

March 5, 1863
No. 58 The Deacons Letter

Mrs. Andrew Upson
Plantsville, Conn.

(Envelope has no postmark or stamp on it. Letter is on two sheets of lined stationery, which is stained, folded in half and is written on eight sides in ink.)

Stafford Co. House, Va.
March 5, 1863

My Dear Wife,

Yours of Saturday & Sunday evening last were brought by Mr. A. Hotchkiss, who in company with Messrs Pratt & Smith arrived here Wednesday noon or soon after – I had just written you & sent the letter to the office – He brought me a pair of stockings which are timely – I send back by Mr. Pratt two pair that need mending, done up in a part of my old haversack – You can patch the heels, darn the toes & they will answer to return to me some time when you have a favorable opportunity – We have been chatting all the evening; & now that they have turned in I scratch off a few lines to send by Mr. H. who expects to start back tomorrow – Though he is in some doubt, desiring to see the review of our corps tomorrow by Joe Hooker, notice of which came this evening – We were quite unexpectedly (**Pg. 2**) called out today by Gen. Williams, the first occasion of the kind since we came here – Whether these reviews mean anything more than a kind of general inspection which a general commander would naturally desire to make I can not say – Guess no forward movement is possible or intended yet – Things are being put into systematic order pretty fast since fighting Joe took the reins – It is perfectly apparent that a new hand is at the helm – We see it in a variety of ways & they argue well for the future – I am more & more convinced that the real master is over us – He sees the wants & deficiencies of the army & every blow he strikes in attempting improvement seems to tell at once – You speak of paying \$5.45 in taxes – I don't understand what taxes you allude to – for afterwards you speak of the amounts as being \$17.71 after deducting the pr. ct. for early payment – Just tell me what tax that 5.45 is – I am glad (**Pg. 3**) if the bills are paid – Do you mean the N.H. one also? It is best to get the cattle off especially as father is so poorly – Mr. Smith tells me all kinds of property is rising in value & real estate must come next – If the time comes when the farm will sell at a good figure you had better take the green backs & have the debts all paid off – It is a good time to square up when money is plenty – Four months wages are due now & that will make quite a hole in the pile against us – Every 100 canceled saves six more each year – You don't tell me anything about the hay whether there is like to be any for market – I am suspicious the pigs will cost about their value, grain being so high – But maybe your luck with the swine will be better than mine last year – Father has never been paid for Bailey & you had better settle for her – Talk with him concerning the farm, ask him what it would bring this

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spring & find (**Pg. 4**) out whether such property is like to be in demand – This don't mean that I wish you to offer to sell or even to say you wish to; but rather to have you watch the run of things & tell me what the look is – I have a kind of suspicion that when the war ends & I can go back to civil pursuits my home may not be in old Conn. very long – This is a big country & I can see how a situation somewhere else will be of greater advantage to us than is ever like to be case in that little state – I have become rather disgusted with the caliber of things in S - & should be glad to sail out on a wider sea – What do you say now don't fret & say I am losing all love for home – Not a bit of it – I am questioning whether we can make that good hit by & by & live easier & more usefully – We don't want to be drumming all our lives in a 7 x 9 patch & just dig our heads out of a debtors grave – My notions lately are to sit down where things grow themselves or at least don't want much coaxing – The spirit of Conn. don't suit me – There is too much narrowness & timidity – The men are small or they would not be dilly dallying [*written up side of letter in margin*] over national questions after rec. a bashing. (**Pg. 5**) So Mr. H is deacon – Well it is curious how that place has been so long a begging for the right fellow – My opinion is that the Parson must feel paid for his long meditation over the subject – It certainly would be denying an Overruling Providence to suppose that such faithful waiting should not be rewarded by discovering the destined man – But seems to me Dea. T. got a little wild when he suggested that I might “feel hurt because another had been taken” – What reason had I to suppose they would take me? Even had I been at home that would not entitle me to anything in this connection – Nor could I desire the place – There is little affinity between my notions & the style of things in Southington – That is, the antagonism would be such that I should either have to fight with my associates in a Christian way of course, or else live in constant hatred of myself – There is far too little broad & open (**Pg. 6**) manliness of character in that town or among the Christian people – There are noble souls there, a good many; but they all wear a yoke – Among the deacons there is certainly some royal humanity – one that under a different moulder would have been wrought into most lovely jewels – It is even now lustrous with saintly virtue – in spite of all that tends to mask & obscure its native excellence – But you know what I feel of the men & their position – It strikes me the recent addition is appropriate all things considered – He will be harmless in counsel & not likely to throw any fire brands into the powder mill – Don't every church keep a powder mill? And is it not the parsons business to watch it lest some careless or blunt pilgrim bolts in & stirs up an explosion? You won't be agitated by the novitiate – Nor will the parsons staff be too mettlesome after introducing so much coltish blood – He has driven the old team with consummate (**Pg. 7**) skill, despite the occasional restiveness of one or two of the mules – The young leader will take his place with a wholesome understanding of the drivers “tickler” & nary heel will he lift even should his ribs catch a sudden “wallop” – And if the “Partner” is coupled beside him, why I guess the Parsons wife need not fear to hold the lines herself – Well, well – is that my brother! Is he a voluntary agent, or only the “May I, My dear,” of a petticoated usurper? – Seems to me that must have sent a broad grin over some faces – I really wish Miles would cut off his whiskers or else crack the whip – But he will make a very respectable deacon – a passable Connecticut deacon – a

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good friend of the pastor – a quietly useful man - But dear me, how many stones can a deacon hang on one shoulder & still walk erect – Gold gets a tarnished hue when constantly in contact with base metal – (*Pg. 8*) & I venture Gabriel would fear to trust his sovereignty with a shrew – Just you recommend Miles to read Mrs. Micawber or Mrs. Gargery – He must knock off those chains or I wouldn't give a rebel rag for his reputation – The virtues of ten Enoch's could not bear alloy with certain lower qualities –

The note you speak of is Hial Woodruffs – I owe him \$200, one hundred in March – the other some time in the summer – I don't care who you pay – Albert, Sophia, Beecher or Bradley – Albert's interest is the biggest & it will be well to top that – Still Beecher has waited a good while & I suppose would be pleased with a little on the face – You can use your own judgment – But be sure you have all payments endorsed on the note, the date & the amount – or else take a receipt for what you pay –

You are doing finely – I like to see sound judgment in a woman about practical things – Accept my thanks well earned & heartily given – The weather is raw & cold – The ground got quite stiff last night – hope you are all warm in bed & wish I was too – I shall be soon – So dear one here is the end of the sheet but not of my love –

A. U.

(Written on first page sideways in upper margin)

The envelopes sent by mail arrived today – It would be better to enclose them in a larger one they got some worn by the journey.