

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, 1876, with transcript

Letter from Miss Mabel G. Hubbard to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. (1876?) My dear Alec:

I suppose this will be my last Western letter to you as now our faces are turned homeward, and we are outrunning the mail. I wonder when I shall be back here again, I do hope you will be with me next time I have seen so much that I want you to see. I don't know that part of you well enough to be sure if you would care for the scenery, but I think so. Somehow or other I don't think your "dry scientific books" have yet destroyed all love for Nature's beauties as things to be looked at and enjoyed, not investigated. From over 95° to ulsters is a great change is it not. It was very hot this morning and noon and now out a few miles North it is very cold. The cold ocean winds have been blowing through this broad Mojave valley rising a terrible sand-storm. The plain is fertile but that great want of all lower California -rain-water has left it a dry sandy desert, with only short burnt grass and thin forests of the cactus palm, and the wind rushing through rised a perfect mist of sand. At the little village where we have been stopping two houses but some 100ft. apart were quite hid from each other. The moonlight shinning on ground and house tops make them look as if covered with snow. As we rode along on one side the heavens were hidden from our view, on the other we saw a thick yellow mist as it seemed all around between us and the mountains, while the setting sun shone above. This is however beginning at the tail of the story, I haven't told you yet of our visit to Sunny Slope. We left the special train a few miles out of Los Angeles and drove over our undulating country, like every uncultivated ground here, brown and desert-looking, to Mr. Rose estate looking so bright green and refreshing after the dryness around. Up 2 the long avenue of heavily laden orange trees with the queer little mounds and ditches and canals around their trunks, for the water — we drove, to the pleasant little residence and were introduced to a fine looking man — Mr. Rose. He lead us to his storehouse and gave us some of his wine, and afterwards

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presented every lady with a bottle of her choice of three different wines. Sister chose Port and I Angelicia — real old 1864 with which I mean to celebrate our housewarming, unless you are a total abstainer — what is the word teetotaller? and anyway something I hope you are not. From thence to another place and more wine — alas not to keep, and then at the top of our speed, or track marked by a long trail of flying dust into Los Angeles. Next day we went to San Pedro Bay, a lovely bathing place with smooth beach and rolling surf, and back from it queer sand bluffs. They looked as if hands had set to work to chisel pillars out of it and then left their work unfinished. Coming back one of the gentlemen asked me to go in the locomotive, Papa is willing to take me but Sister won't let him. I comfort myself by the reflection I shall make you take me into all the dangerous places when we travel and I give you fair warning. It was funny to see that the important public notices in the station house or bridges were printed in three different languages, American, Spanish and Chinese. Surely we are a cosmopolitan people here. Does it not sound funny to hear San Pedro Bay and Los Angeles and Trenton all together or San Rafael and Stockton.

I do think I have got to the end of my letter already, strange but true. I have written to Mamma and I am tired and am growing too fat for my dresses, which hurt, and that's the reason. O dear to think I weigh 121 it has been weighing on me ever since, perhaps I weigh 3 double in consequence. The table is covered not with cinders but sand. Do you know we are travelling and not stopping the car is going so smoothly. I don't think you would know from my writing we are moving. We have just past a Chinese tent encampment. They are plain soldier's tents, but look picturesque.

What are you doing, I am so anxious to hear all about your work, it feels as if, because I have not heard from you, that it and everything else has been stationary. And yet perhaps it is already finished, both so far as your and Mr. Watson's work can make it. I shall be so glad when you get it off your mind, it is very hard to have so much to do. How does your arrangement with Mr. Boncicault progress, have you heard from your foreign patents, have you written to Sir William, and to poor Mr. Stanley, now you have succeeded we must be very kind to one less fortunate. And your professional work how does that progress, how

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many pupils have you, dear Alec I hope you don't utterly overwork yourself. I hope you go out to see Mrs. Sanders, now I am not in the way, and please call on Prof. Horsford and tell Namie I will write and tell her how much I have enjoyed Mr. Curtis' book, please go to Cousin Mary's too and give her my love. I tried and tried to get her something very nice and utterly failed. And to return to yourself please tell me if you take good care of yourself and wrap up warm and respectable. It seems a perfect year since I saw you, I wish you could have had your photograph taken in San Francisco. I never saw such lovely pictures, I should have tried if we had time.

With very much love, Ever yours, Mabel.

P.S. We connect with Overland train tomorrow at Lathrop, but may 4 stop over at Sacramento, we go most of the way home by special train.

I am not quite sure if you will be pleased to hear that Sister and I went on the cab yesterday, Mr. Towne the Supt. took us, and we went in only for a few minutes, so there was no danger, and everyone was willing we should go. But since then I have been feeling uncomfortable lest only say it is done and we shall not do so again. I hope you won't be very much displeased and troubled. I have told you of everything I have done, you must not think there are worse scrapes untold. It was such fun, and even from fun you might not like it.

Ever yours, Tuesday.