



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

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Letter from J[eanne] C. C[arr] to John Muir, [1872 Jul] .

Jeanne C. Carr

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Saturday night. [July., 1872]

Dear John,

You know so well both how great and how rare the joy is of finding a voice for one's best thoughts and an answer to one's hardest questions -- that I need not tell you how I enjoyed Prof. Gray's visit to-day, nor how I wish you could take the spare seat in the carriage and go with us to enjoy a Sunday in the Redwoods. Isn't he the gloriousest old boy, and was it not good to find your tramping machine matched at last by one in equal running order? Dr. Henry Gibbons, one of my friends that you must know, is going with us as a guide to the extinct forest, and to the trunk of the tree thirty four feet in diameter which when standing could be seen so far out at sea that it was the guide-post to mariners. You and I will go there by and by.

Now that the Grays have returned I feel almost that I have been in the Valley. Three or four days ago we had a letter from Ned who said he was not gaining any in flesh, and that he felt a good deal discouraged about himself. We have written for him to come home by slow and easy stages. My brother who lives in Mich. will go to Vermont and take Ned home with him. A day will take him from there to Madison or Chicago and thence he will have good company, for he will wait for it. I shall not think of any pleasuring for myself this year, and you must tell Mrs. Hutchings, who will help you to understand it, that I could not enjoy the Valley even with half my heart upon my boy. Thank God this is so far from being hard, that I know the deferred pleasure is only deferred.

Mr. and Mrs. Daggett write so warmly of you, John. You are a real Harry Wadsworth fellow, and the pulses of your rich life are felt afar off. And this is what you are going to do. After the harvest time is over, and the last bird plucked (I wish I could see some of your game birds, all that I see are sacred storks and ibises), you will pack up all your duds -- ready to leave two or more years, take your best horse and ride forth some clear September morning.

You will live with us and your horse at Moore's (near by) whenever you are not exploring the coast range. We will have some choice side trips, and Ned will be eating his way to complete recovery, so that I can leave him for a week or so without uneasiness. You will pass the winter here, and meanwhile ways will open for you to go to South America.

You will write up all your settled convictions, and put your cruder reflections in the form of notes and queries, not without scientific worth, and securing to yourself any advantage there may be in priority of observation. So writing, and studying, and visiting, the months will pass swiftly until your Valley home is filled again with color and song.

Perhaps it will not be your home again -- God will teach you as he has taught me, that the dear places and the dearer souls are but tents of a night; we must move on and leave them though it cost heart breaks. Not those who cling to you but those who walk apart yet ever with you are your true companions.

Dr. Carr will stay here yet longer on account of University changes, but I hope will not be prevented from taking a long rest.

Tuesday eve. I go in the morning to Suñol, near Pleasanton, where a sister-in-law is very ill. Shall be nurse and housekeeper for some days, perhaps longer. Goodbye to all projects for the present. Dr. Jos. LeConte will be in the Valley soon. If Dr. Carr comes at all it will be with the Agassiz and Hill persuasion.

More hereafter. Adios

J.C.C.

[Jeanne C. Carr]

Mrs. Moore complained of herself for not having written you when I saw her to-day. She was feeling out o'sorts -- her splendid mana flowing free, en sacque, she wished herself in the wilds again.