

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, November 30, 1879, with transcript

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL TO MABEL (Hubbard) BELL 2 Bulfinch Place, Boston. Nov. 30th, 1879. Mrs. A. G. Bell, 1417 K St., Washington, D. C. My sweet little wife:

I have not written to you since coming here as I thought each day would be my last here — but as I think it will be to our interest and to the interest of my father that I should remain here a little longer — I presume that a letter will reach Washington before I do — and so write to render an account of myself.

But first I will give you any little items that may be of interest in the way of news even though they may not perhaps be news to you.

Mr. Baker of Hamilton brought me a full assortment of Canadian stumps for Gardiner Scudder — and I duly presented them to the great delight of Gardiner.

My father brought the wolf-skin robe and Gardiner's fur cap — and had to pay seven dollars on the former. I have said nothing about the fur cap and await instructions. My father also brought the things from the laundry — and I have been helping myself to clean things *ad lib* . — ever since. Neither Aunt Ellen nor Aileen had arrived when my father left Brantford.

Grand Opera House in Toronto burned down with the loss of several lives.

In the way of Boston news — you may or may not know that a little boy Scare made his appearance last Sunday — and that mother and child are not doing well. Carrie Blatchford is no better — and neither Miss Blatchford nor Mr. Scudder seem to care to speak about her. Poor little 2 Sylvia Scudder has just become deaf. She caught cold and inflammation set up in both ears. The membranes of both ears have been ruptured and a discharge

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taken place. At present she is quite deaf and Sam Scudder says it is very painful to see the poor little thing. I called at the house yesterday and saw Mr. and Mrs. Horace Scudder. They said that Sylvia was such better and that she has suffered no pain since the rupturing of the membranes and they seem hopeful that she will out grow the effects and recover her hearing. Mr. Horace Scudder said that a similar thing had happened to himself when he was a child. But that he had almost completely outgrown the resulting difficulty in his hearing.

I saw Dr. Blake — who has Sylvia in his care — but he does not express an opinion as to the ultimate result — but I should judge from all I heard — that the continuous fetid discharge indicates active disease in the ear and that it is a very great chance whether she ever hears again. However all can only hope for the best. I don't think of anything further to tell you in the way of news.

Your Uncle Eustia and family are well — Grace blooming — and lovely as a picture — Harry is himself — Your cousin Mary and Cousin Sam well — and Gardiner Scudder getting red checks on Dandy's back .

I enjoy being here with my father very much. You know this is a theatrical house. We have Warren here and the members of the “Troubadour Troupe” — Mr. and Mrs. Webster — Mr. Salsbury — Mr. Frank Masder — and last but not least Miss Dingleton. (Don't be jealous — they leave tonight.)

Last Friday Mr. and Mrs. Dunlap of Chicago called here on Mr. Warren and I recognized in Mrs Dunlap a Miss Rice of former years, whose escort I was in England at the time of the Harvard and Cambridge Boat race.

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I there mounted the American colours for the first time — and took charge of Miss Rice and her sister and Mrs. Lander.

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A gypsy examined my palm and described Miss Rice as my future partner in life — and examined her palm and gave a description of your humble servant as her future husband. However gipsies are not always right — and I prefer my dear little wife — to the middle-aged-looking — though young, Mrs. Dunlap.

I find that the Dunlaps knew my brother — Brother Grossman I mean! — Some years ago he brought letters of introduction to Chicago intending I believe to make a debut there — but in consequence of some death in the family Mrs. Dunlap did not see him. Mr. Dunlap however remembered seeing him and was much pleased with him and gave him letters of introduction to others and he then passed out of their remembrance. Mr. Warren remembers instinctly being consulted some years ago by Mrs. Ames concerning a young man of the name of Maurice Neville (“neveel”) who was stage-struck.

A young man who moved in the best society and was an attache of a foreign embassy. He became stage-struck and ultimately made his debut here. Your Uncle Eustis, h — My father made me stop right here as the dinner bell rang sometime ago — and now I have forgotten what I was going to say, excepting that it was something about some newspaper accounts of Mr. Neville's debut in Boston that your Uncle Eustis has seen.

Mr. Warren says that he never saw Mr. Neville — but that he remembers thinking how foolish it was for a man moving in such good society — and occupying such an important position — going on the stage.

I have taken up so much space already that I must make a separate letter upon business items. I hear that the mail is sent to the Post Office from the Revere House at half-past four and as it is 4 near that time now — I will run round to post this letter and return to my business communication which I will then carry to the G. P. O. I will make sure of this first though. I hope Elsie's cold is better. If she has earache send instantly for an aurist — and telegraph Dr. Blake. And now with much love I will say goodbye for the present.

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Your loving husband, Alec.