

Letter from Eliza Symonds Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, November 29, 1875, with transcript

Copy of letter from Mrs. Alexander Melville Bell to her son, Alexander Graham Bell
November 29th 1875 P. O. Box 518 Brantford, Ont., Can., Home, November 29th, 75
(Prof. A. Graham Bell, 292 Essex Street, Salem, Mass. U. S.) My dear Aleck,

On Wednesday last Carrie presented her gude mon with a fine little boy, who was in such a hurry to get into the world, that he made his appearance there before the Doctor arrived! She and George were here dining with us only two days before. Owing to the state of the weather and the roads, Papa had not been into Town for a day or two, and consequently we knew nothing about what had taken place, till last evening. This morning Mary and I dragged poor Polly over the muddy roads and deep ruts to see Carrie. She looked and felt remarkably well, and the little fat fellow under process of washing, seemed to be quite a Ballachey. We did not stay long, but in the meantime, the temperature became colder and we drove home over hardened roads, and through a blinding snow-storm. When our handkerchiefs were wet, we could neither of us get at our pockets where we had dry ones, so had to drive on with our faces and eyes plastered with snow. I told you in my last, that Cathcart had lost his situation with Sullivan, through intemperance, but another letter has been received stating that Sullivan had tried him once more, but would give him only half the former salary. What a horrid vice intemperance is, and how it blunts every human feeling in the victim's breast. The more Cathcart has, the more he spends to satisfy that demon within him, leaving his wife and family to scramble on as best they can. Poor Pollie is working herself to death to try to be independent of her husband. She had however great comfort in her children. By all accounts Percy is a noble fellow. We hope my dear boy, that you continue as well and as happy as when you last 2 wrote. I suppose you are at Cambridge today. Do not purchase the darning machine Papa kindly wrote about, till you hear more, because Lizzie takes charge of the darning and has done it so thoroughly

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that now there is very little to do. She could never manage a machine and has given up attempting to work even the ordinary sewing machine.

I do not know if you recollect Mr. Kennedy of Scotch song celebrity? He was a pupil of Papa's 18 years ago, and during the week has been here with his family, giving two concerts, with which all who heard them were delighted. He, accompanied by four sons and two daughters, appeared on the orchestra, and five children we understand, were left in Edinburgh. He brought his daughters up to our house to see us, and was enchanted with the place. All well in Town, Lizzie is spending a few days there. Christmas is drawing very near. How fast the weeks do go by, to be sure — it seems almost as if the last Christmas had only just gone. In three weeks more, we may hope to have you beside us again. We are all to spend Christmas day with your Uncle and Aunt.

Hoping that all is well with you, and with fond love in which your Father and cousins unite, I am my dear Aleck, Your affectionate Mother, E. G. Bell

An eye witness sends the *Ottawa Free Press* the following account of a very strange spectacle:—About eight o'clock on Monday morning a novel and brilliant spectacle was witnessed by those who had the good fortune to be in the vicinity of the Chaudiere Bridge. A large body of fire was seen to descend from the blue heavens, and by those who witnessed it will not readily be forgotten. It was apparently about six feet in diameter, and as bright as the sun, which was shining brightly at the time. Followed by an immense train of fire, of a vividness that cannot be easily described, terminating in an immense column of blood-red flame and dense smoke, it fell in an oblique direction to the west, and then plunged with a fearful hissing noise into the Ottawa, creating a dense volume of vapour.