



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

1872-06-09

Letter from John Muir to Catharine Merrill, 1872 Jun 9.

John Muir

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[Original letter returned to Miss M. Merrill]

To Miss Catherine Merrill

New Sentinel Hotel,

Yosemite Valley, June 9th, 1872.

Catherine Merrill,

My dear friend:

I am very happy to hear your hand language once more, but in some places I am black and blue with your hurricane of a scolding.

I [am] glad you so much enjoy your work (not scolding), but am sorry to hear of the languor wh[ic]h clearly speaks of struggles and long continued toil of nerve exhausting kind. I hope you will not persist in self-sacrifice of so destructive a species. The sea will do you good; bathe in it and bask in sunshine and allow the pure and generous currents of universal uncolleged beauty to blow about your bones and about all the overworked wheels of your mind. I know very well how you toil and toil, striving against lassitude and the cloudy weather of discouraging cares with a brave heart, your efforts toned by the blessedness of doing good; but do not, I pray you, destroy your health. The Lord understands his business and has ~~got~~ plenty of tools, and does not require overexertion of any kind.

I wish you could come here and rest a year in the simple unmingled Love fountains of God. You would then return to your scholars with fresh truth gathered and absorbed from pines and waters and deep singing winds, and you would find that they all sang of Fountain Love just as did Jesus Christ and all of pure God manifests in whatever form. You say that good men are "nearer to the heart of God than are woods and fields, rocks and waters." Such distinctions and measurements seem strange to me. "Rocks and waters, etc., are words of God and so are men. We all flow from one fountain Soul. All are expressions of one Love. God does not appear, and flow out, only from narrow chinks and round bored wells here and there in favored races and places, but He flows in grand undivided currents, shoreless and boundless over creeds and forms and all kinds of civilizations and peoples and beasts, saturating all and fountainizing all." You say some other things that I don't believe at all, but I have no room to say them nay; farther — I don't stab the old grannies where I wasted so much time, the colleges of all kinds, "Christian" and common, West and Northwest, with their long tails of pretensions. I only said a few words of free Sunshine, using the dim old clouds of Learning for a background.

My love to Mina and Mrs. Moores and the dear younglings. The falls are in song gush and the light is balmed with summer love. Would I could send some.

I shall be sure to keep you an open letter road so that you can see your Merrill whom you all commit so confidingly to my care. Hoping that you will get strength by ~~at~~ the sea and enjoy all the spiritual happiness you deserve, I am ever very cordially

Your friend,

John Muir

[Envelope addressed Catherine Merrill, 145 Merrill St., Indianapolis, Indiana.]