



1889-08-01

Letter from R. U. J. [Robert Underwood Johnson] to John Muir, 1889 Aug 1.

Robert Underwood Johnson

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EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT
THE CENTURY MAGAZINE
UNION SQUARE NEW YORK

Aug. 1, 1889.

Mr. John Muir,
Martinez, Cal.
My dear Muir,

I have seen both the Examiner article and the Argonaut criticism and have written to the former disavowing responsibility for that article, of course taking no notice of the Pixley-Irish card. I have also written sharply to Hearst and to Williams, the man who made up the interview from a private conversation with me on my way back from Los Angeles. It is, however, such an article as I cannot endorse, containing much that is not mine either in material or in expression, and in jumping into a state of affairs like this, of course expression is everything. It is a very stupid bit of Examiner work since it has curtailed my opportunity of use by representing me before the public as a bumptious person and a man willing to lend himself to sensation. I am sorry you should think it represents my style of public expression. A man may have his own private opinion of certain things, but he certainly ought to have the choice of the way in which he would express himself in print, and this choice has not been given to me. I regard it as one of the greatest abuses of the press that such things should be permitted and have made it a rule of my life to protest against it to the editor-in-chief, as I did in this case. I have seen Olmstead and had a long talk with him about the Valley. He entire-

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ly agrees with us, but says he can make no engagement to go there or to do the work. At the same time I have no doubt he would do it if he were asked to do so either by Stanford or the commissioners. Judging from the Pixley-Irish letter, the latter are determined to have nothing to do with Olmstead. The next best man would be Sargent, of the Harvard College Arboretum, who ^{Editor of "Forest & Garden"} is now in Europe. But as he may go to Japan before long by way of the coast it may be that we can make use of him. Olmstead did not say that he would not do it, but that he would make no engagement; in fact did not show the fighting qualities I had hoped. He will probably add a short statement of general principles to what we shall print along with your article when it comes. Now that you have finished up the pressing work for "Picturesque California" I hope you can go at the Yosemite article. We have all the illustrations and can make a capital thing of it. I thought an effective presentation would be, first, your article with proper mention of this matter at the close. Second, letter from Judge Deming on his impressions. Third, a note from Judge Howland. Fourth, letter from Mackenzie which I have. Fifth, statement over my own name. Sixth, ^{a summary of} as many general principles by Olmstead and perhaps something from Sargent. Then in our editorial department an article referring to all these, a moderate and dignified consideration of the question from the standpoint of public interest. *I am assured that "Forest & Garden" will back us up and I am sure the intelligent press here will so if*

Robinson promised to send me photographs showing the valley desecration; also the press notices reports of the investigation. R. W. G.

Public sentiment is so strong it can be brought to bear. Robinson promised to send me photographs showing the valley desecration; also the press notices reports of the investigation. R. W. G.

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