



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

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1900-07-09

**Letter from James D[avie] Butler to John Muir, 1900 Jul 9.**

James Davie Butler

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Madison,

John Muir.

July 9, 1900.

My dear Friend,

It is too long that I have read  
no <sup>written</sup> syllable of yours - and know not but  
you are now a humanitarian missionary  
in China. - not with blood and thunder.  
The death of Catharine Merrill  
brings back many a memory - and those all  
precious, which you and I have in com-  
mon. - I am looking for the letter to me  
you dictated to her de profundis when all  
skill in surgery seemed unable to save your  
eyes. - what a noble career to the very end. -  
How "the idea of her life doth sweetly creep"  
much ado. IV. 1. 229. Letters full of heart come  
to me from her scholars.

Last Wed. was the centennial  
of my college, Middlebury. - I had engaged  
to be there and speak on some matters  
well-known to me - "but for some prevent-  
ing Providence" - This Providence came  
at the eleventh hour in the combined roles  
of daughter and doctor - who convinced me  
that my assurance that I could make the  
journey, etc. was the best proof that I could not.  
You know that I must be hemmed in - there  
is no St. Helena less exasperating than mine,  
not even that of the prisoners of the Vatican.

My daughter's husband <sup>snow</sup> is a nervous lecturer - and the outing that suits him best in both mind and body is a voyage. Last summer he was two weeks in Berlin - and means to be this. -

Aug. 20 I hope to be at Sioux City and help lay the corner-stone of an ovalist for which money has been voted by congress to mark the first step of Am. advance into the Trans-Miss-

owia. - I do not hear as I once did - and would give  $\frac{1}{2}$  my front-teeth (all per feet) if I could, - but my hours of study were seldom more - and never sweeter. In tête à tête I have no trouble in hearing. Still write for the Nation - p. 422. Some of my last work. The Emersons. No. 1822. and West Pointers No. 1826. p. 498. The Nation's great-merit is horror of too much. - Maximum in minimo. - Our Lib. all things considered is the miracle of the age.

My 4 children are all good and are all doing good - and it is the joy of my life to witness their activities.  
Sum spero spiro!

James O. Butler.