

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Eliza Symonds Bell, July 17, 1885, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Mrs. Alexander Melville Bell. Cambridge, July 17th., 1885. My dear Mrs. Bell:

I received your letter from Lucerne last night. I am so glad that you are enjoying your trip so much and laying up memories to last your life. I sometimes think the memories are the nicest part of the journeys. I never realized how happy we have been in the past before.

I am sorry you feel as you and Mr. Bell seem to do about our visit to Europe. There never was any danger of our staying beyond an allotted time, Alec's engagements with his school being too pressing and of course there is less temptation than ever for us to remain away long now. But we are all very anxious to get Alec out of the country. He has not been so well since he had the measles as he was before and the heat has been too much for him and we think he needs the sea voyage and to be far away from his business cares. He and I also are very much dissatisfied that you cannot be in Scotland with us. We only intend to remain until September 17th. I think, anyway we must be home by October 1st. Why couldn't you stay these few weeks longer? Such a chance as this to revisit your old home with your child and his children may never come again. Would not this be one of the sweetest of memories to you all? And which you may regret not having?

We left Washington July 10th., and went to New London where we staid over Sunday that we might go to Lynn and endeavor to persuade Sister to come to Europe with us. I was so glad to have Alec and my children visit Lynn that I did not mind the long journey by sail boat and carriage (there being no Sunday train) to reach it, nor did they. Lynn is the old McCurdy birthplace and my Mother's Uncle, an old man of 87 still lives in the old homestead that has belonged to the McCurdy's since 1751. Uncle Charles looks barely 65 and is bright and active in all his movements and very side awake and interested in

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everything. He manages his large estate and famous granite quarry himself and looks good for another twenty years. He showed us all over the old house with the old furniture some of which was 200 years old and one chair which was older still, so old that no one knew how old it was, a delicate chippendale table that had been in the family through many generations and around which seven governors of our race had sat. I have not been in Lynn for twenty years and yet I remember the beautiful old place perfectly, it was all as when I played there a child of eight or nine and perhaps just as when Mamma sat on the old church steps and made mud pies. The years have gone noiselessly by and time seems to have forgotten it but not alas its inhabitants. Only Uncle Charles remains the same and I am thankful for that much.

We came here Tuesday evening but Alec left us at once to stay all night in Boston that he might catch the 9.00 train to Portland on route to the Lovejoy haunts. I had a telegram from him last night saying he would arrive in Augusta that evening which is a day earlier than he expected so I hope he has been more successful than he anticipated.

It is lovely here in the old home and my children are rejoicing in it and the freedom from restraint. In checked aprons and drawers and only one under garment they have been climbing the trees and rolling on the ground in perfect bliss. It is hot to be sure but there is a good breeze and heavy shade under the trees and they are content.

We hear from Mamma and Papa by Telegram every day, they left Washington day before yesterday the 15th., for Allegheny Springs Virginia where they report having found comfortable quarters. They propose remaining until Thursday when they will come up to see us off, unless we can persuade them not to. I don't want them to come, it is so hot in New York and it will make our departure so hard. Mamma is pretty well and bears up wonderfully. She was with Berta from before the Baby came until the end. After she died, she and the Nurse did everything for her and Berta looked so beautiful and as if asleep. It seems so hard Mamma must suffer this terrible sorrow, her life has been so full of sadness and loss.

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With much love to you and Mr. Bell.

Your affectionate daughter, Mabel.