

interests, more intelligent sympathy and active support would be accorded to those who are endeavoring to extend the bounds of knowledge.

In the present world-crisis we are oppressed by the feeling that the old conceptions of truth have failed us, but our despondency is lessened by the realization of the progress which the efforts of investigators must bring when they are heartily approved, sustained and strengthened by universities fully awakened to the necessity for intellectual leadership in the development of the newer civilization.

STEWART PATON

JOHN MUIR

ON the day before Christmas John Muir, geologist, explorer, naturalist, author, joined the great majority. Though seventy-six years old there had been no apparent decay of his remarkable faculties. Nor was there any painful waiting for the end. Death found him almost in the midst of his literary activities, which he had laid aside for a brief interval in order that he might spend the Christmas holidays with one of his daughters in southern California. On the 27th of December a large concourse of friends gathered from near and far at his home near Martinez, California, to hear the last rites spoken over his remains. He was buried, beside his wife, under trees planted by his own hand, in the beautiful family burial-ground among the Alhambra hills.

John Muir was born at Dunbar, Scotland, April 21, 1838. He was the third in a family of seven children. His early education was received at the grammar school in Dunbar. When he was eleven years old his father emigrated with his family to the United States. They settled on a farm near Portage, Wisconsin. There he indulged to the full his fondness for the life of the wilderness. His book entitled "The Story of My Boyhood and Youth" gives a pleasing picture of this period of his life. He also developed an extraordinary aptness for mechanical inventions of

various kinds. Some of these are described in the same volume. In due time he went to the University of Wisconsin. His university career is best described in his own words: "Although I was four years at the university," he wrote two years ago, "I did not take the regular course of studies, but instead picked out what I thought would be most useful to me, particularly chemistry, which opened a new world, and mathematics and physics, a little Greek and Latin, botany and geology. I was far from satisfied with what I had learned, and should have stayed longer. Anyhow I wandered away on a glorious botanical and geological excursion, which has lasted nearly fifty years and is not yet completed, always happy and free, poor and rich, without thought of diploma or of making a name, urged on and on through endless inspiring, Godful beauty."

It was in the early sixties that Muir started off on those wanderings that finally brought him to California. In the early seventies his first brief communications on Yosemite and the Sierra Nevada began to appear in San Francisco and eastern papers. Soon his articles began to be published in the *Overland Monthly*, *Harper's*, *Scribner's*, the *Century*, and the *Atlantic*. A *Reference List to the published writings of John Muir*, prepared by Professor Cornelius B. Bradley in 1897, contains the dates and titles of nearly one hundred and fifty such articles and communications. At that time he had published only one book, "The Mountains of California," which appeared in 1894. But in "Picturesque California," edited by him in 1888, he had contributed articles on "Peaks and Glaciers of the Sierra," "The Passes of the High Sierra," "Yosemite Valley," "Mt. Shasta," "Washington and Puget Sound," and "The Basin of the Columbia River." In the *Proceedings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science* he was represented by papers on "The Formation of Mountains in the Sierra" (Vol. XXIII.), and "The Post-glacial History of the *Sequoia Gigantea*" (Vol. XXV.).

It seems remarkable now that a man of such

outstanding ability as a naturalist and a writer should not have published his first book until he was in the fifties. But Muir found himself very gradually. He spent long periods in exploring and living among the mountains of the Sierra Nevada. On these trips he endured many hardships and fared very frugally. He made copious notes of all his observations and accompanied them with surprisingly exact and often beautiful drawings. His studies were chiefly of a geological, botanical and physiographical nature. The extent and effects of glaciation in the Sierra Nevada received his particular attention, and he was first among geologists to work toward conclusions, on this subject, which in more amplified form now hold the field.

John Muir was an inveterate traveler. During his earlier years he went on foot through parts of the southern states and Canada. In 1876 he had become a member of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey and visited Alaska, where he made many canoe trips and explorations. The great Muir Glacier, which he discovered, bears his name. In 1878 he visited the Arctic regions on the U. S. *Corwin* in search of the De Long expedition, and in 1899 became a member of the Harriman expedition to Alaska. In 1903-4 he visited Russia, Siberia, Manchuria, India, Australia and New Zealand. In 1911 he made a trip up the Amazon in South America, and he went to Africa in 1912. All these travels were undertaken for purposes of study primarily, and served to enrich still further his large stores of knowledge.

The publication of his book on *The Mountains of California* made him known to the world as a writer of exceptional power. His vivid, easy, poetical style was wrought out slowly and with great care. He refused to be hurried in his work, and rewrote his chapters a dozen times if he thought he could improve them in point of expression. His second book, "Our National Parks," shows his literary style at its best. It appeared in 1901 and reflects his eager activity in the interest of forest preservation and the establishment of national parks and reservations. This was

followed by "Stickeen, the Story of a Dog," 1909; "My First Summer in the Sierra," 1911; "The Yosemite," 1912; and "The Story of My Boyhood and Youth," in 1913. A book on his Alaskan explorations was practically completed at the time of his death.

A number of high academic honors came to Mr. Muir in his later years. Harvard University bestowed upon him an honorary M.A. in 1896; the University of Wisconsin an LL.D. in 1897; Yale University a Litt.D. in 1911; and the University of California an LL.D. in 1913. He was one of the founders of the Sierra Club, in 1892, and its president for twenty-two years. The outings for which this organization has become famous were due to his initiative. At the time of his death he was president, also, of the Society for the Preservation of National Parks, and vice-president of the California Associated Societies for the Conservation of Wild Life. It should be noted, too, that he was a member of the Pacific Coast Committee of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, charged with the task of preparing for the San Francisco meeting in 1915.

In the death of John Muir the world has lost one of the most remarkable men of our time. To the last he preserved the eager interest of a child in all the phenomena of nature. His unaffected simplicity and modesty remained unchanged, though fame literally wore a path to his door. He knew how to translate his enthusiasms into human benefits, for no American citizen did more for the establishment of national parks, and the conservation of the great forests of the west. In the concluding chapter of his book, "Our National Parks," his sentences are aflame with the passion of a Hebrew prophet who sees the vision of the coming age and its needs. It may be that the present generation is able to appraise justly the services of John Muir as a naturalist and explorer. John Muir the seer, the writer, the father and guardian of Yosemite, awaits the appraisal of a later and greater day.

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