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1870-03-24

**Letter from John Muir to [Sarah Muir Galloway], 1870 Mar 24.**

John Muir

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mill. I have at least made a horse & a mill here

happiest days & scrap portions  
of my life were in that old  
slant walled garret & among  
the smooth creeks that trickled  
among the sedges of Fountain  
Lake meadow

In recalling the  
mechanical achievements of  
those early days I remember  
with satisfaction that the least  
successful one was that horrid  
guillotine of a thing ~~for~~ eliciting  
off gophers heads

Those money receipts  
are all right, You say that  
business is dull but that you ex-  
pect to live through it all, certainly  
you will, as a family we are  
pretty firmly united & you know  
that no one tree of a close clump  
can very well fall, In my  
walks through the forests of humanity  
I find no family clump more  
enwoven in root & branch than  
our own. I have completed  
the saw mill here It works ex-  
tremely well. It notes a "Kirk & a

I am at least made a horse & a mill here

March 24. Yours of Feb 8<sup>th</sup> recd  
[1870]

(Social)

Yosemite March 20

Dear Brother David L

Your last of Jan 6<sup>th</sup>  
reached me here in the weeks  
two weeks ago I am very  
heartily glad to learn that  
your dear wife & you  
have escaped from sick-  
ness to health - "Ten weeks of  
fever" Mercy what intense  
significance these four words  
have for me after my Florida  
experiences - We were taught  
to believe that Providence has  
special designs to accomplish  
by the agency of such afflictions  
I cannot say that I have the  
requisite amount of faith to  
feel the truth of this but one  
invariable result of suffering  
in a low knit family is  
to deepen affection & sympathy

To quicken all the powers that  
develop compact units from  
clusters of human souls

I am sitting here in  
a little shanty made of sugar  
pine shingles this Sabbath evening  
I have not been at church  
a single time since leaving  
home. Yet this glorious valley  
might well be called a church  
for every lover of the great Creator  
who comes within the broad  
overwhelming influences of the  
place fail not to worship as  
they never did before. The  
glory of the Lord is upon all  
his works; it is written plainly  
upon all the fields of every clime  
& upon every sky. But here in  
this place of surpassing glory  
the Lord his written in Capitals  
I hope that one day you will  
see & read with your own eyes

The only sounds that strike  
one tonight are the ticking of the  
clock, the flickering of the fire  
& the, the low songs of a host  
of peaceful frogs that sing out  
in the meadow up to their throats  
in aluck, & the deep waving roar  
of the falls like breakers on  
a rocky coast

Your description of  
the sad quiet & deserted loneli-  
ness of home made me sorry  
& I felt like returning to the  
old farm to take care of father  
& mother myself in their old  
days but a little reflection  
served to show that of all the  
family, my views & habits & dis-  
position made me the most  
incapable for the task

You stored a happy budget  
of memories in speaking of my  
workshop & laboratory. Then



[Original letter in possession of David Gilrye Muir]

Yosemite, March 20, [1870]

Dear Brother David G[ilrye]:

Your last of Jan. 6th reached me here in the rocks two weeks ago. I am very heartily glad to learn that your dear wife and wee ones have escaped from sickness to health. "Ten weeks of fever" -- mercy, what intense significance these four words have for me after my Florida experiences. We were taught to believe that Providence has special designs to accomplish by the agency of such afflictions. I cannot say that I have the requisite amount of faith to feel the truth of this, but one invariable result of suffering in a love-knit family is to quicken all the powers that develop compact units from clusters of human souls.

I am sitting here in a little shanty made of sugar-pine shingles this Sabbath evening. I have not been at church a single time since leaving home. Yet this glorious valley might well be called a church, for every lover of the great Creator who comes within the broad overwhelming influences of the place fail<sup>s</sup> not to worship as [they] never did before. The glory of the Lord is upon all his works; it is written plainly upon all the fields of every clime, and upon every sky, but here in this place of surpassing glory the Lord [has] (his) written in capitals. I hope that one day you will see and read with your own eyes.

The only sounds that strike me tonight are the ticking of the clock, the flickering of the fire and the love songs of a host of peaceful frogs that sing out in the meadow up to their throats in slush, and the deep waving roar of the falls like breakers on a rocky coast.

Your description of the sad quiet and deserted loneliness of home made me sorry, and I felt like returning to the old farm to take care of father and mother myself in their old days, but a little reflection served to show that of all the family, my views and habits and disposition made me the most incapable for the task.

You stirred a happy budget of memories in speaking of my work-shop and laboratory. The happiest days and scrap portions of my life were in that old slant-walled garret and among the smooth creeks that trickled among the sedges of Fountain Lake meadow.

In recalling the mechanical achievements of those early days I remember with satisfaction that the least successful one was that horrid guillotine of a thing slicing off gophers' heads.

Those money receipts are all right. You say that business is dull, but that you expect to live through it all. Certainly you will, -- as a family we are pretty firmly united, and you know that no one tree of a close clump can very well fall. In my walks through the forests of humanity I find no family clump more inwoven in root and branch than our own. I have completed the sawmill here. It works extremely well. If not a "Kirk & a mill" I have at least made a house and a mill here. I am glad to hear of Maggie's and Sarah's health, and of the welfare of the twins and Joanna.

My love to all.

J. M. [John Muir]

March 24. Yours of Feb. 8th rec'd.

[Year 1870 supplied as Muir refers to completion of sawmill, which he commenced in Dec. 1869, probably]