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Alaska Days with John Muir

Samuel Hall Young



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"Muir's companion and owner of the dog Stickeen, provides a pleasant, enthusiastic version of some of the same mountain climbs and canoe trips, together with warm personal appreciation of Muir's character." - Bibliography Bulletin, Issues 51-60, June 1, 1912

"The writer's contribution lies in his power to reproduce the boyish enthusiasm of this master. He shows us that Muir talked better than he wrote, even though his books are masterpieces." -Springfield Republican, September 30, 1915

"Dr. Young's narrative is not only of absorbing interest but is of value for the light it throws upon the personality of a great naturalist and writer, John Muir." -Outlook, August 18, 1915

"Written in a style animated and vivid without being journalistic – a style not unlike that of the lover of glaciers himself." -The New York Times, November 14, 1915

"The author describes his first meeting with John Muir in Alaska in 1879: 'A hearty grip of the hand, and we seemed to coalesce at once in a friendship which to me at least, has been one of the very best things in a life full of blessings. I sat at his feet; and at the feet of his spirit I still sit, a student, absorbed, surrendered, as this 'priest of nature's inmost shrine' unfolds to me the secrets of his 'mountains of God.' Dr. Young was then a young missionary stationed at Fort Wrangell in southern Alaska. This book, made up of articles first printed in the Outlook, describes two journeys of exploration and discovery taken in company with John Muir in 1879 and 1890." -Book Review Digest, Volume 11, February, 1916

Samuel Hall Young, a Presbyterian clergyman, met John Muir when the great naturalist's steamboat docked at Fort Wrangell, in southeastern Alaska, where Young was a missionary to the Stickeen Indians. In Alaska Days with John Muir he describes this 1879 meeting: "A hearty grip of the hand and we seemed to coalesce in a friendship which, to me at least, has been one of the very best things in a life full of blessings."

This book, first published in 1915, describes two journeys of discovery taken in company with Muir in 1879 and 1880. Despite the pleas of his missionary colleagues that he not risk life and limb with "that wild Muir," Young accompanied Muir in the exploration of Glacier Bay. Upon Muir's return to Alaska in 1880, they traveled together and mapped the inside route to Sitka. Young describes Muir's ability to "slide" up glaciers, the broad Scotch he used when he was enjoying himself, and his natural affinity for Indian wisdom and theistic religion. From the gripping accounts of their near-disastrous ascent of Glenora Peak to Young's perspective on Muir's famous dog story "Stickeen," Alaska Days is an engaging record of a friendship grounded in the shared wonders of Alaska's wild landscapes.

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