



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

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1897-07-09

## Letter from R[obert] U[nderwood] Johnson to John Muir, 1897 Jul 9.

Robert Underwood Johnson

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July 9, 1897

R. W. GILDER, EDITOR.  
R. U. JOHNSON,  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR.  
C. C. BUEL,  
ASSISTANT EDITOR.

My dear Muir:-

The dog story is at hand and we are correspondingly happy. I have just sent the copy to the printer, under the title "An Adventure with a Dog and a Glacier," and I have done the story a service by cutting out some of the preliminary material, which retarded the narrative and to some extent gave away the point. Your digressions about dog life in general, and your elaborate descriptions of "Stickeen" take from the surprise with which the reader discovers his fine qualities. When you told this story you simply said that this was a dog to whom you had paid very little attention before; but when in the manuscript you describe him at considerable length the reader is less prepared for the legitimate effect of his wonderful feat. On this principle I have left out the references to the previous crossings of the ice slivers, and treated it as if it were the climax of the adventure. The <sup>element of</sup> ~~ultimate~~ surprise is of the very essence of the success of the story. Remember that this is my story as well as yours. I have heard it several times, and I know how it is most effective. Of course, I have not dared to add a line, but have only left out what seems to me extraneous matter. For instance, though interesting and valuable in itself, the description in extenso of what you saw on the glacier has nothing to do with the story, except just

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C. C. BUEL,  
ASSISTANT EDITOR.

enough to form a background. *This much is retained.*

The Alaska article will appear in the August number.

We are sending this down for September, which is now our next.

See my editorial in the August number on the great public service of the Forest Commission.

*Forgive me for the  
elisions I believe me* Faithfully yours

*R. U. Johnson*

John Muir Esq.,  
Martinez, California

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