

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

Letter from Miss Mabel Hubbard to Mr. Alexander Graham Bell. Cambridge, Thursday. 1876 My dear Alec:

Your note of Monday has just arrived. I wonder why your letters like so many of your other writings are always so much later than other people's. Our letters always arrive by the morning mail, only yours never come until I have about given them up.

Your Uncle's picture was instantly seized upon, and had gone the rounds of the dinner table twice before I was allowed a look at it. Even then I had to surrender it almost immediately, and then was sent upstairs to get your mother's picture to compare with it. The resemblance especially about the eyes is very great. We all like it very much. Mamma thinks Mr. Symonds must be a fine looking man and is very much pleased to hear he and your cousin intend coming here before they sail, so we shall have a chance to see them. She has taken possession of the photograph case, and when I shall have my pictures again I don't know. This reminds me, you have not yet sent me another photograph of your father like the one I selected, we do not like the one we have, it does not do Mr. Bell justice.

My poor Alec I am very sorry you have had another headache but of course, as Mamma says it is your own fault, sitting up through the night. You will never accomplish anything if you work that way. Driving yourself to death for a week and in consequence losing a month in enforced idleness. Why cannot you work like Papa, who goes on so steadily day by day doing as much as he can and only so much, so never getting tired and having to give up.

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I hope you have finished that amended specification and award papers. I don't like the idea of your doing so many things at a time, I wish you would finish those three before you begin the Examination papers. If you just go from one to the other doing a little at a time to each, they will all "drag their slow length along" for an indefinite time.

2

I am dreadfully sorry my few thoughtless words have caused you so much disquietude. If you are always worried if I feel a little out of sorts, I shall be afraid to say anything again.

Here I am at the end of my sheet and nothing begun. I have Mamma's lovely pen and consequently feel as if I could go on writing forever. You can hardly understand how unpleasant it is to have a bad pen that does not work smoothly and make the handwriting as pretty as possible.

Auntie Berta returned this morning. Berta came last night, so we are now a completed family circle. You and Mr. Marsh don't count in that way yet. Auntie's presents are beginning to arrive. Yesterday came a little china basket with two kittens peeping out, the whole fastened to a blue velvet support, from Gardie Greene, the flaxen bearded young man you saw in New York, and who wrote Sister's Ancestral Tablets for her, the son of that Mr. Gardiner Greene you met at Uncle Edward Buck's funeral. Did Mamma ever tell you how hearing Mamma call Cousin Gardiner, "Gardiner" I thought he must be called "Papa" too as she called my papa that way? Cousin Gardiner is Cousin Anna Jeffrie's brother. This morning the express brought such a lovely silver ice dish from Dr. Marsh and Auntie Kittie, with tongs from Baby Ellis.

It is very nice to have Papa home once more, and to see that study table littered with his papers, and some hard worked Secretary dilligently trying to decipher the closely written much corrected manuscript, for that is the most conclusive sign of his presence. The only trouble is that his stay is so uncertain. Fortunately long experience has taught us to let the morrow take care of itself in that way. I wish he could stay with us permanently, it

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seems so dreadful his children should grow up without really knowing what fatherhood means. We all love him dearly, whenever we get a chance that love rapidly increases, but he is not a necessity of our existence as Mamma is. She has been all in all to us children and we have never felt any want, at least I have not. But this ought not to be so. Papa's absences were so gradual, first going for a week, and then staying longer and longer, still with the hope that Postal Telegraph would soon be finished but it never was, but dragged on with more or less hope of success, and meanwhile, tired of living in this big house alone not liking to bring her children into the Society of Washington, Mamma took us to Europe to improve the time while we were forced to be away from Papa, and we staid there three years and came back to find things grown worse, the prospect of Papa's living here smaller than ever. O how I hope it will not be with us two as it has been with my parents.

What a long letter and about nothing in especial. Well it is the fault of the pen and nothing else.

Grandma went out to ride yesterday but she is still unwell. Kate's funeral was yesterday, and some of the servants have come back.

Mamma wants me to say as addendum to Papa's note she would have wished to ask your Uncle to stay here, but we are already so full that it is impossible to offer them rooms here. She is very sorry, for she is anxious to see them but we hope this will not prevent our seeing a good deal of them.

With kindest regards to your Uncle and Cousins and love to your Father and Mother and yourself,

Ever yours, Mabel.