

Jan 2, 1863

(Letter with no envelope, is written on one large sheet of stationery folded in half and one sheet torn in half with lines and is written on six sides in ink.)

Stevenson, Ala.
Jan 2d, 1863

My Dear Wife -

Once more I am safe back from Chattanooga & sitting by a good fire – The trip has been a tedious one owing to delays & bad weather – I closed my note of Tuesday morning very hastily & left it with Royce to mail – But for that it might have been filled up afterwards for having got my men to the depot the trains failed & we did not leave Stevenson until 5 P.M. Even then we were jammed in with a loaded train bearing an engineer & construction corps just on from the Potomac Army to put the RR. from Bridgeport to Chattanooga in running order – Our late departure from here made it dark & after when we reached Bridgeport – My intention was to cross the river & camp on the other side in order to be ready if possible to take the cars for Whiteside next morning – But when we got to the island I found the traveling so horribly muddy that it was impossible in the night to proceed without tumbling in all over – The only resort was to pick out the least wet spot & put up for day light – After much floundering we reached a flat of higher ground & lay by – The wood was very unburnable, the rain of Sunday having soaked that as well as the ground – We succeeded finally in raising a decent fire, boiled our coffee from water out of a slew near by & then tried to do as civilized folks & brutes do – go to sleep – I got some short naps & besides punching the fire waited the rise of the moon – the progress of Orion & wished for morning – Was astir early, got our breakfast & before (**Pg. 2**) sunrise commenced our onward travel – The morning was beautiful as the previous one had been – Could get no cars & as a matter of course had to commence counting the ties toward Chattanooga – I led off the convalescent following & the guard prisoners bring up the rear – In these parties we have all sorts of fellows & not a few interesting anecdotes & sketches of personal history are thrown in as we step short & long strides towards the destination – Many vile mouthed, profane & worthless scamps are always along & so there is likewise enough that nobody ought ever to speak & certainly pure minds wish never to hear – Afternoon the sky began to cloud over & before sunset it was evident that a wet night was coming – We had made sixteen miles – not a big days work for sound well men – But these convalescents are not able to march like soldiers all the while in service – Neither are they fit just coming from the hospitals to undergo severe weather especially at this season of the year - I know of some vacant houses on a mile further & determined to reach them – Got there just about dark – Got the convalescents all into three old buildings & the guard & prisoners into a fourth – All were thus under a roof & safe for the wet night – Seeing them all right & properly cautioned I went to another house where a family lived asked for lodging & was gratified at the ready response – Afterwards the woman, a kindly disposed lady of 50 told me my society was welcome for she had experienced so much trouble & insult from soldiers

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that she dreaded to see a party approach unless an officer was at hand – These people proved to be Penn. folks who had settled here 9 years since - They worked about the coal mines – She fixed me a good bed & I slept like a man at home with my pistol (*Pg. 3*) under the pillow – the man & his wife occupying a bed in the other corner – The drain fell copiously before midnight & when I heard it upon the roof my heart was full of gratitude & comfort at the blessings surrounding me – The lady got me an early breakfast charged a dollar for her whole trouble & once more I started my party over the ties – It did not rain & yet it had not cleared off – The men were sore from the preceding days travel & at first could go only slowly – About the time we reached Hookers camps in Lookout Valley 6 miles below Chattanooga the clouds again opened & for the rest of the day they did their best at drenching everything exposed – The rest of my journey was what you can imagine – I got all turned over by four P.M. my guard quartered in the same building as formerly, except this time they occupied the lower story – Then about dark not fancying the prospect of a windowless bed room I went to the Christian Commission & asked the agent if he could give me a clean floor to ly on – He made me at home immediately & asked me into the office where I was introduced to several missionaries or chaplains & three ladies – One was a right able woman – the chief of Iowa's benevolent operations among the ladies & gentlemen – just here on a tour of exploration xc. – The second occupying a similar position with reference to Chicago – The third a Missouri woman of plain dress & sad face who had that day rode in the rain upon a mule out to Mission Ridge to see the grave of her husband killed at the late battle there – She had recd. a letter from one of his comrades requesting her to come, written immediately after he recd. the fatal wound – But when she reached here he had been (*Pg. 4*) long been sleeping the soldiers last rest – The evening passed very pleasantly – The howling wind outside did not lessen the satisfaction I took in toasting my feet & participating in the business & chat that enlivened the hours – Mrs. Wittemire, the Iowa Matron was evidently equal to her task – I conceived a very favorable opinion of her abilities – She is a widow about 45, tall, graceful, intelligent & must be doing a good & great work – The Chicago lady, named Porter was less the master or mistress of language, less facile & apprehensive, but really a very efficient though quiet laborer – She understood her business & I thought was more pleasing to the gentlemen agents because less obtrusive & self-mindful – Singing & prayer closed the evening & I went to bed in the same room with the men – The Ms. lady retired before the others & from an adjoining apartment I thought I heard her silent grief sobs as she in widowed loneliness recalled the days heavy experience & her own unsupported future – Oh! the bitterness of War! – But didn't the wind keep high carnival that night – The temperature suddenly changed & before morning I found it difficult to keep back & toes warm not withstanding plenty of Christian Clothing – About light I was out & looking after my men – We all had coffee & hard crackers & then went to the boat – she was to start early – We were aboard long before the hour – The ground was frozen like a rock & the wind stung our faces just as it does way up North – The streamer did not leave until 10 – It seems impossible to get any

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dispatch in transportation – The fact is neither the rail ways nor the boats run for our official convenience & hence we have to submit to what seems unnecessary delay – But this is only a part of the fortune of war as it is & must to a great extent be conducted – This boat proved to be the very hull on which my first descent of the Tennessee from this point (Chattanooga) was made – I told you about it – She is now fitted up with boilers & engine & makes regular trips – having the same pilot & mate as at first – They remembered me & we had a friendly recognition – The fact is I did some hearty pulling at the oar on that occasion – We did not reach Bridgeport until 8 P.M. – 10 hours – all in the wind – 10 hours of New Years day '64 – Every moment of it was felt in my fingers & toes – My ears & heels – Nor shall I soon forget it – unless a bigger day – more famous for winters peculiar grief comes here after - There were about two hundred aboard including two batteries that have reenlisted & were going home for 30 days before commencing their new term – But I noticed that everyone did about the same amount of shivering & stamping as myself & in a crowd the best philosophy is cheerfulness – So not having complained there - (*Pg. 5*) I shall avoid doing such a thing even by letter to you – But all the comfort there was on the “Kingston” would not make a sixpence trinket fit to put in a pickanninnys stocking – I did run ashore once while the boat was wooding & spend 15 cents in a corn cake at a log house which was nestled on the mountainside – I had a few moments pleasant talk with the lady who smoked her cob pipe as composedly as though she was the queen of a Fifth Avenue palace just entertaining some New Years guests - From her cabin door too as I looked beyond the river could be seen a charming waterfall that came tumbling carelessly down the opposite bluff – The winter King had hung some charming drapery from the cliffs summit & the foaming torrent was adorned as for a special occasion – On another occasion I took a boat across a new field thickly set with blackened weed stalks & at every step scared yellow larks from their needed covert – The birds were thick but did not like to be disturbed for the piercing wind made a merry with their garments as with ours – But this was all extra – not aboard the “Kingston” – You see I knocked some fragments of pleasure out of the rather barren elements making up my Jan 1st, 1864 – At Bridgeport found an Indiana regt. just about loading on a special train bound homeward – We crowded in among them expecting to go immediately – When all were loaded we waited to hear the whistle signal a start – One hour passed – a cold hour – two hours went by – we were still standing huddled in a box car – the third went & then Indiana patience got profane – a fourth did not lessen the execrations of soldiers desirous to be moving to the rear – the fifth showed no diminution of oaths – the sixth was half gone before the backing engine (*Pg. 6*) gave the premonitory jar & only at the seventh close did we put our half frozen feet upon the hard crusted Stevenson – We know how men ran when they are stiff with cold – At 3 ½ A.M. you might have seen me & my guard swaying across the field to our camp – As we neared it the moon showed us only walls & chimneys – roofs were gone – The boys had gone – Just as I was leaving on Tuesday it was reported that we had marching orders – Five companies left yesterday morning – going back to Fan talon – K was one –

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The other 5 companies remain here – But they will probably go soon – Some changes have taken place in our division & hence this – It is evident we are still to guard RRs. I called on Col. Wooster this forenoon for orders & he told me to stay here as he wanted an extra officer – I don't know what service is at hand – perhaps none – Will write as things develop – Royce is with my men except a few still here – Capt. W. has gone with the others – A J.F.K & E are the companies that marched – Recd. your Christmas letter this morning. Royce has one that came while I was gone – The box too arrived yesterday – So it was a New Years welcome if I had only been here – I have just opened it but not yet examined the contents. – Shall do so soon & will write in full soon – It is all right I guess – You packed it snug as eggs in oats & there is the secret – I took of the lid to see if there might not be some brandy possibly – Mr. Frisbie wanted some for Elbert – Poor boy – I fear he is going to die soon – He is very weak & low – it is well his father came on – He is very calm – Two or three others are nearly gone – God bless Elbert's people – his name is better than any ones who made a less sacrifice – The boy had done his duty nobly & now is likely to fall a martyr to the great cause - Console if you can his mother & sister – My health is complete – lungs, stomach bowels, legs – all right – Appetite ready for any thing – especially mule coffee – Well I suppose the penalty of being healthy & tough will be plenty of service - Never mind – I don't like medicine – Guess possibly they may keep me railroading & boating – One of these days I will explore Vick, ojack or scale Lookout – If I must travel back & forth to Chattanooga I am bound not to follow everlastingly one route – We'll see -- a coal mine or a salt peter cave – Now wife let me say so late what I really felt in time – “A happy Year to you – Love to all – About the box tomorrow-

As ever yours -
A. Upson.