



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

1872-03-01

Letter from James Cross to John Muir, 1872 Mar .

James Cross

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it is the "correct thing" interrupting you with the remark
"This is pretty fine" "Nice place for a house this" or so.
It is certainly an advantage that there should be some
difficulties in the way. Some lovers of nature are like
the wild beasts they shun the company of man. at
the same time I am bound to state that a good trail down
"The cañon" would have been a good send & duly appreciated
by Maxwell & myself. This winter has been a wonderfully
mild one. There has been no frost since December 6th
and very little snow and now the trees are starting
budding. The difficulty between England & America with
reference to the Alabama treaty seems very serious
but I suppose that you have not as yet heard
anything about it. However I hope that it will
pass over smoothly. The Chicago fire caused an im-
mense sensation here. I stayed there for 2 or 3 days after I
saw you. I also went to see Niagara then down the St Lawrence
to the river Saguenay which is splendid then through the
White mountains to New York & got back to England on the
1st of August. I should like to have gone with Maxwell the
route he took. You must be certain to write to me &
at the same time to remember the various requests in this
letter which I could wish were more interesting &
P.S. Do you know what the ^{ever believe me}
height of Mt Hoffmann is? ^{was yours most sincerely}
James Cross.

[13]
Oxford.
March 1872.

My dear Muir,

You cannot think how pleased
I was to get your letter which arrived in England
on Feb 17th. It seems to have taken some time as I see
that yours was dated Dec 4th. However I suppose I
am thankful to say that Yosemite has not yet become
overrun with tourists as that there should be a railway
there & so "regular postal service". The sketch is a
most pleasant reminder of that pleasant time we
had in the mountains. Oh that it could come over
again with all its pleasant & grand scenes. I have
still a vivid recollection of the grand rocks &
of the "Picea nobilis" which whose branches we so
ruthlessly cut down to rest our wearied limbs
upon. I should indeed like to see the valley in
its winter garb and to spend the lonely days with
you in it as nature however grand cannot entirely

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fill up the void caused by solitude. I thought I should see Maxwell at San Francisco but I suppose that you acted the syren & tempted him to make a longer stay in the valley. Cremer whom perhaps you remember I have often seen since I had many a pleasant chat with about you. I hope that I shall get another letter from you & so will you tell me Maxwell's address as I should like to hear of him again. I have been up at Oxford lately for purposes of reading. It is a grand old place with all its reminiscences of famous men. This year is its 1000th from the foundation unless the tradition of its being founded by King Alfred be only a pleasing myth. Last year a new college was opened to in memory of ~~Robert~~ Keble his "Christian Year". I think you ought to be ashamed of yourself having deserted your unique dwelling & condescending to live so cramped up in an hotel unless indeed it be only for the winter in which case I think that you have shown a certain amount of that astute which flows by the name of common sense. I am very glad you

are now able to devote yourself to science which of course is congenial to you. Before I was afraid that you were one of those flowers which is "born to blush unseen & waste its sweetness on the desert air". You must promise me that you will send me a copy of your monograph on the ancient glacial system which I shall look forward to with much interest. Nothing should I like better than to wander day after day with you in those so yet untrodden regions collecting data. By the bye when you next write please enclose a few flowers from the valley as a reminiscence. If ever you see that old rascal Reilly the photographer I wish you would threaten him with instant death unless he sends me the photographs (4) which I had taken with Cremer & which I paid for but never got. (more fool you for paying for them "I can fancy you saying") If you care for one of them you are quite welcome to keep one & if you ever get one of yourself taken I shall never forgive you unless you send me one to Ripon. What a shame it is making those various trails you spoke of. One will not be able to stop for a single minute gazing in speechless rapture on the view without some tourist who is simply there because