

December 19, 1863
Mrs. Andrew Upson
Plantsville, Conn.

(Envelope is postmarked Nashville, Ten. Dec. 22, with a 3-cent stamp. Letter is on one large sheet of stationery folded in half and one half sheet and is written on six sides in ink.)

Stevenson, Ala.
Dec. 19th, 1863

My Dear Wife –

Arrived back from Chattanooga a 2 ½ A.M. The last half of this trip was not so agreeable as the beginning - Going up I was fortunate, but the responsibility of such an expedition is just enough to keep one pretty uneasy – I did not get away from Stevenson until about noon Tuesday – A train off the track above by which three men were killed outright & 15 or 20 bruised & wounded detained me – I saw the dead men brought in before leaving – They were riding inside a box car which was loaded with bags of grain – Where the train ran off water two feet deep stood over the ground & the car which they were in turned bottom side up piling the bags upon them so that they were drowned – Capt. Woodruff recd. orders Tuesday morning to take up a party of convalescents – He started on the same train with me – We got safely to Bridgeport but were stopped a long while waiting for a chance to cross the pontoon – So many trains & men & horses are passing & repassing that frequently men are hindered half a day there – But we got over about three P.M. & proceeded – I had 8 men to leave at Hd. Qrs. 4th Corps which is on the island opposite Bridgeport – There I learned that by waiting till 8 next morning it would be possible to get transportation to Whiteside 15 miles which was so much of a help that it seemed best to ly by – According I halted at sundown in a piece of woods & encamped – That is we made fires & lay (**Pg. 2**) down of course keeping guard over the prisoners – I had four RR ties for my mattress & would have slept good but for the fact that 99 prisoners were in my care – Eight men at a time stood guard – but I looked about among them every two hours to see that no negligence afforded any opportunity for escape – Wednesday we took the train at 8 ½ or 9 – This was composed of a curious little engine & three cars, two platforms & one box, or would be if the siding had not been taken off – Passed Capt. W. & his party just beyond Shellmound & arrived at Whiteside at 10 – Here commenced our walking – We followed the track as before to Chattanooga – Some of the prisoners were unable to walk fast & the delay of waiting for them made the journey long - Did not arrive at Chattanooga until dark & rain had already commenced - Turned the prisoners over to the Provost Marshall & took up quarters in the second story of a store – The windows were out, the room adjoining full of sick & wounded rebels & the one below occupied by refugees – men, women & children – During the night it rained very hard – One sudden, sharp clap of thunder awoke me from sleep – I thought it was a explosion or the discharge of heavy gun – But the second clap which came soon

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after put me all right & I went to sleep, feeling not a little pity for Capt. W. who had not arrived – Next morning got transportation back by the boat which was expected up at 10 A.M. Meanwhile Capt. W. & his party came in but the boat did not arrive until 9 P.M. We had waited all day & she would not return until (**Pg. 3**) day light next morning – The weather had been growing cold all day & the wind blew fresh out of the Northwest – Our windowless second story was a cheerless bedroom – not half so good as all-out-doors with a good fire at your feet – Give me the woods rather than such a place for any but stormy weather – We got through the night & at four o'clock went aboard the steamer Paint Rock – She did not sail at day light, but commenced taking on RR iron – This occupied till 10 when she dropped down the river to near Lookout mountain & discharged a lot of hospital stores, than turned back to the slaughter & began to ship a thousand hides – Understanding she would go to Chattanooga for more iron we got off & walked up – for the boat afforded few good retreats from the searching cold wind - & a little vigorous exercise was necessary to maintain healthy circulation – Capt. W. & myself stopped at the foot of Cameron Hill beside a big log & made some coffee – Then we walked up to the landing & waited for the boat – Just as we got there portions of the 15th corps, which went up to relieve Burnside, arrived – For the first time I saw barefoot men in our army – These troops have been on the move since they left Memphis & they have had no opportunity to get clothing – Many were without blankets or overcoats – They will soon be all right now – For they are bound for Bridgeport & supplies can be got there – Hundreds of them were put aboard pontoon boats & proposed to float down – This pleased them & notwithstanding they were so poorly provided against the Wintry change that had come I noticed that they (**Pg. 4**) could joke & laugh “right smart” – Our next batch of iron proved to be Gen. Grant & Staff who came aboard bound for Louisville – Lots of wounded men & officers, refugees & their invaluable packs of bedding & iron ware were also taken on & at 4 o'clock we again shoved off – The river was high, the current ran strong & we pushed ahead, passing the pontoon boats & arrived at Bridgeport about 11 P.M. – I never had a more cheerless ride except once - that when crossing the Alleghenies in a stage coach – By dint of dancing & thumping we kept our heels from freezing – that is to say we could not prevent them from a kind of icy sensation that is the 1st cousin of misery – Once the boat landed & took on 8 cords of 4 feet wood – I loaded about half a cord & for once got warm – But the comfort was transient – At Bridgeport we took box cars & were home at the hour allotted – “George Washington” was hustled out & shortly after my toes & fingers & whole body felt the gratifying warmth of a good fire – Found Royce gone having started for Chattanooga Thursday – At 4 o'clock I took the bunk & knew no more until the black cook awakened me to say breakfast was ready – Today my eyes full as if mill stones had hung upon them but otherwise I am strait – Did justice you may believe to “Georges” pancakes & this P.M. expect to pick the bones of a doomed chicken that has been waiting some days for just such an occasion – Living at Chattanooga – at least for transient persons, is poor enough – I did not take enough to carry me through & had to fall back upon “hard tack” – not very attrac-diet when any thing better is to be had – However living for two or three days is a secondary matter provided the weather is not severe – This cold term came upon

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us rather suddenly – I don't know why it is that the winds when they really take on polar airs succeed so completely in reaching the inmost frame work of the system – If we have little of this genuine winter what does come is like the fire eaters - intense - I imagine New England is conscious of her latitude just now – Have you got sleighing yet? Is your cellar well protected against Jack Frost – Don't let him bite your fine crop of potatoes –

(Pg. 5) Lieutenant Doolittle of my company is sick & not expected to live – He went to the hospital last Sunday – I called on him this morning & shall go again this evening – He is very thin, at times out of his mind – He was exceedingly popular with his former company E & also with K. I have had little opportunity to cultivate intimate acquaintance since becoming connected with K. He has been on duty at Convalescent Camp here ever since we arrived at this point – His duties at times have been burdensome & the opinion is that he has greatly overtaxed his strength. He is a young man, unmarried, having parents living in New Haven. Gleason has arrived looking very well – Guess he will be wiser than formerly but it takes a great deal of knocking to get right ideas into some craniums – Of regimental news there is none – When I went up to Hd. Qurs. this morning to report my safe return & business accomplished the Col. was having a big fuss over some matters that had gone wrong – One Lt. was receiving a pretty severe reprimand & two men standing by got hard digs into their ribs, or rather had to be hear themselves berated without answering a word - Thinks I what now is in store for my head – But before he had finished with one offender he turned to me & with a half smile says, well Mr. Upton, your business gets on well – The allusion was to my dismissal & the late notice from the War Dept. of title to all dues – I had not met him before since that arrived – The change in his manner & tone was like (Pg. 6) the contrast between December & July – We had a brief but pleasant conference & departed – But I could not resist an inside laugh at the whole scene – Samuel Ross is as curious a brick as ever came out of clay – When he takes a notion to side over some poor fellow the spurs strike quick & running is out of the question – It will not do to quail before such an assailant - Stand firm & strike too – The battle will be short & the man who is both right & brave wins – I like his mettle, but the devil take his manners –

Gen. Grants return this way has set speculation afloat as to his intentions for the future - I think he is going into Winter Quarters at Louisville – leaving Thomas, Foster, Hooker & Sherman to take care of the army & that no more will be attempted until spring – Others are figuring out a new plan of operations to be commenced very soon – For instance a strike towards Montgomery & Mobile – This hardly seems feasible at this time – The army needs rest & refitting – Besides winter is a bad season anywhere for military performances on a grand scale – As a matter of economy I believe it is better to house the men, take good care of animals & put everything in readiness to act with the opening of good weather in spring – Stevenson grows dull every day – If it were summer grass would be growing in the street where a short while since the mud was poached by ten thousand foot steps every day – We have only one sutler – But the trains run at all hours & railroading is lively with the usual entertainment of smashup - & break – things – These could be endured if only cars got anchored but unfortunately some victim is

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numbered at every such occurrence & men almost cease to think of safety as belonging to RR transportation – Hope to hear from you tonight – It is rather wintry today – but I have so good a fire that the howlings of the Southern Boreas produce no such sensations on yesterday – No letters have come for me since I left – Some great stoppage has happened – But it is time to stop – Let me say Love to you all & in my next I guess it will be kindled by later news from home –

As ever yours

A. Upson

(Written on first page upside down in upper margin.)

Send me some postage stamps I am nearly out – Paper & envelopes I have enough of

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