



1870-02-15

Letter from John Muir to Daniel [Muir, Jr], [1870] Feb 15.

John Muir

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Remember me to Mrs. P. & Mr. C. & to Mr. A. & Mrs. M. & please
write as soon as you get this. An Indian comes over the river with our
mail once a month. I am glad to hear you are all well.

Address
Yosemite valley
Via Big Oak Flat
Care of Mr. H. H. H. H.

Yosemite Valley
Jan 29th 70

Dear friend Emily
I send you a hearty
New Years greeting from the
depths of the Sierra mountains
& none the less cordial for
its tardiness - You have
a great many friends East
& West, & doubtless you
have gathered a bountiful
harvest of friendships & gold
in these happy days of the
New Year! But alas! none
of the holiday meetings & greetings
for me. New Year found me
very painfully far from home
& friends. in this rock-girt
hidden temple of the mountains
securely locked & "snowbound"
amid the winter grandeur of the
Lords ever glorious Yosemite

I think, surely I wrote to
you about my summer
among the high summits.
I had long lived in flowery
summer & I longed to see the
snow & ice - the divine jewelry
of winter once more, & the thin
arctic of cold sky, & I longed
too to hear the deep harmonies
of the storm wind, & the torrents -
& I knew that I should find all
of these pleasures in their grandest
moods & unions in this far-
famed Yosemite. I have been
here since November & will
remain all winter - perhaps
longer for I can hardly tear my-
self away.

I celebrated my years
by thinking of my friends & climbing
a mile upwards into heavens blue
to the brow of Lookoutkahoola -
The valley with its rocks and

falls was sublimely at my feet.
To the right waved the embanking
timbered billows of the foot hills -
still beyond the yellow hazy
plains, & still farther upon the
rim of the sky loomed the blue
flowing mountains of the coast.

To the eastward the jagged spiring
peaks of the Sierra crest were bathed
in equal transparent light, each
mantled reposingly in their
first treasures of snow -

I sat gazing for an hour or
two giving myself ample time
for mind & body to sponge themselves
full of beauty - sketched a representa-
tive portion of the panorama
& started for the nether world by
a new route. - Got on bravely
until full half way down when
I was suddenly halted by a sheer
descent of five or six hundred feet
- had to march back to the very top.

find my old route. Darkness was
coming on & I had two hours work
of a dangerous kind, but by running,
jumping, sliding, tumbling, & floating
besides other modes of locomotion
terrestrial & aquatic I accomplished
my crazy tasks in half time, & avoid-
ed a long fast & a night upon
the mountain in the cold.

The sunlight is very rich
& warm today - almost balmy
& the magnificent waterfalls just
coming over the rocks three
half-a-mile in height have
been supplied with plenty of melting
snow & are emitting the most
divine of nature's deep harmonies.

Something or other jostled a
bunch of the old Thoreau memories
I thought of the days when I came
in fresh verdure from the wooded
woods, & when I used to hurl very
orthodox denunciations at all things
morally or religiously amiss in old
or young. It appears strange to me
that you should all have been so
patient with me.

I am making a mill here
& have plenty of books to read besides this
rocky look of nature between whose leaves I
am stuck in like a fly.
Well here comes the bottom of my page & so
goodbye I hope that 1870 was a great
many blessings for you & I

hope that at all times when a friend is needed you will come on John Thoreau