

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, April 9, 1909, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. 1331 Connecticut Avenue. April 9, 1909. My darling Alec:

I am so sorry I haven't written, but indeed I have expected every day to hear of your being on your way down.

Of course I miss you greatly, at the same time I haven't been so very anxious to have you here as the weather has been bad, and our household decidedly unsettled.

Daisy feels very badly that you don't fancy her little girl's name, and so do I. I too think it a beautiful name and am very much surprised you don't. It's too late to change it now, for the name has been waiting for her for three years now, but anyway except for your feeling I shouldn't want it changed. I don't know any that I would prefer.

She is such a nice little baby too, thoroughly satisfactory in every way. Sandie is dear with her. He hasn't seen enough to be especially interested, as the baby sleeps all the time particularly in the daytime, but when he does see her he is extraordinarily gentle and delicate in touching her.

We are all, that is the Fairchildren and I, extremely excited about the Russian letter. David is rather troubled about the manufacturing idea, he says neither Douglas or Casey have any experience whatever in business and the margin between success and failure is inevitably so narrow that it requires just this experience to incline it on the right side. He says that when Mr. Curtiss was here working at his engine for the Baldwin balloon he was terribly crippled for 2 want of machine-shops. Everything had to be obtained in New York and at the most expensive rates. Telephoning alone is \$9.00 to New York and he had a lot

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of that to do. Now if Washington is so bad for manufacturing how would a place so remote as Baddeck do? Did not Casey's tower cost about twice what it might have done if it had been built nearer a base of manufacturing supplies?

My own feeling is as always that while Mr. Bedwin is a capable, go-ahead man he is not particularly careful of expenses and does not look after your interests in that respect as he would after his own. So while he may be all right to get your things done I should not trust him in commercial work.

We all think your Ottawa address perfectly grand. I don't see how your audience could help but be powerfully influenced. Only we want to go on striking while the iron is hot. Don't you think it would be well for Douglas and Casey to associate with themselves some one more experienced in the business end? I think Casey would always much rather go on with his engineering work, and Douglas with the demonstrating. Douglas might do more office work if he had the business training, but it seems to me there is plenty of work for three, and it's time to hustle or we'll get left, judging by the slip I enclose. I have heard of this before, machines that have never even been tried are selling for thousands.

Gardiner is hanging around waiting for you to come down and to see Mr. Curtiss. He wants to go in with Mr. Curtiss if there is any opening.

I want to see that bulletin. Don't get all tired out over your lecture I want you to be well and bright when you come down.

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I am very much interested in the sheep. It seems to me that you have perhaps advanced a step in the investigation by narrowing down the issue. Before you could not tell whether it was the feeding before or after mating that counted. Now apparently you do know. Why not buy a whole lot of sheep and try both ways, and sell both sheep and lambs in the spring. Surely you don't need specially bred sheep for this experiment.

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Much love to you all.

David is worried about Casey's paper, he says it is not what Mr. Page of the World's Work wants, he wants more an account of the Aerial Experiment Association and its work. Casey's paper is too generally historical. Your address is exactly what he would like, something along that line. Don't you think this might also apply to your Philadelphian address.

Do you suppose that it ever happens in real life that the "stone the builders rejected shall become the corner-stone of my house"? Do you remember my writing you of a Mr. Sanborn whom David was looking over in connection with Mr. Booth's assistant? Well both David and Bert, Daisy and I decided that he wouldn't do, and David turned him down frankly thinking that the kindest thing to do. He wrote me outlining what he thought should be done, which is O.K., but the letter was not worded in a business-like way and he has had no business training. So I answered saying how pleased and encouraged I was with the interest he manifested in a work too little known to the public and especially the feeling he showed for the babies. And I said that even if Mr. Fairchild felt that it was not at present advisable to connect him with the Review there was no reason why he should not go ahead independently and work for them. That no one man had done more for the deaf than you and you had never had any official position in connection with any institution, and that there was plenty of work yet for younger men and there was no reason why he could not go on and take the place in a younger generation that you had. I had a very nice note in reply. He said my suggestion quit took his breath away, but he was going on, and was becoming more and more interested in the work, particularly Miss Rinehart's. He has been there almost every day for weeks, and is going on to Philadelphia to investigate Miss Garrett's and David gave him his camera and he is taking very good photographs of the children and writing an article for the regular popular magazines.

So I wonder whether he may after all be a corner-stone?

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Lovingly, Mabel.