

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Eliza Symonds Bell, September 28, 1879, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Mrs. Alexander Melville Bell. Cambridge, September 28th., 1879. My dear Mrs. Bell:

Your postal card has been received. I am afraid we cannot be with you punctually on the 1st of October but we shall come as soon after as we can. Alec has been hard at work from ten in the morning to eleven or twelve at night, over his bells for the District Exchange, hoping each day to finish them and each day finding him a step in advance only to find the end almost as far off. But now, he thinks he has got over the principal difficulty and another day or two will see the whole thing complete. If he succeeds and nothing happens to prevent, our plans are to leave Adelaide and Elsie here, and go on Sunday night to Washington to get our winter furs etc., and see about engaging a winter home and then proceed to Rochester or Albany where the baby meets us and then go on to Canada. Is that arrangement satisfactory? You see we hope to make such a long visit that by the time we come back it will be too late in the season to get good rooms. We do not want to go housekeeping next winter, but to take unfurnished rooms near a good hotel and have our meals sent in from there, or cook our own breakfast and lunch and go over for dinner.

There are several things we have to do before we leave here, we want to get some furniture here, and do some other shopping and then Mr. McKenzie the Minister who married us is going to baptise Elsie. I wanted very much to have the ceremony in church but Grandpa is too feeble to go so it will be very quietly at home and I hope the naughty little miss will behave with becoming grace but we can never depend on her. Lazy little thing that she is, she won't walk alone yet. She can do three or four steps very well and diligently practices getting up alone from the floor and walks across the room with very

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little aid but that is all. Such a chatter box as she is and very decided in all she likes or does not like and very quick in understanding all that is said to her. If she finds any new thing that pleases her she will sit for an hour perfectly still playing with it. One day it was a Bay water bottle the cork of which she put in and pulled out, put her fingers in and smelt for at least half an hour without stopping. Another day it was a morning cap of mine she pulled on and off her head trying the effect every now and then in the glass. She likes being dressed up extremely and will sit very quietly with a funny made up sort of sweet face while being wrapped up in somebody's bright shawl for a run out to see the "mooly cow".

Alec never was better in his life I don't believe, not so stout as he was and not a headache for weeks. I have failed in getting him up early but he comes to bed at twelve pretty regularly. Berta takes riding lessons and he rides too sometimes and now she has a riding habit, they are both crazy to go out on the road. I have not seen Alec in the saddle yet but the man says he rides pretty well for the first second and third lessons!! So I don't believe he can be an accomplished horseman.

Is there any American product that you or any of you would like us to bring you. I expect to have plenty of room in my trunks for unless you advise me otherwise I will bring only one evening dress and I have not had a chance to get well provided with winter clothes yet, That will have to wait unless you prefer waiting longer for us.

Next time you send into town will you enquire if the Apothecary keeps Imperial Granum in stock also Revelenta Arabica (Du Barrys). Elsie eats them a good deal and if I cannot get them in Brantford I must bring a supply. I suppose of course the grocers have hominy. My baby will eat anything from beef, potatoes to apples and grapes and tea and candy that we will give her but she does not get them very often. I hope you believe!

I believe I told Mary of the insanity of my cousin Carrie Blatchford We have not got over the shock of it yet it was so sudden and entirely unexpected coming when she was

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apparently in more than her usual health and 3 good spirits. The doctors cannot account for it as there has been no other case of the kind in our family. One cousin was insane for a short time after an severe attack of typhoid fever, but that is common. The doctors say if Carrie lives she will probably recover and never have another attack but she is losing strength daily and they are very anxious. It is so hard for my cousin Mary whose only sister she is — the last of three.

We have had several days of frost and at last have had the furnace fire lighted only to be greeted with a return of warm weather which makes the fire rather a nuisance than otherwise.

Goodbye now, please do tell me if there is anything I can do for you either here or in Washington I shall be so glad to do so.

Mr. Gibson is going to give me the roots of some plants for your conservatory. Is there any particular ones you care for. Mr. Gibson has so many and can so easily spare any you might like.

With much love to all,

Lovingly, Mabel G. Bell.