

Dec. 27, 1863
Mrs. Andrew Upson
Plantsville, Conn.

(Envelope is postmarked Nashville, Ten. Jan. 6, 1864 with a 3-cent stamp. Letter is on one large sheet of lined stationery folded in half and is written on four sides in ink.)

Stevenson, Ala.
Dec. 27th, 1863

My Dear Wife –

We have the wettest kind of Sunday – the weather is mild, the skies leak like a sieve & for all out of door operations the mud is profound – Yesterday too there was a good deal of showering but the air in the morning was snow like – I presume if you had falling clouds they shed the frozen dew – Have been to church & just returned – The Chaplain preached a sermon commemorative of Lt. Doolittle, taking for his text Job. 21 – verses 22, 3, 4, & 5 – I liked the discourse much – The audience was small, but the officers generally attended – Yesterday the seats were removed from the Meeting house, which is to be used for confining prisoners – A considerable number of that class are on hand all the while & up to this there has been no place but an open stockade to keep them in – When the weather is wet they suffer exceedingly – Now they have a roof & protection from the inclemency of the season – The seats were carried to a room over what used to be a store & there we met today – Harpers in one of their late illustrated papers, I don't now know the date, gave a picture of Stevenson – It is mainly correct – only much too nice if you wish to form a right conception – the 2d building on the left of the Alabama house is where we now meet to worship – The lower room is occupied by the Quartermaster of the regt. Lt. Scranton – An old sign, “Mc Mahon” is still over the door – The former proprietors of these buildings are all “done gone” as the darkies say – Very many will know their places no more forever, for they are utterly demolished (*Pg. 2*) Just think of that fact – A village entirely deserted by its former inhabitants – Houses & fields left – often furniture & crops – Strangers come thronging – fences disappear – trees are cut down – small buildings are torn down – larger ones, if spared, are occupied by Commissaries, Quartermasters – Generals, Colonels, & officers of various ranks – Every thing is changed, & generally at the end of a campaign, or when a season or two of military occupancy has passed, almost everything is destroyed – I envy not the old residents their feelings if they ever got back – They will hardly recognize their own places – Even the boundary lines & marks of plantations are obliterated – What a devastator is War!

Col. Ross has gone with his wife to Decherd to take temporary command of the Brigade – I believe Gen. Williams has a leave of absence & hence the stepping up among the officers – Col. Wooster commands the 20th & this Post – It is owing to him, I suppose, that the prisoners got a church instead of a stockade for their quarters – I wonder Ross has not done this thing long since – He has wrought many other improvements –

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Capt. Burbank has left for Ct. His resignation is accepted & he goes into the regular service, starting as a private but having the prospect of speedy promotion – Don't believe I love the army well enough to do that – Am willing to fight this Rebellion out, but then my desire is to follow a peaceful avocation – However his course is best if he intends to make war his business – They do things right up to the lines edge among the regulars – I don't believe they fight one bit better than the Volunteers or that the regular officers as a class exhibit higher qualities than those displayed by most of the commanders who these years since knew (**Pg. 3**) little or nothing of the science of Arms - Generally these regulars are not famous for dispatch in business – They have been accustomed to take things leisurely while an a peace footing & the habit remains strong to carry on this war according to the easy way – Our business officers, who engaged in the service & brought the same practical energy & life as won there success on other fields of effort are often restive under the slow coach style of scientific warfare – They chafe at the idleness of camp & the everlasting routine & formality – of those who go by the books – If the experience of the regulars in the modes of business as it pertains to the army could be given at once to those volunteers who have capacity for command we should see matters move – But mostly old army officers are stationed at the corners, they fill those places where it is in their power to measurably control operations, & so betwixt the zeal of one class & the excessive deliberateness of another less is accomplished than the means & opportunities warrant us to expect – A young regular who has pluck & energy – who don't think so much of West Point as he does of the ability that carries on a campaign & whips the enemy – is a capital man – Science does the nation good – But when West Point conservatism & McClellan strategy takes the reins the campaign is a fruitless one & all grow dissatisfied – Enough of this – it is wet – wet – wet – But I am dry – have a good fire & probably shall not be disturbed today – Our Capt. has started for Chattanooga today – He has a sweet time – I don't envy him tonight's comfort – Recd your letter of the 20th by last mail – I explained to you that all the artists have left Stevenson – When I came back (**Pg. 4**) from Chattanooga I intended to get it at Bridgeport – But arriving there about midnight half froze it seemed too tedious to hang around until next day & I came home to get worm – I expect an opportunity will soon offer & you may depend upon it the picture shall come along as soon as it can be obtained – Charles Hotchkiss tells me he expects Elbert's father by the next train – He is about the same as for some time back – I guess Lt. Doolittle's funeral may have been attended today – A sad time for his friends – We hear that his father had got as far as Nashville where he met the body – An express box for him arrived the middle of the week – Things seem to have gone unfortunately all around – I understand he was his fathers pride – Well, the good opinion of his brother officers must be some consolation. He was universally respected – it seem to me friends must feel worse where one dies from disease in the army than on the battlefield – Is it not so? We make some calculation upon getting shot, but with young & healthy men the prospect of being stricken down upon a sickbed is regarded among the improbabilities – I am thankful enough our children escape the attacks of that throat malady – Are they well shod – Look out for their feet - I am thinking one sled may no be enough for three children – Buy a second if you think necessary – Let them slide & take

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abundant exercise in the open air – I can hardly realize that you have sleighing – You must manage as is best with the sleigh - Get one or two seats & have it safe and comfortable – Keep warm – I hope to send a pile of greenbacks to you sometime next month – This week we shall be mustered – Give my regards to Julia Ann – Love to all the children & Grandma-

Love to you too - most of it - do you believe?

A. Upson