

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Eliza Symonds Bell, October 24, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Mrs. Alexander Melville Bell. Hotel Metropolitan, 8 Rue Cambon, Paris. Sunday, Oct. 24th, 1880. My dear Mrs. Bell:

After Berta's letter to Charlie's mother I know you will be all glad of further news of Charlie. The worse, we hope is past now and he has nothing to do but get well, but that the doctor says can not be for a fortnight. Now the crisis has passed the doctors own that they were most doubtful of the issue. The trouble was not only inflammation of the bowels but something else with a long name and the chief trouble was that they were so uncertain exactly what the matter was and therefore what to do. The poor fellow was in dreadful pain from Monday night till Thursday morning. The last day or two the worse trouble was that he could not keep any food down. But last night he says he and Alec put the nurse to bed and had a "high old time" together and this morning he has drunk tumbler full after tumbler of milk and finally after making Berta give him two cups of tea said he wanted to fix the third himself and before she could stop him he had grasped the pitcher and swallowed the contents. So we think he is on the high road to recovery, but the doctors are still grave and prescribe the greatest care and rest. I fear that will be hard work for he is very restless and yesterday while Alec was away got out of bed for a moment. The consequence was his terrible sickness yesterday. The doctors think the cause of this 2 illness was that Monday morning he caught a little cold riding on horseback and afterwards eat his lunch in a hurry and went out with Alec, the whole proceeding in his still weak state being too much and at night he was seized with pain in his stomach. Then instead of calling Alec, half undressed he went down stairs in the cold and stood there fifteen minutes waiting for the concierge to get him some brandy. Poor fellow, all this trouble came the very day after it was decided that he was to be married next month and when your congratulation came in he was far too ill and suffering to care for it and all thoughts of it have been far from our own minds.

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The London Syndicate have written him a very handsome letter, giving him a month or five weeks leave of absence and speaking very highly of the work he had already done "of which they were justly proud". Of course we have not had time to think of fixing any date for the wedding day. We had thought Berta and Charlie would wait until next June and be married from the dear old home where she was born and bred, but Charlie's first illness so tried poor little Berta that both Mamma and Papa think it is better for her to be married and with him instead of worrying her heart out away from him, even under the skies of Italy or Egypt. There is some talk of Charlie, and I suppose Berta's going to Italy with us when he is strong enough to travel, but I do not know. The idea is to have Berta and Charlie married sometime in November that we may be with them, we ourselves sailing in Dec. 4th in Cunard Steamer Gallia. We are anxious to return in that steamer for it is the flag ship of the Cunard line and said to be the best afloat, and in such a bad month we want to cross in the safest and most comfortable 3 ship.

I have been obliged to wean my baby, much against my will as the doctor said she was eating her mother up and that I was not strong enough for such a big baby. She is not so large as my Elsie was and unlike her, lazy darling, she has not a tooth in her head though more than eight months old. We all think her a handsome baby and we hope will have more color now that she has stronger food. Elsie is as well and happy as can be and learning to talk very fast, chattering away all day, sometimes repeating French words she hears.

Alec is well as can be too, though he has been up until five or six o'clock every night this week with Charlie. He is much pleased with the honors he is receiving from the French Savants and the distinguished acquaintances he is making. He has been invited to Berlin and would have gone but for Charlie, but may still go later on. We are much disappointed not having heard from any of you yet, we look for letters daily. Do you not know our address? I know I enclosed it in my steamer letter, however I will give you another-Messrs.

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Hottinguer et Cie. rue de Provence 38, Paris. They are the correspondence of Barings Bros.

My baby has woken up and as Annie and Elsie are in the Tuilleries garden I must stop and look after her. You must not be anxious about Charlie now, for of course if he were worse we should telegraph and we hope he will be quite well by the time you receive this.

With very much love to you all. Tell me if there anything 4 I can bring any of you home. If it is anything wearable I can wear it once and escape custom duties.

Alec would send love, but he is still asleep. He makes up for his nightly vigils by sleeping all the morning.

Lovingly yours, May Bell.