

From John A. Bushnell to Eugenia Bronaugh

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(Sunday the 21[st] Feb[ruar]y 1864)

Calhoun Mo[.] Feb[ruar]y 22 1864

My Dear Eugenia[.]

Your letter of the 19th so beautifully expresses what to me was all you say of yourself and others. Indeed I felt as if I ought not to leave, and yet had to do so. I have felt during the week that a guardian angel, in yourself, was watching over me, smiling upon me, and encouraging me to effort, to reconcile and Help my every thought and action.

After taking the wrong road at Mr[.] Wm [William] Combs' I got down to a brick yard, then turned to find the way by roads that seemed to lead in the right direction but all come to an end in the timber or on the creek or proved only wood roads, so had to retrace my steps and when I got up to the corner of Mr[.] Inman's field I knew then the mistake. After going to the Galway farm I returned and got to Mr[.] Minor's before it blew up cold. Mr[.] M[.] and the family seemed glad to see me. We did not talk much of neighborhood affairs. Miss Lurie and Miss Hooker were looking very well. They did not sit up late as perhaps they were aware Mr[.] M[.] wished to talk to me on business. The next morning I started for home early, it was severely cold, at least I thought so[.] Old George, as usual, as if anticipating my desire or to gratify his own, moved in a quick pace and

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the distance was agreeably shortened and home reached without meeting any one on the road, or stopping at any house. My cold has improved and is now about well. My [MS. illegible] grow very large but after they begin to grow fast, they are less painful, but stubborn to recede [.] I have them on both arms now, think I am feeling so much better that they will not continue to come much longer, hope they will not.

Up to this time have not got my room ready to work; Did I say work? Yes -- to work at my business was once a pleasure, an occupation, a comfort and a beautiful pastime: with high hope of a happy future. I enjoyed it: it was a pleasure, a pride, a staff I could lean upon. But now why so tardy[.] why so loth to begin? To even [prepare?] a place where I can sit without the eyes of the curious or idle to penetrate, or in the least disturb the soul in a moment like this, had I such a place to think, to write, to breath to you whatever of truth and beauty I possess, I might improve my hasty style, as well as correct, or write more at length, full and explicit as if talking. When away from you I can think of so much to say, almost imigine I am with you, but when together am too happy to talk or to bring up any subject but what is before us, and then without study or form, I can appreciate your sentiment in this regard so aptly told of yourself, but had not discovered it. hope when we shall be again together at Hickory Grove we shall have a warm

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day to walk, to take a stroll and enjoy the breeze, to read your cousin's letters, to anticipate like pleasures, and to look forward with hope and faith becoming us -- to grow in wisdom and love inseparable for each others sake. Although we may fervently hope that I will be permitted to come down occasionally, at least before I excite the evil intentions of those who would injure us or be gratified in the disappointment [*text stricken through*] they would inflict. I would be glad to go down once a week and feel as if I would not by this [*text stricken through*] stir up evil minded persons to work out the malice they bear us, for thus gratifying a duty I owe to my self and to you but we will determine further when we know more nor borrow trouble, before it comes. In the mean time we can write and if this so far as we are concerned is selfish, we will both plead guilty and claim the gratification so innocently found, by cheering each other with [*text stricken through*] our pens, when we are not side by side[,] feasting our eyes and drinking the inspiration of each others presence. We may hope possibly by this means to brighten the sparkling deep glow of affection which has already warmed our hearts into one. May we always continue of one mind, one faith, one hope as if the blessed happiness so desirable to our natures has been reached, our hopes realized and Gods favor attained in our own behalf as well as all those we love and feel near to.

Although a little cloudy and windy, the birds

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are singing as if spring had come, and as if to invite me away from this lonesome place on Sabbath day. They [carry?] their notes in sweet expressive tones. I think I should enjoy a southern, or tropical climate so much, where it is perpetual summer, with fruit and birds always with us, and have sometimes wondered whether it should ever be my good fortune to be able to go, or the Divine will that I should change from the pestilence now scourging this once happy country. I must however trust to my own exertions and the future to determine whether such change will be the vineyard of promises, and give the home of peace and quiet so much desired by us all[.]

I know Kos would miss me, but as he has not been in the habit lately of following me, I did not think he would attempt to trail me up[.]

Our town seems quiet and peaceable. Certain men seem to be satisfied that they are doing business and making money, this, to them, is all they wish[.] They and their friends seem to be trying to make the most of it: to make the hay with all possible speed while the sun shines, lest a gloomy day might come and mildew the prospect. Nothing wrong in this, if our country had not been so contracted as to make it necessary for some of our best citizens to stop business and even to move any to give others room and a chance to breath, to live[,] to lord it over the soil and the lesser lights they would

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make burn that their own path might be lighted and and made smooth, even if rubbed up by the friction of prejudice and other evil or vicious passions[.]

We have no late news from below. I will perhaps get a paper tomorrow. The news for the next two months will be stirring and sought for with great concern and interest; perhaps the decisive battle may be fought, perhaps new levies made for more men[.] Does the hearts of men in times like these quiver because, like the aspen leaf[,] they know not whence the wind cometh? Or are they[,] like the aspen leaf[,] only quivering to show the silver lining of a weak heart, in contradistinction to the nobler attributes for which in national wars the American people have such deserved fame at home and abroad[.] There is a difference between civil war and a national war. Civil war may be classed variously -- and in some cases, other nations would not recognize strife for war, nor murder for killing, nor the mob for an army. further than this it may not be right at this time to reflect. What history will call our unhappy struggle we had better not anticipate. [*text stricken through*] I have been led into this digression from our usual matter of correspondence by the whispered silence that now surrounds me[.]

I am thankful to Carrie for the love she sends me, and will ever cherish the sisterly feeling she has at all times shown me, and shall at all times try to make myself worthy of it. I hope she is already convinced that it is not lost on me for want of a

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proper appreciation, no. I have so long lived where and in a manner, seemingly to the outside world not to enjoy either sympathy or love, or perhaps to many I may not be considered capable of such endearing qualities. [*text stricken through*] But could they witness the braking forth of the welled up streams of kindness[,] love and affection refreshing mind and body to which I sometimes insensibly give way: the thoughts of a good Mother, a Father, a dear and only sister, my Brothers, of some kind friend whether male or female, of you[,] your dear Mother[,] Father[,] brothers & sisters[,] they would be undeceived, if such thoughts exist, concerning myself and feel as those do who seek in private to commune with their creator, the God of all, praying for the welfare of all. To love, to feel happy with those I love & make them happy is and has always been the previous ointment of my existence, the day dream of my life[.] Can you wonder then why I have been so silent in flattery, so guarded in love making? The Catechism says we love God because he first loved us; But is this the case between individuals[?] To some extent it is, affinity begets love, a return of that love gives confirmation and leads the parties insensibly to know and feel that they are inseperable; drawing the ties of affection closer, and cementing them after Gods own laws, the pure natures of our being, this being the case, what do we think of the practiced or practical love maker using art strategy -- a smiling or a cloudy face as

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fancy leads him, living on the excitement of the occasion to manufacture a glossy covering to his selfishness.

I remember the story of a courtship long years ago, which filled my mind with pleasure. To make it short two children a girl and a boy in their A.B.C. days were persuaded that they loved each other, and in their innocence split a small silver coin, each were to wear half of it until they were married. Soon they were seperated to complete their Education. The Gentleman afterward without seeing his infant lover and betrothed made a tour through Europe, and by the time he returned, time and health had contributed to mould both into all the proportions of elegant man and womanhood, receiving all the accomplishments wealth and the country afforded. They met as neighbors[,] children, as old playmates, without allusion to the bit of silver that each continued to wear, with sacred constancy -- at last the gentleman drew his half forth in sportive mood yet with an eloquence only understood by them. The lady soon matched it with the other half. From that time the story was well told, all the embarrassment on this account was removed, they mentally claimed each other, still cherishing the small token each for the sake of the other had prized so highly -- this was love -- they were mated by intuition, irresistably in love[,] natures free offering. I wish I had the story now[.]

Please excuse these disjointed lines upon no studied matters. The subjects being suggested

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by the occasion, and as they come into my mind, so I have penned them. This is all I can say of it[.] I have done as you wished me, wrote a long letter -- let my pen, if not my thoughts [MS. illegible] at ran down[,] so will close by sending love to all[.]

Affectionately yours[,]

John A. Bushnell

[P.S.] July 23rd 1864[.] Your not coming yesterday made me quite uneasy, fearing something had happened or that you were sick, yet fancy tried to persuade me that you had company -- no news since Sunday. I give you the last paper[.]

J.A.B.