



1891-07-02

Letter from John Muir to Janet [Douglass Moores], 1891 Jul 2.

John Muir

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Recommended Citation

Muir, John, "Letter from John Muir to Janet [Douglass Moores], 1891 Jul 2." (1891). *John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)*. 87.
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Original in possession of Mr. Charles Moores.

Martinez, July 2, 1891

My Dear Janet:

I was glad to get your fine spacious all-round-the family letter. We too have had our share of Grippe & things ^{that} ~~then~~ make pain & trouble even in so good a love-filled world as this. I suppose that through Annie you have heard of the death of Dr. ^t ~~Stenzel~~. How great the loss only those who have suffered may know. The family is broken like a house torn asunder & half ~~taken~~ away. Little Helen only four years old we feared would follow him with a broken heart. Even now we have to keep her out of the parlor where his portrait hangs for at sight of it without saying a word her eyes fill & for hours or days all our efforts to comfort her are in vain.

Wanda is a big rosy girl & so much like a woman I am frightened & would fain keep her a baby in sweet & sinless baby ^{land.} ~~land~~. But on a swift flood we are all borne forward & only when I am in the wilderness is this current invisible, where one day is a thousand years & a thousand years one day.

Last summer I was among the grand crystal glaciers of Alaska & this summer I spent three weeks in the King's River Yosemite - one of my favorite haunts in the old free Sierra times. I am now trying to write about it for the Century & must haggle through the job in some way for the illustrations for the "article" are already made & they are calling for copy.

I also promised a year ago to write two articles on Alaska for the same magazine, but I have a thousand things to think about in caring for these two ranches & have but little time for such work, while writing to me is very hard, for I have no facility in composition & no available vocabulary - only - only invention & imagination. But why should you care to hear this. The weather has been very hot for a week 105° to 110° & my head swims until horticulture and literature are mixed into rubbish & only ice & Alaska seem clear and significant.

We are all living, or rather melting, together at the ~~Strenzel~~^{Strenzel} home now, and family while my sister Maggie & Ed Goe & his friend Arthur Coleman keep the old house. Ed is doing well & growing every way & I hope he will stay with me forever - a terrestrial forever.

None of your Indiana birds have yet alighted here on their western flight, but I still hope to see them. Surely they will not be so idiotic as to wait for a sealed and solemn invitation. I must, however, send a note to Katey Graydon for she's so bashful.

We are all well, & some of us venerable, looking like old trees or white mountain tops, etc. -----

I saw your friend Emily ^{O. Pelton} ~~Swett~~ a week ago. She is very literary & industrious and thin. I had a letter from our good old friend Prof. Butler the other day written at Paris. He is evidently well, merry & oddly speculative as ever, racing round the globe for fun, money, wisdom & exercise.

Now I must quit this & go to my dismal solemn composition.

Remember me to your mother & Aunts Kate & Mina & to the fine man-boys & Sue Ketcham warmly & naturally as though I had been gone from Indiana but a day. I am always your friend,

John Muir