



1881-04-08

Letter from A[nnie] K[ennedy] Bidwell to John Muir, 1881 Apr 8.

Annie Kennedy Bidwell

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Not is the least a cheerful heart,
That tastes these gifts with joy."

The country is wearing its loveliest dress, and "bloom time" indeed has come. Our friends were delighted with all they saw, and I think, realized that Country people have some sources of pleasure as well as city people.

I have commenced taking lessons in oil painting, and have painted a spray of mangaritas, & a hyacinth, from nature, and have commenced a landscape, from a point near the fort-hills looking toward the Coast Range!! Am I not bold? General just about the game I am to attain, etc, but nevertheless is much interested. He praises my mangaritas, & I am content.

I am very anxious to see Mrs. & Miss Muir, & if you do not bring them to us I may surprise you some day with a call; but wish you would bring them to us.

Please present my kindest regards to Mrs. Muir, & believe me to ever, Yours truly J. K. Birrell

Rancho Chico

April 8th 1881.

Dear Mr Muir.

Your recent communication would have received an immediate acknowledgment, had I not been too much occupied with friends from San Francisco to write.

We do most heartily sympathize with you in your present joy, and trust that no cloud shall arise to cast a shadow on it.

Some day we hope to have the pleasure of an acquaintance with your little one and her mother, and trust, when you can do so, that you will bring them to Rancho Chico.

After all

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have you not found there is some
happiness in this world out-side of
glaciers, & other glories of nature.
Now that nature can not yield its
devotee an exalted joy; but all joy
is not bound up in it, nor in any
one thing in this world.

When friends
ask me - regarding ^{persons in} certain situations
in life - "do you not pity them?"
My reply is "no, I never pity anyone.
For often those we think in need of
pity feel themselves supremely blessed,
and really are." Some have even said
of you, "What a dreary unnatural
life"; but my answer invariably was
"What a glorious life! No life is dreary
when the presence of God is felt,

and we are surrounded by His grandest works," and tell me,
where in the past marked out for us. I know you have
felt that all true happiness was in your refusal of
of labor, yet now, the glaciers are — the where — "I
do not thank God for the vast source of joy and
peace which He opens up to me, and enjoy each to the
full, as He presents it. There has been my theory
and practice all my life, and I find, that though trials
do come, yet there is always a cup of joy, overflowing,
presented to me, and I sing with the poet,

"Ten thousand thousand precious gifts
thy daily thanks employ;

Rancho Chico,
April 8th, 1881.

Dear Mr. Muir:

Your recent communication would have received an immediate acknowledgment, had I not been too much occupied with friends from San Francisco to write.

We do most heartily sympathize with you in your present joy, and trust that no cloud shall arise to cast a shadow on it. Some day we hope to have the pleasure of an acquaintance with your little one and her mother; and trust, when you can do so, that you will bring them to Rancho Chico.

After all, have you not found there is some happiness in this world outside of glaciers, and other glories of nature? Not that Nature can not yield its devotees an exalted joy; but all joy is not bound up in it, nor in any one thing in this world. When friends ask me, regarding persons in certain situations in life -- "do you not pity them," my reply is, "no, I never pity anyone, for often those we think in need of pity feel themselves supremely blessed, and really are."

Some have even said of you, "What a dreary unnatural life," but my answer invariably was, "What a glorious life! No life is dreary when the presence of God is felt,

Nor is the least a cheerful heart,
That tastes those gifts with joy."

The country is wearing its loveliest dress, and "bloom time" indeed has come. Our friends were delighted with all they saw, and I think, realized that country people have some sources of pleasure as well as city people.

I have commenced taking lessons in oil painting and have painted a spray of manzanita, and a hyacinth, from nature, and have commenced a landscape, from a point near the foothills looking toward the Coast Range! Am I not bold? General jests about the fame I am to attain, etc., but nevertheless is much interested. He praises my manzanita, and I am content.

I am very anxious to see Mrs. and Miss Muir, and if you do not bring them to us I may surprise you some day with a call; but wish you would bring them to us. Please present my kindest regards to Mrs. Muir, and believe me, as ever,

Yours truly,

A[nnie] K[ennedy] Bidwell