

Apr. 1, 1863  
No. 70

Mrs. Andrew Upson  
Plantsville, Conn.

*(Envelope is postmarked Washington D.C. with a three-cent stamp. There are two letters dated March 29, 1863 and April 1, 1863. They are on two sheets of lined stationery which is stained, folded in half and written on eight sides in ink.)*

Stafford Co. House, Va.  
March 29, 1863

My Dear Wife,

I expected to hear from you tonight, but the mail failed us – It has been a very Marchy day - & tonight one is glad of an opportunity to sit by the fire – It seems as cold as we used to have it at the North – In fact the country here is not apparently more forward than our own – Still it must be, for I noticed the buds on some peach trees today that began to show the red – A few sunny days evidently will bring out the blossoms –

There is no particular news in camp – Rumors of a speedy movement are flying & doubtless with some foundation in truth – Hooker is not the man to dilly-dally & any day may find us on the road – Yet I should not be surprised if our corps is ordered to remain here abouts - Some things look as if we might (*Pg. 2*) be kept this side the Rappahannock – But no one knows & will not till we are older – I told you furloughs are suspended – Bye & bye there will be another opportunity afforded – We have had no service today – Our chaplain has really gone – My usual course is to read over a few choice hymns, peruse the testament, think of you all at home & try to imagine the services in which you are engaged – Today I took a walk south of our camp & finding a sunny nook sat down by a pine tree & read out of the Psalms – It was quiet all around me & really the moments seemed sacred – I find one can commune with holy things under circumstances apparently most uncongenial – Prayer is to the believing soul on exercise full of inestimable comfort – Some how it is easy to lift up the thoughts to the great Father & as they pass the portals of the soul sweet consciousness (*Pg. 3*) of peace & safety make the moments thus spent ecstatic – Who would lead a prayerless life, that had ever know the joys of such divine communion! -

I had just got the above written when mail! saluted my ears – The camp was nearly quiet, most all having turned in – Matter for our company was handed in to the tent & running over the lot I found one from Joseph & one from Dea. Twichell written at Washington on his way home –

We had a good time with the Dea. & Jo – though my comfort was cut short in the morning by being sent on picket – The boys all were delighted – The fact is there was royal stuff put into the composition of that man, & I am certain it has not been impaired by any inferior blood to produce those who shall perpetuate his name –

Richardson dropped into camp tonight – He is toungey & busy as ever – But I judge we shall not have the pleasure of his society much more – To hear him talk you (*Pg. 4*) would think the whole army is on his shoulders – Major Generals, Secretary's of

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Departments, the President & every other big body follows his nod – The 20th understand him pretty well, unless it is Ross – Shouldn't wonder if he had some inkling of his light headedness; but I imagine the Col. thought his services might prove personally valuable & so he has helped him up – Ross is trying to secure furloughs for 3 or 4 from each company to go home the last of the week; but he says those chances are all against him – Passes to civilians wishing to visit the army are stopped – No one that I know of entertains any expectation of absence for the present – Even sick men are denied – By the way Judd, as we have since learned, got off through inadvertence – But I rejoice over his fortune – Atwood is still in the hospital – He had an attack of dysentery which has put him back – He is a fine fellow & my interest in his case has been very great – He ought to be sent home; but it can't be done –

Monday morning – A fine day – The wind yesterday dried up the mud rapidly – Such weather is favorable to Hooker – Instead of writing a long letter you see I went to bed – But this short one is to my dearest –

A. Upson

*(Written on first page side ways in upper margin.)*

I shall write you after, but very likely the notes will be brief – Don't be surprised if the mails should ere long disappoint you for a week or two – In war you know the commanders often shrink the public interest requires communications to be stopped –

*(Pg. 5, Second letter)*

Stafford Co. House, Va.  
April 1st, 1863 –

My Dear Wife –

Your birthday has come – I would give something to open the door & see whether you would enjoy being “fooled” – For I doubt not the surprise would amount to that in reference to such plans as may have been formed for the day by you & the children –

We were all called out under arms at 5 this morning – When soon after the order was given to stack & return to our quarters there was an universal shout, “April Fool” – Of course it was not – Alarms often amount to no more; but they are never trifles with those in command – The report is that the enemy appeared in force on Sickles front – a long way from us – Yesterday we had another snow storm – as disagreeable one as any I ever saw – Those on picket the night previous pronounce it the worst – It was the good fortune of us officers to enjoy our cribs – though I came on in command (*Pg. 6*) of camp guard – This duty is rather preferable to picket now, particularly in unfavorable weather - You see the officer in charge has a snug little hut with a fire place & he can be cozy as a cat in the chimney corner – It is only lately that this convenience has been provided –

Our regiment is to be inspected today – We expect a most rigid examination of equipments, clothes & person – The captain thinks some of us had better be scissored about the lips & chin – He has kept up the practice of sharpening a razor, lathering his face & having a regular set to with the hair stubbornly contesting its right to cover his lower features – We have contented ourselves with Natures laws & for aught that I can see are as good looking as those who turn their cheeks unprotected to the ruffian kisses of winter & allow profane eyes to range at will all about the neck from ear to ear – I guess though a little delicate trimming would not be considered a (*Pg. 7*) violation of good taste – You know I never liked the tyranny of that fashion which demanded daily or semi-weekly offerings of mustache & whiskers, & since we started on this term of service for our good old Uncle Sam my independence has been complete – A good many strike a kind of compromise with nature & custom – Some surrender all to the demands of society but the growth beneath the nose – Some reserve also to tuft fronting each ear – Others lean more to the hirsute order & recognize a different style by a bare chin or naked upper lip – On the whole it seems to me the truest & fittest practice is always that which adapts things to natural harmony – The character of men varies & so should their dress – Some know how to unite every part so that the impression is at once pleasing & easy – But still where individuality is marked it is impossible to find that exact adjustment which we often see in equable natures – The Alps must be jagged – The Mississippi must overflow – We can expect near views (*Pg. 8*) to exhibit only angles & irregularity – Fashion & conventional rules should not destroy manhood nor eat up ones personality –

I must close this here in order to get it in to the mail – Hours are changed – The impression prevails that this storm had prevented a movement – I hope we shall get sunshine & warm weather soon – March here has been as bad as I ever knew at the north

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– Please say to Russ or some of the boys that probably Atwood will be sent to New Haven in a day or two – If so he will be able we think to get home by a little attendance & vote – I hope they will attend to Judd – He may be bad off – do you know – Can't you say a word to Sam Johnson – Don't believe he will come up with a willow whip next day or ask you to pay his taxes – Try Carmi too – I half suspect he will think more of taxes than anything else – You see as election draws near I am showing out the politician – But you need not fear of my going to get the returns Monday night – Well, as I can't vote for Buckingham – here's a ballot for my love; does it elect?

As Ever

A. Upson