

November 5, 1863

(Letter is on one large sheet of lined stationery folded in half and is written on four sides in ink.)

Stevenson, Ala.
Nov. 5th, 1863

Mrs. Bingham:

My Dear Friend –

I recd a letter from you & a note from little Sarah the night we arrived at Brandy Station, Va. We had just left the Rapid Ann & were about to leave the scene of operations beyond the Rappahannock – Since then, though my obligation to you has not been forgotten, a favorable opportunity to respond has scarcely occurred - It is now 9 o'clock of a rainy evening when ones thoughts run homeward & the thought has crossed me that I had better pen you a few words - Of our long journey hither & the weariness incident there to it is now too late to speak – We had barely stepped from the cars & rested ourselves for a single night when orders came to reship & retrace our journey 50 miles or more – Wheelers raid was in progress, cutting the RR & depredating at various points – We were sent in pursuit & made a detour to Shelbyville & thence back to the line of the railway – I was interested in this jaunt, though it cost us many a mile of hard tramping – We found the people generally outspoken & truly Union – They were not afraid to shake the Stars & Stripes & bid us a warm welcome – We never saw the like in all our wanderings through Va. But it was useless for us on foot to pursue rebels mounted – Our cavalry took up the business & overhauled them a few miles beyond Shelbyville. Capturing some of their guns & many prisoners – Since then it has been my fortune to see some of the party that caused our return from (*Pg. 2*) Bridgeport – We have been temporarily stationed at various points along the road – It is thought we may remain here some time – Some things look favorable to that view – Col. is Commandant of this Post & has sent for his wife – Still we often have fixed up quarters, thinking ourselves located, but a day changed the prospect entirely & often at the end of 24 hours or less we were miles away – But the disposition the Col. is making of his officers & men seems to justify the notion that he will be retained in his present position, & of course the regt. will continue with him – Last week I was sent to Nashville with a squad of rebel prisoners, 42 in all - Five of them were officers – one Capt. Gurley – was the man who murdered Gen. McCook about one year ago – He is a hard looking fellow & I guess could do a rough thing without many compunctions of conscience – They were represented to me as a bad class of men – We did not allow ourselves to slumber – Arrived at Nashville about midnight & felt relieved when they were safely handed over to the Provost Marshal – I stopped there one day & returned to this point, making a much quicker trip than was expected – Stevenson is a miserable, dirty hole – Some of these southern places are of much account – save now & then one like Shelbyville or Murfreesboro - You would

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be rather interested in one subject – the refugees – Every day we see families coming down from Chattanooga & beyond – They have lost everything by the depredations of the army & are compelled to seek a home elsewhere – Children are numerous in all these (*Pg. 3*) families, but mostly ragged & frequently sickly looking – They appear to be well meaning, honest people, who love the old Union – hate the secessionists & wish the war to close – Thousands of these persons from Eastern Tennessee – Northern Georgia & Alabama have been sent to Nashville – From there I learn many go to Indiana & Illinois – Others find employ about the city or with the government – We find hundreds also – men – who have deserted the rebel service – New cases of this kind come in everyday – They make no concealment of having been in the rebel army but give unequivocal evidence of joy to be free from it – Recruiting for black regiments is going on here – I have seen colored soldiers on duty – One regt. 1000 strong is stationed at Elk River bridge, a very important point on the RR – There is one or more regiments at Nashville & the men belonging to them that I saw looked better & behaved more gentlemanly than half our white soldiers – A year from this time W.S. will have a large force of woolly heads & about that time I think the rebel cause will totter to its ruin – The blacks flock in here from the country around – If one is found unemployed he is gathered at once, & soon after you see him dressed in sky blue pants – dark blue blouse, black hat & feather, in which garb a darky looks more tasty than when dressed differently – Nobody down here in our army opposes using this element to help fight – Nor will it be long before those at the North who so strenuously objected to negroes fighting are as zealous in (*Pg. 4*) promoting this method of keeping up our army –

For a while after arriving here we got no mails from home – In fact it is only a week since we began to be favored in this respect – Letters are most precious & go a great ways towards alleviating the troubles that come upon us – Hope you will remember this & not be negligent in duty if conscience moves you at all – At any rate I value much a missive from the New Britain Branch of my kinsmen – Please be faithful – for I shall expect occasionally to hear from that quarter though your cares are numerous – My good old father is nearly gone – I shall not be surprised any time to hear of his decease – God bless him – he did as few fathers would by me, & now it grieves me that I cannot be present to soothe his departing hours – Wife is doing her part well & for her attentions to him I feel the profoundest gratitude – They are passing away, those gray heads – Three years will safely thin their ranks & when I return, if God wills such good fortune, how many will be sought in Vain!

I have scratched this very hastily – Remember me to Mr. Bingham & each of your family – Assure Sarah I shall find an opportunity soon to answer her letter too – The rain is pouring down but I guess we shall see the sun tomorrow –

Very Truly Yours,
A. Upson