

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, June 26, 1895, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. Paris, France. 10, rue Nitot. June 26, 1895. My darling Alec:

I was so glad to hear from you the other night. It had seemed a very long time since you last arrived and though your cable assured me that you were well I wanted to hear from you yourself more in detail. I understand your description of the experiments with your apparatus perfectly. I hope that you have succeeded in definitely fixing the centers of gravity in the arms and in determining whether putting the centre of gravity further out on the arms by means of weights you do increase the velocity per second, and thereby cause a greater lift. It is very interesting to see how, while the machine itself is going at the same rate of speed, it's apparent velocity can be increased by moving weights. Of course the nearer the weights come to the ends of the arms the faster they will have to go around to return to the same place at the same length moment of time, the distance they have to travel being greater. I am impatient to have you get to work with the machine itself. I do so want your name associated with successful experiments in flying machines. I don't like to think of your stopping them unnecessarily or for a longer time than necessary. I wish I could be in two places at the same time, with you at Beinn Bhreagh and here with the children. I want to go home so much and sometimes it seems as if the children were not gaining enough to make it worth while our coming abroad. Elsie is so heavy and lazy sometimes, she wants everything with no trouble on her own part. It is very discouraging sometimes. Daisy 2 works much better, but it is Elsie that I want most results from because she needs more adventitious aids to agreeability than Daisy. I am discouraged about her singing. Mrs. Mauro does not think her teacher a good one and I had about come to that conclusion myself. Besides Elsie declares that you told her she was to sing without effort, therefore she accepts it most literally and sings in the easiest

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way for herself, which certainly does not look to me like the style any singer would adopt, or any and in a position which no one in earnest about her work would take. Excuse me. One must have periods of ups and downs and I am tired this morning. Probably I shall think everything is splendid tomorrow. But it is hard trying to do the best for one's children in two things about which one can know nothing whatever. It's like hunting for lost articles in a pitch dark chamber and that's a pretty hopeless undertaking. I wish you could give Elsie some of your own earnestness in hard work, she hasn't a particle.

I am so glad the fire alarm experiment was a success. I have often wondered that you did not try it before. It seems to me you ought to have drills with the fire hose inside the house, giving each servant his own particular hose to which to run at any alarm.

When one hears of places like the Duke of Fife's Mai Lodge burning down for want of water, one realizes how important a sufficient supply may become. I hope our own dear home will at least outlast our time. During the long time when I had no letter from you I had leisure to decide how I would like you to write, much as Gen. Greely and his companions decided how they would like their dinners prepared when they got them at home. I think I would rather have half a dozen 3 short notes than one long one. There may not be more in the short notes, perhaps not even so much and they are of course more expensive for stamps, but they look more. And women you know are creatures of impressions even if great Man is above such frailties.

By the time this reaches you it will be near our eighteenth wedding day. What a long time we have lived together, as long now as my whole life before our engagement. And I can wish for my children no better than that their married lives may be as happy as ours has been. You have always been very good to me, my husband, and I love you.

I have done nothing further about the portrait, it did not seem as if I could go quite alone to strange artists' studios where probably only French was spoken and no one has been at liberty to go with me, the children busy, Mr. and Mrs. Pollot away, Mrs. Ostheimer

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and Miss Duncan sick, Mrs. Mauro has already done so much for me I did not like to ask her again so soon. Perhaps I will go to the Salon this afternoon once more, it closes Sunday. I have been working very hard on something for old Mr. McCurdy's birthday. He probably will not have many more and I wanted to do something for him myself before it was too late. I have so little time in the day that I have been up pretty late nights and early mornings.

The weather continues lovely, bright and sunny with fresh breezes. It may be hot down in the city but up here it is always cool and there is not a night that I have ventured to leave my windows open.

I wonder whether you will go back to Baddeck from Flint or 4 come right on. I am only afraid your coming would unsettle the children and I am so anxious that they should show really worthy results from all our work. Elsie is covering her grammer over in the chair by me. She doesn't approve of it at all and thinks she knows more of French than it's compiler, but after long talk has concluded to study it. I hope you are back in your own comfortable rooms at the Point. I do not at all approve of your sleeping in the laboratory. I am sure you can not be properly looked after there.

Goodbye. I must dress for lunch. There are advantages in the French way of living, as for instance I can wear a "robe de chambre" all the morning and it is both pretty, comfortable and convenient. Pale blue silk with white lace. Don't you want to see me in it?

Ever your loving Mabel.