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Letter from Ezra S. Carr Jeanne C. Carr to John Muir, 1868 Aug 31

Ezra S. Carr

Jeanne C. Carr

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The incomparable view so when the
view is looked in fellow eyes
music finished their class to me a
fantasy of the life above and beyond
of that world rich communion it is
all their hours. Their joy is your joy
I have had great delight too in these days
New Home. You mean know this mountain
land I am told it is like Scotland only
fresher & greener. From miles from their place
there is a deep ravine between mountains
nearly 1000 ft above the level of the sea
Plateau on which the village lies. This
ravine in state rocks is filled with great
granite boulders banks of fallen trees
banks of sphagnum made two. In places all
manners of rich woods & low with
Cumbrian rocks & decaying logs - one spot of peat
land in a bowl of pure water was
in soft grey slate in the out door
study of my friend Mr. H. whose picture
not the Church in their fidelity to the

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My dear, dear friend
I had worried not a little
and had tried in every possible way
to get word of you & would if I could
as well after work went by a paper
to fact that the probability was only
too strong that the fever had prevailed
you so greatly had finally conquered
your slight strength. I was indeed
very hearted. How in my old days
I remember with James Hooper a fellow
I remember of your dear my friend for
an antidote of a century. I have talked
of you as led for your presence you
until they were in the air that
the best is found. Your letter came
last evening. So Carl was here to
visit with me. Had only a few days

Now I will tell you about ourselves
 or can design to be in the University in the
 United States. In May I decided to spend the
 summer in Kentucky. I left and found in-
 forming a Mr. Stone's family to occupy an
 hundred of Octopus. But I had not been
 away two weeks when Dr. Cairns called out
 home furniture. Everything but books and
 pictures, and Cairns on Octopus after talking
 the meeting of the Scientific Association at
 Chicago. He was now considering an invita-
 tion to stay in Kentucky, and had
 been balancing the against the desire to
 attend it at home and his decision in
 favor of the latter on account of the
 climate and for the sake of the boys
 who were too young to go into business away
 from home. It is also impossible
 of leaving at Buenos Ayres, which
 involves considerable expenditure. And I
 am the more, and I am the more, you
 regard what we determine to do, I
 am the more the Catalogue of books
 for the University of Kentucky, and
 I am the more - I am the more

will never be so dear as my former
 California, I shall find. I always do
 only from books in which I can almost
 see the Father's face. I shall not love any but
 I love. Dear John, it would seem almost
 worse to find you of it. I hope to see
 Octopus near each other. And of course
 to the University. I wish to call you out
 there. Your faculty of course would
 be unwilling to allow me to go. I
 I am sure that I shall find you
 but from the fact that I am the
 more to the University, the University
 and Government from the University
 Confederation. But I do not see the
 necessity of it. I am the more
 great of the University, who
 made me this one of the
 lightest of men and through his
 hands he has set me out in
 his hands. I am the more
 to the University, I am the more
 the University of the University of
 the University of the University of

...the... at the
... of potatoes...
... the beautiful...
... to further the plans of God...
... in not less glad than I am
... of your welfare & congratulate
... on the restoration of your health. I
... shall see you in Pacific Coast before
... of the year. Direct your letters to
... Co. St. Louis.
... and they will be forwarded to me
... delay.

I have a great deal to say. But this day
was all appropriated before your letter came
under a bridge. So I must say good bye
know by this to know how much I love
and your...
I am your affectionate friend
and your affectionate friend
and your affectionate friend
and your affectionate friend

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... nature. The few days in which
... after these nine years of
... after the year of bloodshed in which
... his life had been spared. I shall never forget
... had taken me in his wagon along
... the Rutland road within a mile of the sea.
I did not know the way, but he could
... take him a straight line than I did
... across fragrant pasture lands through
... a hill forest of hemlock & spruce. Down the
... banks are great boulders up the bed of the
... engine mounts. There he sat, his coat of white
... bush poles holding a lonely printing, and I
... seated myself on a bank among the thick
... ferns and watched him at his work. He
... sang - and he did a hermit's hymn, perched
... in a mossy maple over his head. He had
... gray hair & gray he was repeating to him-
... self some lines of Emerson's words. He
... he has nobody wants. What he has he needs
... not wants. I took up the line I was
... leaning my back against his, and then the
... dear old fellow looked at me, moved along
... on his seat, and beckoned me to come. I sat
... myself beside him - and he kept on a half

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There was something in the lights on his
features - the throats singing all the time - you
know how! - they were by Hope's side & he
spoke to me - I had his arm round me - I
I have waited twenty seven years for this day
with you - I could afford to. I said for
you - I am not of the peevish element;
and there we spoke soul to soul of the lessons
we had learned, the glances our eyes have seen,
and the fulness of life to which we aspire.
We had our dinner in one lovely spot, and
supper in another - I went into the little room
with a dozen half grown hemlocks, & carpet
with Hypnum Splendens when my friend brought
his things an' about all for me I found
I had to leave them, but the next
morning my brother's wife went with me & we
spent two days there, and the week after took
my two little nephews - Fred & Geo. & Albin
a boy and two put up a tent close by the
bench back only on the edge of the ravine
with a fine view of slate stones, beds of hem-
lock boughs, and stand a lone beautiful
mead. My sister came up with her lovely music
friend from Boston in whom I found an excellent
betanick, and we had a real among masses
of ferns & music of wild birds and splendor of nature
scenery. The week after that Dr Carr came,
caught the infection of our delights & took
me to Slidell a wild Cascade saw factory
and with a view of the real mountains
and the great Lacatlan are only spurs

Charles Sanderson the foremost music friend
was our guide - and from that we came back
to find Western friends to go over it all
with them. So the summer has been steeped
in out of door delight, and yet almost
daily I have said 'if I knew that it were
worth with you, the days would be brighter'.
Because you see dear John it was to South
America you were sent, & I thought of your
own happy things of Niagara that would
prolong & add that would bloom there as
trace of you - not so much as a paper would
when you perished. Thank God for the
good news, and I will say a word

There has been a quick develop-
ment of material wealth in this state
since I left it through the opening of
unnumerable quarries of marble and slate.
It is wonderful to see the hills opened &
leaf by leaf of the rocky strata unfolded
to see the iron horse steaming through these
quiet valleys. I hear the accents of
many foreign tongues. So I see how
soon there will be one great nationality
one great family when so lately were
many opposed and conflicting na-

Castleton, Vt.,
Aug. 31, 1868.

My dear, dear friend,

You can hardly imagine the delight which filled my heart and eyes at the welcome sight of your handwriting after this long silence. I had worried not a little, and had tried in every possible way to get word of and recover you. I had as week after week went by, begun to feel that the probabilities were only too strong that the fever which prostrated you so greatly had finally conquered your slight strength. I was indeed heavy hearted. Here in my old Vermont home, with James Hope, a fellow-countryman of yours and my friend for a quarter of a century, I have talked of you, asked for you, mourned you, until they rejoice with me that the lost is found. Your letter came last evening. Dr. Carr was here to enjoy it with me. Ned and Allie are here also. The other boys are in Wisconsin.

Now I will tell you about ourselves. Dr. Carr resigned in the University in the winter. In May I decided to spend the summer in Vermont. I left in June expecting a St. Louis family to occupy our house until October. But I had not been away two weeks when Dr. Carr sold out - house, furniture, everything but books and pictures, and came on east, after attending the meeting of the Scientific Association at Chicago. We are now considering an invitation to stay in an eastern institution and balancing it against the desire to settle in California. I am decidedly in favor of the latter, on account of the climate and for the sake of the boys who are too young to go into business away from home. We have also a possible opening at Buenos Ayres, S.A., which deserves consideration. We shall know very soon, and I will write you again what we determine to do. If we live in California I wish to go where there is lovely scenery, and a mild climate. I know the flowers will never be so dear as my Linneas and Calypsos. I shall find, I always do, sweet souls, pure souls, in which I can almost see the Father's face. I shall not lose any that I leave. Dear John, it would seem blessed to me to find you if I go. I hope we may settle near each other. And if we go to South America I wish to call you out there. Your faculty of invention would be invaluable to others and to yourself.

Last winter was especially rich in Madison. I wrote you at length of our visit from Paul Du Chailier, the African traveller, "the Gorilla man" from M. Sarmiento, the Minister to our Government from the Argentine Confederation, and last, best and sweetest of all from Ole Bull, the great Norwegian violinist who made one day an eternity of delight to me and through many evenings led me out on waves of harmony, beyond the regions of time and toil. Of men he is the Royalest I have known, of spirits one of the purest, of artists the incomparable. And so when Nature is locked in fetters of ice -- her music hushed, there comes to me a foretaste of the life above and beyond of deep and rich communion, and in all these hours, these joys, you are somehow mixed as if you had a place in them. I believe you have. The company of "the Elect" is not so large that we may not easily count them that are in it. I have had great delight, too, in these summer hours. You never knew this mountain land. I am told it is like Scotland only fresher and greener. Four miles from this place there is a deep ravine between mountains nearly 2000 ft. above the level of the elevated plateau on which the village lies. This ravine is slate rock, is filled with great granite boulders, trunks of fallen trees, banks of Sphagnum, Madotheca, Hypnea, all manner of rich mosses and liverworts creeping over rocks and decaying logs. One spot of peculiar loveliness -- a bowl of pure water worn in soft grey slate, is the out-door studio of my friend Hope, whose pictures rival Mr. Church's in their fidelity to the truth of nature. The June day in which I found him there after these nine years of absence, after the year of bloodshed in which his life had been mixed, I shall never forget. A friend had taken me in his wagon along the Rutland road within a mile of the glen. I did not know the way, but a bee could not have taken a straighter line than I did to him -- across fragrant pasture land, through a hill forest of hemlock and beech, down the steep banks, over great boulders, up the bed of the singing rivulet. There he sat, his easel of white birch poles holding a lovely painting, and I seated myself on a bank among the thick ferns and watched him at his work. He sang, and so did a hermit thrush perched in a moose maple over his head. He had grown bald and gray, he was repeating

[Letter of Mrs. Carr, to John Muir, dated Aug. 31, 1868, continued]

to himself some lines of Emerson's "Woodnotes", "What he has nobody wants. What he has, he hides, not vaunts". I took up the lines and went on, tuning my voice down to his, and then the dear old fellow looked round, moved along on his seat, and beckoned me to come. I seated myself beside him, and he kept on a half hour or so touching in the lights on his picture, the thrush singing all the time, you know how! By and by Hope laid aside his palette and put his arm round me. "Jenny, I have waited twenty-seven years for this day with you!" "You could afford to", I said, "for you and I are not made of the 'perishing elements'". And then we spoke soul to soul of the lessons we had learned, the glories our eyes have seen, and the fulness of life to which we aspire. We had our dinner in one lovely spot, our supper in another. I went into the little room made of a dozen half-grown hemlocks and carpeted with Hypnum splendens where my friend prays (his prayers are almost all praises, I find).

Well, I had to leave him, but the next week my brother's wife went with me and we spent two days there, and the week after I took my two little nephews, Fred and Eno, and Allie, my own boy, and we put up a tent close by Hope's birch bark shanty on the edge of the ravine, made a fireplace of slate stones, beds of hemlock boughs, and stayed a long beautiful week. My sister came up with her lovely music friend from Boston in whom I found an excellent botanist, and we had a noel among mosses and ferns and music of wild birds and splendor of mountain scenery. The week after that Dr. Carr came, caught the infection of our delight and took me to Llumer, a wild cascade some forty miles north, among the real mountains, for those about Castleton are only 'spores', Charlie Sanderson, the aforesaid music friend, was our guide, and from that we came back to find western friends and to go over it all with them. So the summer has been steeped in out-of-door delight, and yet almost daily I have said, "If I knew that it were well with you the days would be brighter". Because you see, dear John, it was to South America you were bent, and I thought of noxious hateful things, of miasmas that would poison and ants that would devour and leave no trace of you - not so much as a paper to tell when you perished. Thank God for the good news.

There has been a vast development of material wealth in this state since I left it, through the opening of innumerable quarries of marble and slate. It is wonderful to see the hills opened and leaf by leaf of the rocky strata unfolded, to see the iron horse steaming through these quiet valleys and hear the accents of many foreign tongues. So I see how soon there will be one great nationality, one great family, where so lately were many opposed and conflicting nations. There are enough to work at this furnace of politics -- let us remain as we are meek students of the beautiful laws -- all they can do is to further the plans of God; we can worship and adore for our portion.

Dr. Carr is not less glad than I am to know of your welfare and congratulates you on the restoration of your health. I hope we shall see you in Pacific lands before the end of the year. Direct your letters to Castleton, Rutland Co., Vt., care Dr. H. F. Smith, and they will be forwarded to me without much delay.

I have a great deal to say, but this day was all appropriated before your letter came in as a wedge! So I must say goodbye. Know by these tokens how unwillingly we lost you; and believe us,

Always your friends,

E. S. & Jeanne Carr.