain here to beat anything I ever saw or imagined, - even in Virginia, & it was something in that line there. I don't think even a Water Spout would astonish me now. The other day the entire street here was filled with water, in one hour, from house to house, 20 inches deep, in spite of the wide deep gutters. It was perfectly impassable for man or beast. I waited over an hour before I could get out to go home