



1874-09-07

Letter from [John Muir] to Sarah [Muir Galloway], 1874 Sep7.

John Muir

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Oakland Sep 7th 1874

My dear Sister Sarah,

The nice fern leaf is already here on my table trembling in the breeze that comes sweeping across the San Fran bay from the Ocean. It is the Maiden hair (*Adiantum pedatum*) perhaps the most graceful & delicate of all the ferns of North America. It is found in almost every state, but in the Sierras it is yet more delicate & reaches higher perfection than in the moist shadowy dells of Wisconsin. It grows in our mountains up to an altitude of about

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9000 feet above the sea, Instead
of growing in soil as in Wis it
is found only as a rock fringe
where it is sheltered from storms &
is abundantly supplied with moisture
reaching its very highest development
where fed by & ~~grown~~ by the spray
of a waterfall.



It often occurs high
above the tops of pine-
trees as in the opposite figure
in the fringe (as) past wh ~~the~~ a
waterfall pours & on whose breath
its delicate fronds wave respond-
= ingly with a grace & tenderness
that no words can tell

3 Maidenhair in Cal.
There is one other *Adiantum Chilense*
wh. is not quite so beautiful & not
so much of a rock fern or mountainous

The tall ferns wh^{ch} you say were
"waving & making beautiful arches in
the shade of the oaks" are flowering
ferns (*Osmunda Claytoniana*)

I am glad to hear that you
all are so well & so naturally
engaged

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I am always ready glad to hear of Mr. Gulliver. I have seldom one more
human benevolence so so magnificent a kind. I have been very late. I remember
me to all your circle of younglings & to David & Agassiz & you will

How delightful it will be when
I can come to visit a year with
you all & see the plants & streams
& ponds of Wis. I will be a year
or two in the Lake Superior &
Canada region studying their
glacial phenomena. Then I
may make my winter quarters among
you & hear all your plans & ways
& thoughts again. I fancy I would
like a word war with David &
I am hard at work here in
just the bolder studies you
speak of my studies are infinitely
more glorious than any scientist
in the world yet known
Agassiz said the year before he died
Muir "knows all about it." (Glacial phenomena)

[Original letter in possession of Sarah Muir Galloway]

Oakland, Sep. 7th, 1874.

My dear Sister Sarah:

The wee fern leaf is already here on my table trembling in the breeze that comes sweeping across the San Fran. bay from the ocean. It is the maidenhair (*Adiantum pedatum*), perhaps the most graceful and delicate of all the ferns of North America. It is found in almost every state, but in the Sierras it is yet more delicate and reaches higher perfection than in the moist shadowy dells of Wisconsin. It grows in our mountains up to an altitude of about 9000 feet above the sea, instead of growing in soil, as in Wis., it is found only as a rock fringe where it is sheltered from storms and is abundantly supplied with moisture, reaching its very highest development where fed and fanned by the spray of a waterfall. It often occurs high above the tops of pine trees as in the opposite figure in the fringe (ab) past which a waterfall pours, and on whose breath its delicate fronds wave responsively with a grace and tenderness that no words can tell. (Sketch). There is one other maidenhair in Cala., *Adiantum chilense*, which is not quite so beautiful and not so much of a rock fern or mountaineer.

The tall ferns which you ^say were "waving and making beautiful arches in the shade of the oaks" are flowering ferns (*Osmunda claytoniana*).

I am glad to hear that you all are so well and so naturally engaged

[here a portion of the page has been cut off]

How delightful it will be when I can come to visit a year with you all, and see the plants and streams and ponds of Wis. I will be a year or two in the Lake Superior and Canada region, studying their glacial phenomena. Then I may make my winter quarters among you, and hear all your plans and ways and thoughts again. I fancy I would like a word war with David G[alloway].

I am hard at work here in just the boulder studies you speak of. My studies are infinitely more glorious than any scientist in the world yet knows. Agassiz said the year before he died "Muir knows all about it." (Glacial phenomena).

I am always made glad to hear of Mrs. Galloway. How seldom one meets human benevolence of so magnificent a kind. Give her my love, and remember me to all your circle of younglings and to David and every friend.

Farewell,

[John Muir]