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Letter from Annie Hay to John Muir, 1913 Oct 15.

Annie Hay

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15 Oct 1913

Fornum

Newall

Cheshire.

Dear John Muir,

we were delighted to hear from you, and my husband James, although ninety years old in December, is still able to be deeply interested to hear from you and last week Maggie Lunan send us on your book "Boyhood and Youth" to read before she lent it to anyone else and father has been reading it ever since - he takes longer to read now his eye sight is not so good. He doesn't use glasses as they don't help him but he has a big hand glass which he uses - not to look through but to cast a focused light on the page or line! He is much exercised because you do not give the date of your birth and he cannot find out from our family bible when your mother was married - He even spoke of going to Edinb. to the Registrar general's office to find out - although he never goes inside a train now! I couldn't stop when I began to read it - so fascinated me and I would dearly love

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To have a copy to lend to my children to read for
I must return Maggie's as soon as father
has finished. The style is very graphic
and charming in its simplicity. It will
do some of our young people ~~good~~ who
have such marvellous advantages in education
almost thrust upon them, to read how
you struggled & surmounting every obstacle
to attain the knowledge you thirsted after.
It reminds me of William or Robert ^{Chambers} ~~Disraeli~~
I forget which, who used to go to a bakehouse every
morning ^{at 5} and sitting in the window sill read to the baker
the reward being the use of their tallow candle
and a halfpenny bap! "Where there is a will there
is a way" as I notice in most things connected
with life. It is a nice question whether it would
have been better for you ultimately if things had
been made easier for you. At any rate
I don't think being down that well did you
any good. One also speculates how much
your father's Creed his ideas about God &
Hell &c - could have been responsible for
the sternness of his methods. The pendulum
has swung back and we are now at the other
extreme as instance the ^{where}
the idea is to put no obstacles in the way of children
developing from within - not to do things for them
let them do things for themselves - play their own
way &c - Although I don't believe in original sin
children do behave sometimes as if there were such
a thing.

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It is a great blessing that dear Maggie³ has got such a kind companionable woman as "Lady Help" for she will have many a lovely hour now dear Auntie Luman is gone for they were never parted in their lives. I trust she may keep free from bronchitis this winter.

I believe she contemplates selling the house she lives in for it is too large and it would make things easier for her financially - but property at present brings very little & I advised her not to be in a hurry but put it into some one's hands to take a good chance when it comes.

Our children are all away from us excepting Maria - Isabel our eldest daughter who has not chosen to marry. She has now recovered from three years of great suffering from Neuritis. John our eldest son is a consulting doctor in S. pool and is a true scientist and Hearts & Lungs especially are his study. He has just got a wonderful instrument or machine or apparatus - called "An Electro Cardiograph" - perhaps you have seen one - I am sure it would interest you - it is for registering the heart beats or something - There are only six in England so far. He has a nice wife and four charming children. I have just rung him up to ask if he has a photo of father I could have to send to you. He took some in Aug. so they are quite recent. He says he will send one on tonight.

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James our next son is an Artist now lives in London ⁴
he was married for three years & then his wife died
& he left Cheshire and went to London. He is
much appreciated by his brother Artists but
he doesn't make much money. "Margaret
Hardie" our youngest daughter is married to a
Congregational Minister in London - a man
of amazing Christ-likeness and they are very
happy but have no children. There - I have
told you a little about all of us - I may have
done so before but I forget so. I hope you are
near to your dear children and that they are
all well and happy. Our little life is but
a glimpse and a foretaste - The abiding
things remain - but nothing we have attached
to here nothing we have conquered will be lost -
don't you think so.

Yes, we often wish
you would come to see us again - people
don't seem to think anything of going & coming
now a days. Have I written too long a
letter I wonder - you are a busy man.

Father and Habel join with me in
kindest love.

Your affectionate Cousin
Annie Hay.