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Camp of the 15th Ind Reg't 15th Brigade, Gen Woods Division

3 Miles South Nashville March 12th, 1862

My dear cousin Mattie,

It does indeed seem strange that letters are so long in passing between us. I only received yours of the 25th (nlt) was only received this morning. I have sent you four letters since the date of this last of yours, that I have just received. I mailed one to you yesterday morning, yet I will answer this last one, partly to keep even with you, partly to answer some of you per remarks, and partly because I have a little to tell you. And first to answer you, glad you are wiser over my letters, did not however suppose I was writing such letters as would much increase that knowledge of the reader, unless the aforesaid reader was greatly wanting in that commodity, knowledge. You had better be somewhat careful of your remarks, since your correspondent is growing in "conceit"

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Speaking of flattery to the girls, do they not expect it from us, "man beings," just as much as they expect to eat when they are hungry, that thing, "flattery" is one of the principle ingredients to support their dear delicate existences, but you may be an exception to the general rule. I will admit, you are an exception of a girl, indeed. I believe the real, true genuine McK__s are exceptions to the general race of mankind. They are certainly a very peculiar tribe, and on account of their peculiarities, fail, many times, to be fully appreciated by other people, who are so stupid as not to be able to detect and understand the peculiarities. If I should commit an error, by offering any unnecessary flattery to your Ladyship, you will excuse, since I have not been accustomed to speak or write much to one of your peculiar taste, fancy, peculiarities, whimsicalities, in five, my correspondence has not always been confined to a true McK__y, and I am liable, at times, to forget just what their peculiarities are. I shall try and remember not to offer any more flattery to one, who so abhors it, entirely fails to appreciate it, though it may be given truthfully and from the best of motives, adieu to flattery.

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I think you will never forget that conversation of mine on the cars that evening, it seems to stay with you, and ever to be remembered. I do not know that I was in any particular trouble, only I felt that I had been grossly misrepresented by certain persons and I wanted to bring matters right. Not that I cared so much, for I am one of those persons, that I'm quite independent of others, enough at least, to take care of myself, let them talk as they please, but I perceived that your mind was considerably biased against me, and I want you to know something of the truth. But I

said more perhaps, that I ought to, of matters and things, more than I ever said to any other being, for I am one of those, who keep their own secrets, and since you boast yourself good at keeping secrets, we will see how well that conversation stays by you. As to reading thoughts by the changes of the countenance, I think I know very well what you were revolving in your mind during your “brown study,” quite as well as if you had told me. As to your “solving the truth telling enigma” hereafter, perhaps you may but it will doubtless be some time “hereafter. You need not have written your former opinion of me, nor did you write the half you before thought.

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I am quite aware that it was anything and everything but favorable to myself, and the term “rogue” does not half express, what you before thought, I ~~know~~ knew about your opinion, before I ever saw you, gathered it from your letters, and your Mother had about the same opinion. I say it with no unkind or ill feelings at all, but she, from the representations she had had of me, looked upon the as quite a young rascal and would do to watch. Now I know how and where all those things originated, but I care not a straw about them, only, that I do not wish my friends to be in on error regarding myself. This I have written in earnest, and be it only between us, as you can keep a secret. I hope you have been able to see Tom Stafford before this time, I wish I was acquainted with him, perhaps if we were once to meet, and know more of each other, our correspondence would be less constrained, I would write him more humorous letters, but I somehow or other got the impression, that he was a kind of Old Puritan of a fellow, and I cannot get it out of my head. My old, familiar long-tried-ever-to-be-remembered-and ever-present friend “Samuel Hill,” is still with me, and presume always will be, I have known him for quite a number of years, and he still remains the same, and whenever I want to call on-or invoke anyone for assistance always present, and answers all purposes, being a very crafty and convenient institution. He and “Dave,” the one invisible and the other very visible on account of his “deep color,” are always present to answer calls.