

MS92_9_6_04

Camp Wickliffe Feb 1st 1862

My dear cousin Mattie,

Here I am writing you another letter, and have not yet received answers to either of those I have already written since my return. The fact is, we have had so much rain during the past ten days, that nothing can be done in the way of drilling, and with but that exception of Guard duty, have only to sit in my tent and smoke my good old mushroom pipe, of which you know I am very fond. You already know I was a very restless kind of a being, must be at something all the time, and if I should cause my fair Cousin too much trouble by thus attracting my miserable scowls so often into her presence, thus spoiling her quiet musings, she will excuse; remembering always that the wild, restless young man must have some one to trouble, to plague, or else would not relish his meals. But really, should these letters offend you, please let me know, and I will try and find some one else to whom to direct. I shall not expect to answer each one separately, but two or three at once, for I know it would be exacting rather much from your spare time, to expect answers to all. Besides, they are so miserably gotten up, and not worth the answering, especially, by one who has but little leisure for such things. The truth is, I write, partly because I have nothing else to do, and partly because I happen to think much of the Cousins to whom I direct. Now Cousin Mine, do not consider that what I am now writing is at all flattery, but all in solid earnest. I take you to be a true Mc___y, your style of saying and doing things suits me exactly. I believe you to be a true representative (myself included) of the old stock. Although I personally bear but little resemblance, yet I flatter myself, I am of the true grit, and ancient family spirit. To explain, to be a true Mc___y, is to be rather proud, sensitive, high spirited, full of novelty and fun, and to have of very high appreciation of the ridiculous.

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And further, to believe in enjoying life to the fullest extent, a believing the world was made to live in and enjoy, not to growl and pine at. Now how do you like that type I have drawn of the true family stock? Are you suited, do you think all that hear the name, and some that do not had the blood, would agree with my characteristics? I fancy I can almost hear your answer, and the names of those that would take exceptions to my sage remarks. However, I think my fair Cousin will agree with me, taking this for granted will proceed, though to what subject, I do not yet know, I really feel somewhat exhausted after my very learned caricature on the Mc___y blood etc, will probably have to take a little time for rest and refreshments. To resume, it has been raining here, almost without intermission since my return to Camp, and now while I am writing, a very gentle and refreshing shower is pattering on the impenetrable exterior of my grand (Paulian?). Ahem! Our surroundings are rather moist, the raining had so moistened the service of dear mother earth, that one cannot step out without being in the soil rather deep for convenience. By

this time, I suppose you have received my last letter, written during and attack of the “blues.” When I read what I had written the next morning, I had half a mind not to send it, then included I would, that you might see what a man would write during such a state of mind. But I do not want you to believe anything there written and if you have not already, do this much now, burn the miserable thing. I am in really too good a humor to write a letter to night, wanting to talk to you this evening must write something. I would not mind being a soldier, if, when the days labors are over, I could sit down by some kind friend and have a social talk. The fact is, one can do will enough during the day, but when evening comes, no one to see, no one to talk with, nothing to read, entirely cut off from all society, from everything that would give one any pleasure, any real enjoyment. I could write a long letter evry evening, I did not suppose some people would get tired receiving and sending them. I had made great calculations about receiving and answering a letter from you this evening, but when the mail was opened, a last alas! No letter, so thought would write anyhow, hoping to receive one by the next mail, will send this and on to meet the other and hasten it on to me.

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I have written to Cousin Minerva, and directed to Tippecanoe, do not know whether she will receive it or not for it seems to me that the Post Office goes by another name, please inform me. I have not received a single letter since my return to Camp – though I have written to almost everybody. What can it mean, did my friends all become so entirely disgusted with me, during my short visit to them? I am certain if they do not want to write to me they need not put themselves to any trouble, for I am one of those very independent boys, as you well know, but this is all (gammen?). Enclosed you find a very fine and rich article on pipes and tobacco, the writer takes the most sensible view in the conclusion, that I have ever seen. Some of the couplets of poetry are very nice indeed, at least they seem so to me. I also send one of my Officer of the Guard details, that you may see in what kind of a form they come to us. Just at this time the boys are singing in almost evry tent, merry as larks, not caring a cent whether it rains or shines. A soldier becomes a very queer kind of an individual, if he has enough to eat and is anything like comfortable, he is as merry and seems to enjoy himself as well as though he owned a kingdom. I have written this so close, I am afraid I am going to have some difficulty in getting this page full, in fact I am about (as have?) now, an did not know what to say next. Oh yes, I have not seen to Colonel with the red shoulder straps on yet, have you heard from him and the aforesaid land and house? What did your Father and Mother say to the offer, did it meet with their approval? Yes, yes, I got a letter yesterday from Mary’s “Oscar,” I do not understand it, I have but a very slight acquaintance with him, and have never written him a word. I think him very kind, indeed, to thus remember and favor a soldier. But I am very sorry, my time will not permit an answer. I will inform Mary of his writing to me, and not having time to answer, turn him over to her tender mercies. If I had to correspond with both the girls beaus, I think I would have to hire a clerk. But I have got this filled out, so will stop for this time, but look for another in a day or two.

Your affectionate Cousin

WM McKinney