

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Eliza Symonds Bell, November 22, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Mrs. Alexander Melville Bell. Alexandra Hotel, London, W., Nov. 22nd. (1881?) My dear Mrs. Bell:

Your letter telling of your great anxiety about the supposed non-arrival of our ship was a reproach to me. Alec would have cabled immediately on reaching Liverpool, but I said it was too much nonsense, for the notice of the ships arrivals were always cabled. Why you did not see it I cannot understand.

I was very glad to hear from you again. I think this is my third letter to you. I have heard only twice from you. I am so glad you have Turkey rugs in your drawing-room, I think they make any room so handsome. If you don't want much curtain in your drawing-room, why don't you buy Indian muslin ones. I mean the new style light buff ones with pale pink or blue spots in them. They are not common, and perhaps you have not seen them, but we think them extremely pretty. I don't think you could get them in Washington, but you might in Baltimore. I am so glad you and Mr. Bell went on that trip, it is a pretty place though I who am the laziest of mortals don't think it with its steep hills a desirable residence. I am quite shocked to hear of Mr. Bell's flirtation with the sisters. Are there no pretty schoolgirls there whose presence would make Chester and Mr. Tainter, Mr. Bell's very willing abettors?

Berta and Charlie arrived here only a little while ago. Charlie is lying on the sofa now tired and weak, but less thin than I expected, and is much interested in the various pretty Russian things Mamma has scattered about the room. We cannot go anywhere for more than a day, but Mamma somehow manages to give a homelike air to our rooms and our parlor now is very pretty. Berta is very well and looks 2 very well though I think she rather dreads going home just now. Berta and Charlie remain here through the week I think,

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and then go down to the place where Charlie went before with Chester for a fortnight and then return to Leed's to pack up. They expect to sail on the 15th, so they will be just about starting when you receive this. They propose going to New York where Charlie will leave Berta with her friends and then go on to spend New Years in Canada. After that they will probably go to Washington and take apartments for a few months. Mamma, Papa and sister and Mr. Grossman will follow in another month or two, so Alec and I will be left alone. Our own plans are very uncertain. Tomorrow I hope will bring Alec home from Paris, and then we shall decide — no — we must wait for my father who has been obliged to go to Russia, when he returns we will be able to settle something. Probably we will not wait to see Charlie sail, but all go to Italy together thence to Egypt.

Did I tell you of little Elsie's taking riding lessons? She was thrown from her pony the other day but was not in the least disturbed, and went on riding calmly when dusted and let up again. She does very well, but they say is too short for it to be safe for her to canter alone. She enjoys it exceedingly though Grace goes also, and is quite an accomplished horsewoman, sitting her horse easily and gracefully through all the high spirited creature's rearing and prancing. She takes her five barred hurdles in splendid style also.

I saw Mrs. Cathcart yesterday; she called the day before when we were out. I should have been to see her before, but have been very busy, and have even yet not recovered my usual strength. Mrs. Home I have seen several times, her baby I didn't think a beauty, but it is a great, fat, healthy, fair child, which is a great deal better. Noel is up to his mother's shoulders and is a most vivacious reader of books of travel and adventure. Their house is much prettier in situation and 3 appointments than the Hogarth Road one.

We moved here from Half-moon St., — as it was very dark and crowded there. Here we have rooms over-looking Hyde Park, light and pretty, and the children are out of doors in the park half the day. My new nurse I think I shall like, the children are very fond of her, and she seems a pleasant experienced woman.

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Grace and I have been taking lessons in China painting, and think them great fun, but we are too busy spending our money to have time to work very hard otherwise.

Alec has been working very hard over the Exhibition and thinks it alone was thoroughly worth his crossing the ocean. It closed on the 17th, but he has staid on to return the calls that he has received. He has met with several of the most prominent french scientific men, and I have been trying to persuade him to go outside the domains of science and meet artists and authors. With what success I know not, for Alec treats me about as shabbily in the matter of letters as he does everyone else.

Good afternoon, now I think my children must have returned from the park, and as I am afraid to have them here with Charlie I must go to the nursery.

Much love to Mr. Bell and Mary Louise and Lizzie and to yourself.

Very affectionately, Mabel. Oh, I forgot — I wrote Uncle Eustis to send your fifteen dollars. Please send ten to little Mabel Henderson, and the other five is for Harriet's baby's Christmas present. Our address is always care Barings Bros.