

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Eliza Symonds Bell, June 16, 1879, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Mrs. Alexander Melville Bell. Cambridge, June 16th., 1879. My dear Mrs. Bell:

If I had done as I intended, our letters would, as you thought, have crossed, but in common, I suspect, with other people, the fewer letters I have to write, the harder it is to write those few. I am glad to hear of Mr. Symonds' marriage and will write to him if you desire, but I wrote twice to Frances and have as yet received no answer, once answering a note of hers, and again announcing Elsie's birth and Alec's long delay in writing to his Uncle makes it a very hard thing for me to do.

I thought I told you we were settled here for the summer. Alec and I as Master and Mistress. Mamma and Papa have been with us for a fortnight, Mamma has gone now to stay with Grandpapa, and Papa is still here on Telephone business as the company and the N. U., to our disgust, are trying to come to terms. Our stock sells for 10 ¼ above par and we feel very rich and are going to sell some of our very own as soon as this question of the Western Union is decided some people say our stock will be worth two hundred thousand if we unite others it will go down to fifty. It is now over a hundred thousand.

Berta is staying with us and Grace comes as soon as her school closes and they are expecting a very good time on class Day.

Elsie is as lovely as possible except when she comes out of her bath, then she is quite unmanageable and I dont know what to do with her she kicks and screams and cry herself to sleep. Today I had to wait until she lay asleep but still sobbing on my lap before I could finish dressing her. She stands up holding on to my dress or a chair and tries very hard to walk, creeping she dislikes and does not do well. Strangers she does not mind and

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will often come to for a moment. I think she often wins their hearts by the pretty shy way she lays her head down on my shoulder and looks up at them out of her glorious eyes, and then all 2 of a sudden raises herself and bends over until her face almost touches theirs and laughs at their surprise. Everyone notices her eyes, it is the first thing they say — what beautiful eyes she has. Berta who is very critical says they are almost the loveliest she ever saw, and is mad that some strangers say they are like mine. They are much darker, deeper and larger. She does not connect her talk with things around her very much, but often says Hark! when she hears the bell ring or any other sound like it and she knows when you ask her who is Mamma and Papa and Lou. Lou is Sisters dog who is living with us because she and my Auntie's dog Diana cannot live in peace together. Poor Grandpapa has at last left his home where most of his children were born, married or died, and where Grandma died. Those horrid stores always encroaching on the homes of the citizens have driven him out. Fourteenth street where he built his house was so far out of the city that Grandma used to tell how his friends laughed at their being so far on the road to Albany and now it is one of the principle retail trade streets and the house is being fitted up as a large store. Most of the drawing room furniture was sold, it was very handsome, and very expensive, but was too decidedly state drawing room furniture for any of us who are not so rich, and Grandpa will not care for such a large house again. A good deal of the furniture of the rest of the house was divided among the children, Mamma having among others a handsome glass chandelier. You know them don't you, and I have a very handsomely carved screen that Grandma was very fond of. The embroidery may be faded, and then I shall have some handsome Japanese work there. Mamma and Papa, Alec and I have been over the furniture stores of Boston trying to find some furniture for our houses next winter which we have decided shall be unfurnished. I have set my heart on an impossible parlor set of carved ebony and crimson plush, and think I must at least have a chair or two of it, it is so pretty. Mamma's parlor 3 set is very pretty of raw silk, and I think we shall come down to that. Alec has bought a very comfortable bedroom sofa covered with cretonne, that is all we have done or expect to do for some time to come. O yes we have bought a pair of pillows made of shavings! Are we not economical with a

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vengance. Well they are not meant to sleep on but to look handsome on the bed so we can have our small real one for the evening.

The Duke of Argyle is coming here, and we think of giving him a dinner. Alec met him some times in London.

I forgot to tell you that Mr. Carpenter, son of Dr. Carpenter and two other gentlemen came here and Alec gave them a dinner inviting Scientific Men here to meet them. Unfortunately the notice was so short that many declined still we had down fourteen to dinner.

With love to all,

Yours affectionately, Mabel.