



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

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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 range 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 Lookoutkahavola -  
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 spiny  
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