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Reminiscence of John Muir by Bell, Emily

Emily Bell

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Anecdote sent file

Philadelphia, 1428 Spruce St.,
Oct. 13, 1915.

Messrs. Houghton Mifflin Co.,
Boston.

Dear Sirs:

In response to this clipping enclosed I take pleasure in sending you the accompanying characteristic anecdote in reference to John Muir, with the hope that it is not too late for you to include it in the "Life, Letters and Journals" which you propose to publish.

Yours truly,

(Miss) Emily Bell

A chance meeting in the dining-room of Shepheard's Hotel, Cairo, was the beginning of a pleasant friendship with John Muir which ended with his death. As his beloved California trees were always in his thoughts it was natural for him to open the conversation with an allusion to the beauty and majesty of the "Sequoia gigantea." Seated at his left was an elderly English woman of the prosaic type, one used to find in Egypt and in continental resorts. She had not been included in the conversation, but desiring to take part in it she abruptly broke in upon his poetical description of these giants of the forest with the practical question, "Would they make nice furniture?"

Turning upon her with as fierce a look as his gentle blue eyes could give, "Madam," he replied, "would you murder your own children?" The stolid dame fairly jumped with fright, evidently thinking she had addressed a madman, and hurriedly finishing her dinner she silently left the table. At the next meal she furtively glanced at him from the extreme end of the dining-room.