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1893-07-31

Letter from John Muir to Helen & [Annie] Wanda [Muir], 1893 Jul 31.

John Muir

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**Recommended Citation**

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North of Scotland & Orkney & Shetland Steam Navigation Co.

"St. Sumniva"

Near Bergen, Norway,  
July 31, 1895  
8:30 P.M.

My dear sweet little Helen and Wanda:

The ship is going very fast through the beautiful blue water among a lot of islands, and is shaking so much I can hardly write. In a few minutes we will be at a queer-looking Norwegian town called Bergen and then I will go ashore and send this letter to you. Tomorrow evening we will start back to Scotland, where we will land about Wednesday night. Then I'm going to London and Switzerland, and then I'm going home. I bought some nice little things for you in another queer town called Savanger, and in still another called Thronheim, and perhaps I may see something you would like in Bergen.

I have enjoyed the sail in Norway very much. For more than a thousand miles I have been sailing in narrow channels between high mountains in beautiful scenery. The walls of the channels or fiords, as they are called, are about 3000 or 4000 feet high, and are covered with heather and grass and bluebells and larkspurs and geraniums and buttercups and many other beautiful flowers. Also many handsome birch trees not very big, and alders and willows and huckleberries. Wild strawberries grow on these high steep hills too, as well as raspberries, but there are not many pine trees or spruces, nothing like California trees. It is just as if all the valleys of California were full of water so that we could sail about in them.

The farms along the sides of the mountains are very funny and small, less than an acre, many of them. Hundreds of waterfalls come tumbling over the tops of the high cliffs and make them very beautiful, and make all the country joyful. Some day you must see them. The people are good and kind, but they are not troubled much with money.

I also rode about 200 miles through the country and saw many lovely lakes and two charming and grand Yosemite Valleys called Naradal and Romsdal. I'll bring some pictures of them. God bless you, my darlings.

Your father,

JOHN MUIR

[Envelope addressed Helen Muir, Martinez, California, U.S.A.]