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Letter from John Muir to Louie [Strentzel Muir], 1896 Jun 12.

John Muir

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Portage, June 12. 1896

Dear Louie

Your telegram

arrived a few minutes after I had sent one to you telling that mother was better. But she is still very weak & unable to sit up. She eats well however & we hope that as the weather is fine she will gradually recover a little strength & remain with us another year. We are by no means sanguine however for it is very hard at her advanced age to gain what vital force is once lost. A few days will show whether there is to be loss or gain. She has taken plenty of nourishment & seems brighter today. & Shows no sign of biliousness - the cause of her last illness. I have been sitting

by her bedside telling her Scotch stories stirring up old memories & made her laugh many times as she has not laughed for many a day - so they tell me. When I first came I could hardly catch a single word of hers when she tried to speak but today I heard but little difficulty in understanding all she said.

Her case as far as I can see, & learn is simply heart failure from age. It is feeble & irregular in action & of course is easily made more so by any little untoward chance of food, weather etc. The doctor says she may live through the summer if her continues good. & that a few days will tell. Of course I'll remain until I know. Dan is kept advised of her condition from

day to day & sends medicine. But she no medicine with change age to youth. Her grandchild. Mary's Helen to you old & former's Mary about the yard & come to her bedside now & then to cheer her with their bright faces & pretty ways. & she is glad to have me near always.

Bessie is a remarkably bright intelligent girl, & Bessie is lovely, while Ethel is a fine scholar. Mary's Helen is a healthy strong woman. I wish my babies, the best of all, were here. Some to them & all. Even Yours affectionately John Wain