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1877 Apr 22 JM to WT p 1a

John Muir

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1419 Taylor St
San Francisco Cal
April 22^d 1877

William Trout,

Dear friend

I read your last, so full
of the exposition at Philadelphia
with a great deal of interest.
The impressions that a fresh
mind like yours receives are
always infinitely more valuable
than those of the regular skilled
reporter, at least to me who
always values realities alone.

I feel sad at times when
I think of the repression & seques-
-tration of a life like yours, so
much real power & originality
held down far below the
possibilities of perfect develop-
-ment, by force of repressive
circumstances. There are many
who appear as leaders in science
& mechanic arts who have far

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less native talent than you, & the same is true of
a good many others, especially among old country
people. There is not one American in a thousand
who could ever be of any account now ^{if} educated
them as you may, but in the obscure lanes
byways of life, back among the cold shadows,
there are many good, strong, pure souls who
seem deprived of the conditions of development,
like seed upon poor ground. Yet, nevertheless,
when I think of the real happiness of those who are
blessed with contentment back in the solitudes,
who have no artificial wants to provide for; & how
little is often contained in what is called, a success-
ful life, I am the more reconciled to the fact that
men like you remain unknown to the great noisy
world. And then you are at least a leader in

Your neighborhood, & have access to the sunshine & the sky, & your labors, though too exacting to leave sufficient room for the improvement of your mental & general spiritual nature, are still far less so than those of many others.

I have often thought of advising you to come here where so much new machinery is being made for this rapidly developing country, especially mining machinery, & in which you would be sure to succeed. But then many a year might pass ere you could get yourself established in the place you are fitted for, & living is high, rents etc, & you have a family that would have to suffer a great deal of distracting inconvenience, to say the least, ere you were fairly rooted & grounded in your ^{new} place. So that if you are at all comfortable - If your life is not too much of a struggle, I should say, remain where you are

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I take comfort in the fact that your life with all its limitations is infinitely richer than that of most people whose advantages are far greater. It needs that a man be very wise, & very strong in every way, to maintain a keen fresh appreciation of all that is really good in this fine world of ours, in connection with fame or wealth. Contentment in California is the very rarest of the virtues, & as wealth increases, the capacity for the enjoyment of God's best gifts diminishes. Well, I had no intention of reading you so sombre a lecture, especially now, since I'm in a great hurry. I leave the city for the mountains of Utah & ~~to~~ Nevada tomorrow to do government work on the great geodetic survey. My first book is finished & I'm to New York

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+ I will probably be in print in the fall. I made all the illustrations myself, I have been exceedingly busy all winter.

I send you our old account. You will see by the date that your ten years is up. however I am not so greatly in need of money as to wish to put you to inconvenience in paying it. I only feel poor when I think of marrying, which does sometimes enter even my wild contented happy ~~life~~ ~~at~~ ~~the~~ When you get ready send through Wells Fargo's Express.

I shall return here to write another book next fall, my address remains the same. Any letter you may send will be kept for me. With cordial regards for the welfare of Yourself & family & all old friends I remain John Blair