

Bridgeport
Oct. 4, 1863
Mrs. Andrew Upson
Plantsville, Conn.

(Envelope is postmarked Nashville, Ten. Oct. 14 with 3-cent stamp. Letter is on two sheets of stationery folded in half and one single sheet and is written on ten sides in ink.)

Bridgeport, Ala.
Oct. 4th, 1863

My Dear Wife,

Once more I have the opportunity to use pen & ink to communicate with you – We arrived here about noon yesterday – It is a spot in the north east corner of Ala. so called I suppose because here the Nashville & Chattanooga RR crosses the Tennessee. The bridge itself was destroyed by our forces under Gen Mitchel early in the war - The rebs never rebuilt it – Uncle Sam has begun it anew & probably will complete the structure in a short time – Whether there ever was a house here I can not say – No evidences of human habitations have come under my observations: but I guess on the other side there are houses for I head roosters crow this morning in that direction – A range of hills (**Pg. 2**) extends along the opposite side - & probably as we advance the country becomes more broken – In the vicinity of Chattanooga it is very mountainous – An hour after we landed here I had a good bath in the Tennessee & this morning went down & washed again – It is a beautiful stream at this point, 40 or 50 rods wide – Small boats I believe used to run up as far as Chattanooga – The government is building one now just here which I lean is to be armed for the protection of transports – From this point Rosecrans supplies have to be carried in wagons 28 miles – This required a vast array of teams & the danger to trains is such that a considerable force is constantly necessary for their protection – A RR can be protected easier than separate trains of wagons – Because a squad or company is stationed permanently at each bridge – If it is large a block house is built & sometimes also an earthwork or battery render its destruction a very hazardous (**Pg. 3**) experiment – On the Baltimore & Ohio RR. they have what are called railway monitors, which are stout built towers placed on wheels armed with two or three moderate sized guns & fitted with portholes so that they can be used anywhere for offense & defense – I have no doubt Uncle Sam intends to hold on to East Tennessee – The rebs seem equally determined to regain it – For its possession is essential to them – But they are too late – I find the spirit of these western soldiers the most undaunted – They say nothing about giving up & certainly we of the East shall not be the first to say enough – What precise object is to be attempted by our expedition or whether it has a separate field of effort is all unknown – Hooker has not arrived here yet – The 11th Corps is on hand & I suppose ours must all get in by to-night – We have a beautiful camping place – in an oak grove, looking eastward upon the narrow valley of the river & (**pg. 4**) the mountains opposite – This is all a hardwood region & the hues of autumn are the same as with you at the north – I never saw more enchanting places for homes than lie all around here – This river with its mountain scenery & its rich intervals is lovely as a stream in paradise – I would ask

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nothing finer than this very tract surrounding our present stopping place – But should desire to retain the trees, which of course will fast go down under the wasting life of armies – I think you too would be charmed with a home such as could be had here – Of course I speak of times when peace prevails & society is possible – Many locations in Va. attracted me – But I must say that Ohio & Ind. impressed my mind more favorably – Ky. we crossed in the night, but there is no question about its eligible situations & Tenn. so far as we have viewed it enchants me – (Pg. 5) Our chaplain seized the opportunity to hold service – The companies all fell in & assembled on a little plot that some of our predecessors had swept clean – We all sat down “by companies” just as they did perhaps when Christ fed the multitude – The Chaplain stood up beside a large oak – there are plenty of such in whichever direction you look – First we sang “My Country xc” – Then he read a Psalm, then prayer, another hymn, Coronation, then the sermon, short & pointed – closing with the Doxology – The exercises were happily conducted & certainly by most they must have been enjoyed – His text was the verses in connection with the miracle of healing wrought upon the man possessed with an evil spirit – There were three heads, each illustrated & made plain by brief remark 1st Evil characters fail not to recognize (**Pg. 6**) their opposite – The good – The bad spirit knew Christ at once – Knew him quicker than his own people knew him – The wicked generally detect their likes & unlikes more readily than the good – This point was well established – Bad men would detect hypocrites quicker than sincere men would – 2d point – The Evil Spirit demanded entire possession of its victim – Wished Christ not to interfere – So in life – Evil habits tend to that control which amounts to supreme authority – They grow stronger daily & become cables of iron – We see how difficult it is for complete reformation to take place in the life of a hardened sinner – 3d point – Christ is the only help to save us from the power of evil –

Our chaplain so far is popular – The men esteem him & I think he will be the means of good to the (**Pg. 7**) regt. But it is sad that so few opportunities are afforded by our high commanders for this highest of all duties – What can armies accomplish when the Almighty is not friendly! – What presumption it is to assume the direction of an agency so important without recognizing dependence upon the ..Great Arm! – We should never march or attempt any expedition without his blessing invoked at the outset – And do you suppose this war could last long if all our generals acted on this rule – Viz that nothing should be sought or done which enlightened conscience & the word & expressed will of God did not approve? Things are done hastily in military life – But it is too often a haste without wisdom, not without sin – I have seen very few occasions when it was not perfectly practicable for a commander to recognize the Sabbath in such a way (**Pg. 8**) that it would tell upon his men – Let it be understood that the high officers from upon every form of evil that they appreciate moral obligations & our armies would soon be invulnerable – Probably the Majors & Brigadiers hold themselves more accountable to the War Dept. & Regulations than to the Almighty – Chief, whose throne is in the skies – But I fancy they will at last wake up to the vast responsibilities devolved in their command – When they stand before the Eternal Throne to answer for this life, then will

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they measure rightly the interests confided to their keeping – How now they can assume direction of 1, 2, 3, 5, 20, 100 thousand men & not send up constant supplication for divine guidance seems amazing – “Set up your tents” – That is the word – We stay here over night – To morrow we may not go at all – Any how Sunday is nearly over – I presume you have been (*Pg. 9*) to church & the widows probably got together & compared notes over the movement – We have speculated somewhat as to the construction you women would put upon our transfer to Tennessee & the Army of the Cumberland – Generally it is thought the folks at home will not be pleased with the change – But you must not render hasty judgment! We may be sent here for our own safety as much as for duty – Let God reign – We are soldiers, engaged in a holy cause: it becomes us ever to obey & trust in Him who can preserve to the uttermost – You at home must do the same & in patience possess your souls – Let me tell you something – Rosecrans hard tack are twice as large as those we get on the Potomac – There again we get coffee in the berry & know it is not peas – You ought, too, to see what fine sides of bacon the boys drew today – So much already – Will you believe me? I am glad to be out of Va. & (*Pg. 10*) away from Washington – A new field opens here & somehow I enter upon it more hopefully than I did that of last year when we joined the army about Washington –

I am getting right hungry for a letter from home – You have the advantage of me, for I keep writing & doubtless they reach you; but we are tossed here & there & must wait for a calm before we get any mail – Very likely you will at times not hear from us in some days – Don’t worry over that – I shall endeavor to keep you well posted – Guess no other man in the company, perhaps in the regt. wrote every day on the march, or ride, but me – But it is drawing towards tea-time – Wouldn’t I like to sit down with you as formerly – Enough sure this time – My love to all the family – how much, much to you –

Truly
A. Upson