



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

1868-03-04

Letter from John Muir to Julia D.M. Moores et al., 1868 Mar 4

John Muir

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[Original letter returned to Miss M. Merrill]

New York, March 4th, [1868].

Dear friends, Mrs. Moores, Miss Catherine, and Miss Mina [Merrill]:

I am

sorry that I could not hear from any of you lately. Letters move so slowly, I could not tell where they might find me, but I mean to start for Panama and California tomorrow, and so I shall expect a long letter from you all at San Francisco. I wish I could spend a few evenings at your home, I am often lonely - the labor of being among strangers is hard to bear.

I spent about a month in Cuba, arrived in Havana about the middle of Jan. The weather was very hot. I could wander for miles among the sunny hills, touching a flower at every step, and some places I could gather more than a million in my arms at once, delightfully fragrant and in all the pomp and glory of full bloom.

I often feel the absence of the plants I am acquainted with, true they have been away also, but it is pleasant to visit the places where they have grown. I feel that distance can separate us from flowers far more than winter. I'm sorry I could not travel in South Am[erica]. I hope at least to see a little of Panama and California, and perhaps South America another time.

How do your Sabbath schools and benevolent societies prosper? There is said to be a great deal of suffering in the large towns and in the south. Miss Mina, - so my scholars still attend the mission sch[ool]. I would like to hear about Prof[essor] Butler. Please remember me to my friends.

Most cordially yours,

J. MUIR

[Following letter on same sheet]

New York,

Dear Janet, [Moores]

I cannot feel that I am in New York just now, for you seem so near I might reach you with my hand, and I don't think that any plant is calling you this time. I am pretty sure that you and Cha[rle]s have been growing bigger and better all winter, and soon you will be out again in the sunshine with the birds and flowers. I found a dear little plantie growing on coral rocks by the seaside. Its smooth round leaves are like purple beads, and so are its flowers. Sometimes it has rain and sometimes mist from the sea, and when storms come thousands of high waves break in the rocks and cover the little plant in deep white foam, but it is not forgotten, and so it is always as bright and happy as though it lived in the skies.

Please ask Mrs. Davis if any of the flowers that she carried to my dark room are living yet. My love to Janie and Katie. Goodbye, dears. I will be glad to hear [from] you again at San Francisco.

[J. Muir]

[Envelope addressed Miss Catherine Merrill, Care of Merrill & Co., Indianapolis, Indiana].