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Camp Glenbrook, Hart County, Kentucky, February 19<sup>th</sup>, 1862

My dear cousin Mattie,

Yours, of the evening of the 8<sup>th</sup> inst was received last night at 10 o'clock, and I hasten an answer, lest another should come and the wheels of the vehicle of correspondence should become clogged by the numbers of letters received. It is raining but dark clouds lower around and above us, and the deep thunder betokens the coming storm. We are under Marching orders, were to have marched this morning at 8 A. M., but it commenced raining hard at about midnight, and still at it this morning, we may perhaps start this afternoon, should the rain cease. Our orders were for Mumfordsville, about twelve miles down the River. I will first answer your letter, then afterward, if I have any news, will communicate. Just as you supposed, I was sitting by my "little stove," one week ago last Sunday evening, smoking my "mushroom pipe," musing, thinking as my Journal informs me, of my friends far away, of pleasant scenes, of happy hours but passed among those of whom I have to think. I think you do me injustice, when you talk of a young man like myself, throwing Camp tools and "sick" like things at the heads of my comrades, when they intrude upon me. I certainly would be the last man to do such things. As to my getting out of humor in Louisville because I did not get wakened up in time for the train, I never even had a wicked thought about the matter. Instead of getting mad, had you been there, you would have seen a young man leisurely walking over the City, seeing what was to be seen, and taking notes of all that was worth remembering, 1,2,3,4, ah, I see you have not forgotten the number of motions of the military salute, I presume by this time, you can salute very gracefully. I can imagine I see the graceful movements of the hand, and that very wise little head leaning forward to meet the hand, as my fair Cousin salutes every one she meets. It would doubtless do a Military Officer like the Col good, to see such precise and graceful movements. Even ought not to have teased, vexed and then laughed at our good old Aunt. I was astonished to hear you tell of your own mischief, when you want to tease any one, always take one near your own age, never laugh or ridicule grey hairs, I am in earnest now, mean what I say, "Indulged in an audible smile," you might very properly have done that, but then to thus treat our good Aunt, was indeed very naughty. As to "Thompson's Will," he is able and will take care of himself, I am afraid you are misrepresenting Aunts remarks on that subject. In the Army for three years and not married, no nor any sign (of) being married, "Ha, ha, ha, how does she know that prospects may be very flattering for all she knows about it, besides I am sure it is better being unmarried than married in the Army. I should like to hear Uncle make a war speech, if I had thought of it, would have had him at it the night I was at Camp McKinney. If Will's really as you represent him, he had better get a discharge, and not ruin himself for life by trying to remain in the service. It is no disgrace to be discharged from the service for disability. I have made out discharges for just as good and as true man or ever were in the service, and it is not considered disgraceful to a man to refuse to

do that which it is impossible for him to do, without peril to his health, persuade him to apply for a discharge.

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I believe I have about answered your letter, and now for whatever else I can think of to write. I received a letter from Cousin Minnie Morris last night, which I have in part answered. If you get even with me, in a letter line, you will have to do considerable writing yet. I think I am about four ahead yet, and between reading and answering so many long ones, you will be well employed for several days. About dark yesterday, we received the news of the capture of Fort Donelson, the Camp was perfectly wild with excitement for about an hour. One fine Brass Band played Yankee Doodle, Hail Columbia, Dixie, & e, & e. while the "boys" united in cheer after cheer for the success of our arms. We who are in the service, and know to some extent what war is, evn better appreciate a victory, then those of our friends at home, who know nothing of the war, except what they hear. Well I have had my dinner, feel considerably improved, still raining, will not move this day, I had all my "troops" packed up by daylight this morning, will have to upack for to night, suppose we go tomorrow. I will write to Will soon, if I can find time, but if he should not receive the letter, he must not feel offended, since I have enough to do, to keep even with his only dear sister, really, I do not know that I would be entirely safe in waking up another "Tartan" at Camp McKinney, if they are all alike. I do not mean to compliment you at all, for you know I never read in the article, except in a "left-handed" way. Keep even, is my motto, and keep even I will, if pens, ink, paper and fingers do not all give out. Well, when I began this large sheet of paper my head to seemed overflowing with news, but it seems I have run short and the sheet not half filled. I took this large one this time, by way of economy, I find it rather expensive to send you so many letters, and two and three sheets each time, my "ready means," will not keep me up so extravagantly. I believe all my friends, particularly Father, that I am a strict economist, "What did you say, Dave"? "De Mail come," "Go up and bring my letters, sir." "Yes sah." "I'll wait till "Dave" comes back, and see if I get any more letters, in the meantime, will take a smoke, by way of variety, "How many have you got, "Dave." "Fo sah." Four, well, that is doing well, four last night four today. Well, we will see who they are from, No 1, opened, Uncle Jim McClure, No2, Cousin Em, No. 3, Capt Patterson at Barracks, No 4 well I know that "scratch" before I open it. Cousin Mattie again, written the 11<sup>th</sup> and here I am just answering one, written the 8<sup>th</sup>, well by the looks of this, I guess I can get this sheet filled out at last. After the above, then followed by reading of the letters and now to answer No. 4 is the next case on the docket, and such a letter. Well, I'll kill two birds with one stone this time, answer two letters at once, think I'll get ahead by this means, it just came in time. I rather think this last letter is ahead of any I have yet received, I only wish I was in the humor I was in sometimes, to answer it, could then do the subject justice.

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My dear cousin, I think you will find after you have received all the epistles I have written you and the ones I am writing from this Camp, that the "little debt" you speak of, is not very rapidly diminishing in your favor. Again you are trifling with grey hairs, calling your Father, "Man Friday," I'll soon begin to be of the same opinion of you as our old Aunt, you seem to be growing worse and worse evry day, I would like to see you keeping house, but it occurs to me that the house would be safer without your care than with it. Excuse me, I have no wish to see you mad, if such instruments as "flat irons" have wings when you are about, not any, thank you, when I have any "(fat?) birds" about the house, I would prefer those of softer texture. I do not wonder at "Friday" looking wild. Kiss a mad girl, sooner be "stung by a viper" not half as venomous, think that the Col even would ask to be excused. Well my "little Dutch Cousin" glad to hear you are enjoying such excellent health, hope it will continue; if your face is as round as a ball, what in the name of goodness have you done with that "nasal appendage" that so distinguished you from all of the rest of the "kin." Has it been entirely obscured by the flesh of your face? Glad to hear that Will is improving, if however, you should go in his place, just take one of those "birds" with you, called, as I suppose "The Winged Flat Iron," it would certainly do good execution, wielded by such a hand as yours, You are not more sorry than I am or was, at not receiving any letters while at Camp Wickliffe, but they are coming now, thick and fast, if "Dave" could only write, I could make him my Clerk, and could them get along with my business. You "Dutch (riy?)" well my dear even-tempered-amiable-sweet-loving-quiet-unassuming-always-quiet-silent-and-ever-to-be remembered Cousin, I am sure I wrote to you in time, had you only stayed at home to receive them, and not gone over to torment and vex our good old Aunt, with you everlasting "titter" and lately learned "Hoosier (flak-dubs?)." I would like to take a peep at your Journal, how do you spell out all your laughs, for that must constitute quite an item in it. I have no doubt that the items in the Journal would well grace the Library of the most gifted of American Humorists. I have often thought of that very Literacy Lady we saw in our travels, and of the poor unsophisticated wretch, that was known as her husband. Ah! May the powers deliver me from such a fate as his, I'd rather be a dog and bay the moon, then live such a life as his, it is a disgrace to the name of man. As to the "Ladie of such cloth and ashes, the fates preserve us from such," excuse me, I would not choose any, take mine clear, if you please." Ah! Vexed again, well your originally sweet temper is rapidly improving, one would think.

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Expecting company from Medway, well, perhaps he concluded to call upon some other fair Lady, bad luck to him if he did. Now that you have done all the mischief you could, written to a very handsome Officer (of course the Col) then worried your poor old Father almost to death, and not being able to discover anything else to do, sit down to talk to me. All right, so I get a letter, I am satisfied, whether it is written before or after the Col's, all the same to me, age and rank always first. Singing love songs two-year-old Father, that beats me, I wonder he did not box your ears. Why did you not try a few on our old Aunt, you might have soothed her

troubled spirit, but I am thinking you would have had to have kept out of her reach. So you are not (wanted?) on the (missing word) of (honest) people, all right. I (am?), I will now know how to deal with you, for I am accustomed to “rogues.” What a personification, “tall, smoke-eyed, mischievous, heartless, void of feeling and conscience,” well I never want to see the individual. I know of no one it would suit, expect the \_\_\_ himself, and even he would be surprised to learn, that any Lady knew so much about him. “Col Red Shoulderstraps, well it is very strange you cannot write even a page or letter to me, without mentioning that miserable old dutch miscreant half a dozen times; confound him. I’ll settle him, if ever I meet him again, I’ll learn him how to craze the brain of a Cousin of mine. Well, do you not think I have about played out on this letter, if you do not I do, and am thinking I had better stop soon. I received another of those little three cornered papers a few minutes ago, am (detailed?) as Officer of the Day, again tomorrow. I suppose we will march in the morning at 8 A.M. when I next write. I suppose it will be from Mumfordsville or thereabouts. After you receive this, direct to Mumfordsvile, to follow the Regiment. Hoping to hear from you “daily,” I subscribe myself.

Your affectionate Cousin

McKinney