

Feb. 15, 1863

*(Letter with no envelope is on one sheet of stationary folded in half and another single sheet of paper with lines and is written on six sides in ink.)*

Stafford Co. House, Va.

Feb. 15th, 1863

My Dear Wife,

Yours of the 9th came in yesterday & today I have that of the 11th giving notice that you should that day ship the box asked for & contents – Shall look for it this week, but it may be delayed a month – My things so far have come right along in good condition – but you can hardly imagine how much is lost by spoiling – When I was down at Aquia Landing there was a small mountain of express matter for soldiers – but the RR was so much occupied by the govt. business that it could not be got forward – Our brigade is fortunately located – we have a landing on the creek about two miles from camp where forage is landed & the report is that express matter for us will come the same way – Any how I shall expect my regular luck & before long be able to toss a line & perhaps exhibit you the scales if not sending the fins – (**Pg. 2**) You speak about stamps – guess I have recd. all that were sent – Charley brought 50 & since then I have found a lot snugly laid away & forgotten – They were in my satchel – But envelopes are all gone & paper nearly – Live by borrowing the former – can't afford to buy at 25cts per pack – Apples are 5cts each & not plenty – But we get potatoes now at 80cts the bushel & soft bread for 6cts per loaf – Good ham – good enough too, we get for 11cts – So our living is far better than we have sometimes – Those sausages served to give relish to two meals in our family – There was but one opinion as to their merits – The cheese, which we finished before leaving Loudon Valley was as good as any you ever made – Capt. Recd. some butter, dried beef & flour, buckwheat – the same night – We put things in together & of course it don't take long to use up the contents of a box – I was however surprised when C. Hotchkiss told me a few days since (**Pg. 3**) that he & Elbert had finished the bbl – I stood by when he unpacked it & it did seem that they two had supplies for at least one month – Some of our boys receive things from home very often – In fact they would be better off without so many sweet things – I notice that most of them off & on, for duty today & sick tomorrow, are the ones forever wanting something better to eat. C. Hotchkiss don't belong in that crowd –

Alex Lewis is still here – His son is to be discharged – He was never fit to be enlisted – Considering what expense it was last fall to get up a regt. I think the Surgeons who passed so many worthless bodies & pronounced them sound ought to be punished – Not over half the men who came out in the 20th, judging from what I see, have the kind of stuff necessary to carry them through a years service – Some are always complaining of diarrhea – others have the piles, & others the rheumatism – Then the rations, the picketing, the fatigue – the mud, the (**Pg. 4**) marches, & this or that is constantly offered as a reason for exemption – The men or the officers who tow the mark every time week after week are precious scarce – Our chaplain is gone to Washington – We have had no

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service of any kind today – It rained quite hard early in the morning & the day has been more or less stormy – We had dress parade tonight for the first time since coming here – Soon after it was over Lt. Post, who went home with the body of Capt. Smith came in & reported a man named Twichell who had a son in our company on the way here – We thought he must mean Jo. But doubt was soon dispelled for Dwight Twichell himself came sweating up the hill – We were not expecting him – perhaps Jim was – Guess you didn't know his intention to visit us – I have not seen him but a moment yet – Our Segt. Major is going home tomorrow morning, having a discharge presented him without asking for it – I shall send this by him – We frequently do so when citizens leave us, as somebody (**Pg. 5**) does nearly every day – I gave one for you to Dr. Peters of Cheshire last week – Believe it was written on picket – at least it contained a fern leaf & so on – The principal topic of interest in the regt. just now is appointments & promotions – New Captains & 1st & 2nd Lieuts. Serjts. & Corps. are to be made – It amuses me to see what expectations some men entertain of their own importance – I presume here as generally elsewhere personal influences will accomplish more than anything else – You know my way is to let fortune run – not chasing any of her bubbles – But I see often what a nice thing it is to have a friend at head quarters – Men get along by help of others, plying various arts to boost themselves aloft – Generally speaking I judge the performance of duty faithfully is not sufficient to hoist a man very fast – Still Col Ross is not easily bamboozled by a regular fool (**Pg. 6**) & he has discrimination enough to see who is fit for an officer & who is not – If as some say will be the case officers are imported to fill these vacancies you may look for a big tempest down here soon – I am of course expecting nothing – but plenty to do – You say nothing about paying Albert any money – When you have got round just show me where you have stopped holes – If father sells the cattle you can put the money in the Savings Bank for grandma or cut down a debt – Just as you think best in the matter – Had an interesting letter from Mr. & Mrs. William Jones today in response to one written them a few days since – Mrs. Jones, like all the rest of them who write me, think you setting a good example acting like a heroine – Well, it does me good to hear their reports, notwithstanding you try so hard in some of your own letters to prove their commendations false – I am inclined to believe your friends tell the truth so here is my love to you –

A.U.