



1878-09-04

Letter from Annie K[ennedy] Bidwell to John Muir, 1878 Sep 4.

Annie Kennedy Bidwell

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in those four days we went to Big Meadows
& Butte Valley, and collected lovely flowers.
Took my press and portfolio. Gathering
flowers is very fascinating but the pressing
is trying. Dr Gray says "send noble
specimens." Is not that encouraging?
In the last lot, sent recently, I have
some things which I think precious,
but Dr Gray's report will prove. One
beauty I found on our "summit." You
remember the "Summit" of the Mountain
Road, where we get the grand view of "La-
sen" & the chasm beneath us. General
is so interested in the collection of plants
that he facilitates my getting them, even
when we are in haste, so we pass some
by. He has found several which delighted
him, & he was "sure they were new," but
the report did not so say, & he has to be
reconciled. Dr Gray says some of my
specimens are "rare," some, "bulbs &
seeds never yet obtained." One had been
found before only by Hartwig on the Sacra-
mento, probably at Chico. Its name is
"Antirrhinum Cornutum" What I ought

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Rancho Chico.

Sept 4th 1878

Dear Mr. Muir. Last night's mail brought yours
to my sister, which we read, as directed, and
will forward tonight. What grand opportunities
you are enjoying for studying that which so in-
terests you, and which you have chosen for your
life work. My sympathies are hearty with
you, and my prayers too, that God may long
spare you to study his noble works and
give the world the benefit of your ardu-
ous (though pleasant) labors. Your enthusi-
asm in your work is what misleads persons
to imagine you are on a grand pic-nic; to think
you ought to "settle down," when really you
are, the hardest kind of work, though in
the light of your own statements it appears
play. One secret of my enthusiastic sym-
pathy is that you give God the glory due
unto his name, and as I said, I do pray
daily for you that you may trust in

weeks from date," and ^{at} in that time I had
no opportunity to write, owing to our hav-
ing a lady with us in the last stage of
Consumption, who died on the 14th of Aug.
at our house. Her case was the saddest
I have ever met, & enlisted my heart
and hands, fully, so that I could not
write you though I was anxious to do
so, for I had not been able to thank
you for your pleasant good bye letter,
as Mrs Corley came to us a few days
after my return from San Francisco.

General has been too busy to write
you, but enjoys your letter extremely,
& intends writing as soon as he can
crowd a letter into the space allotted
him for many more duties than he
can perform. He is putting up a build-
ing for our Agricultural fair, and —
well, I will not begin or I shall not know
where to end. He went to Tehama Monday
night on business for an estate for which
he is one of the Executors, returning this
morning as your letter came in most

Shasta! What a grand time we had. Billy is so fat that I question whether even you could fasten a saddle on him sufficiently securely for safety on those Mountain sides. He is looking very handsome, but eyes me suspiciously whenever I attempt to be very friendly with him. Tabbiesmule Pet, with another mule, have done mount, and service this summer. General drove them the last time he went to the mts, & rode Pet, & pronounced her the tamest & easiest mule he had ever ridden. But I must say adieu.

This is for General and myself, and as there are no apologies needed for its length!

Trusting that your return may be in safety, & your trip in every way a success, I remain,

Very Sincerely, Your Friend

Annie H. Bidwell

Mr
John Muir.

To do is to thoroughly study botany, and General and I purpose doing so if we can carry out our plans. We had a letter recently from Prof. Canning, from Waltham Mass. He said he intended visiting Dr Gray in a few days and talking up Chico and Shasta?

We have a lovely lawn this summer, owing to our new waterworks being in operation. The fig tree is undisturbed and I know you would enjoy a lounge under it. We have a few seats scattered over the lawn and plenty of shade & beds of flowers, but the latter being cultivated flowers can't ^{not} hope for your favor.

General was in San Francisco but Sabbath and Monday, and your card stated you expected to leave the city on Friday, so we did not call. Otherwise we would have done so. General expressed regret afterward that he had not called at a venture. I attended a pleasant party at General M^cDowell's, and a "lunch" at San

Mateo. Spent a few days at Black Point^[87] with an Army Officer's wife who is a relative of mine. The scenery from Black Point is fine. Had sails on the Bay.

You suggest that you may go East the coming winter, and may visit Washington. I hope you will, for you are so far on your way that you will find it easier to continue than to start from San Francisco. I hope you will like Washington. Don't judge it too hastily, or you will wonder wherein is the attraction, as my San Francisco friends seemed to wonder wherein were the attractions of our Camp life, over which we so exulted. To them there was the snow, & ice, & rain, and dust and hardships, to us a world of pleasure.

Sympathy is necessary to enjoyment, whether it be in city or country. If one is not in sympathy with the country he will see no beauties there, and the

same as regards the city. When I first go to the city, all seems lonely and dreary, but on reflection I remember the city's charm is its society, and I enjoy that even when longing for the country; also there are other advantages which it is superfluous to mention. I make this little plea for Washington lest you judge it too hastily, and because it was long my home. I would like you to see Mamma and Papa also. You will like them I am sure. They may possibly come to see us this winter but it is not probable. They are now at Saratoga. They were in Meadville Penn^a, but left my sister there to extend her visit, & are now at Saratoga, & thence to Mass.

Sabbie expects to visit New York, and Berkshire Mass. later. This time last year we were busy packing our Camp equipage, and a while later we were on