

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Eliza Symonds Bell, October 11, 1891, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Mrs. Alexander Melville Bell. Beinn Bhreagh, Victoria County, Cape Breton, N. S. Oct. 11th, 1891. My dear Mrs. Bell:

I am so glad to hear that you are at last regaining strength, and hope that the improvement continues. Poor Louisa seems to have had a hard year. I hope she too is growing stronger these bright autumnal days. Isn't the foliage lovely? Ours is just beginning to show brilliant tints among the darker shades of green, but as yet the brightest things are the beautiful red berries of the mountain ash. I never noticed how brilliant they were before.

You have heard of the children's entertainment, whooping-cough, I suppose they had to have it sometime or other, but it seemed particularly unfortunate that it should be just now, because they had to remain indoors during some of the loveliest autumn weather I ever knew. Of course whooping-cough patients should be out of doors, but Elsie had bronchitis, and Daisy coughed so badly that she was weak and unable to walk, consequently we could take none of the walks and drives we had been looking forward to.

It is getting cold now, we have our carpet down at last and find it very comfortable, for without the long blood-stirring walks we used to take we find the house cool.

What do you think of my Marian's letter. It is entirely her own composition, especially the long words of which she is evidently very proud. I think the spelling really very good for a girl of her age. Her attack of whooping-cough really was a very bad one, and I dare not think 2 what she would have suffered but for her father's timely discovery that the continuous peculiar cough cough cough of the disease expelled all the air from the lungs, and when at the end of the attack she tried to forcibly draw in air the rush shut the glottis and atmospheric pressure held it down. The effort to sing "ah" though unsuccessful as

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far as voice was concerned, forced the epiglottis open so that a little air passed in and relieved the distress.

Alec has been coughing two, also Sarah, and for a couple of days we seemed to be in for a whooping epidemic, but both are better.

Alec is busy in the laboratory and thinks he is on the verge of a great pecuniary success. I hope so, for I want some more money very badly, especially now, I have ninety women sewing and wanting work to keep them employed. The trouble is that ninety is a large force for me to employ, but a very small one for a regular business undertaking. Do you or Mr. Bell know any wealthy people in Canada who would send their sewing to me? This is not as absurd a proposition as you must think it for numbers of people send to Europe for their sewing, and some to Fayal in the Azores, although the journey there and back alone consumes six weeks.

Daisy has told you of our new Club. It is to be both an original paper and reading club, to meet once every week. The ladies have taken to the idea very kindly, and I think that if it is properly managed it will meet a "long felt want". I thought it very mean of both Alec and Mr. McCurdy to go off and leave me entirely alone with my company of ladies, few of whom I had ever seen before, but I got on better than I dared to expect, and enjoyed it very much particularly the pounding on the table and calling the company to order! There are 41 names down for membership.

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Alec's shepherd has been in Vermont, learning how to manage, he went down with Grace, and we expect him back tomorrow bringing another ran or two to replace the one we lost this spring. No more sheep have died since we come here, one in fact who we thought dying, has nearly recovered in consequence we think of breathing sulphuric flower fumes prescribed by Miss Kirwan.

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Please give my love to Mr. Bell who I hope is well again, and with much to you and my cousins.

Affectionately your daughter, Mabel.