



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

1886-03-15

Letter from James D[avie] Butler to John Muir, 1886 Mar 15.

James Davie Butler

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ROOMS OF
 State Historical Society of Wisconsin

Madison, March 15 1886

John Muir, Esq.

My dear Friend.

It is too long since I have heard from you — longer than I would formerly have believed possible.

Some outline of my life I send you, and am confident I shall have yours in return.

^{and that, right early.} I live here, just as when you were last here, and have the same family. My boys are both away, Jamie in Iowa railroading, — Henry at Superior on the Great Lakes, — a lawyer and building up a city. ^{"Hatching vain empires"} My wife is no more an invalid.

Twice have I been abroad, — taking Anna on one journey and Agnes on another. ^{we returned on the Oregon — rail — yesterday} When the Northern Pacific opened I was at Portland, — and then went on into British Columbia. — The same season four of us slept 13 nights on the tentless ground among the Yellowstone geysers. — It is but about a year since I last returned from Europe, — and that year I have been studious here.

Greek and Shakespeare are my special
pets. — but just now I have a craze for
ascertaining the true inwardness of James
Bridges — the great path-finder from the
Missouri to the Pacific. Tell me some char-
acteristic incident about him.

The death of my life-long friend
Gen Alvord I heard of when I was lingering
in Vienna.

I was with Emerson who told me
of his forsaking you at the Big Trees — which
his party had enough of before your wonder
had been fairly roused.

Give us now a leaf of your life. —
Tell me of wife, wee ones, — rambles, writings
and studies. When shall we see you here
again? Art here has advanced — Nature
could not.

It is not a year since Kate Merrill
to whom I introduced you in Indianapolis. —
— but we ought to write often.

Today I am 71 years old — but am so
well, that I must compute the age I cannot
feel. — With memories
and hopes. yrs.

James O. Butler.

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