



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

1903-03-08

Letter from [Bailey] Millard to John Muir, 1903 Mar 8.

Bailey Millard

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Larkspur, California,

March 8, 1903.

Dear Mr. Muir:

I don't know whether I have yet informed you that in a journalistic sense I departed this life on the 7th of last December. On that day I gave up my ~~post~~ position as Sunday Editor of the Examiner, retaining only the literary editorship. My position was the most paradoxical one I ever heard of — my head full of Milton and Tennyson and my hands full of yellow manuscripts. But no more of that for yours truly.

It was just about a year ago that I visited you, and I have been thinking every day ^{perhaps} about another pilgrimage to the Muir Mecca. Would next Saturday be convenient for you to receive me? I feel a great delicacy about breaking in upon your quiet, as I always fear I can bring you very little that is worth while to you, while you give so much to me. But there is a subject very near to my heart that I want to talk over with you. You know that May 25th will be the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Emerson. I want to see what can be done by the literary folk of the Coast to celebrate that ~~can~~ event. The centenary will be celebrated in the East, and the West ought to do something to show that we know who our foremost American was and how great he was.

I shouldn't like to see anybody in the thing I am planning who would be prominent in a Cleveland or McKinley or any such ceremonial, but ~~some~~ only those ~~who~~ to whom Emerson is a magic name — a handle to the heart. My idea was to have the thing done by a few Emerson lovers — not necessarily all literary men, but literary-minded, at least — who should meet in some redwood grove, and ~~out~~ there, in the open, read some selections from "Nature," "Compensation," and the Poems, — read them out there where "man in the bush with God may meet" — and have somebody who knows how to do so make a few simple remarks. Then have a few voices — trained voices, I mean — sing something that would be to the purpose. I had also thought that we might name some natural object, a ~~ge~~ great rock or butte or something, for the Sage of Concord.

I know the place for this — within easy reach of all who might want to go and do this. It is Sequoia Cañon, which is only an hour or so from San Francisco and ~~as~~ far away that nobody from the city ever goes there. I had thought this might be done quietly, without letting the newspapers know anything about it — no pose, no flourish, just a little simple gathering; so that we in our hearts should feel that we had done something to remember in a notable way the centenary of a man beside whom Washington seems a child.

If Saturday is not a good day for you I can come some other time. And if you don't care to talk of the Emerson mat-

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ter, there are doubtless other subjects. Even if you should not take an active part (which I sincerely hope you may) I should like to hear what you might suggest as to this matter.

As for me, I am the poorest creature for forms you ever saw and never go to any sort of celebration, but this is quite a different thing.

You are the first & to whom I have broached the plan. I tried to think of some one who did not care for newspaper mention, and so forth, and your name naturally occurred to me. It would add so much to the affair if it were just a quiet little meeting and as simple as it could well be made.

Q I send you a clipping about your friend Keith, in which I know you will be interested, if you have not already seen it.

Yours as ever,

Millard