



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

1905-03-13

Letter from James Davie Butler to John Muir, 1905 Mar 13.

James Davie Butler

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John Muir

My dear Friend

Madison,

March 13, '05

Monday evening.

and for countless more to come. for a generation backward

Last week I read in the March No. of The Century of Burbank's Miracles which had before been hid from my eyes - At once I began to blazon abroad the revelation which had flashed upon me like the light^{ning} which unfolds heaven and earth - Here one can say "it lightens" -

Others' eyes I soon found had sooner than mine had felt the scales falling from their lids - yet no one had seen so much as not to make greater eyes as he opened the Century - and saw its promise of more.

Lancaster where Burbank's kind was b. in 1845 - is not far from Andover, and I had preached there myself as early as 1841. - and in that village high-school was all B's academics. - A new proof that genius as in Burns, Bunyan, and Shakespeare penetrates to truths deeper, higher, wider than can be taught. We cannot say "Pity it lacks instructions for it shows itself a master to all who teach" What humanitarian uses of Carnegie's bounty to make Coetus the curer all of India famine. Do write me of your relations to B. when you began to know him. - How often you meet. - what you judge his crowning achievement. - what new work he will explore? who else is second only to him?

On March 15 is the 10th birthday since
the loving cup and loving words - gave me such
a glad surprise that has been musical in
my soul ever since.

I was $\frac{1}{2}$ inclined to shut my
doors because Agnes who a year ago had a
serious sickness - six weeks ago was doctor-
driven to her brothers so far North that the
debility which possessed her dares not follow
but so many are eager to be with me - in
communion of mourning the absence of so many
who shared in the first convocation yet walk
the earth no longer.

My friends have clustered around
us. - Anna is here - At no time have I lacked
a daughter under my roof as "restorer of life and
nourisher of age." Nor do I lack visits from both
my boys in seasons better for household sane-
lities and sweetness than the crowded hours
of birthday festivities. - Not only shall I all day
keep open house, heart, tongue and hand - but have
a special call to be Senatorial Chaplain - on birth
morning as the very oldest man (woman's age here a
month) - who has for three years been found among
us. - If I am killed by kindness what better death
to die? Is it not the euthanasia of Moses who as
Rabbin's translated Deut 34.5 died by the kiss of God.
Yst aware that age has clawed me in his
Clutch and only grants me such a reprieve as the cat
ouchsafes a mouse I am impatient for your letter
in the Sabbath of my years. Respectfully from Anna
as well as me the patriarch of the place.
James & Anne Butler.