

Ms92_9_4_03

[Letter from William McKinney to his cousin Martha McKinney, circa 1862]

[Alternating lines of this letter are written in alternating directions. That is, a body of text was written down the entire page in a single direction, and then the page was turned upside down and another body of text written between the lines, so that every other line appears upside down. For the purpose of comprehension, all the text in one direction is presented here, then all the text in the other direction.]

[The following is scrawled across the page, sideways: "Yours truly, K. N. Pepper, attny. (???) U.S. Army." This probably indicates that a scrap from another correspondence was used to compose this letter.]

...and not feel penitent when the whole deed was made public, penitent! He should feel more of shame and remorse!! I do hope the perpetrator will be amply repaid in his "own (corn?)." I perceive [tear] Plaintiff (a law term, ask Uncle the meaning) [tear] his revenge in her bosom and means to be avenged, "though it be twenty years hence," a lad passing to (cherish?), will eat the soul entirely away before that time. You were not more rejoiced at my safe return to Camp, without having to appear before the General to answer for my absence without leave, than I was myself. I was really expecting to be read out of the service, and perhaps disgraced, as many have been. And all for the love I have [for] my friends, especially the gay Mattie, on whose account I had to travel far out of my proper route. When you speak of (tears?), I confess, I am at quite a loss to comprehend your meaning, and that Mattie McKinney should be found in tears, impossible, you must be joking, she pretends to be entirely proof against such things. I can assume you, my dear Aunt, that although the aforementioned Lieutenant felt "not a little sad" at parting with so many kind friends, he shed no tears. About face, forward march!

(turn page upside down)

I should like to have stepped in just about the time those things were "falling like rain," think it would have him sick. I hope cousin Em has received my letter before this time, perhaps she will not be so "tart" afterward. I must ask Uncle's pardon for not writing to him first, but he is old enough and ought to have had experience enough to teach him, that the Ladies must be pleased first; besides the letters I direct to you, must of necessity belong to him, since I suppose he has a (great?) (title?) to you and yours and can have the benefit of the letters if he chooses. Will you please tell me what can be the trouble with Cousin (Abby)? It does seem to me she has changed wonderfully lately. I notice much of a change even in her correspondence. Is she love sick or is she in the (longnose?) of the fact, repeating, "some one to love in this wide world of sorrows, some one to smile while others do frown." I certainly remember well all the incidents connecting with my unexpected first visit to your house, if I am not much mistaken, I had the honor [tear] pleasure of receiving a hearty welcome and a [tear] kiss from that dear old Aunt, the proprietress, of the house. Though she may be very "cold hearted," she has a very poor way of making people know it. "Old discomfited, robbed Aunty," there it is again, will she never get over that terrible, heart rending calamity!