Plantation near "Cowles Station." Ala
West Point & Mont. R. R. July 12th 66.

My dear Colonel

Sickness has prevented me from answering yours of the 8th ult. rec'd on the 14th After nearly five years perfect immunity from all climatic diseases the "Chills" found me here and laid me up for nearly three weeks. However I am much better now & have been improving for the past week very fast — Your letter was very welcome for it contained the first & only news I have rec'd concerning the old 54th Since its departure from Selma. My brother officers seem to have entirely forgotten the poor devil they left down in this miserable country — The last I ever heard of the Regt was that they had been Shipwrecked on the Mobile & Ohio R. R. & obliged to go to Vicksburg — For aught I knew to the contrary they might have been doing garrison duty at Camp Parker. Your letter was also the first direct intimation I had of your existence. in spite of all your protestations on the "Magnolia" to write at once on yr arrival in New York. I didn't place much confidence in them as I told you at the time. but I was surprised at yr not answering my telegram about the horse — When Levi (I think that was the man's name who took care of him) came

to me at the Hospital & informed me there was talk of selling the Horse for what he would bring & turning the proceeds into the Regimental fund. and that none of the Officers would draw forage for him I signed the necessary requisitions for two months. altho I never even saw the horse during the time, much less use him. Capt Wagley came twice to see me about him. (it appears that he had heard of him from other sources for the horse got to be well known after the Regt moved into town) & both times when I sent for him. he was out in harness, & I accordingly telegraphed to you. but receiving no answer let the matter drop. tho Wagley wrote me a note afterwards asking me to ride the horse down to the boat. However. as you are satisfied. So I was informed. let the matter drop. I only wished to remind you that I didn't forget my obligations to you even after you were a Dead Duck in the 34th.

Your information about Graham does not surprise me. tho I had heard nothing about it before. He is. what he always was & always will be. an adventurer. I always backed him during his absence. against the other Officers of the 34th. but only on principle. I recd a letter from him a few days after you left us. enquiring about his commission &c. I telegraphed him that you would mail it at New Orleans & afterwards wrote explanatory letter. He never condescended to notice either. Let him go. he liked me because I was useful to him and I admired his impudence. I am very glad to hear of yr Brevet Brigadiership. Weren't some people astonished at Trenton when they learned it for the first time? I'd have given a month's pay to have known it at Selma. before the Regiment left. I wonder if there is any of the devil of malice in my nature. Well. I suppose this ends yr military career for the present unless you join the Fenians. After all it is hardly the place for a man with a family. but for myself. I look back to the many careless, happy hours I have spent in the field with regret to think they will come no more. Had I been a few years younger. I would have attended another course of Lectures and tried for the Regulars in hopes to have spent my days on the frontier among Buffaloes & Indians. The next best thing is to make a little fortune down here and then find some comfortable little corner North where I can spend it satisfactorily. I am doing quite fairly so far with every prospect of an increasing business this Fall. If I do as well as I have every reason to expect I will I shall make a couple of thousand dollars clear by the 1st of February. And for the first time in my life I am spending no money. I get boarded. washed. slept & mounted together with what Whiskey I want in return for taking care of the ordinary sick on the Plantation. that is such cases as are usually treated by the Planters themselves. all other cases I charge regular prices for my at-

-tendance, The prospects down here for Planters & business men generally is, I am sorry to say very poor. The present year which ought to have been one of the very best. both for the encouragement of the South & more especially for the northern men who have invested their capital here in cotton. has proved most disastrous. The heavy and long continued rains of may have kept the farmers in the grass all the time - And the big flood in June ruined many of the river plantations below Montgomery Almost all planters in this vicinity have been obliged to "throw out" (in English "give up") more or less of their cotton land for want of help. and yesterday I hear of a planter who has thrown out his whole plantation. (1200 acres) discharged all his hands. thus sacrificing his seed & 6 months labor - All these discouragements. combined with the low price of Cotton. (a drug at 23. to 25 in Montgomery) make things gloomy enough - The only ones who seem to retain any life or hope are the Banks. They persist in the belief that there is money to be made in Cotton & I haven't heard one yet but who is determined to try it another year if he can only make expenses this year - I do not know how McArthur is doing. I saw him in May last at Selma. he is interested in 3 Plantations about 6 or 8 miles from S. & that time was doing well. Almost everything depends on the Freedmen and here my opinion differs widely from that of "Correspondents for the north". The Freedmen on this & the adjoining plantations are indolent & indifferent - It is almost impossible to

make them understand that any one is a loser except themselves if they choose to lay up 3 days out of the week - On this Plantation alone the percentage of "dead beats" is from 3 to 4 times greater than in any regiment I was ever connected with. But things are improving & will be better next year. The days of big plantations of from 1000 to 4000 acres & gangs of from 200 to 1000 hands are passing away and small plantations with small gangs, superintended by the persons directly interested in the crop will be the order of the day. The industrious white men of the south, the men who cultivated the soil for the benefit of the proprietor & made the cotton, but who never in their wildest dreams aspired to any thing higher than being an overseer. These are the men who in connection with the Yankees are to make the South. And these latter are scattered everywhere thro the South. More than 50 officers of the 3d Division of 2nd are in the cotton business within 20 miles of Montgomery, while Yankees with Yankee Capital of $500.000 are digging iron above Selma & more are digging or boring for oil in the northern part of the State -

Con C. Badger 34th N.J.