



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

1912-01-01

Letter from Charles N. Elliot to John Muir, [ca.1912 ?].

Charles N. Elliot

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Charles N. Elliot
Architect

325 Failing Building,
Portland, Oregon,

Dear Mr. Muir:

I am at a loss how to adequately express my appreciation of your gift of "Stickeen", which has just reached me. I would that I might in some more tangible way than words, show you how deeply your delicate kindness affects me. I have always loved your story of the little dog companion of your dangerous Alaskan adventure, and the book containing it -- a gift from its writer -- will ever be one of my most prized possessions. As I have said, I wish it were possible to show my appreciation in some other way than a mere letter -- but I cannot in any way give you the pleasure your act has given me, so much remain in your debt, not alone for this gift but for your good letter, your inscription in "My First Summer in the Sierra" and the perennial pleasure and help your writings bring to me. You see I am hopelessly in your debt.

Regarding "Stickeen" -- not alone to you is his little dog-soul immortal, but your touching tale has made him a member of that immortal animal company to which belongs "Rab and His Friends", "Black Beauty" and others whose soul-workings have been revealed to us by sympathetic human eyes and pens.

I had intended writing you for one more favor -- which I now hesitate to ask -- in view of your generosity, but feel impelled to risk troubling you, though I hope to be forgiven. I noted in a New York paper that you had written an appreciation of Mr. E. H. Harriman, published by Doubleday, Page & Co. for distribution to public libraries only -- not obtainable by purchase at the bookstore or elsewhere. I had our Library obtain a copy for their shelves and have it before me as I write, but I would like a copy of my very own, not only because of its author, but also because of its subject. Mr. Harriman always seemed to me one of America's real noblemen. If I could buy the book I would not ask what I do -- but, under the circumstances, may I hope that you will write the publishers to send me a copy? If there is any reason why this is not to your liking, forgive me and disregard my request.

I enclose a copy of my daughter's "Class Poem" which is an exact expression of the sweet child herself. The thoughts are all her own, and while the composition lacks artistic finish, it is interesting as the expression of a sweet, beautiful and unspoiled nature.

Again thanking you and with affectionate regards,

Ever faithfully yours,

Charles M. Elliot

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CLASS POEM - JUNE '12
LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL, PORTLAND, ORE.

How good to gain this sunny, long-sought knoll,
All shining with the light of dreams come true.
Four years toiled we to reach the beck'ning goal,
Rejoicing that "to dare" can mean "to do".

'Tis sweet to tarry here among the flowers
Without a care - our youthful labor done;
To dream away the idly-floating hours
And feel the pride that comes with purpose won.

But shall we like dumb brutes without an aim
Rest ever 'neath this little laurel's shade,
And watch life's sun in high midheaven flame,
Then sink to silence ere our mark is made?

Nay, see'st thou not yon distant mountain crest,
Rose-glowing in the light of dawning day?
'Tis called Success - go, give the world your best,
Climb onward, upward; shining gleams the way!

And as when Spring has climbed the highest peak,
And, looking back, surveys her joyful course,
Finds all the world is laughing in her wake,
Each step flower-jeweled, and each smile the source

Of streams of joy that swell and flood the world;
Each blossomed breath - Life's heartaches blown away,
Each fairy touch - man's pleasure-store joy-pearled;
An earth transformed - an Eden from cold clay;

So let us strive to make our way bloom bright
With radiant joy, with hope and truth and love;
To make each deed a shining glory-light
That points men's souls from earth to thoughts above:

Till, looking from the summit of the years,
A thousand barren hearts have burst to bloom
From seeds we sowed and watered with our tears -
The world more joyous for our having come.

Far nobler than some selfish object won,
Our deeds nor time nor death can e'er destroy.
Thru' us God's perfect plan more nearly done,
When all the world is joy, forever joy!

Romaine Elliot.

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