

## Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, undated, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. Gilsey House, New York City. (October 11, 1896) My darling:

We have just returned here from Utica. I had intended going right on to Washington, but finding that Daisy was really hard up for clothes concluded to stay here until tomorrow afternoon and get her something.

I wish that you could have come up to Utica with me, it was such a delight to see how well off the children are there. Mrs. Piatt is such a kind motherly woman and looks after her girls in a way very satisfactory to a mother. Daisy says the school building reminds her of the Louise Home for old Ladies in Washington and this description will at all events give you an idea of a large, rather imposing brick building. The bedrooms are at least large and much higher than Elsie's in Northampton and open out on either side of a wide long corridor running the whole length of the house. The girls are not allowed to keep their doors closed, portieres in the doorway gives all the privacy needed and does not prevent the admission of warm air from the hall. There is no heat in the bedrooms themselves and I fear they may be very cold by and by. However the house is heated with seven furnaces so perhaps they wont. The children seem to have what they call "a crush on" Mrs. Piatt and no one could seem more kind and thoughtful and indulgent. They say that she has a wonderful memory and never forgets the faces of any of her pupils, recognizing 2 them even in the streets of a strange city. All the in and out going mail passes through her hands and in a week they say she knows the handwriting of all the new girls. They are allowed to write to all the boys whose names are given her by their guardians. She does not allow the girls to have bicycles as she says if she did she would be unable to keep track of them and she wants to know where they are all the time. The schoolroom is

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a very large high hall, lighted by very tall windows on either side and also at the end. Mrs. Piatt calls the roll herself every morning and is about almost all the time, so she knows the girls well. She gives one or two lessons to the highest classes and conducts daily evening prayer and reads aloud every evening while the girls sit around and do fancy work. She reads anything she thinks may be interesting, good novels etc., and reads very well. There is a trained nurse in the establishment and girls are encouraged to stay in bed if they do not feel well. She, Mrs. Piatt, says that while it may be true that she is taken advantage of by lazy girls who want to shirk work, still she prefers that this should be so rather than that those girls who should stay in bed should suffer. Daisy and Gypsey seem to think that they have to work pretty hard, but they both enjoy their lessons immensely. Gipsey practices two hours and ten minutes a day. They like almost all their teachers very much and it was nice to see the friendliness that seemed to exist between teachers and pupils. It was far more like a home than one would have believed possible in so large a school. They are not required or desired to study in the evening 3 or in their bedrooms. The elder girls are authorized by Mrs. Piatt to put a stop to all proceedings they think objectionable. Mrs. Piatt in fact tells them that they stand next to the teachers in authority.

Both children are eager already to secure their rooms for next year and I think this life of steady work is going to do Gipsey a world of good. Daisy is very well, much better than when she left home and says she has a tremendous appetite. The only thing I wish is that they were made to go to bed earlier than ten o'clock for when they breakfast at half-past seven this makes a very long day.

Goodnight. I wish I knew something about you. I am very impatient to get home where I hope there may be letters from you.

Ever your own.