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A Letter of A. C. Van Raalte to Philip Phelps

A. C. Van Raalte

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March 12, 1871

No. 73

A letter of A. C. Van Raalte to Philip Phelps, extending his appreciation for the help Phelps has been giving the Amelia people. "The Capital is safe enough. But it may increase your storms and hasten the crisis....Also I rejoice in the increase of the number of Japanese..." to three. Mrs. Van Raalte is very unwell.

Wape Carkeu

Holland Mich
March 12 / 1871

Revd Dr P: Phelps

Dear Brother.

I thank God that you have been the means of helping the Amelia people. The Capital is safe enough. But it may increase your storms and hasten the crisis. I trust however Christianity and Common Sense will prevail.-

In the meantime I did pray for their delivery and I consider this God's gracious answer: Therefore I rejoice and thank God and you as his gracious instrument.

Also I rejoice in the increase of the number of Japanese: the Lord may make this Institute by many of no account felt even far off. ✓

Your wandering in the East are need and fruitfull.

I trust that Mrs Phelps will rejoice in having now in hand three Japanese: So she does do missionary work indeed. ✓

That thousand Dollar female Scholarship is an very encouraging seed.

Mrs. Van Raalte is suffering: the fevers are destroying the vitality. Sometimes I see spells of easyness which makes me hope against common sense.- ✓

Our school is quite different of what it has been. The Lord takes up the future life in his plans. It is allwell.

May the Lord bring you safe home again.

Sincerely yours

A. C. Van Raalte

In P. means of helping the Amelica people 73.
Japanese
Miss Phelps does do nothing with Indians

Rev. L. P. Phelps.

Alliance Society
March 12/1871

Dear Brother,

I thank you,
that you have been the means of
helping them Amelica people:

The Capital is safe enough.
But it may increase your Storm and
hasten the crisis. - I trust however,
Christianity and Common sense will
prevail. -

In the mean time I still pray for
their delivery and I consider this God's
gracious answer: therefore I rejoice and
thank God and you as his instrument

Also I rejoice in the increase of
the number of Japanese: the Lord
may make this Institute, by many of
no account, felt even far off. -

Your wandering in the East
are well and fruitful.

I trust that Miss Phelps will
derive in having now on hand three
Japanese: so she do the missionary work
more.

That Wendell Lillie female
Scholarship is an very encouraging deed.

Miss Van Klee is suffering: the fever
are destroying the vitality. Sometimes
I see spells of easy sleep which
make me hope against common
sense. — Our school is quite
different of what it has been.

The Lord takes up the future life
in his plans. It will all
May the Lord bring you safe Home
again.

Sincerely yours

H. Van Klee

Holland Mich

March 12 / 1871

Revd Dr F: Phelps

Dear Brother.

I thank God that you have been the means of helping these Amelias people. The Capital is safe enough. But it may increase your storms and hasten the crisis. I trust however Christianity and Common Sense will prevail. -

In the meantime I did pray for their delivery and I consider this God's gracious answer: Therefore I rejoice and thank God and you as his gracious instrument.

Also I rejoice in the increase of the number of Japanese: the Lord may make this Institute by many of no account felt even far off.

Your wandering in the East are need and fruitfull.

I trust that Mrs Phelps will rejoice in having now in hand three Japanese: So she does do missionary work indeed.

That thousand Dollar female Scholarship is an very encouraging seed.

Mrs Van Raalte is suffering: the fevers are destroying the vitality. Sometimes I see spells of easyness which make me hope against common sense.-

Our school is quite different of what it has been. The Lord takes up the future life in his plans. It is all well.

May the Lord bring you safe home again.

Sincerely yours

A.C. Van Raalte

71-03-12 [GS73]

Holland Mich
March 12,/1871

Revd Dr P: Phelps.

Dear Brother.

I thank God, that you have been the means of helping them Amelia people: The Capital is safe enough. But it may increase your storms and hasten the crisis. – I trust however, Christianity and Common Sense will prevail.¹ –

In the meantime I did pray for their delivery and I consider this Gods gracious answer: Therefore I rejoice and thank God and you as his instrument.

Also I rejoice in the increase of the number of Japanese:² the Lord may make this Institute by many of no account, felt even far off. –

Your wandering in the East are need[ed] and fruitfull.

I trust that Mrs Phelps will rejoice in having now in hand three Japanese [students]: So she does do missionary work indeed.

That thousand Dollar female Scholarship is an very encouraging seed.³

¹ Phelps, during his fund raising tour in the East, obtained a gift of \$600.00 from Mrs. Frances Few Chrystie, a member of his former congregation in Hastings-on-Hudson, New York. A Mr. Morris Jessup Esq. made a gift of \$1,500.00 for a total of \$2,100.00. This money was given for the college's endowment fund but loaned to the Mattoax congregation in the Amelia Dutch-immigrant settlement in Virginia. There is no mention in the minutes of either the Council of Hope College or in the minutes of the Executive Committee giving Phelps permission to make this loan to the Virginia congregation. At the same time, Van Raalte was the chair of both the executive committee and the Hope College Council. It is no wonder that Van Raalte anticipated a storm over this action that was clearly a conflict of interest for both Van Raalte and Phelps. Both men were equally naïve that the "Capital is safe enough." See "AGREEMENT Between the Consistory of the Reformed Church of Mattoax in Virginia, and Rev. Philip Phelps Agent for the Endowment of Hope College in Michigan," dated 29 May 1870, for details of this transaction. The loan may have seen safe then but in a few years the Amelia Colony failed even though the Mattoax congregation was the only one of the three founded survived but joined the Presbyterian denomination at a later time. Philip Phelps Jr. collection, Hope College, the Joint Archives of Holland. It was reported to the General Synod in 1878 in an accounting of the financial status of the college, the year that Phelps was asked to resign the presidency, included the information that, in the list of unproductive investments in the endowment of Hope College, was "...Loans on Virginia Lands...[\$] 2,000." It is not conclusively known if this amount was another loan made from college funds or if this \$2,000 was part of the \$2,100 loan made to the Mattoax congregation. *The Acts and Proceedings... June, 1878*, 122.

² Wynand Wichers, in his history of Hope College, tells the story how Phelps recruited these Japanese students to Hope College. At one time, there were fourteen Japanese young men enrolled at the college. *A Century of Hope...*, 104-105. Van Raalte delighted in this action by Phelps because he felt educating foreign students at Hope was part of the missionary obligation of the college. Mrs. Margaret Jordan Phelps undoubtedly had a large task in assisting these students in their acculturation at Hope College.

³ *The Minutes of the Council of Hope College* recorded the gift of \$1,000 from Mr. Simon Shindler, a member of the First Reformed Church of Tarrytown, New York. 6 January 1870, 83.

Mrs. Van Raalte is suffering: the fevers are destroying the vitality. Sometimes I see spells of easyness⁴ which makes me hope against common sense. - Our school⁵ is quite different of what it has been. The Lord takes up the future life in his plans. It is all well.

May the Lord bring you Safe Home again.

Sincerely yours

A. C. Van Raalte

⁴ The few good days Mrs. Van Raalte may have had during this time raised false hopes on the part of the Van Raalte that her demise was not as near as the circumstances clearly revealed.

⁵ Van Raalte may be referring to the school of life in this statement.