



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

1869-09-24

Letter from John Muir to Dav[id Gilrye Muir], 1869 Sep 24.

John Muir

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Please send your help & other help. I give her my kindest wishes. My address is Professor Pierce at Berkeley. I have a number of letters to you.

a very poor stick. But in speaking to a medical man I ought to be more particular so I will quote direct from my diary. "July 2^d - Tea & mutton! - to this little measure has shrunk all the timber of our staff of life. Crystal streams ring in all the noises of these cool mountains & so our "water is sure" but our bread I fear will not be given us for many a day - The tea we drink is very strong & makes us dizzy like whisky & when poured in quarts & pints upon solid pounds of unmixed masticated mutton - it causes a series of loud premonitory rumblings like those that preceded the great earthquake last year at San Francisco. The tea, doctors, try to go down among the mutton & the mutton tries to come up among the tea but if both are kept in place until one mountain is climbed all is safe. 5th. Tea & mutton becoming more & more combative & so we have been compelled to vary our diet to mutton & molasses candy. - There seems to be a bread which in that grand centre of man the stomach which no other food of a civilized kind can occupy. 6th I feel weak, reekish, & sour."

There is a cluster of conic splintered granite peaks near the summit - opposite "Cattle peak" & "Mount Dennis" where the highest sources of the Tidlumne Merced & Joaquin rivers are small sparkling ringy streams. One of these peaks is exactly like an old cathedral & is called "cathedral peak." I rolled a loaf of bread in a pair of blankets & started to explore these peaks. I reached the topmost spires of the grand old church about noon of the first day & sat down to rest & to eat. I now doctor here is a strange thing. I was seated on the brink of a precipice about 1000 ft in depth. In eating whenever I looked up I was hungry but - when I looked down I was full. My stomach consented to take block after block of the bread which perched there while I kept looking at the sky like an old astrologer but the movement looked odious I felt that I was not "fit for the calf."

I have had charge of 2500 sheep & have enjoyed a most glorious piece of life among mountain plains, mountains grandeur, the wild Indians & grizzly bears. Bears as large as ever killed a good many of our sheep. I have been engaged with botany geology & drawing. Have about 50 sketches. I mean to leave Cal in 3 months for some other portion of the Lord's lovely creation, perhaps South America.