



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

1893-03-08

Letter from Ripley Hitchcock to John Muir, 1893 Mar 8.

Ripley Hitchcock

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March 8, 1893

John Muir, Esq.,
Martinez, Cal.

Dear Sir:

I beg to acknowledge your letter of March 2, and I should like to say that we are very glad indeed to find that the suggestion of the book on mountaineering in the West strikes you favorably. It seems to me that there is a place for a book written by an authority, but at the same time popular rather than scientific, and dealing with actual experiences in mountain climbing. Our idea would be that the book should not be a very large one. On the basis of a 12mo. it should not contain more than 350 or 400 pages. I think the illustrations could be made satisfactory to you. No doubt you have a considerable number of photographs, and these would be very carefully reproduced. We should endeavor to make the book in the best possible manner.

As regards terms, we should offer you 10% of the retail price of all copies sold, the payment beginning when the book had met the expense of manufacturing, and then including all copies sold. For example, if the sale of 1000 copies was necessary to meet the cost of plates, etc., we should pay you the royalty on the 1000 copies as soon as this number was sold. The idea is that the publisher and author should become partners, and inasmuch as the publisher invests a considerable amount in the manufacture of the book it seems fair that the cost of manufacture should be recovered before he pays out an additional amount in royalties. I think that this book ought to prove a permanent one, and the results in the long run I trust will be satisfactory. We should probably make a book which would be uniform in size with Darwin's Voyages, or possibly

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2

3/8/93

with Wright's Ice Age, although of course our idea would be that the book should be more popular in character.

I am obliged to outline this general plan somewhat hastily, but I trust the suggestion will meet with your acceptance, and I shall be very glad indeed to hear from you on the subject at your convenience.

Yours very truly,

Ripley Hitchcock

01437