



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

1881-04-08

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

Annie Kennedy Bidwell

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For 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 success
of pleasure as well as city people.

I have commenced taking lessons in
oil painting, and have painted a spray
of manganites, & a hyacinth, from
nature, and have commenced a land-
scape, from a point near the foot-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
manganites, & 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 As ever, Your truly A. K. Burrill

Rancho Chico

April 8th 1881.

Dear Mr Muir.

Your recent commu-
nication would have received an im-
mediate 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 I tell you where in the facts marked out for us. "I know you have felt that all true happiness was in your spiritual field of labor, yet now, the glaciers are — in evidence — "Let us thank God for the vast source of joy and peace which He opens up to us, and enjoy each to the full, as He presents it. This has been my theory and practice all my life, and I find, what I thought would be some, yet there is always a cup of joy, overflowing, presented to me, and I sing with the poet,

"Sten Stromman's Stromman's precious gifts
My Sails 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 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,

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