



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

1879-01-28

Letter from John Muir to [Strentzel Family], 1879 Jan 28.

John Muir

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920 Valencia St.
San Francisco,
Jan 28th 1879.

Dear friends,

The vast soulstirring
work of flitting is at length done,
& well done. Myself, wooden clock,
& notebook, are once more planted
for the winter out-here on the outer-
-most ragged edge of this howling
metropolis of dwelling loxes.
And now, well what now? nothing
but work, bookmaking, brickmaking,
the transformation of raw bush sugar
& mountain meal into magazine
cookies & snaps. And though the
spectacles critics who ken everything
in wise ignorance say "well done sir
well done" I always feel that there
is something not quite honorable
in thus dealing with God's wild gold.
The sugar & meal I mean,

00827

Yesterday I began to try to cook a
mess of bees, but have not yet succeeded
in making the ink run sweet, the
blest brownies wuna buzz in this
temperature, & what can a body do
about it. Maybe ignorance is the
devil that is spoiling the the the broth -
the nectar, & perhaps I ought to go out
& gather some more Melissa & Thyme
& white sage for the pot.

The streets here are barren & be less &
ineffably muddy & mean looking. How
people can keep hold of the conceptions
of New Jerusalem & immortality of souls
with so much mud & gutter, is to me
admirably strange. A Eucalyptus bush
on every other corner, standing tied to a
painted stick, & a geranium sprout
in a pot on every tenth window sill
may help heavenward a little, but how
little amid so much down dragging mud

Thus much for despondency, per
contra the grass & grain is growing

& man will be fed, & the nations will
be glad etc, & the sun rises every day.

Helen is well out of danger, & is very
nearly her own sweet amiable engaging
little self again, & I can see her at
least once a week

I'm living with Mr Upham & am
comfortable as possible. Summer
will soon be again.

When you come to the city visit
me, & see how bravely I endure.
So touching a lesson of resignation
to metropolitan evils & goods should
not be lightly missed.

Hoping all goes well with you
& am cordially your friend.

John Muir.