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Letter from John Muir to [Katharine M. Graydon], 1880 Feb 5.

John Muir

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[Original letter returned to Miss Katharine M. Graydon]

To Miss Katharine M. Graydon

920 Valencia St.,

San Francisco, Feb. 5th, 1880.

My dear Fatie, Miss Kate Graydon,
Prof. of Greek and English Literature, etc.
Conduct of Life, etc., etc.

My dear, frail, wee, bashful lassie and dear Madam:

[David Starr]

I was delighted with your bright charming letter introducing your friends Prof. Jordan and Chas. Gilbert. I have not yet met either of the gentlemen. They are at Santa Barbara, but expect to be here in April, when I hope to see them and like them for your sake, and Janet's, and their own worth.

Sometime ago I learned that you were teaching Greek, and of all the strange things in this changeful world, this seemed the strangest, and the most difficult to get packed quietly down into my awkward mind. Therefore I will have to beg you to excuse the confusion I fell into at the beginning of my letter. I mean to come to you in a year or two, or any time soon, to see you all in your new developments. The sweet blooming underbrush of boys and girls, Moores, Merrills, Graydons, etc., was very refreshing and pleasant to me all my Indiana days, and now that you have all grown up into trees, strong, and thrifty, waving your outreaching branches in God's Light, I am sure I shall love you all. Going to Indianapolis is one of the brightest of my hopes. It seems but yesterday since I left you all. And indeed, in very truth, all these years have been to me one unbroken day, one continuous walk in one grand garden.

I'm glad you like my wee dear ouzel. He is one of the most complete of God's small darlings. I found him in Alaska a month or two ago. I made a long canoe trip of seven hundred miles from Fort Wrangel northward, exploring the glaciers and icy fiords of the coast and inland channels with one white man and four Indians. And on the way back to Wrangel, while exploring one of the deep fiords with lofty walls, like those of Yosemite Valley, and with its waters crowded with immense bergs discharged from the noble glaciers, I found a single specimen of his blessed tribe. We had camped on the shore of the fiord among huge icebergs that had been stranded at high tide, and next morning made haste to get away, fearing that we would be frozen in for the winter; and while pushing our canoe through the bergs, admiring and fearing the grand beauty of the icy wilderness, my blessed favorite came out from the shore to see me, flew once round the boat, gave one cheery note of welcome, while seeming to say, "You need not fear this ice and frost for you see I am here," then flew back to the shore and alighted on the edge of a big white berg, not so far away but that I could see him doing his happy manners. e

In this one summer in the white northland I have seen perhaps ten times as many glaciers as there are in all Switzerland. But I can not hope to tell you about them now, or hardly indeed at any time, for the best things and thoughts one gets from Nature we dare not tell. I will be so happy to see you again, not to renew my acquaintance, for that has not been for a moment interrupted, but to know you better in your new growth.

Ever your friend,

John Muir

[Envelope addressed Kate M. Graydon, 232 N. Alabama St., Indianapolis, Indiana].