

West Chester, Mass.

May 28th, '66

Edward L. Higgins Esq.

Sir,

I now commence the important although unpleasant task of addressing you. Receive it not as an instrument of retaliation, but rather as a subject of contemplation. Consider the elapse of time, and you will, at once, that had I intended it as a system of revenge, I would have written long ere this. Know, therefore, that I would not cause you that anguish of soul, more bitter than the grave, even were it in my power, for my very heart would shrink back, paralyzed and aghast from such an effort! Let me inform you at the onset, that I am actuated by no such motive. Neither am I guided by the impulses of the moment, for I have meditated long and fervently of the efficacy of informing you, in this manner, of your duplicity.

Nevertheless, I am compelled by the imperative calling of duty to perform this act. Thinking, perchance, you may yet listen to the exhortations of a friend of former years – that you may yet reflect on your double-dealings, that you may repent and turn from the error of your ways, ere the star of your honor sets in the blackness and darkness forever.

Now I would ask you in the presence of the living, made solemn by the silence of the dead – How could you! Ok! How could you sit there, where you were so recently seated beside the remains of that Dear Sister, whom memory made, & still makes dear to us all; How could you sit there and give utterance to such expressions as those which fell from your lips, under such circumstance, and your tongue not cleve to the roots of your mouth.

A young man of your years, of your attainments, & your refined sensibilities which, in your situation, God most generously bestowed upon you; taking into consideration all these qualities, together with love of character, which no one doubts, you in common with every true son of America possesses—Standing by the grave of her, whom we all love so well, watching clod after clod, fall into into the narrow house, hiding her forever from mortal view. Then turning from the resting place of Father, Mother, & Sisters, to speak premediated falsehoods, such as no villain would dare to speak, unless his honor was trampled in the dust, -- his tongue the avowed instrument of deceit – his heart the abode of universal wicked, while his dark, contaminate operation, were preparing him for an honorable situation, if not a crown in the kingdom. [not sure of this last sentence]

Then, and not till then, let the act be forgotten and forgiven. Nellie W. Smith.