

too hot for my woolen ones for some days
past. I have been wearing the steel collar
ever since & think it splendid. It is easy
& comfortable, never gets out of kiltin &
above all don't melt. I think I shall like
it ever so much - I certainly shall if it
proves no trouble to wash, and I don't imagine
it will. It will save my paper collars won-
derfully. It rained heavily all day Sunday but
cleared off about six to my great delight for
I was invited ^{up} to Mrs Russell's to tea. I
took both her and her some of my candy, for
I had more than I could dispose of by any
possibility, and we sat talking about matters
& things until ten o'clock or so. Yesterday
I got her a permit to keep a pistol for self
defense, from the Provost Marshal, and I
have lent her my small Revolver for the pre-
sent. She may need one in case anything should
happen, for living all alone as she is, with only
her little girl & a servant, a pistol is a very
wise thing to have. I have two more so do not
need it, and it is safer with her than me, for
in moving at any time it might get lost. I
am very glad to be able to repay in the least the

Headquarters, Department of the Gulf,
19th Army Corps.
New-Orleans, May 28th 1863.

My Dearest Mother

Capt. Shunk has gone off to Brechin
again for a day or two leaving me in charge once
more. There is nothing for me to do save issue
orders, sign papers &c, and as this is going to be
another perfectly hot day I mean to keep pretty
quiet in the office. I have had your letters of
May 10th and 16th - the first by the Falton the second
by the Columbus. They are all I have had since our
from Kathleen of May 7th. I can't imagine where
the mails can be for although the Continental, the
Falton, Columbus and Morning Star have all
come in they brought but very few bags of mail
matter, & all the letters we have had were thro'
the Quartermaster. The Quincy is still due & I hear
has put into Key West disabled. The Clew has
arrived last night with a quantity of Ordnance
stores but I believe brought little or no mail.
It is very disquieting, but there is one bright side,
if my friends all write as often as they have been
doing this past winter, I shall get a pile of let-
ters by & by! Both the basket & the bundle

have come safely to hand and I am ever so much
~~obliged~~ for them. I think it was Sunday your
letter telling me of the basket came to hand
and I had just turned round & was asking one
of the clerks where the Fulton would be up
from Laurensburg, when the door opened & one
of my workmen came in with it. It had been
sent to the Ticketing Press (our storehouse for
Ammunition) and the Copt. in charge there
sent it up to me. I sent it over to the house
& after dinner opened it for examination.

You must have known exactly what I wanted
for I was feeling hungry for something good
& just debating with myself whether I should walk
down to Canal St. or not for some candy. I didn't
have occasion to go as you may well imagine for
what with the Boxes from George & Katie App.
& the Maple Sugar & rest, I almost made my-
self sick. It is very curious to see how soon
the ants find anything of the sort out. I
had taken out what Maple sugar I ^{thought} wanted and
rolled the oat up and laid it back in the bas-
ket. In about ten minutes I wanted some
more, having miscalculated the first time,
and when I went to the paper it was perfectly

black with ants. I drove them all off & put
the 'box of contention' in a dish, & stood the
letter in water - it is the only way we can keep
anything. I had the pleasure of sending a plate
full down to Mrs Raper and I think they will
appreciate Yankee sugar if they don't like the
people who make it. The wine I have not
yet opened for I want to keep it until I really
need it, but I think I shall take one bottle up
to Mrs Russell, for she has been quite unwell
lately, & as I tell you it is just impossible to get
any decent wine or liquor here, except claret.

That I drink freely for I find it gives me strength
& does me good in many ways. The papers and
books I was very glad to get for I have nothing to
read save the Harpers Weeklies etc. I buy when
I go down town. Nothing of the kind is had here
for after I have read the books I like them to the
office and lend them to the clerks, & then take them
up to Mrs Russell or send them off to some of my
friends in the field. Some here the common
paper covered novels are from \$1.50 to \$3.00
and that is rather steep when one wants a book
to read once or twice, & then give away. The books
are already in use for it has been very much

from Washington to that effect. It was But-
lers influence I have not the least doubt. The
Thames has not arrived yet as I presume she
was detained in Pensacola longer than was ex-
pected. I will see her as soon as ~~she~~ she does
come in & writ- to Father all the news &c. I shall
then be better able to tell as to the recharter-
ing and I have strong hopes that she will be
needed here to carry stores up the river,
if the troops move on Vicksburg from
Port Hudson, as is now the plan. I will do
my best to have her employed somewhere.
I hear the Pochonias is again under
charter & on her way here - I hope she will
bring me some letters. I don't know but the
best way is to send letters in baskets for them
they turn up. Give my best love to Grand-
mother & all at home. I hope long before this
that both Bridget & Mary Ann are well again
for cleaning house without any one to help you
is but a poor joke. I writ Ed. on Friday
last & will answer his of the 11th by & bye.

Your loving son
A. S. Phelps

Kindness she showed me while I was sick.
She is the only real lady I know in the city, &
it is a great pleasure to be able to talk to some
one well educated, refined & perfectly ladylike.
They are more than a scarce article in this
region! She is a daughter in law of Mr. Pat. Russell
of Boston who died some time since, & has been very
sick although she is teaching music now. Having
lived in and near Boston for so long she knows many
of my acquaintances & friends, & it is very pleasant to
be able to talk over old times. I got the clothes
you sent by the Columbia yesterday. They fit nicely
& are very pretty colors. I have got a trunk
to put my spare clothes &c in should I go off
at any time, and shall send that to the Storehouse
for safe keeping should such an event occur.
I think I told you I had covers made for all my
buttons in order to make calls &c, and go round with-
out fear of trouble or bother. Now I can wear the
suit you sent me which is very much better than
my heavy dress suit. We don't get the news
from Port Hudson as rapidly as I thought for, but
I think the 1st June will see the river open up to

Vicksburg. Banks has come round to Baton Rouge for I saw a telegram from him at that place yesterday. We have rather dubious news from the district he has just left though. An officer on Gen. Emery's Staff told me this morning that Col. Chickering in command at Opelousas, had been attacked by a superior force of 6000 men & compelled to retreat to Franklin - twenty four miles from Baton Rouge. Banks has not changed men to hold the country he has been over & keep that clear, and at the same time attack the plans he is ordered to, & do the work expected of him. When the nine months men go home it will be still worse of course. We have not 1500 troops in the city today & were it not for the gun boats lying off in the river every one of us would be prisoners to night. There are enough men in the place ready to rise & clean us out if they had but a leader, & it is only the fear of having the city burned over their heads that prevents their rising I'd believe. I wish Emery had more aim - I feel very much afraid he would not dare to send word to fire on the town should we all be captured in an

hour. I hope I am mistaken in this, for I would almost be willing to visit Mobile or Augusta under a Confed. guard, to have the pleasure of seeing this infernal plan lie in ashes. If Gen. Butler had only done it at first & then gone right up the river we should not have had any trouble here now. I want to know whether Father is still collecting Postage Stamps. I heard that Chase or somebody else had published an order for all such collections to be destroyed, but I have not yet seen it, as I shall send the ones I have when I get enough to make it worth while. I have already sent one envelope full - did they arrive safely? The Registered Enemies have mostly all gone out but those who remain are worse than the others, for while really rebel to the very heart they have taken the oath to save their property etc, and will do all in their power to aid the Confederates should the chance come. You need not give Banks the credit for the order sending the enemies outside our lines, for he would never have issued it had he not had direct orders