



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

1899-11-02

Letter from R[ichard] W[atson] Gilder to John Muir, 1899 Nov 2.

Richard Watson Gilder

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New York Nov. 2, 1899

My dear John Muir,

Here is the letter I wrote a year ago (adding
to it a bit since) I was to a friend who ran at the farm before
you visit, & contains an account of your advent.

Tell you the news ^{a letter from Four Brooks Farm. Sincerely} R. W. Fielder

From Four Brooks Farm?

Well,

But there is news to tell!

As long as my arm.

"What, a new she-calf born

To this world forlorn?"

Few things are finer

Than a fine heifer-calf,

And most things are minor;

But it 's better by half -

The news that I speak of;

Besides now we reek of

Such farm news as this:

You were here, when, what bliss!

Alpha dropped on our planet,

And we all ran to scan it.

How it staggered and swayed,

Groped, puckered, sucked, prayed

On its knees, or it seemed so;

But its mother never dreamed so,

For there! what fun! Wisht!

How the old cow it punished,

With blows of its nose

05086

Till she rocked on her toes!

- When its warm food it takes it -
 Your word, Herr Professor,
 Of "instinct" no less a
 Mystery makes it;
 And so, Dr Baldwin,
 Whatever it 's called in
 Your books, 't is as queer,
 As - lots of things here;-
 How the soft thing, with silk down,
 Had learned to bring milk down
 Without any teaching,
 Example or preaching.

- But the old cows so quick went
 To breeding, that such news,
 Calves being frequent,
 No longer is much news;
 If the cows keep enthused up
 We 'll soon be to Phi
 And next summer will see
 All the Greek letters used up!

- No this is not the news

From Four Brooks Farm -
Nor the ice-pond built
Where Hermit Brook spilt;
Nor the great pine we found
Thunder-burst in the middle
And spread on the ground
Like the strings of a fiddle,
Not of this, not of that,-
Such news now were flat,
But something far racier!
Muir, of Alaska,
Path-finder, cliff-basker,
Known of bird, known of deer
(Grizzlies know him, won't harm),
John Muir has been here,
And has hitched to the farm
A great blanket glacier!
Don't flout it! don't doubt it!
'T is as sure and as clear
As if on the rock
With chisel and knock,
A giant of eld
His message had spelled,
And ten thousand years after
We read it,- with laughter

05086

And loyal acclaim,-
His ancestry, name,
The work he was doing,
The place whence he came,
And the journey pursuing.
"This giant of eld.
"See his path," said John Muir,-
"Here it held
North-west to south-east
Slow and sure
Like a king at a feast
Eating down through the list:
Inch by inch, crunch by crunch;
Long Mountain was his lunch,
Of this valley - one gobble,-
Then he dined upon Cobble!
This big boulder, he bore it;
Through eons uncounted
That range there he mounted,
He tore it.
Rock-grinding; strata bending;
Always pausing; never ending;
O what a grand rumpus!
Now, down on your knees,"
Said Muir, "and you please,

And out with your compass!"
(By the way - 't was Thoreau's
In the good long-agoes,)
And then, in a trice,
Where the quartz glistens white,
Smooth as ice,
In the clear slanting light
The fine striæ show,-
Like arrows they go,-
North-west to south-east
Just as John Muir pleased!

--And as he spoke I saw the huge creature glide
With speed that scarcely lessened or increased
From the far pole to ocean's melting tide.
Through countless boreal hours
It moved on its torn pathway deep and wide;
Its gelid bulk I saw
Crunching the mountain tops with monstrous maw;-
To make our Four Brooks Farm with all its flocks
and flowers.

R. W. Gilder

Fall of 1898.

Gilders
4 Brook Farm
Rhyme

Go rolling down to Rio
Roll down roll down to Rio

Editor of The Indian Rubber Co

Wentworths to the falls of Uaupes
Symptom Channel - Straits Magdalen

Amazon begins to rise in Nov, increases
in volume till June then falls until
the end of October.

The Madeira rises & falls 2 mos
earlier

The Amazon Steam Navigation Co
English

State of Para yields 35 % of the Amazon
basin timber

The Casar tree grows wild in great
abundance

Probably not 25 % of the
Am. basin cultivated

Quitos 2300

Gilders on Blowers
4 Brook Farm