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WILL EXPLORE COLD SIBERIA



JOHN MUIR,

The eminent scientist who is going to Siberia to study the vast forests there.

John Muir and Sargent, the Tree Man, Are to Cross
the Great Steppes.

In his sixty-fifth year, and still as sturdy a mountain climber as when he discovered the great Alaskan glacier which bears his name, John Muir, who has carefully explored all the wildest and most inaccessible places in our land where Nature hides herself away in secret beauty, and who has sailed the fjords of coldest Norway and the coral-lined coves of warmest Polynesia, is making his studies of peaks and the structure of plants, is now preparing to go farther afield than ever before. He is going to explore the forests of Siberia and Manchuria in company with Sargent, the tree man, who wrote that exhaustive "Silva of North America," in fourteen enormous volumes.

Muir will leave his home at Martinez about the 15th of May and will join Sargent in New York. They will then sail for Europe and take the Transsiberian Railway and journey across the great steppes to that rare country which is said to be of all wildernesses the most howling.

Mr. Sargent shows the sapiency of the scientist in uniting his fortunes with Muir, whose woodcraft is probably superior to that of any other man in America. Muir is a man whom no prospective hardship can frighten, except, possibly, crushing through a street crowd, for he always prefers to walk on a glacial pavement to one on the concrete. He thinks nothing of starting out on a fortnight's tramp in the high Sierras with no other equipment than a bag of bread, a tin cup and a handful of tea. In fact, that meager provision proved sufficient for him in all his hardest tramps, and he makes light of some of his most wearisome and stupendous tasks. Clarence King, after long and careful preparation, climbed to the top of Mount Tyndall and afterward wrote of his awful perils and narrow escapes during the tremendous ascent; but when Muir climbed Tyndall he ran up to the summit of the peak and back to camp before breakfast.

I am afraid that Californians do not know enough of John Muir, who to me seems to be one of the finest and most engaging figures in the whole wide West. When Mr. Doubleday recently gave us our much-deserved scolding for our disloyalty to our best literary men, Muir's name recurred to me at once. That simple, gentle figure, living so quietly there in that little rift of the Contra Costa hills—the best example of plain living and high thinking that I can now recall—seems to me a standing reproach to the neglectful Californians who know the name of

John Burroughs, in its tame entourage, much better, as it is constantly referred to in the Eastern prints, while the name of John Muir, beside whose solid life work that of John Burroughs is like a little pile of brushwood, rarely gets mentioned. I mean no disrespect to the worthy Mr. Burroughs, but it irritates me to see his prosy matter, the reading of which is often about as interesting as beating a carpet, rated so highly by our people, while Muir's magnificent work goes unread. In all the "literary" conversations to which I have listened and in which I have so frequently heard the name of the author of "The Pink Cow," or of the man who wrote "The Sonnets of a Stevedore," or other kindred matter so engaging and important to a certain order of minds, I have not heard the name of John Muir a dozen times, or a mention of his charming books. It would seem, when it came to reading, as if we cared more for the work of an effeminate freak than for that of a real, shaggy man. For in California, except to a very small circle, Muir's fragrant nature writings, breathing the breath of the high Sierras and the subtle odor of the sugar pines, is unknown. And, yet, what a rare, poetic pen the man wields! Stevenson at his best, in his "Inland voyage," never wrote anything so piquant, so zealous, so full of the spirit of the open air, so Homeric in its sweep, as some of the chapters of "The Mountains of California," while the finality

—that is the word—with which Muir has treated of Yosemite and the Yellowstone must be the despair of all the truly appreciative writers who come after him.

Given such a sensitive, receptive mind as Muir's, with his ability to report what he sees, and forty years of careful observation of Nature's wildest moods and greatest pictures, and you have a man fit to voice the message of the wilds. His work is recognized among all the high scientific and literary authorities in the Eastern States and it ought to be better known to the general run of people in California.

To the discerning minds of this country Muir is the accredited spokesman of Nature in the West, and he should be able to make a most valuable report of what he will see and note so carefully in the East.

In talking with me the other day at his pretty country home in the hills he told me many of his adventures in that quiet, off-hand manner which always characterizes the report of the man who does things and never that of the bombast. Speaking of his tour of exploration, which will take the better part of a year of his valuable time, he remarked:

"We shall extend our journeyings to Japan and to Java and the Philippines. I should like to go to the Himalayas, too; but we cannot go everywhere."

He always speaks of trees with genuine affection, as of human beings. "I expect to find some relations of our old friend, the sequoia, in Manchuria," he said. "They are known to exist in Japan. But I am satisfied that nowhere shall I find any trees as large as our giant redwoods."

The prospect of this hazardous journey is not one to daunt the spirit of the man who discovered the great Muir glacier and who has stood on the tops of all our highest mountain peaks.

Mr. Muir does not write his wonderful books for money. He has a horror of the hampering futilities of life and seems to despise wealth as he despises danger.

"The rich man," remarked the old mountaineer to me, "carries too heavy a pair of blankets."

Simplicity! There is a man after Thoreau's own heart.

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RUMORED ENGAGEMENT OF ENGLISH ADMIRAL

Father of British Navy, Aged Ninety-Three, to Be Married.

LONDON, March 28.—It is said on excellent authority that there is every possibility that Admiral Sir Henry Keppel, known as the "Father of the British Navy" and who is now at Singapore, will be married before he returns to England. Admiral Keppel is in his ninety-third year.

ARMOUR PLANT HAS WIRELESS TELEGRAPH.

Messages Sent Several Miles Clearly and Without a Break.

CHICAGO, March 28.—The first practical test of a newly installed wireless telegraph plant was made to-day, messages being transmitted several miles between the Armour Packing House at the Union Stock Yards and the general offices in the business district of the city. The message came clearly and without a break. The wireless plant is for commercial purposes. Owing to objection to the placing of a proper sending pole on the downtown building, the messages were all sent one way. Arrangements are being made to extend the system to Armour plants in the West.