



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

1914-11-01

Letter from W. Borland to [John Muir], 1914 Nov 1.

W. Borland

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C17
"Wanda"
Portsea,
Victoria.

11:1:14.

My dear Sir,

I write this in a cottage
by the sea, where we have come with
the children for a holiday, after reading
your story of your boyhood to you etc.
I read it through leisurely at
two sittings, & haven't enjoyed a
book more for long. In your
other books, which I read in Dunbar
I was also carried on to the end
by the simplicity & directness
of the style; but this is even more
full of human interest than at
the same time the "Bible English",
which I fancy you owe largely to
your early studies in "the books".
If so, they were not in vain. The
present educational methods will

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not build up a virile & simple style
like that. I wish to assure
you of the great pleasure I have
derived from your writings. Perhaps
I should be mistaken were I to speak
of great profit; for I am not so
constituted as to make the most
of your treasury of nature-love.

I understand you keen interest in
the small things of nature; but,
though I was brought up in the
midst of Nithsdale on a farm,
I have never felt that interest.

In anyway I love & appreciate the
fine effects & influences of nature,
& have read a little natural science:
but my experience convinces me that
without the inborn love of the earth
& of the birds & beasts & creeping
things on the face of it, one doesn't
become a lover of nature in the true
sense. Such books as you write,
however, have given me times of

insight, even of ⁽³³⁾enthusiasm; & I am
grateful for these. I shall never
forget the pleasure of discovering -
through your friends the Linnams - a
source of pure pleasure in your books,
which have opened my eyes to many
things which I should otherwise
have missed. I feel as if I

knew you ^{personally} through them, & Dunbar,
& the Linnams, & the Davidsons. Dr.
Tom Davidson is married to my wife's
only sister, & I remember also Dr.
Austenher Davidson, his brother, whom
you know better I think. What
a discipline life has been in your
case, & what a pleasure too!

Pardon this egotistical note of thanks.
It may serve to show you how you
have influenced many who may
not seem to have much in common
with that which is the life of
you. We are all in one "bundle of
life" together, & the human note makes
us all tingle & thrill, though we

may not responds ⁽⁴⁾ to every chord
of the great music.

Dear old Mrs Linnam is 'fallen on
sleep' and her daughter is rather
frail I fear. I was sorry not to
be in Dumbarton to do what I
could for her when her mother
died, & writing is a poor medium
of sympathy.

We have found a new home, & many
kind folk, & a few good friends
already here. I like my work, &
our six bairns are growing in
health of body & mind. The
climate is like yours in California;
but the fauna & flora & all the
face of nature is different from
anything else in the world when
one gets away from cultivation &
things imported. It is a great
land; and trust our race will
prove worthy of it; though the
sons have not their fathers' vigor

& done sense of duty. ⁽⁵⁾

3.
Again let me thank you for
your kind thought in sending
your book. I am sorry I have
nothing of my own that can
give you the like pleasure and
instruction.

With kindest regards,
Yours ever sincerely
W. Rolland

My address is always "Scots Church,
Dumbarton." If ever I can do anything
here for you or any friend of
yours, you will give me the privilege
I know.

W. R.