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Bruce Collection
Box 4, Folder 117

[letter of Rev. S. L. Helm to Henry Bruce Jr.]

Lexington [Kentucky] June 21st 1863 [June 21, 1863]

Dear Henry

Your letter of the 19th is duly recd [received]-- as I expect to start to Mason County day after tomorrow and shall not return for ten days or two weeks I will embrace the present opportunity to reply We have not yet receivd [received] any additural [additional] newse [news] from Will or Frank I wrote to my brother in Lew [?] to urge Greuet [?] to give Aunt Nancy the full particulars [particulars] of their troubles as soon as she gets to her fathers But the whole family are slow to write and have a great aversion to long letters Tell aunt Nancy to cheer up our blessed God will not forsake us nor ours If she will promise to go to church I will come to Covington [Kentucky] & preach her a sermon I made in prison and the first I preached after I got out from the 1 & 2 verses of the 27 Ps. One of the very best sermons of my life. Or if she cant [can't] get out I will save it for her funeral service if she says so-- I am unhappy about Will & his poor family. Oh if we are to get no speedy relief from the oppressive usurpatures [sic] and heartless crueltees [cruelty] of the times we shall all soon begin to covet death as a priceless boon I have stayed so long close at home to avoid slanders and bayonets that I am looseng [losing] all spirit vivacity and I begin to fear injury to my health But I shall start out now

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I cannot say that I know of any Negroes of good character were for sale neither do I know exactly the the feelings of the people now on the subject but a few weeks ago you could have bought any nego [negro] in the county pretty much at your own price Negros [Negroes] of good character in this county are scarce [scarce], a mere perfectly demoralised [demoralized] set I never saw than they are here and if there is not some check to their association, with soldiers we shall have

serious times here yet I hear of great numbers being offered at public sales but knew nothing of their qualities If you had a trusty agent here with instructions I have no doubt you could get as many as you want directly

I feel some curiosity to know where you are going to carry in you farmery [farming] operations [operations] From recent [recent] movements it seems ~~from~~ that your city is becoming quite a slave mart When will my prediction made some years ago come true that I should live to see Cincinnati [Cincinnati] become the great slave mart of Ohio

Your views of the great raction [reaction] I deem entirely correct The mighty wave is in motion and will soon be beyond the controll [control] of those who set it in motion. It is the invisible hand of God commding [commanding] the councils of infidelity [infidelity] That same mighty hand is directing this whole natural tempest and will set the councils of fanaticise [fanaticism] infidel aboletionism [abolitionism] and proud usurpation at naught Read the 1st page of the Enquirer of this date, see the prediction in Joel 2, 20 is true

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Your allusions to a powerful iron clad navey [navy] soon to appear astonished me can it be true if so the work is now almost accomplished.

I have never witnessed such a marked change as is now visible on the faces of many of our citizen The bold defenders of Administration usurpation suspension of law and arbitrary arrests of their neighbours now look as if they were goeing [going] to the scaffold they had erected for others I have labored hard with myself to keep down all feelings of animosity and revenge I have resolved firmly to continue my respect for all respectable men of both parties But I find I have over tasked my powers While I could pursude [persuade] myself more my neighbors [neighbors] & acquaintences [acquaintances] were honerably [honorably] and honestly entertaining their views and were decieved [deceived] I dare not withhold my respect & confidence But now that the gausy vail is removed from the diabolical purposes of the Administration and they persist in its support I cannot retain enough respect to behave to them decently so I avoid contact with radicals

I have been much distressed for the future of Ky [Kentucky] our Legislature has been completely taken in else they are a set of wooden heads and blinded knaves-- What they will now do baffles all prognosticators [prognosticators] I hope for the best but seriously fear the worst The resolutions published in to day [today's] Enquirer offered in the Senate promise good

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Well I thank God there is still left me some well known long tried friends like yourself and family from where these convulsion cannot sepperate [separate] me O here I would enjoy a long talk with you one of these winter nights If I were to tell you some incidents in my present life I know you would laugh and weep I learned much then and much since my return one good result has been to effectually sift all pretended spurious friends from the circles of my associations O what sickness evidences of the corruption of poor human nature have been forced upon I would not have the world to know all It would make infidels of many. I speak it with shame that the most insidious efforts have been made since my return to consummate my ruin by those from whom I and the world had a right to expect better things I bent [?] before the storm and bore its loudest blasts quietly It past over left me unscathed but carried of its onginatur [?] by its own pernicious [pernicious] effects We are all well and all join in love to you and family Just as soon as I learn any thing more from Will you shall hear it

Truely [Truly] yours
S L H [S.L. Helm]