



1880-05-05

## Letter from Janet D[ouglass] Moores to John Muir, 1880 May 5.

Janet Douglass Moores

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Mr. Davis sends word that you have treated me in a very  
shabby way, and Miss Eliza Hendricks says that she has  
picked out a good many nice ones for you - Alas, her  
efforts were of no avail. These flowers are from our yard.  
Mamma sends love.

The Dear Mr. Muir,

I shall call you  
that, even if you are married, for  
you had no business to take such  
an important step without asking our  
advice. Perhaps you do not know that  
you have been our sweet-heart, since  
we were little things, Katie and I.

Now that I have made you aware  
of the fact, imagine our feelings on  
hearing of your desertion. If it had  
not come from as reliable a source, Mr.  
Jordan, we could not have believed it  
true, as it must be so. Suppose  
we shall have to congratulate you  
and the young lady who is so happy  
as to be Mrs. John Muir. I cannot  
bear to write the name. Mr. Muir

How could you do it? She must be as  
fair and sweet and natural as one  
of your dear wild flowers. Please tell  
us about her, and send her picture to  
us, and inform her that we will not  
allow you to stop writing to us, for  
we have the first claim.

One of my first thoughts ~~was~~ after  
reading the astounding intelligence  
was "What beautiful letters Joanne  
Rathbone, that fortunate young lady  
must have received!" I <sup>think</sup> that  
such delightful news to us, how  
much more must these have breathed  
of beauty and happiness of the world  
of John Muir!" Can you understand  
that? I doubt whether I can, my  
self. I should like to know very  
much, whether you addressed her in  
the same language, as <sup>that</sup> in which you talked

To the little "water ouzel." Is she a  
bird or a flower, a fairy, a nymph,  
a disguised princess or simply a woman  
after Wordsworth's heart and your own?

And this is the secret of your coming  
back next winter? Be sure that we  
shall be glad to see you both and we  
shall like Mrs. Muir for your sake  
if not for her own.

So you have met our friend Prof. Jordan - Kate and I were in some  
anxiety lest you should not fancy each  
other. He has happily turned out  
to the contrary. The Professor writes  
(you must not tell him that I told  
you this) that "Mrs. Muir is a brilliant  
woman in her own way" in addition  
to which he is a good fellow and "I  
like him." That is transcendence from  
Prof. Jordan, for he rarely commends

I wish that you could go abroad with  
our party in '81. Kate and I have  
made up our minds to go, though the  
trip seems visionary enough, taking it  
so far ahead. Next to finding  
the money I feel there is nothing  
the Professor likes so well as taking  
nice girls & boys over his fine mountains.  
These are his words.

Do you want to hear something more  
about us? I have told you what  
I mean, what we do, we are, we  
think, what we are active, we are, we  
enthusiastic. Good & good fellow he is -  
No bad habits, unless being extremely  
fond of society and of excitement is one.  
He has a great many friends, a nat-  
ural consequence of having lived here  
all our lives. Occasionally every  
evening in the week is taken up, so  
you can understand that he does his



Life is considerably faster than it once was.  
It doesn't think it is right to spend  
one's time and strength in this way,  
but it is very enjoyable & now is  
one to put a stop to it.

I belong to five societies: "The Woman's  
Club of Indianapolis" a French class, for  
conversations & fun, a "Young Folks  
Social Club", a "missionary society" &  
a "Shakespeare class". With occasional  
papers and entertainments to get up,  
these are not play, not all play, any  
how. Sometimes I think that I should  
like to go with mamma & the boys  
& some particular girl friend to some  
beautiful quiet country a bit really  
alone, except the <sup>small</sup> society of books &  
"out of doors". Our Vermont summer  
was after that style & I am sure that  
it was a happy one.

1160

But you must not think that we  
are unhappy here, far from it. We  
only seem to accomplish so little, on  
account of constant interruptions -  
Charles is now at "Beller" with Aunt  
Kate and intends spending next year  
and the year after with Charley Mer-  
rill at Habash College. They are  
splendid fellows, "if I do say it, who  
shouldn't", fond of study & fond of fun  
& shall I admit it, fond of girls?  
There were two little girls whom they used  
to tease, but were scarcely able to  
tell which they liked better. Charles com-  
plained some once that whenever he set-  
tled down on me, Charley flipped me  
too. It is very amusing, but it is  
to be hoped that they will get over their  
nonsense before long. The other children  
are growing up fast & strong.

1160

There are very few little Graydons now, Julia  
 & Willie are ten & eight. But there are  
 any number of little Kitchmans whose  
 acquaintance you can make, if you wish.  
 Aunt Kate & the other Grunts are in  
 ordinary health & Mamma would be  
 pretty well, except for the fact that  
 cleaning house is not exhilarating.

Willie would tell you what Kate told you  
 about Charley Gilbert. Please take her  
 nonsense for what it is worth.

He is a friend and classmate, Cad-  
 mic is like him. That is all.

I wish I could have my revenge,  
 on Kate, but I dare not.

And I wish also that there were  
 more Prof. Jordans & Mr. Muirs in  
 the world. a vain wish.

Goodbye. Health & Happiness to  
 you both. Yours, Janet M. Moore

1160



232 N. Alabama St., [Indianapolis, Ind.],  
Wednesday, May 5th, 1880.

My dear Mr. Muir,

I shall call you that, even if you are married, for you had no business to take such an important step without asking our advice. Perhaps you do not know that you have been our sweetheart since we were little things, Katie and I. Now that I have made you aware of the fact, imagine our feelings on hearing of your desertion. If it had not come from so reliable a source, Prof. Jordan, we could not have believed it. Well, as it must be so, I suppose we shall have to congratulate you and the young lady who is so happy as to be Mrs. John Muir. I cannot bear to write the name. Mr. Muir, how could you do it? She must be as fair and sweet and natural as one of your dear wild flowers. Please tell us about her, and send her picture to us, and inform her that we will not allow you to stop writing to us, for we have the first claim.

One of my first thoughts after reading the astounding intelligence was, "What beautiful letters, poems rather, that fortunate young lady must have received!" If Mr. M. wrote such delightful ones to us, how much more must these have breathed of the beauty and happiness of the world of John Muir! Can you understand that? I doubt whether I can myself. I should like to know very much whether you addressed her in the same language as that in which you talked to the little "water ouzel." Is she a bird or a flower, a fairy, a nymph, a disguised princess, or simply a woman after Wordsworth's heart and your own? And this is the secret of your coming back next winter? Be sure that we shall be glad to see you both and we shall like Mrs. Muir for your sake if not for her own.

So you have met our friend Prof. Jordan. Kate and I were in some anxiety lest you should not fancy each other. It has happily turned out to the contrary. The Professor writes (you must not tell him that I told you this) that "Mr. Muir is a brilliant man in his quiet way, in addition to which he is a good fellow and I like him." That is tremendous praise from Prof. Jordan, for he rarely commends.

I wish that you could go abroad with our party in '81. Kate and I have made up our minds to go, though the trip seems visionary enough, looking at it so far ahead. Next to finding new species of fish there is nothing the Professor likes so well as taking nice girls and boys over historic mountains. These are his words. Do you want to hear something more about us? I have told you about Merrill, what an active, nervous, enthusiastic bad and good fellow he is -- no bad habits, unless being extremely fond of society and of excitement is one. We have a great many friends, a natural consequence of having lived here all our lives. Occasionally every evening in the week is taken up, so you can understand that Indianapolis life is considerably faster than it once was. I don't think it is right to spend one's time and strength in this way, but it is very enjoyable and how is one to put a stop to it? I belong to five societies, "The Woman's Club of Indianapolis", a French class for conversation and fun, a "Young Folk's Social Club," a "Missionary Society" and a "Shakespeare class." With occasional papers and entertainments to get up, these are not play, not all play, anyhow. Sometimes I think that I should like to go with Mama and the boys and some particular girl friend to some beautiful quiet country and let society alone, except the sweet society of books and "out-of-doors." Our Vermont summer was after that style, and I'm sure that it was a happy one. But you must not think that we are unhappy here. Far from it! We only seem to accomplish so little on account of constant interruptions. Charles is now at "Butler" with Aunt Kate and intends spending next year and the year after with Charley Merrill at Wabash College. They are splendid fellows, "if I do say it, who shouldn't," fond of study and fond of fun, and, shall I admit it? fond of girls. There were two little girls whom they used to share, but were scarcely able to tell which they liked better. Charles complained to me once that whenever he settled down on one, Charley flopped over too. It is very amusing, but it is to be hoped that they will get over their nonsense before long. The other children are growing up fair and strong.

[Letter of Janet Moores to John Muir, dated May 5th, 1880, continued]

There are very few little Graydons now. Julia and Willie are ten and eight. But there are any number of little Ketchams whose acquaintance you can make, if you wish. Aunt Kate and the other aunts are in ordinary health, and mama would be pretty well except for the fact that cleaning house is not exhilarating.

With regard to what Kate told you about Charley Gilbert, please take her nonsense for what it is worth. He is a friend and classmate. I admire and like him -- that is all. I wish I could have my revenge on Kate, but I dare not. And I wish also that there were more Prof. Jordans and Mr. Muirs in the world -- a vain wish.

Goodbye, health and happiness to you both.

Yours,

Janet D. Moores

Mr. Davis sends word that you have treated us in a very shabby way, and Miss Eliza Hendricks says that she has picked out a good many nice wives for you. Alas, her efforts were of no avail! These flowers are from our yard. Mama sends love.