



1881-05-20

## Letter from John Muir to [Louie Strentzel Muir], [1881 May 20?].

John Muir

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20 steps in <sup>2</sup> many places that I had  
to go on all fours, while the wind  
blew stormily & pelted me with  
snow & sleet. Yet for a that & a  
that I was not tired, but only  
exhilarated. Just think of that  
when so short a time ago I used  
to get pale & breathless carrying up  
that little home knoll. You can  
hardly know how glad I was to find  
that my old instincts as to finding  
my way through the storm when  
I could not see half a dozen steps  
ahead, & my old strength of limb  
& lung were still good as when  
I toiled & enjoyed in the mountains  
about Yosemite. My face burned  
& tingled when I got down out  
of the snow & sleet to the rain belt  
near the level of the sea, & when  
I reached the ship, how I astonished

to get a look at the natives, but I  
must not attempt to describe them. <sup>6</sup> 132  
Here they live in sod huts that look  
like muskrat cabins. The smell is  
awful inside. I was in half a dozen  
of them with the doctor who was nursing  
the sick. I saw one man making  
arrowheads of old bottle glass, a very  
interesting operation. Their skin canoes  
are wonderful affairs as to lightness &  
speed. But I must wait until I return  
to tell you all.

I was not aware until a few days since that  
the officers in the Revenue Service had to  
board themselves. Now my share of the  
supplies already purchased for our  
mess - the Captain Surgeon & myself - will  
amount to about 200 dollars which  
when that Magazine money comes  
I wish you would pay to Mrs  
Hooper. The address is

[May 20, '81]

the cabin boy<sup>3</sup> who waited on me at Table.

But now I must tell you something of what I learned. First then, the brown plushy earth matle here is composed of mosses lichens & grasses & a small heathwort-empetrum-together with more or less of the darling Linnaea the beautiful purple flowered Bryanthus 2 species of Dwarf willow, 3 of Clubmoss a Geranium, 2 Saxifrage an Archangelica, several Lupines a Pyrola & the little gold thread Coptis besides two or three others that I could not make out. as none of them are in flower, a few fresh leaves are springing up in sheltered places & the willows are beginning to show the silky ends of their catkins, a few 100 feet above the sea however it

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Alaska Com. Co. to be sent by some other vessel than the steamer  
Mrs Captain C. L. Hooper  
548 Caladonia Avenue  
Oakland, Cal.

I think that you would enjoy making her a visit if you could leave home. The Captain has never mentioned this money affair until I spoke to him about, & he says it is nonsense to talk about putting you to any trouble about it. But of course you will see that Mrs Hooper gets it as soon as possible.

We will probably leave here on the 22<sup>d</sup>. before which date I will write you again. This will make seven Donalaska letters in all. The first five I will send by the schooner H. L. Tiernan which sails for Shoalwater Bay Oregon tomorrow. where they will be put in the mail. The remaining two I will leave with the

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