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1863-08-02

**Letter from John Muir to Mr. & Mrs. Ambrose Newton, 1863 Aug 2**

John Muir

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[Original in possession of Mr. William Newton, Omaha, Neb.]

Fountain Lake, August 2, 1863.

[Enveloped marked Geddo, Wis. by hand]

Mr. and Mrs. [Ambrose] Newton,  
[Middlefield, Mass.]

Dear friends:

As I now sit down to write, many thoughts crowd upon me. Some are very painful. The morning that I left Pr[airie] du Chien shall ever be one of mournful interest to me: I was then compelled to part with the friend who was dearest to me, fully assured that we would not again meet until we had passed through death into the other world. And soon she was called away. She is now in the tomb. I shall not again receive her letters of cheer and encouragement, or hear her words of earnest kindness, but the marks of her goodness shall never be ef[f]aced, and her advice shall influence me all my life.

I have often remembered you and thought of sending you a letter of condolence, but words seemed so very weak and inadequate in such a case that I could not begin. The Christian parent can see a dear child droop and die and give it to the grave, feeling submissively that a kind Father in heaven manages all,- beyond the gloomy separation of death he sees a union that shall endure; but after all it is a sad thing to give up those we hold so dear, almost more than mortals can bear.

I passed through Pr[airie] du Chien a few weeks ago on a botanical ramble. I was kindly received by Mr. and Mrs. Newton, but things looked lone and desolate without Mrs. Pelton. I walked away down the prairie to the cemetery and found her grave. I sat by it as long as I could, then gathered a tuft of grass from it and turned away.

I am now at home, this being vacation. I shall likely be a few hundred miles nearer you next term, as I mean to go to the Medical School in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

The cause of Christ has prospered of late in Madison, a great many especially from among the young have professed faith in the Saviour and joined themselves to his people. A few of the young men have formed a "Young men's Christian Assoc[iation]" which it is hoped may do much good. Far more interest, too, is taken by Christians in the Sunday school cause. The Sunday schools of the city are in a more prosperous condition than ever before. All this is very cheering amid the din and desolation of war.

But I now bid you Goodbye. May the God of consolation grant comfort in your grief for your dear Frances. May you be soothed and sustained by Him to the end, and made to rejoice in hope of immortality.

Very respectfully,

John Muir.

My address will now be Ann Arbor, Mich.  
I would like exceedingly well to hear from you.

J.M.

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