

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, April 1877, with transcript

Letter from Miss Mabel Hubbard to Mr. Alexander Graham Bell. (April 1877.) My dear Alec:

Yours of April 9th. has just come. It frightened me very much at first but Mamma don't seem at all disturbed and I am relieved. I only wish if you must have "dual" lectures you would try the experiment in a very small way and in unimportant places. I have perfect faith in the success of any lecture where you conduct it personally, but I am awfully afraid of it when you are not there. Doesn't the success of a lecture depend a good deal upon the way in which it is spoken, not only upon the way it is written. Cannot a very interesting paper be made dull by monotonous or embarrassed reading? If you are sure of drawing good audiences even to repeated lectures. I see no objection to your lecture tour. I have not the prejudice against lecturing Mamma has, but I also, don't want you to make it your principal business. Perhaps you can make more by lecturing just now than by Mr. Ponton but I thought the agreement was to pay you a salary of 5,000 every year and can you hope that the public interest and curiosity in your invention will last, so that you can calculate upon an income from your lectures — If Mr. Ponton does fail you I do think your lecturing is the best thing you can do.

I enclose desired translation of the German letter with original. Mamma advises your speaking to Mr. Horsford about it he has many friends in Hungary and would know about Herr Rosenzweig if he is a responsible person. I also wish you would go and spend an evening with Cousin Mary. It is hardly civil to show her so plainly that I was the only attraction that brought you so often to her house. I am so fond of her myself I want you to be too and I want my friends to know and love you as they do me.

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I am so glad you like the Washington idea. I hate Boston climate and would be thankful to be anywhere else. And I do believe you were right after all and that Mamma will never come back to Cambridge to live, so it would be very lonely for me alone in Boston. I am hardly ever free from colds all winter long in Boston and neither are you it seems, so altogether it seems as if Washington were the best place for us. It would also be a good centre to start from on lecturing tours.

Little Ellie has just been in his bath and is now sitting in his mother's lap rolled up in a blanket having his hair curled. He is a splendid fellow as good natured as he can be, he never cried yesterday when I shut him up from the parlour where "Aunt Gertrude" was and from the kitchen where "Mother" was making custards.

Grandpa goes to Newport tomorrow and wants Mamma to go with him so our visit is unexpectedly shortened we are going back to New York today. Don't think because I am at work on my outfit that I want to hurry you I have ever so much to do even if we don't set up housekeeping and shall take up every moment's time you give me.

Mamma heard from Sister from Savannah she is enjoying her trip exceedingly and it enthusiastic over the beautiful air and lovely cake mosses and plantations — But she too says the country is still desolate from the effects of the war.

I shall not attempt to argue with you about half days or anything else. I am too well aware that you will beat me in any argument. I am content if you will make Sundays a day of rest. It is one point gained and I leave the rest to the time when you are under my apron strings.

I am so glad you have found that overcoat, look it over and see if it needs repair, it is most time for you to put it on. Then when the cold days are finally over wrap your winter overcoat up put camphor in it and put it away in your trunk. It would not do to have it all eaten up by moths.

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I will write more in New York.

Thursday- I am sorry my letters are so irregular. Yesterday I thought I had time to ask Adelheit about some points in the letter which were not clear but a freight train went off the rails a few miles below Paterson and until that was cleared our car could not pass— so we were delayed at Paterson for two hours. It was after mail time when we reached 10 East 14th. St.

What do you propose doing about this offer. You had best consult Mr. Horsford. I hope it may relieve your foreign patents difficulty. Have you paid for them, if you have not and have the money from Providence you ought not to delay.

Mamma and Grandpa have just gone to Newport to see about Grandpa's house there which needs some alternations before he can let it again. I suppose you have written to me in Paterson again, it is the only reason I regret leaving.

I was interrupted and now Dr. Marsh has brought your letter of the 15th. Of course dear I enjoy writing to you always, you see why it is you have not heard from me. Why do you come on — thankful as I should be to see you I don't want you to be so extravagant as that. If you are going to be so lavish of your money I don't see how you are ever going to accumulate enough to be married on.

I am so sorry you don't like the idea of Washington, of course if you don't want to live there I won't to thought you did not care.

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Why should you be so despondent about Mr. Ponton he says he is getting ready slowly but surely. Isn't it just like you to keep putting off and yet be working on earnestly and honestly. Evidently from your letter you are tired out and perhaps have a bad headache. Poor Alec I do wish I could be with you, and it would be just lovely to have you come on but don't you

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see a little self denial on our parts now will help to bring the time near when we shall be always together.

With a heart full of love to you dear, Ever your loving, Mabel.