



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

1878-02-01

Letter from John Muir to [Annie Kennedy] Bidwell, 1878 Feb 1.

John Muir

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Probably this statement is not very strictly true. At any rate I am not at all
eager to see him. When I was at San Jose last summer I met his wife, who
was teaching drawing in the Normal school. My friend Prof Allen the principal
asked my opinion of Prof Gunning much in the same spirit as you have done, &
in a lecture that Allen prevailed on me to give before the teachers, Mrs Gunning
was present, & I could not help looking her way & remarking against scientific
humbug.

The questions you ask concerning evolution are far too extensive to be touched in a mere
letter. The subject is very interesting to every intelligent person in the world. Gray has
written a remarkably lucid & charming pamphlet on the subject that you must
ask him for. It is entitled, "A free examination of Darwin on the Origin of Species."
& was first published in the form of articles in the Atlantic Monthly.

I wish too that you would read some of Darwin's writings, if for no other purpose
than to learn how poor & good a man he is. His noble character has suffered from silly ignorant
& unbelieving men who say much about Darwinism without really knowing anything about
it. A more devoted & indefatigable seeker after truth than Darwin never lived. Both
Gray & Hooker are warm personal friends of his. If you do not care, or have not time
to examine his heavy plodding scientific works, at least read his "Journey of a Naturalist
round the world," published by Harper. The geology plant on the pitchfork camp at the
foot of Luzon, or rather on the side we slept is Bryanthus. I have no photograph to send you but
will procure one. I can well understand your enthusiasm over the Lake water. I had a
glorious walk there after your visit. Have not yet heard from Hooker. Remember me to the

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University of California
at Berkeley
John Muir