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Field of Shiloh, Pittsburg Landing, Tenn April 19<sup>th</sup> 1862

My dear cousin Mattie,

Yours of the 19<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>d</sup>, & 30<sup>th</sup> nlt, all arrived here two days ago, by the same Mail, and I shall answer them all at one time; however, having so much else to write about I shall not criticize or again refer to the Letters, except to say, although they were somewhat behind date, yet I was highly interested in them and read them with great pleasure, knowing them to be from my very interesting and beloved Cousin. I have now forgotten (seems have been so stirring lately) whether I wrote you while I was in Nashville or not. For fear I did not, I will only say, I was left in Nashville sick, when the Regiment, or rather Buell's Army started for Savannah, and that when I got able to get about, instead of following after the Regiment, and trying to overtake it after it had six days the start, took Steam Boat at Nashville at 12 M. of the ~~28~~<sup>29</sup><sup>th</sup> 3<sup>d</sup> inst, went down the Cumberland to Smithland, down the Ohio to Paduca, and thence up the Tennessee to Savannah, a distance of near 500 miles. Had a very pleasant trip. Arrived at Savannah just two hours before the Battle commenced at Pittsburg Landing, 9 miles further up the River. My Regiment did not get in to Savannah until Monday evening, I was a spectator having no Command nor Commander. Reported Myself to Gen. Grant, but he would not let me go into the field and take a horse in the fight until My own Regiment should come up. But I was there and saw all that was done, I only wish I had the time

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To describe to you all that did actually occur, and under my own observations, but I cannot now, perhaps I may have an opportunity to do it in conversion in many months. However, you doubtless have already read very many accounts of the engagement. The best I have seen, was in the Cinn Commercial. I presume it was the greatest Battle ever fought on this Continent. I got into the field on Monday afternoon, just in time to help drive the enemy from the field. We laid on our arms all night in a terrible rain, then pursued them 6 miles the next day. Since that time until yesterday, we have been lying out without either tents, blankets, or cooking utensils, all having been left back (90?) miles the other side Savannah, when the Division started on the forced March to get up to the Battle, and the heavy rains had so swollen some small streams, they were unable to get up sooner. It has been raining almost all the time here since the battle, though the weather is quite warm, and one would expect nothing but occasional showers, we have been in the rain all this time without shelter, had to cook our Salt Pork on sticks, and make all our coffee in pint tin cups. It has indeed been a terrible time. I was scarcely able to walk when I started out into the field, and have been so much exposed, that I am really not fit for duty, and ought not to be in the field.

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But my Company needs me just at this time, My 2<sup>d</sup> Lieut is of but little force and the Capt not here yet, and we do not know what have the enemy may again attack us, or what moment we may be ordered by Gen Halleck to move against the Rebels. I am as poor as a smoke, and weak, but just as long as I can hold my head up, I am going to be on duty. I would not (somed?) well, to hear of an officer getting sick, when the fight is looked for daily. And it is my opinion, when the next Battle is fought, whether here or at Corinth, it will be much more bloody one then this, where thousands will lay down their lives on the altar of this Country. And when that battle has been fought, I think the war will be about over, that is, if we are successful. As I said in the start, I will not attempt to give particulars, but will only say here, that on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the battle, thousands of the sons of Ohio disgraced themselves and brought their State into disrepute, by cowardly running from the enemy, some Regiments without firing a gun. But to praise of many more, that did not run, but fought like true men, Ohio has many noble sons to be proud of. I have yet to hear of an Ind Reg't that has shown the white feather in this war, they have not been engaged in a single engagement, but what our troops have been successful. I am somewhat anxious to have our Gen's bring on another engagement here.

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I think we would whip them so badly they never would want to fight again. Though we might have our hands full, and many of our troops have to bite the (dust?), I have not seen (Penrace?) yet, thought the 1<sup>st</sup> (Ky) is here some place, but among so many troops it is almost impossible to find a Reg't. There are over 100,000 Infantry, 10 or 12,000 Cavalry and scores of Batteries of Artty here, all covering of vast area with their encampments. I received a letter from Cousin Minnie yesterday which I shall answer as soon as I can find time. Being sick, unable to be up about half of the time and when I am up, having so much to do, and trying to get my Company in great trim for a fight, I have but little time left for writing letters. I have written this in great haste, so excuse all blunders and this miserable scratch. My love to all, write whenever you can. It may be you are even with me now, but it is owing to the fact that I have been so situated and engaged that I could not write, and with such work to do as was done here on the 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> int and such as we have before us to accomplish, we have have far weightier matters to think of than writing letters, because we have nothing else to do.

I am your affect Cousin

WM McKinney