

## Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, November 7, 1901, with transcript, with transcript

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL TO MABEL (Hubbard) BELL Beinn Bhreagh Laboratory. November 7, 1901. Mrs. A. Graham Bell, 1331 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, D. C.  
Dear Mabel:

Here I am hard at work with bits of giant kites growing round me. Three workmen now engaged upon them. Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Watson and young Ferguson (John).

George McCurdy has weighed and measured and photographed a whole mass of discarded kites — most of them quite large — discarded not because they won't fly — for they do — but because we need room and can't afford to build a special house to hold the relics of bygone days. We shall preserve them photographically and use up the materials in new structures.

Daisy and "Jean" left here yesterday morning leaving Baddeck at 6:30 A. M.

Did any one tell you of the awful time we had last week with Susie McCurdy. It was last Saturday I think that Daisy called me while I was in the bath-tub to come and help Susie. Daisy had tried to take a plaster cast of Susie's face and could not get the plaster mask off. She had soaped Susie's face, I understand, to prevent the plaster from sticking, and had then poured plaster on leaving two small holes at the nostrils to breath through. After letting the thin shell of plaster 2 set and harden she then poured on more plaster to strengthen the mask until poor Susie had a mass of plaster several inches thick over her face — and then it was discovered that Susie's eyebrows and eyelashes were firmly embedded in plaster and that the mould adhered to her face in several places. How long they had been working over it before I was called I do not know but when I arrived on the scene there was Susie, on her back on a sofa — helpless — with a mass of plaster

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weighing several pounds completely covering her face and apparently as hard as stone. It went under her chin also up to her neck — decidedly dangerous. She had been crying and her nostrils were beginning to be plugged up. Had to pick it away with a penknife but this proved very slow laborious work and trying to Susie. Poor George looked like a ghost as he looked on. I thought I would send him to the laboratory for a fine hair saw we have there — by which means I hoped to saw off portions and reduce the thickness of the whole. George thought there was a saw somewhere in the house and went off soon returning with a meat saw. I then set him to work carefully reducing the thickness of the mass.

Before I was called Daisy had tried to loosen the mask by pouring in water between the mask and the face — but as the face had been soaped — soapy water got into Susie's eyes causing her great suffering.

We soon succeeded in taking off all the plaster below the nose thus relieving the mouth. Her breathing was 3 then all right and this also enabled us to administer stimulants for Susie was in a half fainting condition.

Little by little the plaster was sawn away until nearly every bit had been removed excepting that covering the eyes. George saved these so that they were cracked into comparatively small pieces, and then Daisy prying the pieces up a little scraped away the under surface of the plaster in which the hairs were embedded.

We all gave great sighs of relief when the plaster was completely removed and Susie's eyes were found to be uninjured. Present — Mrs. Kenna, Daisy, Miss Safford, George McCurdy and A.G.B. — with Maggie, Mary and Company flitting about in the background.

When it was all over we gave Susie a good dose of liquor (is that the way to spell it) and put her to bed. The operation of removing the mask lasted about 5½ hours! Susie went to sleep almost immediately and woke up next morning fresh and bright.

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Mail man going — good bye — will try to write every day.

Your loving husband, Alec.