



1877-11-29

## Letter from [John Muir] to Sarah [Muir Galloway], [1877 Nov 29].

John Muir

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Thanksgiving eve  
At old 1419 Taylor St

My dear Sister Sarah - I find an  
unanswered letter of yrs dated Sep 23<sup>d</sup>  
& though I have been very hungry  
on the matter a few weeks ago I have  
just been making beautiful amends  
at a regular turkey thank feast of  
the old New England type I must  
make an effort to answer it however  
incapacitated by "stuffing" for depend  
upon it this Turkish method of thanks  
does make the simplest kind of literary  
effort hard, - our brains go heavily along  
The easiest lines like a laden wagon  
in a bag but I can at least answer  
your questions - The Prof<sup>r</sup> Gray I was  
with on Shasta is the winter of the  
school botanys the most distinguished  
botanist in America, & Sir Joseph Hooker  
is the leading botanist of England. We have  
a fine rare time together in the Shasta  
forests discussing the botanical characters  
of the grandest coniferous trees in the  
world camping out & enjoying ourselves  
in pure freedom - Gray is an old friend  
that led around Yosemite years ago  
& ~~for~~ with whom I have corresponded  
for a long time - Sir Joseph I never met  
before he is a fine cordial Englishman

President of the Royal Scientific Society & has charge of the Kew botanical gardens & a great traveler but perfectly free from all chilling airs of superiority - He told me a great deal about the Himalayas the deodar forests there & the gorgeous rhododendrons that cover their flanks with lavish bloom for miles & miles & about the Cedars of Lebanon that he visited & the distribution of the species in different parts of Syria, & its relation to the deodar so widely extended over the mountains of India. & besides this scientific talk he told many a story & kept the camp in fine lively humor. On taking his leave he gave me a hearty invitation to London & promised to show me through the famous government gardens at Kew & all round etc etc - When I shall be able to avail myself of this & similar advantages I don't know I have met a good many of nature's nobles one way & another out here & hope to see ~~some of them~~ some of them at their homes but my own researches seem to hold me fast to this comparatively solitary life.

Next you speak of my storm night on Shasta Terrible as it would appear from the account printed the half was not told but I will not likely be caught in the same experience again - Though as I have said, I



3 [31]  
have just been very hungry - one meal in  
four days coupled with the most difficult  
nerve trying cliff work. This was on Kings  
Rim a few weeks ago. Still strange today  
I do not feel it much & there seems to  
be scarce any limit to my endurance.

I am far from being friendly here  
& on this particular day I might have  
eaten a score of prodigious thank dinners  
if I could have been in as many places  
at the same time. But the more I learn  
of the world the happier seems to me the  
life you live - You speak of your family  
gatherings - of a weeks visit at Mother's  
& her & then - Make the most of your  
privileges to trust & love & live in near  
unjealous generous sympathy with one  
another, for I assure you these are  
blessings scarce at all recognized in  
their real divine greatness.

Remember me to Jane Mitchell Root & all  
the Salaways

You ask whether you are to keep Mrs  
Moors letter - Keep it if you can for it  
she is no relation of Merrill Moors but a  
friend whom acquaintance I made here  
Merrill is now a man. Studying hard  
& successfully in Yale College

We had a company of fourteen at dinner tonight

+ we had what is called a grand time but these big eating parties never seem to me to pay for the trouble they make though all seem to enjoy them immensely - a crust by a brook side out on the mountains with God is more to me than all beyond comparison. Nevertheless these poor legs in their weariness do enjoy a soft bed at times + plenty of nourishment.

I had another grand turkey feast a week ago. Coming home here I left my boat at Martinez 30 miles up the bay + walked to Oakland across the top of Mt. Diablo, + on the way called at my friend, the Stuntzels who have eighty acres of choice orchards + vineyards. When I rested two days, my first rest in six weeks, they pitched my weary looks, + made me eat, + sleep - stuffing me with turkey, chicken, beef, fruits, + jellies, in the most extravagant manner imaginable + begged me to stay a month.

Last eve dined at a French friend's in the city + you would have been surprised to see 50 temperate - erate a Scotchman doing such justice to French dishes - The fact is I've been hungry ever since starving in the Mtn Canons -

This evening the guests would ask me how I felt while starving? Why I did not die like other people. How many beers I had seen - + deer etc. How deep the snow is now + where the snowline is located etc. - Then up stairs we chat + sing + play piano etc + then I slip off from the company + write this - Now it's near midnight + I must slip from this also wishing you + David + all your dear family good night with love