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John Muir

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agreed to remit a part of its charges to the
railroad, so we had cases where the Stan­
ard paid a rebate to the railroad instead
of the reverse—but I do not remember
having heard any complaint of this com­
ing from the students of these complicated
subjects.

The profits of the Standard Oil Compa­ny did not come from advantages given by rail­
roads. The railroads, rather, were the ones
who profited by the traffic of the Standard
Oil Company, and whatever advantage it
received in its constant efforts to reduce rates
of freight was only one of the many ele­ments
of lessening cost to the consumer which
enabled us to increase our volume of business
the world over because we could reduce the
selling price.

How general was the complicated bargain­
ing for rates can hardly be imagined; every­
one got the best rate that he could. After the passage of the Interstate Com­merce Act, it was learned that many small
companies which shipped limited quantities
had received lower rates than we had
been able to secure, notwithstanding the fact
that we had made large investments to pro­vide
for terminal facilities, regular shipments,
and other economies. I well remember a
bright man from Boston who had much to
say about rebates and drawbacks. He was
an old and experienced merchant, and looked
after his affairs with a cautious and watchful
eye. He feared that some of his competitors
were doing better than he in bargaining
for rates, and he delivered himself of this
conviction:

"I am opposed on principle to the whole
system of rebates and drawbacks—unless I
am in it."

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THREE DAYS WITH JOHN MUIR

CONVERSATIONS WITH THE MAN WHO HAS A MOST INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF NATURE—
HIS HOME IN THE ALHAMBRA VALLEY AND HIS EXCURSIONS INTO THE SIERRAS

BY

FRENCH STROETHER

R

EVERENCE— that is the most note­
worthy characteristic that I observed
in three days' continuous conversa­
tion with Mr. Muir. The Sage of the Sierra,
as Californians call him, has turned his seven­tieth year, and now, with heaps of notebooks
about him, accumulated through years of ob­
servation in the forests, on glaciers, and among
the mountains, he has begun to write the
story of his life, and to leave some permanent
record of the beauty in Nature to which he
is supremely sensitive.

Hardly any civilized man has lived so com­
pletely at home with Nature in her untouched
wildernesses. Perhaps no man of our gene­
ration has so combined, as he has, the gift of
poetic prose with the exact knowledge of the
scientist to transcribe the beauty of the wild
places.

"There are no accidents in Nature," he
said. "Every motion of the constantly shift­
ing bodies in the world is timed to the occa­
sion for some definite, foreordered end.
The flowers blossom in obedience to the same
law that marks the course of constellations,
and the song of a bird is the echo of a uni­
versal symphony. Nature is one, and to me
the greatest delight of observation and study
is to discover new unities in this all-embrac­
ing and eternal harmony.

"Little men, with only a book knowledge
of science, have seized upon evolution as an
escape from the idea of a God. 'Evolution!'—a wonderful, mouth-filling word, is n't it?
It covers a world of ignorance. Just say
'evolution' and you have explained every
phenomenon of Nature and explained away
God. It sounds big and wise. Evolution,
they say, brought the earth through its glacial
periods, caused the snow blanket to recede,
and the flower carpet to follow it, raised the
forests of the world, developed animal life
from the jelly-fish to the thinking man.

"But what caused evolution? There they
stick. To my mind, it is inconceivable that a
plan that has worked out, through unthinkable
millions of years, without one hitch or one mistake, the development of beauty that has made every microscopic particle of matter perform its function in harmony with every other in the universe—that such a plan is the blind product of an unthinking abstraction. No; somewhere, before evolution was, was an Intelligence that laid out the plan, and evolution is the process, not the origin, of the harmony. You may call that Intelligence what you please: I cannot see why so many people object to call it God."

Another day he said:

"People talk about creation as a remote fact of history, as if it were something that was attended to a long time ago, and finished at the time. But creation was not an act; it is a process; and it is going on to-day as much as it ever was. But Nature is not in a hurry. With God 'a thousand years is as a day.' Suppose you could have been a spirit in one of the past periods of the creation of the world, and that the Archangel Gabriel had taken you to a place where you could see the earth as it was then covered miles deep with snow and ice, the air still full of swirling snowflakes that seemed to be burying the world forever. Suppose he showed you this silent, frozen, characterless waste (as it would seem to you), and told you that God was creating here a world of beauty, of seas and mountains, of flowers and forests, of song-birds and men. Suppose you flew away and were gone for a thousand years, and then looked again. You could not see that the scene had altered a particle. Another thousand years. Still no change that you could see.

"'Creation?' you cry out, 'I see nothing being done here.'

"'Patience,' is the angel's answer. 'Down beneath these miles of snow the ice is shifting, grinding, slicing, leveling, building, making a sierra here, a broad valley there, scooping out a Yosemite, leveling off a plain, polishing boulders, marking rock ledges with the handwriting of God, making ready warm glades for grass and flowers, mountain slopes for majestic forests, homes for birds—breaking ground for beauty.'

"At the end of a few million years your visits are rewarded. The ice-cap has receded from parts of the earth. Seas are exposed, land has come into view, flowers have followed the retreating ice, trees nestle in the canions and climb the mountain shoulders, birds are caroling, fish dart along the singing streams, man is abroad to enjoy the beauties of the earth.

"This is creation. All this is going on today, only men are blind to see it. They think only of food. They are not content to provide three meals a day; they must have enough for a thousand meals. And so they build ships to carry the food that they call commerce, and they build houses to store food in, and other houses to buy and sell it in, and houses to eat it in, and load themselves down with the care of it so that they cannot get away. They can not pause long enough to go out into the wilderness where God has provided every sparrow enough to eat and to spare, and contemplate for even an hour the wonderful world that they live in. You say that what I write may bring this beauty to the hearts of those that do not get out to see it. They have no right to it. The good Lord put those things here as a free gift that he who chooses may take with joy, and he who will not walk out of the smoke of the cities to see them has no right to them."

On another subject he said:

"See how painstaking Nature is in her minutest creations. I picked up this piece of petrified wood in Arizona. It is millions of years old. Millions of years ago the tree that it is from was covered about two miles deep in alluvial mud. Then Nature set about making it imperishably beautiful. All living organisms are composed of microscopic cells that are linked together to make the organism. These cells are so minute that millions of them would have to be laid side by side to extend the length of an inch. But each cell is perfectly formed and individual.

"When the process of decay began in this bit of wood, these cells began to break down and lost their shape. But, as they did this, Nature repaired each tiny break with a bit of mineral from the water of the ooze in which this lay, so that when a cell disappeared it was replaced by a piece of enduring masonry that is an exact reproduction of the living cell. It is as if you had a brick building and wanted to change it into a stone replica without tearing it down all at once, and so you took out a brick at a time and substituted a block of marble so carefully carved that it reproduced every microscopic peculiarity of the brick in structure and surface. In time your brick house would be all of marble, but identical in appearance and structure. So with this
bit of wood, except that the replacing of cells was done on a scale of millionths of an inch. The result is that piece of wood translated into stone, in exact replica, except that Nature has added, with the mineral, a rainbow of coloring that rivals the finest gems. Think of it: millions of years of silent labor under miles of dirt, all that at some day there might come to light a new beauty to adorn the earth."

A fine glow of humor, sometimes kindling into irony, illumines much of Mr. Muir's conversation. He had on his study table a magazine, just come to hand, in which a writer had described one of Mr. Muir's adventures in Alaska with much dramatic force and imaginative power. The imaginative power was especially evident, for Mr. Muir checked off the hair-raising details and of all of them just one inconsequential item was correct. The writer made Mr. Muir carry in his teeth to safety a companion (a missionary to the Indians) who had fallen on a dangerous mountain ledge and broken some bones and his nerve at the same time. That tickled Mr. Muir mightily. He read the account through aloud with unctuous emphasis, burlesquing every breathless incident, chuckling with amusement as the writer put into his mouth a barbaric Scotch dialect at the moment of greatest dramatic intensity, and lingering with perfect glee upon the crux of the whole miswritten tale - the terrible moment when, with his mouth full of maimed Scotch brogue and missionary's collar, he was made to crawl on his hands and knees with the lacerated form trailing beneath him, like a rat's in a cat's jaws, over cruel rocks and ice to safety. It was rich, delicious irony, but without malice. It was too funny for that.

I happened to use the word "psychology" in a remark, and he came back with:

"When I was eleven years old I could repeat the entire New Testament from memory, and about two thirds of the Old Testament. Memorizing was the larger part of schooling in Scotland in those days. Teachers had not heard of psychology and all these other new-fangled 'ologies' with which modern teaching is chopped up. They had only one theory: they had learned from experience that there is some unexplained connection between the memory and the skin, and that by irritating the skin the memory was stimulated. So we had the Catechism and the Bible and John Milton thrashed into us, and much of it we never forgot."

Mr. Muir lives in the Alhambra Valley, an hour's ride by train from San Francisco. This valley winds down narrowly between two walls of high hills to the Straits of Carquinez. Nearly all this valley was once the property of Mrs. Muir's father, and most of its thousands of acres of trees and vines were planted and, for many years, cultivated by Mr. Muir. His method was to superintend the winter pruning and the spring cultivating, bringing everything into readiness for the summer sun to do its work, and then to leave in May for the mountains, where he lived alone with the wild things he loves until October, when he returned to complete the harvest of the fruit. Mr. Muir's poetic spirit and literary skill have not been developed at the sacrifice of a keen business sense that has made him a successful farmer and a practical man of affairs as well as an author of rare charm and a scientist of extraordinary achievement.

Mr. Muir's family consists now of two daughters, neither of whom is at home, though the elder, who is married, lives near the old homestead in the Alhambra Valley. Mr. Muir lives alone in the huge old family mansion, sleeping outdoors on an upper porch, cooking his own coffee for breakfast - reminiscent of his mountaineering days. He works long hours in his study, surrounded by his books, current magazines, and specimens from the petrified forests of Arizona and Australia; solitary, in a sense, but with much companionship though his correspondence. Solitude of the person - in the wilderness - has always been full of mental companionship for him, so I doubt that he is ever very lonely. One or two of his neighbors are old friends, and drop in often for a chat; a sister lives a mile up the valley; his little grandson lives near by, and gets a deal of spoiling from the gentle old man, who thinks that the innumerable thrashings of his Calvinistic Scotch youth did him no good.

Perhaps Mr. Muir's greatest service to the cause of science has been his example in going direct to Nature for study and observation. He is of the class of Darwin, Agassiz, and Sir Joseph Hooker - men who were as conspicuous for the extent of their original researches and first-hand observation of Nature as for the acuteness of their power of analyzing and classifying what they saw and the laws that they
illustrate. Mr. Muir has spent much more of his time living with Nature, hourly studying "things as they are," than he has spent over text-books or at his writing-desk. The result is that he has literally hundreds of notebooks, containing the most careful notes made in the field upon the phenomena of flowers, trees, and glaciers, illustrated with sketches from Nature that are almost mathematically accurate.

It is a fitting old age for one who has put his faith in Nature to have achieved, without seeking it, a great fame in literature and in science; to have earned the honor and affection of the best minds of his generation; to turn the seventieth year with sound health, clear vision, an active mind, considerable fortune, children, friends, and work still to do for which is waiting an eager and appreciative audience. Few men achieve such fortune; few men earn it, as he has, by years of labor, sincerity, and gentleness.

A RETURN TO THE LION COUNTRY
A VISIT TO TSAVO EIGHT YEARS AFTER A SUCCESSFUL HUNTING TRIP ALONG THE UGANDA RAILWAY IN 1906

BY LIEUTENANT-COLONEL J. H. PATTERSON

DURING the early part of 1906 I revisited the scene of my former labors and adventures on a shooting trip. Unfortunately the train by which I traveled up from Mombasa reached Tsavo at midnight, but all the same I got out and prowled about as long as time would permit, half wondering every moment if the ghosts of the two man-eaters would spring at me out of the bushes. I wanted very much to spend a day or two in the old place, but my companions were anxious to push on as quickly as possible to better hunting-grounds. I took the trouble, however, to wake them out of their peaceful slumbers in order to point out to them, by the pale moonlight, the strength and beauty of the Tsavo bridge; but I fear this delicate little attention was scarcely appreciated as it deserved. Naturally I could not expect them or anyone else to view the bridge quite from my point of view; I looked on it as a child of mine, brought up through stress and danger and troubles of all kinds, but the ordinary traveler of course knows nothing of this and doubtless thinks it only a very commonplace and insignificant structure indeed.

We spent a few days at Nairobi, now a flourishing town of some 6,000 inhabitants, supplied with every modern comfort and luxury, including a well-laid-out race course; and, after a short trip to Lake Victoria Nyanza and Uganda, we made our way back to the Eldama Ravine, which lies some twenty miles north of Landiani Station in the province of Naivasha. Here we started in earnest on our big-game expedition, which I am glad to say proved to be a most delightful and interesting one in every way. The country was lovely and the climate cool and bracing. We all got a fair amount of sport, our bag including rhino, hippo, waterbuck, reedbuck, hartebeeste, wildebeeste, ostrich, impala, oryx, roan antelope, etc.; but for the present I must confine myself to a short account of how I was lucky enough to shoot a specimen of an entirely new race of eland.

Our party of five, including one lady who rode and shot equally straight, left the Eldama Ravine on January 22d, and trekked off in an easterly direction across the Laikipia Plateau. As the trail which we were to take was very little known and almost impossible to follow without a guide, Mr. Foaker, the District Officer at the Ravine, very kindly procured us a reliable man—a young Uashin Gishu Masai named Uliagurma. But as he could not speak a word of Swahili we had also to engage an interpreter, an excellent, cheery fellow of the same tribe, named Landaalu; and he in his turn possessed a kinsman who insisted on coming too, although he was no earthly use to us. Our route took us through
MR. JOHN MUIR

WHO IS NOW INSISTING ON THE PRESERVATION OF THE YOSEMITE, BY OPPOSING SAN FRANCISCO'S USE OF WATER FROM THE HETCH HETCHY VALLEY

(See page 1755)