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Letter from John Muir to Merrills & Moores, 1868 Jan 1

John Muir

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[Original letter returned to Miss M. Merrill]

Cedar Keys, Jan. 1 '68.

My dear friend Merrill [Moore]:

I was very glad to hear from [you]. I need you even more than I did last spring. I am sure that you would enjoy five or six days of Florida. Had you been with me on the beach this morning, you would have seen hundreds of pelicans fishing in the shallows and on the shell banks. They stand in long rows, and the sun shines beautifully upon them. There are a great many bald-eagles and gray ones too here. I could keep you in sight better than when we travelled in Wisconsin, for if you left the path, the saw palmettos would saw you, and bamboo-briers would hold you, prick you at the same time, and if you made out to heave and roll yourself through all of these fences you would soon find yourself sore with uncountable bayonet wounds, or entangled in a mesh of gum vines like a porpoise in a herring net. Ah, my boy, you would have to go softly here. Nature does not permit people to romp among her south flower fields as she does in those open ones of the North.

You would not find any winter here. The woods are green always, and the sky has summer clouds in all your winter months - birds and butterflies and muffy millers flit about until they die of joy. The garden beans and peas have hundreds of pink and snow white flowers.

You inquire about the rainy season but there is no well marked rainy season in Fl[orida], and as for the customs of the Florideans in the matter of clothing they are not unlike those of Hoosiers, and some of them live in towns.

Did you receive a letter I sent you from Gainesville, Fl[orida]? Did you ever find your lost clothes. I suppose your holidays were very Merrilly spent with your many friends.

Please remember me to Janet and Chas. and Janie and Katie. I hope that you and they will be very happy this year. Goodbye, my boy.

I am ever your friend,

JOHN MUIR