



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

1903-01-01

Letter from Helen [Muir] to Wandering Wanda, [ca. 1903].

Helen Muir

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Wandering
Young Lochin Wanda

wandering
O Young ~~Lochin~~ Wanda comes out of the west,
Of all the fruit eaters her legs are the best.

She can climb Grizzly Peak, Mt. Diablo also,
And ^{the rocks} perhaps ~~the~~ Sierra, ^{all covered with snow} ~~but that we don't know.~~

Some girls get tired,
But she gets inspired
With determined desire
To climb higher and higher.

Then she seems to have wings
As she laughs and ^{she} sings ^{springs}
~~While~~ ^{her} ~~deep~~ ^{sweet} little voice
~~And~~ ^{while} her footies rejoice.

And when she comes homing
Tired of ^{lessons and} ~~her~~ roaming,
She eats very much
Though meat she won't touch.

Some think she is queer,
 Just how don't appear,
 I think myself she is cranky
 But not a bit lanky.

She rides in the rain,
 Damp gives her ^{no} pain,
 She just loves to get wet,
 This dear little pet.

She has lots of ambitions,
 And crams definitions,
 And gets up before roosters,
 To write compositions.

On poor me she plays teacher,
 Or at times solemn preacher,
 And compels me to learn
 With a face very stern.

But keeps on
~~then back she goes to~~ eating fruit,
 Bearing not ^{the least} a particle
 Of any ^{fresh} other article.

And shouts "come Helen let's climb a hill,
 You little muggins I'm sure you will,
 The wet brush, ~~and the~~ ticks and ~~the~~ clover
 Just ~~make~~ make me feel happy all over."

She is growing wilder all the time,
 As I'm trying to tell in prose and rhyme,
 And climbs so well it doth appear
 Some day she'll be a mountaineer,
 So wondrous wise, so wondrous strong,
 So wondrous bold, so wondrous long,
 Where'er a mountain lifts its head,
 Upon its top she'll make her bed,
 She'll scale the very highest peak
 Of that wild land called Mozambique,
 And if you only think to ask her
 She'll ^{climb the peaks} (try the mountains) of Madagascar,
 And shout and dance and wave her hat
 On the very top of Ararat.

Some doubting say "There's many a slip
 Between the mountain ^{so} ~~up~~ and ~~tip~~ tip
 But all her features proclaim the climber
 As this fine letter proclaims the rhymers.

Her step is firm, her cheeks are rosy,
 Her mouth is like a pretty poney,
 Made for laughing, made for talking,
 Her legs for dancing, climbing, walking.
 And should she lass do all her dooty
 A thousand peaks will feel her footy.

The Highlands, Alps, and Appenines
 Shall climb with naught but bread and beans,
 And scramble through the highest passes
 With jumping chamois eating grasses.

And wandering far I think shall soon
 Try all the Mountains of the Moon,
 The "Himmelaya", the very highest,
 The Rockies, Andes, wettest, driest,
 And fearing naught shall make a push
 For weird and wondrous Hindu Kush.

Meanwhile she keeps the classic shades
 With scores of studious Berkeley Maids,
 So cool, so calm, sedate she seems,
 Her Mountaineering looks like dreams.

Here endeth my letter the dream and the ballad,
 And now for a lesson, an orange and salad,
 My eyes and my head and my fingers are sore
 But if the Muses keep whispering, I'll send you some more

From your admiring
 scholar,

sister,

friend,

lover,

Stelen.

**Ditto Papa.