



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

1875-07-31

Letter from John Muir to [Jeanne C.] Carr, 1875 Jun 31.

John Muir

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Black's Hotel,
Yosemite, Cal.,
July 31st, 1875,

Dear Mrs. Carr:

I have just arrived from our long excursion to Mt. Whitney, all hale and happy, and find your weary plodding letter, containing things that from this rocky standpoint seem strangely mixed — things celestial and terrestrial, cultivated and wild. Your letters set one a-thinking, and yet somehow they never seem to make those problems of life clear, and I always feel glad that they do not form any part of my work, but that my lessons are simple rocks and waters and plants and humble beasts, all pure and in their places, the Man beast with all his complications being laid upon stronger shoulders.

I did not bring you down any Sedum roots or Cassiope sprays because I had not then received your letter, not that I forgot you as I passed the blessed Sierra heathers, or the primulas, or the pines laden ~~with~~ ^{with} fragrant, nutty cones. But I am more and more made to feel that my gardens and herbariums and woods are all in their places as they grow, and I know them there, and can find them when I will. Yet I ought to carry their poor dead or dying forms to those who can have no better.

[omit between brackets]

The Valley is lovely, scarce more than a whit the worse for the flower-crushing feet that every summer brings... [The Editorial party are awful wise, Yet I find some fine and and good-looking people among them.] I am not decided about my summer. I want to go with the Sequoias a month or two into all their homes from north to south, learning what I can of their conditions and prospects, their age, stature, the area they occupy, etc. But John Swett, who is brother now, papa then, orders me home to booking. Bless me, what an awful thing town duty is! I was once free as any pine-playing wind, and feel that I have still a good length of line, but alack! there seems to be a hook or two of civilization in me that I would fain pull out, yet would not pull out — O, O, O!!!

I suppose you are weary saying book, book, book, and perhaps when you fear me lost in rocks and Mono deserts I will, with Scotch perverseness, do all you ask and more. All this letter is about myself, and why not when I'm the only person in all the wide world that I know anything about — Keith, the cascade, not excepted.

Fare ye well, mother quail, good betide your brood and be they and you saved from the hawks and the big ugly buzzards and cormorants, grangel, political, right and wrongical, and I will be

Ever truly,

John Muir

"Only that and nothing more." →