

Nov. 30, 1862
No. 30

Mrs. Andrew Upson
Plantsville, Conn.

(Envelope is pre stamped with 3-cents and postmarked Washington D.C. Dec. 1862, and is stained. Letter is on two sheets of lined stationery folded in half and is written on eight sides in ink.)

Loudon Valley
Sunday Afternoon
Nov. 30th, 1862

My Dear Wife,

I have thought many times today, as also on previous Sabbaths, how differently you & I spend these holy days – I am on picket, in charge of our regimental detail for that purpose, having left camp at 8 o'clock this morning to be absent till relieved tomorrow – You I presume have seen something to remind you of the occasion & perhaps have participated in exercises appropriate to it – My surroundings are uncongenial – save only the quiet which seems to prevail – as I went along the line an hour since there was something in the stillness around that struck me as in harmony with the Sabbath – No where could any body be seen – but our own men – Smoke rose feebly from the farm houses scattered here & there & cattle were grazing in the brown fields, but of work or travel the eye discovered none – I had many sweet reflections & on the whole felt glad that it fell to my lot to come out here rather than (**Pg. 2**) remain with the regt. though I miss the Chaplin sermon – There are some other reasons why this seems more like Sunday – By coming on picket I avoided inspection which generally spoils the forenoon of Sunday & the rest of the day in camp is more or less broken in upon – After I had got the men all posted & returned to my head quarters – the Independent of the 20th which you sent around the wrapper, was perused & that contributed something to my proper feeling – Next, there is beautiful stream running along the hollow below me & the noise of its waters over the rocks uniting with the play of the wind through the trees has been a kind of soothing music to my soul – I don't remember to have realized before since leaving home those sweet moments of luxury when we drink in Natures loveliness & find ourselves happy – The scene around in some other respects is calculated not to please - The trees are leafless – the air chilly & clouds ominous of a disagreeable storm have obscured the sun during most of the day – At home this season of the year is rather gloomy to me – But it has not (**Pg. 3**) appeared so today – After visiting all the posts as was my duty, I could not resist the desire to take my leisure a little & enjoy as much as possible opportunities so rare – Coming along back I fell in with some frost grapes – Perhaps I have not told you they grow abundantly in some places here – generally beside a stream – When we scouted up the Shenandoah there were bushels of them hanging over the river – They have begun to drop down from the vines now – I got my fill today & brought back a handful for the fellows from our company – My attention was also arrested by the sight of some most symmetrical cedars – they were small but very thick &

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perfectly pyramidal – One in particular will long be remembered I went around it & feasted my soul upon its beauty – Enclosed you will find some little twigs – The same kind grows at home, still it may please you to see that the sacred soil of Va. can produce so fair a specimen – On the whole I must acknowledge myself thankful for even so much of Sabbath rest – Of habitual cheerfulness there has been scarcely a break from the onset – (**Pg. 4**) At times it seems wonderful to me that my mind has been so much at rest – Doubtless health has had much to do with it; Still I have surmised that possibly it is one of the fruits of right purpose granted by our Heavenly Father – I certainly hope his Kingdom may be greatly advanced through the agencies at work in this war – While it is impossible to live up to our standard outwardly we may keep our hearts for his abode & welcome him there – Mr. Smith & Co left our camp Friday afternoon – I accompanied them to the Ferry & also visited Md. Hts. showing them all I could – They will tell you everything – We did not get back to their hotel till evening – I took tea with them by invitation enjoyed their good cups out of white & clean ware – Bid them good bye about 8 o'clock & reached camp just as tattoo was beating – I am glad for their visit & also for all the rich provisions they brought – But whenever hereafter anything is got up for the company as a whole I hope the names of the donors will be kept from all the articles – It seemed that several fowls & other things got in as directed to certain individuals – Two or three claimed these & were unwilling they should go (**Pg. 5**) common stock – They showed a very contemptible spirit & disgraced the company, but most of all themselves – I think also their friends who directed articles to them to be carried in the company lot did very little better – If friends at home wish to send to their friends here they should be willing to pay the express bill - We hear a great deal of growling from certain quarters & would anyhow – Some you know complain just in proportion as they are well treated – I am getting sick of these public offerings – But you need say nothing of this – I presume however there will go back from some all sorts of perversions & falsehood – Sometime I mean to write you a confidential letter & tell you just what I know & think about some of our men - But for the present enough – You must not however suppose that in the main our boys were churlish or ungrateful – There was a very subdued feeling during the meal & after – We had no noise & apparently little enthusiasm – Still I know the majority took hold with becoming temper - (**Pg. 6**) Richardson brought up the two Assistant Surgeons though behind time – They were abundantly furnished. The barrel of things to individuals & also two for Charles H. Clark arrived last night – We had a very suggestive scene soon after – We were just taking supper in our tent – The men had finished theirs & it being known that new express matter was come it was not long before a crowd gathered – The company bbl was directed to me; I told them it should be opened as soon as we had finished our supper – A few growled as usual - But when it was opened & the bundles all distributed you ought to have seen the faces & heard the remarks of those who recd. nothing – You see everybody at home wrote to their friends here what things they had sent or provided – Of course when so much could not be brought somebody must be disappointed – But they said Mr. Smith told them their things were sent & no

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representations could convince them to the contrary – The whole matter of Thanksgiving has done much to bring out no bold relief the light and dark (*Pg 7*) shades of character & disposition composing the company – A great many men volunteered for some other reason than patriotism – But perhaps we expect too much of depraved human nature – Men who think of themselves only – who never realize the force of great truths actuating vast movements who enjoy not making contributions to the good of all will show out their true spirit at such times – I have no idea that hundreds now in the army would again volunteer under any circumstances – They curse the govt., the negro, Abolitionists & every body & thing – In fact it seems as though the grumbling ones were given over to the devil who is rapidly working them into complete likeness to himself –

I want to say one thing for you about our hospital sick – They are not more deserving of pity than some others in the company – I think their present weakness is more owing to their own imprudence than to disease – They have been pampered with good things until they think every article from home, especially jellies & preserves belongs to them of right - Sometimes I think (*Pg. 8*) the gifts of this description do more harm than good – I know they do in five or six cases – I guess as a general thing those who have mainly confined themselves to army diet have suffered the least – It is a mistaken notion that shortness of provisions results in the diseases of camp – Excessive indulgence is the trouble – A great many lack foresight & never make any positive stand - Consequently when the supply to the regt. comes short a day or two they are destitute – When the rations come full again they run to the other extreme & the result is sickness – We can calculate pretty surely when certain ones will be off & on – But maybe then things do not interest you – This letter I guess is not what you may have expected from the line I sent by Mr. Hotchkiss – If I had been at home in the tents probably I should have got up something better – You must tell me all about your Thanksgiving & how father is – I am going to write him soon – The third also must be got up immediately – All things considered my time is provided for continually I see you frequently speak of your side – Take care of yourself – Let the work go – take care of yourself –

Yours to the End

A. Upson