

Nov 23, 1862
No. 24

Mrs. Andrew Upson
Plantsville, Ct.

(Envelope is postmarked BANKS' DIVISION with a 3-cent stamp. Letter is on 4 sheets of lined stationery folded in half and 1 single sheet and is written on 17 pages in ink.)

Loudon Valley –
Nov. 23, 1862

My Dear Wife –

I have recd. nothing from you since the letter of the 16th containing Ida's, Franks & Willies – To that I responded, not however as fully as was my intention – Frequently after commencing to write, whether by night or day, some sudden interruption compels me to finish very hastily or defer for an indefinite period what I wish done immediately – Nothing of interest has occurred since my last to you which as near as I can calculate you will receive tomorrow – Yours to me generally are four days – They ought to come in two & might easily, but the circum location of army regulations prevents – From Friday 7 A.M. till Saturday 12 P.M. I was on picket - Had command of the grand guard, or reserve, which is stationed inside (**Pg 2**) the line of outposts – We had on old log school house for our station which served as a shelter – The remains of a stove enabled us to keep up some fire & a good deal of smoke – During Friday afternoon the clouds & fog which had chiefly prevailed since Sunday night cleared away & we all rejoiced to see the sun's face again – But the wind came up strong out of the north west – the night was chilly & we began to think this region in point of temperature has little advantage over Connecticut – The people here say they frequently have deep snows & a “right smart” cold winter – I guess that is the truth & we shall probably see as much winter here as you at home – The rumors of rebel force near at hand & preparations to meet a possible attack from there ceased Wednesday afternoon – I told you about our coming down the Height in the night – The next morning orders (**Pg. 3**) were recd. from Gen Kane to recommence battalion drill - That forenoon we were all out – it was rather awkward business after our three weeks marching & picketing to undertake the nice movements & evolutions to which we had become accustomed at Pleasant Valley – We seem now to have reached definite conclusions as to our future & so far as we can judge it is our fate to remain here – We are all informed about the intentions of the good friends at home for our comfort next Thursday – In some respect I am sorry that anything of the kind is attempted – We are liable to be called off any time & Thanksgiving day will be no more regarded than Sunday – Then again it seems impossible to make any arrangements for a big family supper – Probably you expect us all to eat together – Lately the men of each hut eat together & some think it would be better to divide up the (**Pg. 4**) provisions through the various families & let them manage for themselves – But where Smith & Co. arrive we shall do the best that can be devised – Our fare is much better than at any time since leaving camp Chase – Last night two loaves of soft bread were distributed to each man –

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Potatoes also are obtainable & even dried peaches come occasionally – The men have not finished chinking & roofing their huts – Probably they will be complete this week – Our sick list has increased during the past week – One day the surgeons list of excused reached 22 – Mostly jaundice, which seems to be going through the regt. There are about 60 cases of that complaint – The other day I was twice asked if I had not got it – It amused me much particularly as I was out on picket in the rain & felt never better - The Capt.- has got it but keeps about, some of the time on duty – Maybe it will catch me; but I have no (**Pg. 5**) symptoms yet – Several officers are on the ill list – My opinion is they don't like the service first rate – Doubtless they often feel unwell & need rest; but Uncle Sam gets some feeble creatures among those who wear straps – He allows no whiskey to his privates, & were all to whom he grants commissions brought to the same abstinence it were better for his cause & for his servants – I have touched not a particle of medicine nor a drop of spirits: the record of deficiency is just one half day when I lay by for diarrhea at Arlington Heights – It is noticeable that the most healthy usually have the jaundice here - I feel very devoutly thankful for this great blessing – It is a poor place to be sick - Still the hospital accommodations are now greatly improved & Richardson is doing much in his new capacity – He is permanently separated from our company & between you & me I (**Pg. 6**) am not sorry – we rather enjoyed each others society; yet I found him a most stubborn fellow & with his power of persuasion over easy natures it tried me often to find his counsel persisted into the detriment of our affairs – You know he is quite visionary, full of grand schemes that look beautiful as soap bubbles & break into vanity – as easily – He could spend a fortune every week & yet it would be lavished on others, not himself – But while generous he is indiscriminating & the designing & selfish mostly profit by his free dispensations – Associated with others superior to him & decisive enough to put on the breaks whenever his impulsive sympathy tended the wrong way his aid would be valuable – He much needs some balancing power – Just now His reputation with the regt. is high. The field officers all confide in him & I verily believe they are in some (**Pg. 7**) danger of being so much blinded by his artful accomplishments as not to suspect in season the impracticability of many things he proposes to do in the hospital department – While on this subject let me say another thing – My advice to the charitable ladies if Southington is – “Send no more things to the hospital of this regt. until they are asked for by someone or all the officers of the company” – My opinion is that Mr. Richardson put you to some unnecessary expense & very likely he will call again – Of course I would not divert to other ends the noble generosity which has been so many times displayed; but I desire also that benevolence so great & free should not be tested without proper occasion – The letter which I suppose described the articles & conveyed the sentiments of the donors was directed to him as clerk of Co. E. – He has not seen fit to divulge to us its contents. – (**Pg. 8**) Tonight he spoke of having written a long letter to Mrs. Granniss – He is no longer our clerk - We have D. W. Hart in that capacity – You can keep what I have said on this matter to yourself & act accordingly – I should rather

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like to know what new things he may have asked for, if any, & also to what extent he arrogated the responsibility of speaking in our name – Maybe his communication will be read publicly – In any case I have written as above in order to put you on guard & if necessary you can judiciously caution others – From what is written to some of the company I should think a great many silly & false stories are constantly current in town – I am glad you seldom take up any room in referring to them – It is astonishing how little sense many folks exhibit in what they say & others in what they believe – I hardly know who of our men busy themselves in so perverting remarks & occurrences – But any sound mind must understand (*Pg. 9*) that men here are not so vastly different from men elsewhere – But some minds seem to love slander & others some apparently strong seem to lack scope & so the latter become dupes & the former knaves & both classes help a good deal towards keeping each little community when they may be found in a fret - I rather guess the war interest – that is the direction of thought & effort generally towards the Soldiers will run into the ground by & by – Seems to me that with monthly reports & letters & delegations the public appetite will soon cloy – I suppose my reports have seemed long – maybe tedious – But I was until lately aware that everybody who writes home or visits us does so for the town – Just as soon as you get enough there let me know & I shall very gladly save the labor required for that duty – Jim, my boy, bids fare to meet me first rate – He sits now leaning (*Pg. 10*) across a box half asleep – The rest have turned in – The day has been chilly & the air like snow – Aside from regular Sunday inspection we have had a quiet Sabbath – The Chaplain gave a good discourse at 2 o'clock – I think of you all especially Sundays – What a pleasure it would be to get ready & go to meeting as we used to – You at home have no idea how much your Christian privileges are worth – Then too the sweets of the fireside – The delights of the family circle – What precious blessings we have left behind! If I could once more salute you all – See Mary in the cradle, take Willie & Frank upon either knee – have Ida stand at my side & you, my wife choosing your own position & participating – Me thinks a happier man would not breathe – On the whole, I guess there were about as many elements of comfort in that home I left as full to the lot of the average man – Looking back now the farm & all its conveniences present many charms – My highest satisfaction over (*Pg. 11*) the place is this that it is no worse but I flatter myself much better for my occupancy & toil – Provided it were my own beyond all contingency there would be little wanting to render complete the chain of attractions by which my affections are linked to the scene of those ten years it cost us to bring it up where it is – We experienced many anxious days there – we bore our burdens together – now light - now more weighty: but the sum of each years good things increased & we can hardly complain that our efforts were not adequately rewarded – Certainly our intent was good enough – Like others we wished to get on in the world – My aspiration was to overcome the obstacles & disadvantages in our way & win by honest & manly exertion a practical triumph – You seconded me with full heart & judicious hand, contributing also the fledglings of the nest; & really as my imagination depicts house & lands, hearthstone & offspring – labors & improvements- (*Pg. 12*) I seem to be reading a tale of Arabian Nights rather than recalling from memory a

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veritable representation of facts – We can partially appreciate the tangible prints of those years – I at least know something of their value having once experienced their capacity to delight by use - & now finding out anew their measure by realizing their loss – But the more lasting results – that which was added to our character – the growth of soul – thoughts purified & elevated – feelings refined the approach made towards justice, truth, charity – in short the apprehension of God – of those results – we perhaps can not so surly tell – Yet I should not feel justified in declaring that we attained nothing of the spiritual – Whether of not we have freely & devoutly laid out temporal blessings upon the altar of county it may not be proper for you or me to affirm – Certainly (*Pg. 13*) we should not pretend so if the facts forbid – But at an earlier period or without the training of that home & its varied scenes of trial & comfort could we with as much good will & true devotion or even at all shoulder & sustain the weighty duties & apparent sacrifices of our present condition! Each year is but a stepping stone upon which the succeeding one rises to higher views – We climb over the hills of youth & early manhood to survey the loftier elevations that are to test our matured strength & wisdom - Rejoicing at the summit gravity will carry one down – but, alas! Those who descend thus never regain the starting point – The purer light of the mountain tops is only for those who rise above fog & mist darkening the valleys, thus gaining vigor & freedom, having left behind & below doubt & cowardice & degrading self love & every debasing passion – By what we suffer worthily – by what we (*Pg. 14*) vanquish in every strife with prejudice or earthly folly our souls are celestialized & we go up to the great King –

I hope you will make Thanksgiving with usual ceremony & enjoy with more fullness than ever before – Just see how much we have for which to offer up devout praise – First our little circle unbroken & capable of participating in the Anniversary – Second our health – We have been sick & recovered – Thousands have died young & old have been taken we are alive – How strange that seems! Our four children all spared – All well – Third – Our numberless blessings – I left a full barn & more crops to be gathered – You all have enough to eat, to wear – You have quiet & may hope for its continuance – Could you see the people where war makes its track. I am sure you would praise & thank God for your own condition. Lastly, thank God that you & I & we all are able to do something for the country He has so bountifully blessed – Thank Him (*Pg. 15*) that in this time of sore trial we have hearts willing to meet privations & even to sacrifice life under his command if so be liberty & good government may be upheld & great blessings flow down to our posterity – Be think you at the pristine board & all the day how often We have together enjoyed a Thanksgiving because Patriots lived years ago – recall their heroism – their great sufferings & count as light indeed what this crisis demands of us – Is it an honor now to be patriotic? Is it not rather a disgrace to suppose the apposite possible? Sometimes I get disgusted with the condition bestowed upon those who have gone to the war – In Heavens Name, Could they have done less & deserved the name of men! Be thankful that we are not left to that course that if no praise – at least no finger of

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shame can be pointed (*Pg. 16*) I have much everyday for which my grateful acknowledgments are duly rendered – And when next Thursday comes I have no possible doubt that it will be loaded with rich fruits all proofs of infinite goodness to you & me – So than my desire & expectation is that you & the children will improve it to the utmost – If you stay at home Thursday make your usual call up to Maria's & Joseph's next day xc. xc. Try to have a pleasant time all round – For Christmas, New Years & other occasions I left a good horse & a good wagon – If you haven't pluck enough to use these when you like don't call yourself my wife any longer – If you prefer to go by cars put on you things like an independent minded woman – Take one, two, three or four children as any other mother justly proud of her offspring would – pay your fare honorably, claim your full (*Pg. 17*) rights all the way along. See your friends & go home when you get ready – That's my advice freely given & warranted good – You can try it or not as you please – But don't complain if you lack courage to make the test – I shall not prescribe any further – This letter has run along to an uncommon length – But you can take it by parts as we do the chicken pie – some today – tomorrow & so on –

Suppose likely you have been writing to me – The fire has gone out in our picket stove – my toes & fingers are cold & the candle is nearly out – Give my good wishes to everybody my better ones to all the friends & take the best for yourself & the little ones – Good night – good night a sweet good night & may we yet again walk with the circling years our pilgrimage together –

A. Upson