

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Eliza Symonds Bell, August 1896, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Mrs. Alexander Melville Bell. Beinn Bhreagh, Victoria County, Cape Breton, N. S. Sunday, (Aug. 10, 1896) My dear Mrs. Bell:

I am so very sorry that we none of us have written you for so long. Distance doesn't prevent the transmission of letters as Mr. Bell says, but with a whole lot of girls and boys all collected together and all pulling different ways it is some times hard to remember that there are other things more important than to keep them in order. A whirlwind doesn't diminish your affection for absent ones, but it does prevent your thinking of anything but self-preservation for the time being, and we have been living in a whirlwind ever since Alec and Elsie returned.

Alec is very well now, he was very tired in Boston and troubled because he was very deaf in one ear and almost totally so in the other. But a visit to the aurist remedied the trouble entirely so that he hears as well as ever he did. He is working very hard indeed at his flying machine and other experiments so that we really see very little of him. My father and mother and their family came up two days before Alec and Grace and I sat up all night watching for them, as the steamer instead of arriving at twelve P. M. did not come in until eight next morning and we waited for them all the time except for four hours after four o'clock. Next day a young gentleman came, and then Alec bringing Mr. and Mrs. Davidson, and we had something for them all the time, sailing, parties, driving, riding parties, excursions during the daytime and dancing in the evening.

Last night we had a grand illumination of the bay and a long 2 procession of rowboats all lighted with strings of Chinese lanterns. Charlie was commodore, and we started from his wharf and rowed slowly up the bay, then across it and up our side to the warehouse where we had supper and dancing. There were bonfires all along both shores, and the houses

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were lighted up and several of the people burnt colored lights in front of them. Then some of the boats had other lights or fire balloons and we had fireworks from the warehouse wharf. The wharfs were hung with chains of Chinese lanterns and so was the warehouse inside and out. Altogether the effect was very pretty and we had a perfect night for it, dark and still and just sufficiently warm. There were eighteen boats in line, and Charlie's was very gorgeous with poles wound with red, white and blue bunting like barbers poles and hung with the lanterns. He had a fir tree set on a raft and floated on the water and lighted with the lanterns, and it was pretty.

Now we are busy preparing for a church fair Tuesday, and on Wednesday we are going to camp, Papa, Mamma, Grace, Charlie and I. The whole responsibility is on my shoulders and I begin to quake.

We haven't had any hot weather for a long time, today was quite warm and windless and we all rejoiced in it. I wish you were up here too. If you were in the cottage you would be on the edge of the whirlwind, not near enough to have to fight for self-preservation, but near enough to feel the refreshing breeze of its outer circle.

I will try to write oftener and now Good night with much love to you all.

Your loving daughter, Mabel.