

June 21<sup>st</sup>, 1863

No. 105

Mrs. Andrew Upson

Plantsville, Conn.

(Yellow envelope with unclear postmark and a three cent stamp. Letter is on two sheets of lined stationery folded in half and is written in ink on eight sides. Pages are not in order.)

Convalescent Camp

June 21<sup>st</sup>, 1863

My Dear Wife –

The sun is just sinking behind the hills & a pleasant light falls upon the table at which I write – Were I in my own home surrounded by those so dear to me hardly nothing would be wanting to perfect my happiness – Suppose you have been to church today & nothing has disturbed the Sabbath's rest – Not so here – I attended church this morning – But when my desires were for peace, lo, the stirring sounds of war broke forth – I think it must have been about 9 ½ o'clock when the low boom of cannon struck my ear & will you believe it I had great difficulty in restraining myself – From these forts around almost every morning there is practice with the big guns – But they fall unheeded – These on the (Pg. 2) contrary aroused me & I wished to fly instantly to the scene of combat – The cannonading continued brisk except at intervals – Sometimes it was quite heavy – We have heard it all day more or less – At this hour it seems to have ceased – The general opinion of its whereabouts is divided between Leesburg & Centerville – To me it appears at the former place – I have heard, but can't vouch for the truth of it, that our corps left the latter for the former place yesterday – Hooker's Hd. Qos. were at Fairfax – I don't know his force nor the probabilities as to the result of a contest between him & Lee – I have both fear & hope – It has discouraged me somewhat to see what a big army of sick & invalids we have – There are hundreds here that ought to be with their regiments – Still Hooker has abundance of (Pg. 3) artillery & if the men only behave well he may give the rebels a good drubbing – Such news tomorrow would do us all a world of good – Yet it is too bad that so many should be lying idle – I can't help myself, but that fails to satisfy me – What if the 20<sup>th</sup> becomes involved while I stop here! That thought troubles me – Recd. a letter from Sarah Stow today – Also your second yesterday – Hope in the next to hear something about your visit to father – He must have improved much to ride over to our house – You will find yourself very busy with home duties: but I hope your time will not be so much engrossed that you can not call on him frequently – Tell me all about affairs – We had thunder showers here the same afternoon (Thursday) that you speak of: & since then it has rained frequently- (Pg. 4) I guess Washington streets have got an effectual sprinkling this time – Do you remember a tenth part of what we saw looking around the city –

Every day I see women coming here to hunt up their husbands – Friday a man came to me requesting that I would get him a pass to go to Alexandria with his wife – She had

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been to Annapolis & thence here where “her James” was found – Of course I felt my sympathies aroused & obtained the asked for favor – Two Irish hearts were made glad – Today I met him again - he expressed his feelings most fervently – All of the 20<sup>th</sup> here seem to manifest me great respect – Guess my reputation didn’t suffer any by the fight at Chancellorsville – After talking with those who have been with the regiment since then I find officers & men are estimated about for what they showed themselves on that occasion – (Pg. 5) Col. Wooster is up & Col. Ross down – The same is true of Captains & Lieutenants - Some have a good & others a bad name – Those of Co. E. who left camp a week since say Capt. Woodruff is a changed man since the fight – He was never quick – Now he appears lost or absent minded & is very much reduced in flesh & spirit – No doubt he felt the strain of those troublesome days more than a younger man would – I used to think his elasticity might break down suddenly – But it grieves me to learn that his condition is just now so unfavorable – I fear the march on those hot days may have used him up – Co. E. will be in a sad plight & Lt. Lewis may find quite a responsibility upon his shoulders – However I don’t allow my mind to get disquieted – Some how I am bound to keep hopeful & courageous (Pg. 6) & as you thought of me, matters will turn up some where – One thing I can assure you – There are more discontented men here than I ever found at any other camp – Those really good for anything want to get away – But with few exceptions these are unfit to go to their regiments – I speak now of convalescents – We paroled would be glad to start in five minutes – I judge there must be nearly 10,000 men in this camp – The barracks at the Seminary are full & also Alexandria, & for ought I can say Washington too. One would almost conclude that sound healthy men were not to be found – If I were sick me thinks the sight of such multitudes with loose bowels & torpid liver – lame backs & palpitating hearts would work an instantaneous cure – I should get well out of very shame – I feel a new flow (Pg. 7) of life every time this subject comes up as though my very nature repelled the supposition that this is any place for me –

We officers board with a woman whose name is McDonnell or something like it – Her husband is connected with the Qo. M. department in the army – She has two children – is from Maine & a true blue Union Woman – She manages things well & is making money – I am glad – It is really a comfort to sit down to a table & eat like civilized beings – But don’t tell me about your strawberry short cake – Eat them & keep still – I ought not to be tantalized – Though we have stewed gooseberries, lettuce & ice water as well as milk – So do not think me destitute of all the comforts – I got some cherries last Wednesday – Just here a clap of thunder broke me off – I stepped out to make myself sure it was not a big gun – No (Pg. 8) mistake – Heavens artillery closes the day – Lightnings flash across the sky just over or beyond where puny man has lately been noisy with his devilish enginery – I hear too that Reynolds has engaged the rebels some where & driven them – That is the camp rumor – Tomorrow news will be awaited with much interest – I have a kind of loose impression that Joe Hooker will knock some ideas into Lees head that will keep him the other side of the river in future – There are two other rumors current – No. 1 – that the paroled men are to be sent to New York State – No. 2 – that they will all be sent off on furlough – Of course they are pure lies, the latter being some the bigger –

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You must read this letter as it is paged – I see no prospect of leaving here soon – But you need not rejoice – Sarah Stow thinks your face is not so care worn – Glad if the trip produced so good a result – Just keep it smooth –

Here are kisses to help you – right off the lips –

A. Upson