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Muir Knoll dedicatory exercises in honor of John Muir. 1918

University of Wisconsin

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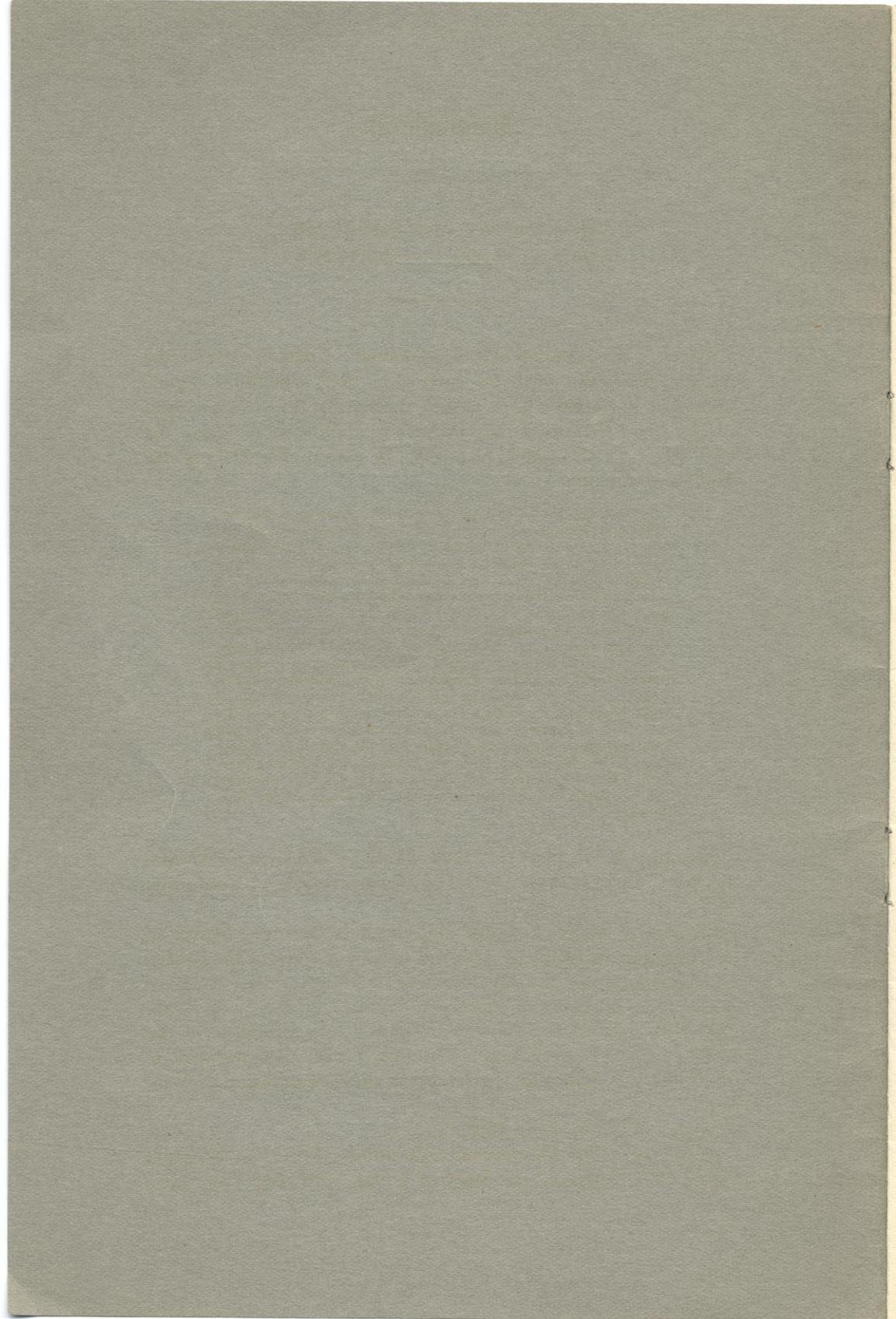
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The University of Wisconsin

Muir Knoll
Dedicatory Exercises

In Honor of
John Muir

Muir Knoll
Tuesday Afternoon
June Eighteen
1918



Biographical

Born at Dunbar, Scotland, April 21, 1838

Died at Los Angeles, December 24, 1914

Attended the grammar school in Dunbar. Came to Green Lake County, Wisconsin, with his parents in 1849, and for a decade labored on his father's farm, getting during this time but one term of schooling. Studied at the University of Wisconsin during the early 60's. Of this period of his life, he says in *The Story of My Boyhood and Youth*:

"Although I was four years at the University, 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 a diploma or of making a name, urged on and on through endless, inspiring, Godful beauty. * * * From the top of a hill on the north side of Lake Mendota, I gained a last wistful, lingering view of the beautiful University grounds and buildings where I had spent so many hungry and happy and hopeful days. There with streaming eyes I bade my blessed Alma Mater farewell. But I was only leaving one university for another, the University of Wisconsin for the University of the Wilderness."

Honorary A.M., Harvard, 1896; LL.D., University of Wisconsin, 1897; Litt.D., Yale, 1911; LL.D., University of California, 1913.

Member of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey; Member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters; Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science; Member of the Washington Academy of Sciences; President of the Sierra Club, 1892-1914, and of the American Alpine Club; President of the Society for the Preservation of National Parks; Vice-president of the California Associated Societies for the Conservation of Wild Life.

Settled in California in 1868.

Author of: *The Mountains of California*, 1894; *Our National Parks*, 1901; *Stickeen, the Story of a Dog*, 1909; *My First Sum-*

mer in the Sierras, 1911; *The Yosemite*, 1912; *The Story of My Boyhood and Youth*, 1913; *Travels in Alaska*, 1915; *Letters to a Friend* (Mrs. Ezra S. Carr, 1866-69), 1915; *A Thousand Mile Walk to the Gulf*, 1916; *The Cruise of the Corwin*, 1917; about one hundred and fifty articles in magazines and newspapers mainly on physiography and the natural history of the Pacific coast and Alaska.

Editor of : *Picturesque California*, 1888.

Visited Alaska in 1879 (discovering the Muir Glacier), 1880, 1897, and 1899 (with the Harriman expedition); went as scientific and literary expert into the Arctic Ocean with the government expedition in search of the ill-fated De Long, 1881; visited Norway and Switzerland in 1893; traveled in Russia, Siberia, Manchuria, India, Australia, and New Zealand in 1903-04; visited South America in 1911, and Africa in 1912.

Labored many years in the cause of forest preservation and the establishment of national reservations and parks. In affectionate recognition of these labors, a magnificent park adjacent to San Francisco, at the foot of Mount Tamalpais, was, in 1907, presented to the government by Congressman William Kent, and named Muir Woods.

Was married in 1880 to Louise Strentzel, the daughter of a Polish physician, who came to California in 1849, but later found his gold in a fruit ranch near Martinez, which Muir ultimately inherited, and managed successfully, though, in so doing, he deemed himself "condemned to penal servitude." And as for the money: "Man, I'm like to die for the shame of it!" he exclaimed to Dr. Young.

Two daughters, Mrs. Helen Muir Funk and Mrs. Wanda Muir Hanna, live in California.

A bronze bust of Muir, executed by the New York artist Pietro, and presented to the University by Hon. Thomas E. Brittingham, of Madison, was unveiled in December, 1916, on which occasion President Van Hise made a memorable address.

Program

HON. THEODORE M. HAMMOND, Presiding

Introductory

By Mr. Hammond, President of the Regents

Song—The Blue Bells of Scotland*

By the Assemblage

Dedication of Muir Knoll

By Dr. Charles H. Vilas, '63, Member of the Regents

Address—John Muir in College Days

By Judge Milton S. Griswold, '63

Address—John Muir's Relation to Modern Science

By Professor Charles E. Allen, '99

A Word from a Roommate

By Mr. Charles E. Vroman, '68

Presentation of the Muir Knoll Marker

By Mr. Thomas S. Morris, '00, President of the John
Muir Walking Club

Song—Auld Lang Syne

By the Assemblage

* In the summer of 1879, while exploring glaciers in Alaska with Muir, Dr. S. Hall Young was seriously hurt, and lay helpless on the brink of a precipice. Muir was on the other side of the chasm, and called to him to hold fast and keep cool, while he crossed the rift higher up in order to reach him. Then he started off, whistling The Blue Bells of Scotland, and singing snatches of Scotch songs, evidently to cheer the one in agony and danger.

Songs for the Program

The Blue Bells of Scotland

:: Oh, where, tell me where, is your Highland laddie
gone? ::

He's gone with streaming banners where noble deeds
are done,

And it's oh, in my heart I wish him safe at home.

:: Oh, where, tell me where, did your Highland laddie
dwell? ::

He dwelt in bonnie Scotland, where blooms the sweet
blue bell,

And it's oh, in my heart I lo'e my laddie well.

Auld Lang Syne

Should auld acquaintance be forgot

And never bro't to min'?

Should auld acquaintance be forgot

And days o' lang syne?

For auld lang syne, my dear,

For auld lang syne,

We'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet

For auld lang syne.

We twa hae run about the braes,

And pu't the gowans fine;

But we've wandered mony a weary foot

Sin' auld lang syne.

Sin' auld lang syne, my dear,

Sin' auld lang syne,

We'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet

For auld lang syne.

Muir's First Lesson in Botany

From *My Boyhood and Youth*

I received my first lesson in botany from a student by the name of Griswold, who is now County Judge of the County of Waukesha, Wisconsin. In the University he was often laughed at on account of his anxiety to instruct others, and his frequently saying, with fine emphasis, "Imparting instruction is my greatest enjoyment." One memorable day in June, when I was standing on the stone steps of the north dormitory, Mr. Griswold joined me and at once began to teach. He reached up, plucked a flower from an overspreading branch of a locust tree, and, handing it to me, said, "Muir, do you know what family this tree belongs to?"

"No," I said, "I don't know anything about botany."

"Well, no matter," said he, "what is it like?"

"It's like a pea flower," I replied.

"That's right. You're right," he said, "it belongs to the Pea Family."

"But how can that be," I objected, "when the pea is a weak clinging, straggling herb, and the locust a big, thorny hardwood tree?"

"Yes, that is true," he replied, "as to the difference in size, but it is also true that in all their essential characters they are alike, and therefore they must belong to one and the same family. Just look at the peculiar form of the locust flower; you see that the upper petal, called the banner, is broad and erect, and so is the upper petal of the pea flower; the two lower petals, called the wings, are outspread and wing-shaped; so are those of the pea; and the two petals below the wings are united on their edges, curved upward, and form what is called the keel, and so you see are the corresponding petals of the pea flower. And now look at the stamens and pistils. You see that nine of the ten stamens have their filaments united into a sheath around the pistil, but the tenth stamen has its filament free. These are very marked characters, are they not? And, strange to say, you will find them the same in the tree and in the vine. Now look at the ovules or seeds of the locust, and you will see that they are arranged in a pod or legume like those of the pea. And look at the leaves.

You see the leaf of the locust is made up of several leaflets, and so also is the leaf of the pea. Now taste the locust leaf."

I did so and found that it tasted like the leaf of the pea. Nature has used the same seasoning for both, though one is a straggling vine, the other a big tree.

"Now, surely you cannot imagine that all these similar characteristics are mere coincidences. Do they not rather go to show that the Creator in making the pea vine and the locust tree had the same idea in mind, and that plants are not classed arbitrarily? Man has nothing to do with their classification. Nature has attended to all that, giving essential unity with boundless variety, so that the botanist has only to examine plants to learn the harmony of their relations."

This fine lesson charmed me and sent me flying to the woods and meadows in wild enthusiasm. Like everybody else, I was always fond of flowers, attracted by their external beauty and purity. Now my eyes were opened to their inner beauty, all alike revealing glorious traces of the thoughts of God, and leading on and on into the infinite cosmos. I wandered away at every opportunity, making long excursions round the lakes, gathering specimens and keeping them fresh in a bucket in my room to study at night after my regular class tasks were learned; for my eyes never closed on the plant glory I had seen.

Soon After Leaving College

(From *Muir's Notes*)

Oftentimes I had to sleep out without blankets, and also without supper or breakfast. But usually I had no great difficulty in finding a loaf of bread in the widely scattered clearings of the farmers. With one of these big backwoods loaves I was able to wander many a long wild mile, free as the winds in the glorious forests and bogs, gathering plants and feeding on God's abounding, inexhaustible beauty bread.

An Appreciation

BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT

(In *The Outlook*, 1915)

Our greatest nature-lover and nature-writer, the man who has done most in securing for the American people the incalculable benefit of appreciation of wild nature in his own land, is John Burroughs. Second only to John Burroughs, and in some respects ahead even of John Burroughs, was John Muir. Ordinarily, the man who loves the woods and the mountains, the trees, the flowers, and the wild things, has in him some indefinable quality of charm which appeals even to those sons of civilization who care for little outside of paved streets and brick walls. John Muir was a fine illustration of this rule. He was by birth a Scotchman—a tall and spare man, with the poise and ease natural to him who has lived much alone under conditions of labor and hazard. His was a dauntless soul, and also one brimming over with friendliness and kindliness.

He was emphatically a good citizen. Not only are his books delightful, not only is he the author to whom all may turn when they think of the Sierras, and northern glaciers, and the giant trees of the California slope, but he was also—what few nature-lovers are—a man able to influence contemporary thought and action on the subjects to which he has devoted his life. He was a great factor in influencing the thought of California and the thought of the entire country so as to secure the preservation of those great natural phenomena—wonderful canyons, giant trees, slopes of flower-spangled hillsides—which make California a veritable Garden of the Lord.

A Tribute

By DR. S. HALL YOUNG

(In *Alaska Days with John Muir*)

He lived aloft, exultant, unafraid.

* * * * *

He walked apart from men, yet loved his kind,
And brought them treasures from his larger store.
For them he delved in mines of richer gold.
Earth's messenger he was to human hearts.
The starry moss-flower from its dizzy shelf,
The ouzel, shaking forth its spray of song,
The glacial runlet, tinkling its clear bell,
The rose-of-morn, abloom on snowy heights—
Each sent by him a jewel-word of cheer.
Blind eyes he opened and deaf ears unstopped.
He lived aloft, apart. He talked with God
In all the myriad tongues of God's sweet world;
But still he came anear and talked with us,
Interpreting for God to list'ning men.

The great public service of John Muir was leading the nation, through his writings, to appreciate the grandeur of our mountains and the beauty and variety of their plant and animal life, and the consequent necessity for holding forever as a heritage for all the people the most precious of these great scenic areas. Probably to his leadership more than to that of any other man is due the adoption of the policy of national parks.—*President Van Hise.*

