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Letter from Louie Strentzel to [John Muir], 1879 Dec 1.

Louie Strentzel

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cheerful about it, though all the same I do hope you'll not stay very long as a tribal member, and by the way, your new name must be spelled with a "K," just see if that doesn't stylishly improve the looks of it!

Your good old name however, Scotland be ever praised, does not need improvement.

Papa says to tell you "that although tastes must be allowed to differ, he has his own opinion of the very peculiar variety that could slight his finest spiciest Alexandrias and Corinths and Newtowns, and settle down to wigwam pemmican and Seal—". Still, overlooking that, he and mamma both have been wonderfully interested in your explorations, and studies of forests and glaciers; and likewise are much exercised about Uncle Sam's neglect of Alaskan firm government.

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Alhambra, Dec. 1, 1879.

Beloved Friend,

All the week of Thanksgiving, I cherished the ghost of a hope that the last day would bring to me a blessed message out from the far Northland—but now there is no more than the overwhelming vastness of that Wilderness of Ice beyond me, wherein the mountains and the seas, and the sky above, are frozen and silent.

Each previous month the good "California" safely brought your letters to me, yet I was not patient and now, my punishment has come.

I can only read over and over your October letter that at first

comforted me so, because I thought surely there could not be any coming danger while you felt always hopeful and confident of the future. Do not be vexed because I am not so eager and jubilant as your own strong spirit.

You must know that my heart is in all your work and that I rejoice over your gains in God's Wilds—but do you think, dear, that I do not understand the costly price you give for it all, in toil and hardship and suffering?

You yourself are more precious to me than any work, and it hurts me to feel so utterly powerless in aiding you and shielding you from pain.

Yet I know that God is with you there, and while your soul is called to hear His word, I would not have you to come away—

though I long to see your face, more than words can tell.

But is not God here also? Therefore I trust that some blessed day He will bid you come, and there will be no more fear nor shadow of darkness.

Meanwhile, I am thankful for the visions of beauty and wonder you have given me, for the exquisite pictures of that new land, more lovely it may be than my eyes could perceive. O, but I have wanted so to see them for myself—did you know that?—and indeed I must see them by and by. There were some delicious dreams over the Alaska Coast letter "for me," but the others were beautiful too, and so I claim them all, every one, for my own!

Another reading of your Indian Adoption has left me tolerably

Mother has felt little anxiety concerning you: she believes "the same kind power that has so long led you on your way, will not forsake nor forget to care for you now, but she will be glad when you come home and let her also have a little care over you."

She is quite well again, and papa will be so too after resting awhile, we hope. He was sixty six years old, last Saturday, so we kept two days of thanksgiving - and of prayer in silence. Several friends from the city came during the week, but after all were gone, a steady November rain arrived, and is yet beating down upon the roof.

Last night I waited beside the glowing fire till midnight, and then till one, all alone with myself, and your letters. The wind sighed and moaned without

ceasing, and I tried to understand but could not, and there was no other voice nor sign.

At last in the silence, I knew not how, the loving-kindness and power of the Heavenly Father seemed to come very near, and clear in my sight, and I believed and was comforted to trust all in His care.

O John, though my weak fears so often dim all else, — sometimes I think that I comprehend the delight and precious value of your work to your own soul. Knowing this, I dare not call to lead you from the way that you feel is best, wherever it may guide.

If only I might once behold where you dwell on the mountain heights and obey the Master's word, I could learn to grow stronger and wiser. But while that can

not now be, am I yet too selfish in craving to be first of all to hear your new Highland lesson to the Lowlands, and to see first in your eyes the clear light of sunrise?

I am eager to hold in my hand, the snow and frost sketches I fancy you have made. Perhaps a whole great glacier might seem cold, cold! but the wee bit fairy crystals and snow-blossoms surely could charm away all the fever and pain of restless life.

They say the "California" will return to Victoria for Christmas. Mayhap the coming New Year will bring a dear wanderer home to me, but wherever you be, here or there, I pray always God bless you and guard you and love you forevermore.

Louie Strentzel.