

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

Letter from Miss Mabel Hubbard to Mr. Alexander Graham Bell. November 1876. Ogden, Utah, Thanksgiving Day. My darling Alec:

Our arrival here has put me in possession of four delightful letters from you, bearing date from November 20th. to 23rd. Poor Alec I feel so horrid to have written such cross letters as my last two, when you have been so worried about Telephony and that Dion Boncicault. I am so sorry he has deserted. What did Uncle Eustis say that made him withdraw without attempting to obtain better terms. I am disappointed for it seemed as if he would bring you money at once and now we must wait a little longer. Still perhaps it is best you know nothing of his character perhaps he might have taken unfair advantage of you. I know that though you say very little about it you must feel it deeply and I wish O so much I were with you just now. But I am sure this would not have happened if it were not best and have firm confidence that now your invention is so near completion, others will come to your aid, other men have gone through all this and succeeded so will you dear. I am waiting impatiently for your next letter to hear how your new instrument succeeds, poor Alec I fear you have been as usual terribly excited and had one of your old headaches. I hope it is all over now I did not understand your Telephonic letter at first but since re-reading it carefully I think I do understand all except the arithmetical part perfectly. Why the weight on the piece of iron should be only $\frac{1}{4}$ of an ounce at two inches distance where it is one whole ounce at one inch is beyond my slender mathematical powers. The "square" confuses me. I am so glad Miss Robinson's progress pleases you.

You need not be so anxious to impress it on my mind that "my" husband will be always known as a teacher of deaf mutes (O Alec!) or interested in them. I have been sure of it for long and it is not the least thing for which I honor you. Only dear your starting

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the evening school again just now troubles me. You have so much to do already, I can't bear to think of your undertaking still more. You will leave yourself no time to rest, and undertaking so much you will not be able to give proper attention to any part of your different work. I do wish you could be careful of yourself, and finish the telegraph and have leisure to devote yourself to your deaf mutes. Then I should enter heartily into that work. Please don't think me so utterly selfish as not to care anything about my brothers and sisters in this misfortune. I only care a little more for you and wish you to take some thought for yourself. Above all things however please don't speak of yourself in that disrespectful way, it gives me a very unpleasant feeling. I have no sympathy whatever with bones, it is the prime reason I object to Roman Catholicism and favor cremation.

Since beginning my letter we have left our Central Pacific car and attendant kitchen and have come to this gorgeous new one with bright oil lamps instead of the dim candle ones. They are a great improvement though we have no side candles, which we provide ourselves. We shall have to go back to the old way of living more tea cooking by lily hands and gallant knightly help. I see some shining new kettles peeping out from their wrappings in the stateroom now converted into storeroom. Our porter is a great degeneration from our two others. Ben, the first, was a bright helpful boy, Charlie, the second, whom we have just left was very tall towering a head over even tall Mr. Palmer, which enabled him to dispense with ladders. He too though not so delightful as Ben was pleasant and obliging. This negro looks sulky and is short and forty. He is making up the beds now, and the Foxes have retired though it is not nine. We truly live according to the maxim "Early to bed Early to rise". We leave here at daylight and will be up by that 3 time, on route to Cheyenne, thence for Denver where we arrive Saturday night or Sunday morning. Thanksgiving has been such a sleepy day with us, the gentlemen talked and sacked in the other car, and we read or slept a great change from the usual buzz of talk that prevails. Papa told me tonight, he did not anticipate any evil effects from Mr. Boncicault's withdrawal, nor does he think it will hinder the arrival of money, if I may use that expression.

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It was funny receiving your acknowledgement of my letters from here just when I had returned. The letters had a narrow escape from being forwarded to San Francisco, the address was all changed. Sister and Mrs. Palmer had a very nice ride in the cab today, but I was glad not to go again without your free permission. Please forgive me if I have seemed cross and rude. I have not felt at all bright since my birthday. It is ever now but then I nearly cried over every trifle that annoyed me. I suppose a slight cold was at the bottom.

O dear we've come back to snow and ice and chill winds and I am all impatience to be home again, though our car is warm and pleasant, and as we are free to move about from seat to seat we do not feel the confinement irksome. Then we can get out at stations or at our own pleasure as we are in a special train, or were, I don't know how we are placed now. How my letter is to go I have no idea, we are ahead of the regular overland train and keep so until leaving Cheyenne Wyoming for Denver and Colorado Springs. Carrie Blatchford will tell you all about them she was there two years ago. You go out there sometimes don't you? Tell Cousin Sam we saw some minute fossil fishes today and I thought of getting him one, but reflected. Carrie had provided him liberally.

Papa says bedtime. Adieu with very much love from, Your own little girl.