

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Alexander Melville Bell, Eliza Symonds Bell, Carrie Bell, June 19, 1870, with transcript

Copy of a letter written by Alexander Graham Bell to his parents and Carrie. 13 South Charlotte Street, June 19th, 1870. My dear Papa, Mama and Carrie:

The Sale has gone off far better than I could have anticipated. The proceeds amounted to £63-11-7. Deducting 10 per cent for Mr. Turnbull I should get £57-4-5. This with what I have remaining of John Smith's money and Mr. John Milne's (£7-16-6) will amount to £65-0-11.

Mr. Turnbull gave me yesterday a cheque on account amounting to £50. The accounts that are still unpaid amount to £77-5-2½. So that I shall still be short of £12-4-3½!!!

I sent along the Books to Mr. Turnbull's yesterday. They will be sold on Thursday at his rooms. But they won't fetch very much. There were 36 volumes of Edinburgh Review. 25 parts (unbound) of Don Quizot illustrated by Dore. 95 volumes miscellaneous books, pamphlets, etc.

I have sent along all your books to Collie's. I have a note of them. The Observation on Speech I have given into Mary's hands as well as two Standards (in use), Hyde Clarke and Smart's Walker.

On Friday I collected all the things that were to be kept, into the study — and locked myself in — and tried to imagine myself in the Backwoods of Canada.

It was not very hard to imagine — for Mr. Weir, Mrs. Nauman and I dined that day off the Bagatelle Board (!) sitting on 2 borrowed chairs — in the empty class-room. We had to

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take the cold chicken and salmon we had for dinner in our fingers . In the evening tea was made in an earthenware teapot without a snout and we drank out of jam-pots for cups.

Mr. Weir has been quite a God-send to me — cheering me up — roughing it with me, paying accounts for me and making me take care of myself.

I thought it best to retain Wilhelmina till Friday. As she has not got a place yet she was very glad to stay. Miss Roger's servant came and stayed with her. She really took so much trouble that I thought you (Carrie) would not object to my letting her choose some little thing for herself. So I gave her a pair of curling-tongs and a glass sugar-bowl.

Archie Bell took no notice of my note in any way . So on Thursday afternoon I sent Wilhelmina along to the shop for the things and to tell him that I should be glad to know whether he intended making an offer or not. He kindly (?) sent back instructions to me what I was to do. "Tell Mr. Alick if he does not hear from me to put them up at the Sale and I can bid for them, etc." — which was of course the very thing I sent along to let him know. However at 10 o'clock on Friday morning — (the Sale was to be at 11) — the things had not been returned — so I got a cab — and taking Mr. Weir as a witness — sent myself to see him. He was rather astonished I think to find I had discovered his private address — and I spoke out my mind to him — and, to 3 my surprise I must say , he had scarcely a word to say in reply. He said he would go at once and see that the things were returned in time for the sale.

I found them at home on my return. And they were more valuable than I had expected. During the sale I got the enclosed note from him.

My pupil Mr. Inglie (defective [??]) has been writing to his parents in Australia and he showed me what he had said about me . I asked him to give me a copy of the passage and he kindly sent it up to me yesterday. He has no objection to my using his name in any way. The Testimonial is as valuable to Papa as to me. It has been some reward for the hard work I have had lately. I enclose his extract. He had a lesson yesterday in the empty

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class-room. The only table I have now is Carrie's Work-Table — which Uncle will take care of.

I have arranged for a man that Mr. W. Milne knows — a professional packer — to come up tomorrow to pack up the blankets, etc., so as to stand the journey to London per luggage train. I should like to return myself by water — I don't want a fourth train-journey if I can help it. Should Grandmama and Susan take return tickets I have no doubt I can dispose of the return halves here.

Benjamin Herdman wanted Mr. Weir and me to take up our quarters with him. So we accepted and now sleep at Gilmore Place. But of course I shall be at Charlotte Street tomorrow and Tuesday. We had contemplated making up our own beds on the floor at 4 Charlotte Street and roughing it.

I have been quite knocked up the last day or two — so Mr. Weir made me promise to deliver myself over to him for Saturday afternoon. He arranged an excursion to Roslyn and Hawthornden. Benjamin drove us out. We were accompanied by Maggie Herdman, (now grown up and very pretty) — a friend of hers Miss Haliburton (a beautiful girl) and M ary Symonds . We started at 3 p. m. and enjoyed the fine country air — and the scenery etc ., very much. Mr. Weir is evidently struck with Miss Herdman and she with him. Benjamin was particularly attentive to Mary. And of course I was not a bit taken with Miss Haliburton (?) — who has a fine voice and sang duette with me. In the evening we had music etc., at Mrs. Herdman's and I went to bed a totally different being from when I left it in the morning.

Mr. Weir wants to arrange a boating-party for Monday evening to go up the Canal to Hateford or farther. I f I go — you need not be afraid of my exerting myself too much as I shall only steer and t alk to the young ladies .

On Tuesday afternoon Mr. Weir and I dine with Mrs. and Mr. Watson at Linlithgow. On Wednesday Mr. Weir returns by the steamer and I should like to accompany him. Would you please send me per return a copy of the Class Primer — if it has — as I think it has —

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the diagram that is in the large Visible Speech at page 63. I want to give it to Mr. Inglis — so that he may attempt to teach his Australian brothers the correct [???] — as they have all caught the defect from him. He is the eldest.

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I don't like very well just now (Papa) to ask you for more money than I can help when you have to pay some for poor Melly — but I should feel very much obliged if you could let me have £5 of my own money for my own private purposes.

If you will do this — the whole amount to settle up everything here would be £17.4.3½.

With dear love to all from Uncle, Cousins and self.

I am dear Papa, Mama and Carrie, Yours affectionately, A. Graham Bell. Professor A. M. Bell.