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1903-03-28

**Letter from James D[avie] Butler to John Muir, 1903 Mar 28.**

James Davie Butler

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Madison, 518 Wis. Ave.

March 28, 190<sup>3</sup><sub>2</sub>.  
Saturday evening.

John Muir,

My dear Friend -

How few here walk the earth whom you saw in these streets at your first coming! - All the closer do I hug those with whom my thoughts have long since brought me into communion. The "printing" I enclose will show that no casual man now meets me - no, not one. - My boys were both with me in the holidays, and knew that on birthday I was <sup>to be</sup> monopolized by those of an outer circle - I wish you had been with us at the Ides. Snow had earned a sabbatical year and went abroad with Agnes in June. Their ideal was realized in a sort of Bohemian honey moon. But sinns sights and sounds made them <sup>before they set foot</sup> laggards in Italy, and Agnes wrote at Milan - "We have kept the good wine until now, - and alas! cannot stay to drink it." Snow's lectures began with Feb. - and he was on hand -

But about New Year's Hankes our chief banker, and his wife Agnes' sister by the higher birth appeared in Naples, saying to Agnes, "Abide with us, or we must go it blind." - It was as good in Snow's eyes as hers that she <sup>could</sup> stay. - Business soon forced Hankes to start home - though I have not seen him yet. But he said to Agnes "Go where you will - and stay as long. Foot the streets (or automobile them) - have no thoughts of footing bills. So Agnes is having <sup>her heart's desire,</sup> <sup>for herself,</sup> and Anna finds her ears for Mr medicinal - and is as self-forgetful as a hen scratching for one chicken. -

Ever since you were here - I have loved the home  
as much as I had before loved to wander. - Lib. and Univ.  
have grown as in a perpetual springtime - and I have had  
no sickness except old age - Mrs. Adams and wife,  
our best of friends - have died where you live - and  
left their all to our institutions. - Work on the Carneg-  
ie has already begun, - close by the Park, - my corner.

I see you were to do for Roosevelt what you  
would gladly have done for me in 1869. - and what  
nobody but you could do. - In some camp you will  
tell him how you found me, - and perhaps get some  
match for it from him. - Telepathy!

He will be here next Fri. - but barely two hours. -  
and politicians will hedge him about. - In 1893. he  
came here in June and I caught him browsing among the  
stacks of Dutch books in a back <sup>or secret</sup> room. - Thinking him a man I  
had seen hanging about the legislature for a job as ~~our~~ "porter"  
I thought he had gotten the place - and so <sup>with a hand-shake</sup> said to him; "So  
you're a going to stop with us!" - "Yes" said he; "but not so  
long as I would be glad to, etc" - He did not discover my  
mistake. - We invited him to lecture under our auspices,  
in the Capitol - and I (then acting Pres. of the Hist. Soc.)  
introduced him - My words - suggested by his ragab<sup>o</sup>dage -  
were as prophetic as the witches to Macbeth. - "Mr. R. not  
of Mass. nor of N. York - nor of Dakota - but of the United  
States -!" He began with special thanks for such a send-off.  
My ability to walk and talk for six hours day after day  
was what I chiefly thank God for on entering the year next to  
my ninetieth - May you live as much longer than I do  
you are more useful. Come and see me! - or at least  
look me up <sup>in the life beyond</sup> in a region contrasted with that Liberty Cap of 1869  
as much as that does with the platitudes here.

Respectfully!  
James D. Butler.