

From John A. Bushnell to Eugenia Bronaugh

[page 1]
Clinton Mo[.]
July 3 1864

My Dear Eugenia[.]

Scarcely a moment has passed since I have been here without thinking of you, wondering, wishing you would come to Clinton, watching the road in the direction of your house, yet scarcely knowing whether to expect you or not--but still hoping you would get some way to come and be able to stay several days. all this would have been pleasant to me. I know Mrs[.] [Cruce?] would have been glad to have had you spend the time with her--while I was here. she would not have thought that any one would work prejudice against her for our stay--and yet I did; I felt like I should be willing to risk the consequences, trusting no evil would come to her or her household on our account--or by virtue of our visit and stay. Yet how strange the feeling when we know evil disposed persons are ever ready--and abundantly prepared to manufacture designs, out of the simple desire of others to gratify their pleasure by going to see their friends and meeting with associates and friends.

I am sorry you did not come, and while I consider the disappointment in the anticipated pleasure of your coming (not that I was disappointed in your not coming for I scarcely knew how you could well come) I feel resigned[.] hoping that it is providential, best that you did not come. How selfish it would have appeared and how unhappy

[page 2]

we would have been, had we brought trouble on others, by indulging in, or gratifying our own pleasure, but such are the times in which we live. I would like to have talked with you, told you how I felt about the prospect of my business and my desire to be doing something for the future and to escape danger at present.

I do not feel afraid of open danger--not a murderer among them would dare level his instrument of death against me in the open field or in the blaze of day. God's presence would rebuke him but the thief who comes at night--the murderer who ambushes himself is at all times to be dreaded. I am satisfied my life would be avenged with telling effect--and that if I am to be selected as the hated object upon whom to vent retaliation and death--little do they dream that this power is only assumed, borrowed for a limited time, which like the debris and dirt of a building on fire, answers to smother the flames, only to give it more heat and volume; to leave such pusillanimity and erect the long smothered standard of justice and right[.]

I brought my books and papers over with me. Mrs[.] [Cruce?] has permitted me to use her east room. I have been writing and at work all the time since I have been here, going down town only in the evening of mail days to get a paper--it will take me several days yet to get through my work. I find it so pleasant and quiet here that I believe I shall remain until I finish, also until I attend to my business, as well as I can, in the clerks office, for God knows whether I shall ever come to Clinton again. I cannot tell, I hope

[page 3]

I shall, and that too with far different feeling to what I experience at present--when [secret?] private and public enemies shall have vanished--when all can enjoy the pleasures of Gods grace--His smiles and favors, with love to Him, love to one another, in a happy and peaceful Country--"the land of the free and the home of the brave[.]"

This last sentence brings me prematurely to the celebration of the 4th of July--to morrow--great preparations have, I understand, been made, and the usual forms will be gone through with. I sincerely trust the awe inspiring presence of the writer of the noble and soul stirring Declaration of American Independence, the potent influencer of the founders of this great Republic, may be felt--that it may come down like the Power of the Holy Ghost--until not a traitorous feeling is left, until all shall realize that this dwelling place was not made by selfish, for selfish purposes but for the Everlasting good--the benefit of all who can appreciate its blessings and live evangelic--true to its teachings[.]

I see children passing to Sunday School, the Sunday School is an institution commanding my highest respect--one which I feel proud to say I have encouraged as far as I could, at all times and in all places--and pray that the children and others may be benefitted here, for in my opinion it requires great effort on the part of those who, know and feel, the obligations resting on them as teachers--as servants of God--to keep up and diligently perform their duty--to themselves--to the children and to God in whose service they have enlisted[.]

[page 4 blank]

[page 5]

Little did I think that I should let my pen run so much at will, but I hope what I have said cannot be construed into disloyalty--a spirit of insubordination, it is expressing truths which by the freedom of speech and the freedom of the press might be elaborated and handled with good effect to establish loyalty and good government--and if understood more generally and acted upon would result in much good[.]

Last Sunday I spent the day at Mr[.] Garths. Mrs[.] Garth has had chills, she was looking badly--I saw her yesterday[,] she was greatly improved and began to look like herself again--the day passed off very pleasantly--we gathered cherries--currents--walked in the garden--chatted--the little girls sang (some songs you would like to hear) and so we spent the day[.]

I have not heard from Calhoun since I left there--except that I learned the soldiers who were there also left the next day after I come over here--would like to know what they are doing--but presume I will not hear until I go back which I hope will be Thursday--or Saturday at [MS. illegible]--perhaps I could hear something by going down town oftener and associating more--but as I do not wish to manifest any unusual curiosity in matters, about which appearances would tend to show satisfaction, I prefer my usual quiet course--do not wish to obtrude--unless I could be favorably impressed that my feelings would be appreciated and acted upon or at least be listened to with due effect[.]

[page 6]

Bettie Royston called on Mrs[.] [Cruce?] since I have been here but I did not get to see her--did not know that she was here until she had gone. I presume she thought it was my place to call on her at her home--so it is--and I would gladly do so, if times were slightly changed but as they are, I do not believe I would benefit her or myself either by doing so. I rather think it prudent not to call. I may get a chance to see her before I go back. A Miss Ellison was staying with Mrs[.] [Cruce?] when I first come, she has called once since, plays on the piano very well and sings a good many songs new to me. I believe she is from Cass Co[.], but is now living on the Davis farm, she seems alive to the times.

I got a letter from Bro[.] Fayette since I have been here, he is still improving his health and is much pleased with his change of business and the exercise it gives him. I answered it filling just four sheets like this--pretty long lecture--lengthy advise for it was mostly devoted to that object, as I was led to believe his position was of more importance than he was aware of, and might be made a stepping stone to great results, good fortune and eminence socially and in a business point of view, so I ventured my prompting aid, if he will so receive it, he may be benefitted by it or I may be mistaken in his

conceptions, in part--for he seems upon most of the business he is connected with to have pretty good ideas, and to realize what he may make of it--and how useful he may become. He is very anxious for Bro[.] E. to go to New York. I do not think he has any idea of going, all the troubles are not

[page 7]

confined to Missouri--though we may have warm work here this summer and fall. I do not see that he is in any more danger--in fact I think, in less danger here than he would be among strangers[.]

I want to go to Sedalia as soon as I get to Calhoun--or as soon as I can get ready to do so. I am so anxious to get to your house but I cannot tell much about the propriety of it until I get back home. I have not hinted to Mrs[.] [Cruce?] that you might come up. I thought that in case you did come, it should be a surprise to her, at least not looked for from anything I might think or say to her. She takes everything in a philosophic manner--does not fret about anything or complain[.] She must be happily disposed. Mr[.] C. has gone into the mercantile business at Warrensburg with a good prospect before him--had made arrangements to build him a house, but gave it out for the present. I suppose Mrs[.] C. expects to move this fall--but she hardly knows what she will do--nor does any one else.

Tuesday morning--Mrs[.] C. said yesterday she expected to move in September. I left this open to tell how the 4th passed off. I did not go down town all day[,], not even to get a paper, could see that quite a crowd was in attendance at the table, which I learn was plentifully supplied and set under the shade trees at the former residence of the Rev. Mr. Bond[.] quite a crowd was gathered under the shade before the court house when the declaration of Independence was read and Parson Marvin made his speech conclusively, in his own mind, proving the races equal[,]

[page 8]

the black as good as the white--so created &c[,], all was harmonious--if any perturbation rested in the mind, of any--it sunk deep into their souls to be willed up for future use--they said nothing--but woman--true women cannot hide so well the fountain of her thoughts, fit emblems--the pine and the cedar remains fadeless on wasted soil--the moss flourishes in all its beauty on the barren rock--the ivy clings to the broken rock--and Heaven be praised something awfully sublime[,], more beautiful--more grateful to the soul--Woman's love[,], Woman's fidelity--in the darkest hour of fate, still twines its tendrils around the crumbling and broken arches of the desolate temples of humanity still proudly [breasting?] the storm of adversity, clinging ever to truth and justice--to right--with a pure heart and unsullied hands--Gods favor is their allowance and may they ever prove so, now and forever[.]

We had a fine rain Sunday--some last evening and a glorious refreshing shower this morning[.] This I trust will revive the crops and will I know, make glad the hearts of many--it was so much needed. My ink is so awfully bad that I can scarcely get my pen to write--so for the present will stop by sending my love to all.

Yours Truly and Affectionately

John A. Bushnell