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1872-04-02

Letter from John Muir to Emily [O. Pelton], 1872 Apr 2.

John Muir

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To Emily Palton  
Yosemite Valley,

April 2, 1872.

Dear friend Emily:

Your broad pages are received. You must never waste letter time in apologies for size. The more vast and prairie-like the better. But now for the business part of your coming. Be sure you let me know within a few days the time of your setting out so that I may be able to keep myself in a findable, discoverable place. I am, as, perhaps, I told you, engaged in the study of glaciers and mountain structure, etc., and I am often out alone for weeks where you couldn't find me. Moreover I have a good many friends of every grade who will be here, all of whom have greater or lesser claims on my attention. With Prof. LeConte, I have made arrangements for a long scientific ramble back of the summits; also with Mrs. Carr. You will readily understand from these engagements and numerous other probabilities of visits, especially from scientific friends, who almost always take me out of Yosemite, how important it is that I should know very nearly the time of your coming. I would like to have a week of naked, unoccupied time to spend with you, and nothing but unavoidable, unescapable engagements will prevent me from having such a week.

If Mr. Knox would bring his team you could camp out, and the expense would be nothing, hardly, and you could make your headquarters at a cabin I am building. This would be much the best mode of traveling and of seeing the Valley. Independence is nowhere sweeter than in Yosemite. People who come to <sup>here</sup> Yosemite ought to abandon and forget all that is called business and duty, etc.; they should forget their individual existences, should forget they are born. They should <sup>as</sup> nearly as possible live the life of a particle of dust in the wind, or of a withered leaf in a whirlpool. They should come like thirsty sponges to imbibe without tute. It is blessed to lean fully and trustingly on

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Mrs. Wilson went in by "gentriffs" Mr. Muir placed a horse at her disposal for the nine days the party remained in the Valley. The party consisted of Dr. Keellogg, the academy of sciences in S.F., Keel, the artist, Mrs. Carr & her son, Mrs. Wilson, her cousin, Mrs. Knox & nephew, and Mr. Muir. They camped in Tenaya Canon. Mrs. Wilson can add reminiscences of this time on inquiry.

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Nature, to experience, by taking to her a pure heart and unartificial mind, the infinite tenderness and power of her love.

You mentioned the refining influences of <sup>s</sup>Society. Compared with the intense purity and cordiality and <sup>b</sup>Beauty of Nature, the most delicate refinements and cultures of civilization are gross barbarisms.

As for the rough animals called men, who occur in and on these mountains like sticks of condensed filth, I am not in contact with them; I do not live with them. I live alone, or, rather, with the rocks and flowers and snows and blessed storms; I live in blessed <sup>in</sup>Mountain <sup>Light</sup>LIGHT, and love nothing less pure. You'll find me rough as the rocks and about the same color (granite.) But as for loss of pure-mindedness that you seem to fear, come and see my teachers; come, see my Mountain Mother and you will be at rest on that point.

We have had a glorious storm of the kind called ~~Earth-~~quake. I've just been writing an account of it for the N. Y. Tribune.<sup>①</sup> It would seem strange that any portion of our perpendicular walls are left unshattered. It is delightful to be trotted and dumped on our Mothers <sup>in</sup>Mountain <sup>knives</sup>knives. I hope we will be blessed with some more. The first shock of <sup>The m</sup>Morning of <sup>[March]</sup> 26th, <sup>at half</sup> ~~12~~ <sup>two</sup> past 2 o'clock, was the most sublim<sup>e</sup> storm I ever experienced.

Most cordially yours,

JOHN MUIR.

① Issue of May 7, 1872.