

## John Burroughs

My Visit to the Home of John Burroughs was On  
October 23rd, 1917.

By Flora MacDonald.

That Burroughs was the world-famous naturalist, that his books are on all study tables, that his name is magic to the amateur Kodak lover, or that he is adored by not only the girls of Vassar, but of everywhere, was not my reason for wanting to visit him.

For thirty years, John Burroughs and Walt Whitman were friends. Meeting when John was thirty and Walt was fifty, their friendship and love and understanding of each other grew, nor did death have power to part them, for Walt Whitman is to-day a "Real Presence" in the life and consciousness of John Burroughs.

The day was splendid. It was about noon when I arrived at West Park and walked up and over towards the Hudson River, on whose banks is situated the home or homes of this epoch-making man.

I was expected and received a cordial welcome in a delightful bungalow, whose walls were covered with books, books and more books.

John Burroughs was all alone, and was just eating a luncheon prepared by himself and served on a napkin tablecloth on the corner of the kitchen table, remarking that it often happened that he had to wait on himself, and enjoyed doing it.

He showed me through the house and into the room of his secretary, physician and biographer, Dr. Clara Barrus, at the time giving a course of lectures in New York.

As he talked of this noted and splendid woman, I grew to love her as I found she belonged to the "Institution of The Dear Love of Comrades." Perhaps a dozen photographs were framed upon the walls of her room, and they were all of Walt Whitman.

He then said, "Now I'll take you to my study, while I tidy up; you see the Doctor is particular."

As we went out, I noticed that the broad verandahs were outdoor sleeping-rooms; possibly this was why John Burroughs, at eighty, was a young man. His voice was young, his step elastic and quick, his complexion clear and his whole being jaunty—yes, that is the word.

The joy of living was in his clear eye and love and cheer exuded from his being.

A little one-roomed place, with one door and a big chimney, some short way down the river was his study.

I was permitted to enter this shrine—he left me, but soon returned with a plate heaped with red, blue, purple and white grapes—his own growing and picked with his own hand.

I was alone and ate grapes and poked the hospitable fire, and looked about. A big day was being lived by me and I felt greedy to make every minute of the time count.