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1866-05-10

Letter from Hattie Trout to John Muir, 1866 May 10

Hattie Trout

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I am sorry you have not nice companions in your boarding school. I have just by speaking of my
 progress in botany told the class
 I am sorry for you but I must tell
 you the truth - I have not got a
 manual yet - so that I could
 not try to analyze those sweet
 little flowers you sent from London,
 sent for Hobbs and it could not
 be got - and the money was spent
 for Maggie, so I could not get
 it since; but I hope before you
 hear from me again I can per-
 form better success - not much.
 The class is very busy but I hope I may get one book
 in the mean time. I am
 deriving a great deal of pleasure
 and profit from the structural
 work I am doing you will miss
 very much - it surely is an excellent
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 it. I told you I did class you did
 not forget them and they
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 you all. They all seem better
 than well. Other still teachers
 than Johnson came back
 and took to be a class again
 class all vanished. It was
 increasing and great need of
 more teachers - I am sure you
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 in your work about - conducting a
 Sunday school - 809

[4]

My Dear friend
 I am sorry you have not nice companions in your boarding school. I have just by speaking of my
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you of our ramble - Herode up tied our horses to the gate
 and then was when we missed Mary's kind face to greet
 us - The first thing I did was caught hold of a bunch of that
 dear old Thyme that you used to make a furrow in - I inhaled
 its odor with pleasure and I send you a piece of the very
 bunch - it is not very green yet - everything is very backward, we
 have had an unusual cold dry Spring - only 2 or 3 warm days
 the 1st of April and since that time Nature has almost stood
 still - There is not a green leaf to be seen on the trees yet and
 very few flowers - even the little Liverworts are not half so abundant
 as other seasons, these I enclosed Duncen and I gathered on
 the side hill next the 7th line - "He gathered them all for
 thee, All these wild-wood flowers, sweet wild-wood flowers"
 This is what Maggie used to sing - But to return to the garden
 all the flowers that were in bloom were a few daffodils - your
 May Sun daisy is almost froze out, there is just a little bit
 of it peeping up out of the ground - As for everything looks
 neglected and makes one feel sad - But the darling wild
 birds sing as sweetly as ever in the trees - the lonely hills and
 ever flowing little stream is just the same, and it is
 impossible for me to describe the feelings I had - every
 place I would turn would bring some pleasing remembrance
 to my mind - Has there ever more freedom of speech thought
 and action ^{felt} on earth than in that hollow - we were all
 equal - every one did as they chose - Ah me - I hope that the
 happy days will return that we may be there again

And that you might be one of our number for at least a short time - The circle would be incomplete without you

The ~~Marta~~ Kitten and all that remain of the once happy occupants of that little spot, so you must feel very sorry for me and say poor Hattie for John I do feel lonely - I can't help it - Though my time is continually occupied I feel as if there was something lacking, and it is just the company of my most intimate friends - I can only get home once a week, for it is too far to walk and teach my school for it has been larger than ever this Spring - Then when I do go home there are so many absent ones - Mary is away on her wished for trip: but poor thing she will never see home this side eternity - I don't know when ever I felt so much for any one - It seemed so hard to think that Mary did not go when Anna wished to see her so much - She should have gone ~~the way~~ that you did and nothing can comfort her for not going except the consciousness that she was endeavoring to do her duty - I don't know whether she will go to Maxwell or not - they wished her to go - but she has gone to Toronto and to visit among our friends in Erie, and I am so glad for I am sure it will do her good - Maggie of course is having good times in Toronto going to school.

Rachel commences her school again on Monday - so that the boys and Anna Spratford are all that are with father & mother: but father is getting quite like himself again, is able to walk about the fields & garden, and came to meeting last Sunday being the first for 16 weeks - some of the friends were quite overcome with joy to see him among them again - he was not able to speak ^{much}

Don't say anything about this unless
I know as that in

I feel so thankful that he is still spared with us. I heard lately that the doctor had not the least hope of his recovery (last winter)

What do you think - I had a letter from Dan at last and it was not a fool of a one either - It was a very nice letter - just like Dannie himself - he did not send me his photograph though and I shall wish now I had not sent him mine - he said I would have to look to you for it; and I have to look to you for your own also - Please John like a good boy don't forget to send me yours you wont - Will you? - I enjoyed the reading of your letter so much - Charlie said when he went away if there was a letter came from you I could open it - and then send it to him I did so and with ^{our} genuine satisfaction - I will be anxiously waiting now to get from you right to myself - Don't keep me waiting for it too long - I should have written to you before but I thought I would wait - until we heard from you again as the girls & Charlie had written - Poor Charlie we feel lonely enough without him - I miss him to tease me if nothing else: but he is a kind good boy - and he likes his misses too

I suppose by this time he is with Ma at Oil Springs - you will likely hear from ^{them} pretty soon - I think they might about as well be over there with you as where they are - if they were in a healthy part - I am afraid that you will get sick when the warm weather comes - you should not stay if you find it does not agree with you - Your friends here as far as I know are well - I don't see Miss Harens often - only twice since you were here - I think she is lonely - we write to each other occasionally - I am sorry she has to be so far from her friends - I told Duncan of your enquiries for him and kind wishes for his happiness - he spoke of you in very affectionate terms and wished to be remembered to you, and if he was a letter-writer would like to hear from you - I suppose he would any way - he has been quite poorly most of the spring - poor fellow - he has not been out much - nor able to do much at home and I think he feels discouraged - and no wonder he is improving now though hard I hope he will be better for the summer - Just look: here I am at the bottom of this newspaper, and quite unconscious of the paper I was covering - and don't feel as if I was near done yet -

[Canada],
Meaford, May 10th, 1866

My dear friend John:

I have taken my seat to have a real cosy old chat with you. I have selected a large sheet of paper, for I don't feel as though paper of any size would contain all the things I would like to speak with you about. And in trying to get my rambling thoughts collected on paper I fear I may lose track of them altogether.

The first thing, and that which is freshest on my memory is about the darling hollow. I have not two minutes ago returned from visiting it, and you don't know how I wished and wished again that its old inhabitants were there to greet us. Who, do you think, was with me? Why Duncan. He came down here this afternoon and I saddled one of those little ponies of Sing's (I can ride them when I like) and we rode out there together. Now you fancy yourself with us and I will tell you of our rambles. We rode up, tied our horses to the gate, and then was when we missed Mary's kind face to greet us. The first thing I did was to catch hold of a bunch of that dear old thyme that you used to make a furrow in. I inhaled its odor with pleasure and I send you a piece of the very bunch - it is not very green yet. Everything is very backward. We have had an unusual cold dry spring, only 2 or 3 warm days the last of April and since that time Nature has almost stood still. There is not a green leaf to be seen on the trees yet, and very few flowers. Even the little liverworts are not half as abundant as other seasons. These I enclose Duncan and I gathered on the side hill next the 7th line - "We gathered them all for thee, All these wild-wood flowers, sweet wild-wood flowers." This is what Maggie used to sing.

But to return to the garden - all the flowers that were in bloom were a few daffodils. Your Mary Ann daisy is almost frozen out - there is just a little bit of it peeping up out of the ground. Aye, John, everything looks neglected and makes me feel sad. But the darling wild birds sing as sweetly as ever in the trees. The lovely hills and everflowing little stream is just the same, and it is impossible for me to describe the feelings I had - every place I would turn would bring some pleasing remembrance to my mind. Was there ever more freedom of speech, thought, and action felt on earth than in that "hollow". We were all equal, everyone did as he chose. Ah me! I hope that the happy days will return that we may be there again, and that you might be one of our number for at least a short time. The circle would be incomplete without you.

The Malta kitten and I are all that remains of the once happy occupants of that little spot, so you must feel very sorry for me and say "poor Hattie", for, John, I do feel lonely, I can't help it. Though my time is continually occupied, I feel as if there were something lacking, and it is just the company of my most intimate friends. I can only get home once a week, for it is too far to walk and teach my school, for it has been larger than ever this spring. Then when I do go home there are so many absent ones. Mary is away on her wished-for trip; but poor thing she will never see Anna this side eternity. I don't know whenever I felt so much for anyone. It seemed so hard to think that Mary did not go when Anna wished to see her so much. She should have gone the time that you did, and nothing can comfort her for not going except the consciousness that she was endeavoring to do her duty. I don't know whether she will go to Williamsville or not - they wished her to go - but she has gone to Toronto and to visit among our friends in Erin, and I am so glad, for I am sure it will do her good. Maggie, of course, is having good times in Toronto going to school. Rachel commences her school again on Monday - so that the boys and Anna Spratford are all that are with father and mother. But father is getting quite like himself again, is able to walk about the fields and garden, and came to meeting last Sunday, being the first time for 16 weeks. Some of the friends were quite overcome with joy to see him among them again. He was not able to speak much. I feel so thankful that he is still spared with us. I heard lately that the doctor had not the least hopes of his recovery last winter.

What do you think? I had a letter from Dan at last, and it was not a fool of a one either. It was a very nice letter - just like Dannie himself. He did not send me his photograph, though, and I half wish now I had not sent him mine. He said I would have to look to you for it, and I have to look to you for your own also. Please, John, like a good boy, don't forget to send me yours. You won't, will you? I enjoyed the reading of your letter so much. Charlie said when he went away if there was a letter came from you I could open it, and then send it to him. I did so, and with genuine satisfaction. I will be anxiously waiting now to get one from you right to myself. Don't keep me waiting for it too long. I should have written to you before, but I thought I would wait until we heard from you again as the girls and Charlie had written. Poor Charlie, we feel lonely enough without him - I miss him to tease me if nothing else; but he is a kind good boy, and he likes his missus too. I suppose by this time he is with William at Oil Springs - you will likely hear from them pretty soon. I

[Letter of Harriet Trout to John Muir, dated May 10, 1866, continued]

think they might about as well be over there with you as where they are, if they were in a healthful part. I am afraid that you will get sick when the warm weather comes - you should not stay if you find it does not agree with you. Your friends here as far as I know are well. I don't see Miss Marcus very often - only twice since you were here. I think she is lonely - we write to each other occasionally. I am sorry she has to be so far from her friends. I told Duncan of your enquiries for him and kind wishes for his happiness. He spoke of you in very affectionate terms and wished to be remembered to you, and if he were a letter-writer would like to hear from you. I suppose he would anyway. He has been quite poorly most of the spring, poor fellow. He has not been out much, nor able to do much at home, and I think he feels discouraged. And no wonder. He is improving now, though, and I hope he will be better for the summer. Just look, here I am at the bottom of this newspaper, and quite unconscious of the amount of paper I was covering, and don't feel as if I were nearly done yet.

I am sorry you have not nicer companions in your boarding-house. Am glad you are not deprived of the privilege of meeting with your flower companions and there are a great many more privileges that we are not deprived of, no matter where we roam. Am very thankful, John, that you do not forget us. I love to be remembered by my dear friends and I don't forget them. You are not forgotten for a single day, and I know I shall always remember you, and I ask the same of you for I need very much to be remembered and cheered on to duty, unworthy though I be. "Yet One is worthy - Guide Thou me." May health and prosperity be yours and Heaven's choicest blessings rest upon you, is the ardent wish and prayer of

Your very affectionate friend,

Hattie Trout

I have put off speaking of my progress in botany till the last. I am sorry, John, but I must tell you the truth. I have not got a manual yet, so that I could not try to analyze those sweet little flowers you sent from Ind[iana]. I sent for Wood's, and it could not be got, and the money was spent for Maggie, so I could not get it since, but I hope before you hear from me again I can report better success. Not much of the season has passed away yet, and I hope I may get one soon. In the meantime I am deriving a great deal of pleasure and profit from the Structural, which I am sure you will miss very much. It surely is an excellent work. I have not heard whether May Marcus is able to analyze or not.

I told your S. S. class you did not forget them, and they all looked up as tickled as could be. They all seem to attend very well. Peter still teaches them. Johnson came back and took Charlie's class again. William's class all vanished. The school is increasing and great need of more teachers. I am sure you can give me some good hints in your next about conducting a Sunday School.

Don't say anything about the manner in which those flowers are put in.

Mary Hank ?