

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Eliza Symonds Bell, June 20, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Mrs. Alexander Melville Bell. Stockton Hotel, Cape Way, N.J. June 30, 1880 My dear Mrs. Bell:

I hope Alec has told you how much pleased we were with Mr. Bell's plan of coming down here with you for a little visit before taking us back to Canada. It would be just the thing for I do hate leaving Alec so far away for so long as we must, if we went early to Canada. Alec is very well except for an irritation of the skin brought on by the heat, and which is unpleasant but by no means serious. But he seems as far as ever from the end of his work, when one point which I hoped would be the end is reached, half a dozen more show themselves and so on and on, just now Alec is beginning on his new laboratory and I am in despair.

We moved here because we were all getting tired of the place and hotel, I am sure you would not like Atlantic City, for it is nothing but a summer breathing place. In winter there is absolutely nothing there. But you might like this for there is an air of home about it, the people really live here and love their homes and family grounds. Several very nice people stay here all the year around, and have pretty tree and garden embowered country homes. We saw one marked "For Sale" and got down from our carriage at once to see if it might possibly suit you, it reminded us something of your own pretty Canadian Home, it needs only the two back rooms of your house, the dining room and small bed room, to be of the same plan. The rooms upstairs are smaller and more numerous and there is a third story. It is near the sea and yet not too near for winter time. There are eleven acres of ground, but alas nearly one half was salt marsh and mosquitos abounded. They asked \$5500 for the whole place. When you come we must look around and see what you think. Of course the country is not pretty and picturesque like yours, nothing but the sea with wide desolate

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stretches of land, but the village itself behind 2 the monster hotels is dirty and picturesque, perhaps the last without the former and I didn't look only thought, and before the houses stand tall trees or rose vines overhang the porches.

This hotel is really monstrous. The bedrooms on the first floor number 98 and it is four stories high. Then downstairs there is an immense central hall about as large as the whole city hall, and beyond that the dining hall as broad and twice as long! Then there is the parlor nearly as large as the hall, three smaller reception parlors and three large bedrooms. These last all in one wing, there may be another on the other side of the hall. We have a band every night and nearly every afternoon, and a hop two or three times a week, all of which grandeur is lost upon Lina and me, and we are anxious to move into a little cottage still nearer the water which I hope we shall do by the end of the week. My babies are so nice and well and growing fast. We weighed them today and Elsie turned the scale at 31 pounds and the baby at 16. I don't think she is quite as big as Elsie was at that age but nearly two pounds a month is very good progress. I am ashamed of myself for not having sent you the babies' pictures. They were very good indeed, and shall be sent at once. Charlie seems very well notwithstanding the heat which is greater even than in Washington.

To think I should have forgotten to tell you how we got here, not such an easy matter after all though the distance was but forty-five miles. The Brighton people were stupid and said there was no railway from there to this place, and we must either go to Philadelphia and start again or go by water. There being no regular steamer or other vessels we chartered a big schooner on our own responsibility and sailed away in our own ship. We felt magnificent but our sense of our own importance gradually melted away under 3 the influence of a hot sun and then having to wait on shore from 7:30 A. M. to ten for the tide and wind to turn, the last did sufficiently to let us get out of the bay, that was all, and the only way we could get on in the face of strong winds was by tacking, so it was nine P. M. before we reached Delaware Bay, nearly everybody including poor little Elsie was very seasick, but I was not and Lina and Alec not enough to spoil their pleasure or change

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Alec's determination to have a laboratory yacht of his own to be called "Volta". At nine it was pitch dark and a storm brewing, so our landing by means of the Captain's small boat was not entirely without danger and I had ample proof of Alec's assertion of the boat's being nearly half full of water by sitting down into a pool of it and by the state of my clothes next morning. But it is very late now so I must close.

With very much love to all my friends and especially to Mr. Bell and you,

Affectionately, Mabel