



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

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**Letter from J. E. Calkins to John Muir, 1909 Apr 26.**

J. E. Calkins

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Lordsburg, Cal. April 26, 1909.

My Dear Mr. Muir:—

Stickeen, with your valued words of presentation, came to hand in good time, several days ago. I have been delayed in making this acknowledgment, but not very long, and I hope you will pardon it.

To say that I value the little book is to use a feeble word. It is a treasure in itself, and the manner in which it has come to me makes it doubly fine. I had not looked for it, but thought that the next time I visited Pasadena I would buy one of friend Vroman. Now I am again and still further in your debt, and can only say that if you will accept my thanks in fullest measure till I can make better payment I shall be grateful.

I have read the story once since it came. In a few days I shall read it again. I find its charm increased above what I remembered of it, and I remembered it, as I have said to you, as one of the greatest little stories I ever read. It is a great tale and superbly told. I know of no other narrative or description of animal nature that so clearly illuminates its subject, and is such delightful, absorbingly fascinating reading. Oh, if only we might have more and more of these things of yours!

I have been remiss in not writing to you in regard to Helen, but the imperfect touch I have been able to keep with you through the newspapers has led me to believe that of late you were absent from home. I know only that she went to Los Angeles to a hospital. Since then I have not heard. What is the situation? I hope and pray that you have reason to feel encouraged. If the sympathy of friends could do you any good, or help her, she would be well and your mind would be so lightened that you would feel in the humor to write a dozen books. I have been anxious about you both, and shall be till I hear. When you see her please tell her that we often think of her, and earnestly trust that we shall see her again in health.

March 30 Mrs. Calkins went back to Iowa, called thither by the rapid decline of her father, 80 years of age. She is still there, and may be there for some time yet. Her brother and his family are at my house, and will be here several weeks, so I am not reduced to a state of absolutely savage bachelorhood. The boy and I are busied with our work, and enjoying life here as much as we can.

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I am led to infer, by what I read in the papers, that you did have that Grand Canon adventure with John Burroughs, after all. When we saw Mr. Vroman in Pasadena it appeared doubtful, from what he told us, if you would be able to make that trip. I am very glad if you really did get there, as I understand to have been the case. Sometime I hope to see the Canon myself, but I have not the courage to hope for such good company as either of you gentlemen had.

The summer is coming on beautifully, down here, but it is a sorry thing to read, in the letters I get from Iowa of the rough time they have there. Cold, high winds, and hard storms, have made the days anything but pleasant for weeks past. People who, like yourself, enjoy storms for the insight they give into Nature's workings, might get something out of all this hurly-burly, but for those who have fled to California for the relief of calm weather there is not much contentment in it.

I hope to hear that you have been feeling well, in body and mind. There is no rest for the former when the latter is disturbed, as I know yours has been over the condition of your daughter! I do not understand that the open air cure has failed; certainly I hope it has not. I believe that the girl will win the race yet, but there is always an anxious state of mind till these doubts are settled. When you have time for a line let me hear, about her and yourself.

As for Stickeen, he is so altogether good and great that I can only say, with all my heart, "thank you," and say it again and again; first that you have written it, as it is, and again that you have had the goodness to remember me so kindly. May the little book be the best seller of its day. Everybody ought to read it, and you deserve the success.

With sincerest hopes for the prosperity of yourself and yours, I am, most truly yours,

J. E. Calkins,

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