Glennora August 29th 1865

R. Semmes Esq.
Mobile, Alabama.

My dear Brother

I have never read with so much responsive affection any letter that I have received from you, as the one dated the 12th instant which I received yesterday. Your course in taking part with the Southern States in their late unrivaled but disastrous struggle to achieve their independence of the United States, however much I might have regretted at the time you made your choice between the contending parties, has never affected my love for you as a brother otherwise than as all dangers which threaten a beloved object are known to affect the heart of the true friend. I expect therefore, that you have been more frequently present in my mind since the commencement of our civil war, than I have been to your thoughts, filled, as it was natural for me to be, with greater anxieties on your account. I have never been exposed to the hazards of any actual military service during the war, whilst you have been all the time facing dangers the most varied and appalling. We have reason

to be increasing in our grateful acknowledgments to God for His mercy and favor in sparing your life and permitting you to return to your family in good health and without loss of limb. You will no doubt feel the retirement to which you are now devoted very difficult to bear, especially for a year or two; but by giving your mind wholesome employment you will not fail to experience a great deal of true happiness for the life which is still left you. Belonging as you did to the naval service of the United States at the commencement of our civil war you could not have retained your station without having to obey the orders of the government, and in doing this, you would have been brought in hostile array against the Southern States from which you hailed and which you believed were justified in their course; it was therefore far more creditable to you to fight in their behalf than against them. My own course has been a neutral one. I was opposed to the Secession movement of the Southern States, and so long as the United States government in its declarations of policy professed to limit itself to its duty in maintaining the Constitution and laws of the United States, I approved the conduct of the administration; but from the time the policy was avowed that peace could only be restored upon condition that the institution of slavery was surrendered in all the revolted States, I then saw that the conflict would be a protracted, bitter and destructive one, accumulating burdensome national debts upon the contending parties, and ending if in the defeat of the Confederate States, then probably in a change of our present Constitution and National form of government converting the United States into a Republic after the model of the Roman Republic where a magistrate had only to be in favor with the military power to enable him to play the despot. This was the evil I began to dread after the first year of the war, and from that time forward I seriously doubted whether the liberties of those who adhered to the United States would not be better secured in future by the success of the Confederate States. And my confidence in the stability of our republican institutions, that is, in the security of the rights which our Constitution professes to guarantee, instead of being strengthened by the triumph of the United States, has been almost entirely destroyed. The motives and influences which sustained the United States' government in its giant-like efforts to subdue the Southern States, were not only of the most selfish and vindictive kind, but purely sectional and

kept active and raging by the fiendish spirit of abolition. The late president Lincoln instead of being the great man which he is claimed to be by the partizan history of the times, was neither more nor less than the weak tool of a party. He had none of the elements of a great man in his character; and the evils of his administration are destined to operate as a blighting mildew upon our national character as well as a corroding and malignant poison upon the vitals of the nation. I can never again feel proud of my country, if by that name we are to understand, the Union constructed by our existing constitution as set forth and illustrated by the arbitrary powers exercised by the late president. His wanton proclamation abolishing Slavery, and his Military Commissions with their fiendish Advocates appended, ought in my opinion to damn his name to everlasting infamy amongst all who are proud to own their country "as the land of the free and the home of the brave".

My family is at present well. My wife and daughters have been absent on a short visit to Philadelphia to avail themselves of the services of a good dentist, and also to make some purchases in preparation for the approaching wedding of my eldest daughter Mary who is to be married next month to H. Groves, a Lawyer, of Louisiana. My second daughter Kate is also engaged to be married, but her wedding will not take place until next Christmas. I will write again soon. Give my love to Ann & all your children now with you. Your affectionate brother, S. McKemmes