



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

1873-02-03

Letter from J[eanne] C. C[arr] to John Muir, [1873] Feb 3.

Jeanne C. Carr

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Should be 1873

Oakland, Feb. 3, [1872].

See Silliman's Journal

Dear John:

I enclose a letter from that dear old man, Dr. Stebbins,-- perhaps you already have its counterpart.

I have been having such perfect days at Berkeley, coming home exhausted in body but clarified in spirit. One night coming thus I found more of you than ever before, and have you around with me constantly since, as I am planting my pine orchard, especially. On the highest point of the grounds, but not the driest, I have put as tenderly and carefully as ever I put my babies into their cradles, the little groups of *Abies*, *Picea*, etc., in all thirty species of cone trees.

I hear you pitying me, but I don't care. I know the souls in abodes which I catch a glimpse of from my hilltop who will call my work blessed when they catch the piney smells, and watch the lovely growth of these. It is a pleasure, this making of soul bread for those who cannot make it for themselves, shared with Our Father who scattered it so abundantly throughout his world!

Your big thick letter blessing had to be exchanged with McChesney for his slice and with Mrs. Moore for hers, and now that I have it back again I will go over it crumb by crumb. Suppose it had been so, and a great sob from the valley pines had reached me and a call had come from the soft-voiced one to find you, missing and always to be missed. If alone I had found you I would have covered you with rocks and granite-loving flowers and ferns, and Nature would have been all sweet and kindly as before. But if also I should have tracked you bruised and bleeding, broken limbed -- unable to defend yourself from creatures that had tortured you, all that agony written about the place, then I should have understood many of Ruskin's pages better than you do, better than I do. There is a great deal of morbidness in Ruskin's writings, the traces of terrible anguish, which he has seen reflected in the tortured rocks. God has been so loving, so gentle to thee, my bairn, you cannot realize that other side, the terrors of wrath under which in natural and spiritual things some souls abide. I think I told you once that such have an awful attraction for me. To persuade and draw them to my heaven, I try to understand their hells.

But, glad that none are bereaved of you, dear, as I never shall be, glad in the riches which I see unfolded in your spirit and in all the benedictions of sky and mountain that fall into it, I must go into the world which waits for your words and bring its message. It says, Work and Write. The last Silliman's Journal has your living glaciers bodily. I think it a great compliment. I am going to stop writing to you that I may write of you. The big letter, under some head, must go to the many. Some cunning work has come to me -- and I am going to write up the "Rural Homes of Cal." to be illustrated with photos. Far enough it will be from that bit of description of your 'little bed room.' "Do I see you, do I hear you?" It pours a flood, wetting my pine children through and through, and you are in that nasty black place under the roof a hearing it. You had better be here, and when the sky is washed you would not smell the smoke. I do wish you here.

Irwin is married and housekeeping. Nothing could be more suitable. Will'st say a word of congratulation?

We all love you, and I am,

J. C. C.

[Jeanne C. Carr]

[information in case →]
year 1872 supplied as this is evidently one of the letters answered in Muir's letter to Mrs. Carr of March 16 (1872)]