

Letter from Eliza Symonds Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, April 23, 1877, with transcript

Tutelo Heights, Brantford, Ont., Can., April 23rd, 77. (No envelope) My dear Alec,

I am glad I did not post a letter for you yesterday, as your two have arrived which I now answer without delay. The eruption you tell me about seems to be very like what both Papa and I have had more than once since we came to Canada. If in passing your finger over the parts they feel like a fine nutmeg grater, it is probably the same eczema. I had it for a good while and was cured by bathing the parts with a decoction made from "Slippery Elm bark". All chemists keep it. Pour a pint of boiling water upon as much as would lie on the palm of your hand, and have it boiled for some time. Ask the chemist how long. If any of the eruption is in sight you might let the chemist see it. He would know if it is eczema. It comes generally in hot weather, also through indigestion, and from worry. Have you eaten freely of sweets, nuts or shell fish, or do you take your meals in a hurry? Mr. Swaisland had it all over his body about four years ago, from the latter cause. I mentioned your ailment to Aunt Ellen and she said "Oh, sulphur, he should take sulphur and a sulphur bath, it may be something he has caught from sleeping in hotel beds". If there should be any doubt about it, after having shown it to a chemist, show it to a medical man. Tepid bathing is good, so says the medical directory, 2 and also an aperient. I should like very much my dear to be with you in Boston, but it is impossible. Your Father's engagement at the Ladies' College is just at hand and besides that, he has some private pupils. We must defer our visit to Boston till the time of your marriage when nothing shall prevent us from being present (God willing). In going to Europe and lecturing be sure you tread on safe ground, or you may lose all you have gained. You know it is not an easy matter to attract the attention of the British, but you and your friends will know best. Who is Mr. Gower? Do you thoroughly know him, and is Mr. Hubbard satisfied with the arrangement between you and that gentleman? We read in the papers of such unscrupulous breaches of trust

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amongst Americans, that it makes one feel the need of caution. We are gratified at the marked compliment to you, in the invitation you have received to lecture in Boston. Papa will write a few lines and most likely touch upon lecturing in Canada. If you do, and come West, we shall surely catch a glimpse of you.

You must never miss an opportunity of running home if possible (and I don't think you would) for Papa and I are both growing older you know. I, especially, have felt the sensation of "wearing awa'" more unmistakably during the last year, than I ever did before. Not that I am in any way out of health, so don't fidget. Aunt Ellen was off to Laurie yesterday, so Uncle and Aileen are quite alone.

Thanks for the Telephone March, it is pretty but not a 3 Beethoven. Papa says it is by a lady. We have had the piano tuned today. When you write again, glance over this sheet and see what there is to answer. I am afraid Mrs. Ottaway thinks she has not been well used. I have asked you so many times what you did with the parcel you took charge of, for Mrs. Ottaway's friend, that when I found you took no notice I wrote to Mabel(I suppose a month ago) asking her to get the information from you and let me know. I have not had any reply from her, and when Mrs. Ottaway asked me again two or three days ago, the old, old question I was really ashamed to say I could get no answer to the inquiry! Now I don't know what it contained but I know it was a present of some kind from Mrs. Cathcart, who has received many from the lady to whom it was sent.

I must now my dear Alec, say good bye. Love to Mabel. As you say nothing to the contrary, we hope she is well again. My best love to her. I wrote to Uncle Edward yesterday. Fond love to you my dear, from,

Your affectionate Mother, E. G. Bell. Pray don't let any one see this slovenly letter, the ink would drop from the pen. Your Uncle is undecided about remaining in his present house, so communication by telephone must stand over.