Macon, Feby. 19, 1866

Assuredly, I possess one virtue at least which you may admire, and that is the virtue of stubborn persistence in spite of the rebuffs of Fortune and the cold receptions I receive. A consciousness of my utter want of merit cannot condemn your judgment; on the contrary, I am only astonished that I have ever mustered the requisite impertinence to have sought a prize so far beyond my reach. Let me hope that some one more worthy (he could not be more earnest), will be the chosen one. I must be contented with the cold appellation of friend. I have long deliberated whether a reply was desired to your last, and may be even now overstepping the bounds of propriety in presuming to write at all, yet I beg a little of that charity extended towards me in the correspondence between us for more than three years. If you really desire to close our correspondence, do not hesitate to do it for the very great pain such an event would occasion me. I speak plainly, regretting the decision to which your judgment has lead you, and admiring the candor and truth of that noble spirit which would not tamper with a confidence so fully reposed. Your natural worth which is richer than the tinsel of accomplishment, attracted me, and I sought only to deserve your approbation. I have seen much in you to admire and nothing to censure. As I am then responsible for all these results of our correspondence, I do not hold you accountable in the least for the sorrow which now broods over my life, but in the midst of misery in which I am the injured and the injurer, I must acquit you of all censure. Your peerless nature and happy genial manners have made me happy more than once; your words sank deep into my heart, and gave strength and nerve when nought else could. If by your wish, (for it never can be by my own), we should cease to write each other, in a few brief years or months perhaps, you will forget me. I can never you. It were better, perhaps, if I could.

Very respectfully, &c.,
Eugene S. Mitchell