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Reminiscence of John Muir by Whitehead, James

James Whitehead

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Emporia, Kansas.

March 7, 1917.

Mr. William Frederick Bade,
323 Marlborough St,
Boston, Mass.

My Dear Sir:-

Your letter acknowledging receipt of John Muir matter received this a-m- The paper containing article-"Recollections of John Muir"- must have gone astray as I mailed it myself. I send you in envelope another copy as you will be more sure to get it in this way.

But for the disclosures of John Muir his ^{fathers} severity with his children would never have been known. So far as I know, and I lived in that neighborhood for 30 years, no one thought or dreamed of Mr. Muir's punishing his children as John afterwards claimed he did. The difference between us was, we told others about it, the Muir children never did, they bore their punishment in silence. This in my judgement was the reason his brother David sought to restrain him. Apropos to this - Ploubet in his Notes on the International S.S. Lessons" for 1915 has this to say relative to "The Solomon method" & its application to John Muir-Lesson Feb. 21., 1915 on "The Death of Eli and his Sons"

"He that spareth the rod hateth his son", is as true to day as it ever was, if "rod" is interpreted as not merely "a switch", but as any kind of wise punishment. The famous naturalist, JOHN MUIR in his autobiography, represents his Scotch father as greatly over-doing the "rod" business. But JOHN MUIR turned out to be a wonderfully fine man."-- Prefaced with the remark- homes,
"The most of those who go astray from religious not all, could have been saved by wise restraint and punishment."

You may have been told- though it may not be of value or pertinent to your plan - Of Mr Muir's investing largely in books, religious, & his traversing that entire country with horse & buggy and leaving them in the homes of farmers who were unable to purchase & after a stated period going over the same route collecting the same & leaving others- And this kept up for years. His way of doing good

The years passed on, the Muir family had scattered, one or two of the younger girls alone remained at home, so Mr Muir sold the place known as "The Hickory Hill Farm". A sale was called at which the stock, farming impliments and part of the household furniture was offered for sale. An immense throng gathered. During the sale Mr Muir stood near the auctioneer, if in his zeal to make a good sale he mistated the facts Mr Muir would say in his scotch dialect "Na, Na, mon tell the truth, tell the truth, dinna lie, it'll no pay, its an auld horse ye're seeling noo".

A neighbor who had bought a horse asked me to accompany him when he went for the same, & some corn he had purchased also - Mr Muir was directing the delivery of the goods or articles purchased. An old scotchman named John was weighing the grain, Mr M. happened to be near when John was, he thought, scrimping on the weight - "put on another ear John, put on another ear, it's an awfa sin John, an aufa sin ta gie licht weight". And that to when the scales balanced & the weight correct. John as if to "get even" for the unmerited rebuke would put on two instead of one ear, at which Mr Muir nodded approval & walked away. And it was from this man John Muir got his honesty & desire for a "square deal". It characterized Daniel Muir in ALL his dealings with his fellow man -

While this may not be of intrest I take the liberty of submitting the same for your personal benefit & information.

Trusting you may receive this letter with inclosure, (I would ask also, a list of books the publication of which you have supervised)

I am very Sincerely Yours,

James Whitehead