

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, 1876, with transcript

Letter from Miss Mabel Hubbard to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. Chicago and North Western Railway,- Friday (1876)? My dear Alec:

We left Chicago this morning after an hour's detention just outside the depot, without any regret except that we missed Harry's call yesterday afternoon.

Can you read these lines? Mr. Fox has just filled our ink bottles with some fluid bought in Chicago but which seems intended for mediumistic purposes so faint are the marks it leaves. We are several hours away from the city, traveling along the banks of a lovely broad stream whose name we cannot find out, so smooth and refreshing after the long ride through the broad expanse of prairie. We really are on the far famed prairies at last, though I can hardly realize it. I don't suppose we have come to the most characteristic part of them yet. They are so varying sometimes rolling and at others stretching away as far as the eye can see, perfectly flat and bare of all trees and at others gently inclining and covered with pretty trees.

We have just left Sterling apparently a dirty and busy manufacturing place, crowds of rough looking men were gathered at the depot a very uncultivated looking lot, but we have passed some quite pretty little houses the first I have seen for sometime.

How lovely that unknown river is winding around them on it's pretty wooded banks. Mr. Fox says encourageingly that my ink gets black afterward. It is to be hoped so for I really only see my writing with the eye of faith. We are a large party now. Mrs. and Mr. Palmer and their little boy, Mrs and Miss Bangs the objectional ladies. They are quiet and pleasant though Western and then young lady wears such a 2 display of diamonds on her fingers which Innever saw equaled except here. We have a car to ourselves, a pretty and

Library of Congress

comfortable one but not different from any other drawing-room car. This is the last of a long train of cars, and there is a cosy little smoking-room accessible from the rear platform and Papa took Miss Fox and me into it, and we had such a nice view of the country.

Mr. Hjortsberg and Mr. Hammond came to the depot to see us off and we had a very nice time with them.

Mrs. Palmer's little boy has a lovely little face with soft brown eyes. His Mother, tell Mamma, remembers going to Mt. Vernon with us all those years ago, when we were in Washington.

Do you know Alec, that I want to see you very much more every day I am away than before, yet I am having such a nice time. Everyone is as kind to me as they can be and do not seem to have any trouble either in talking to or understanding me. Mr. Fox has ceased making signs, and told me a long story about his experiences on board ship. Mr. Fox is so fond of talking he makes friends with every and anyone he meets and seems to know everybody he ever travels with for five minutes. I like him ever so much.

We could not have a hotel car so we have brought provisions along. Such big boxes, and so many of them too. One would think we expected to be out a month instead of a week and only sometimes three.

I wonder if my letters come regularly. I do hope there will be a nice little budget of letters from you at San Francisco. I am beginning to want very much to hear from you all.

With ever so much love to you and Mamma.

Ever yours, Mabel.