

## Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, December 6, 1876

Very important V.S. Boston - Dec. 6th, 1876. My darling pet,

When will you come home? It seems so dull & dreary here without you. Life is under a cloud with me and I must see you soon. Your letters are so comforting and delightful — but they are not so comforting as you dear. When will you come! Although this is the sixth and you are due on the eighth it seems an eternity to wait till then.

If you only knew how much happiness it gives me even to see you — to be near you — and feel that you are mine — and that you really & truly love me — you would want to marry me right off — without anything to live upon — and starve it out together.

There! You see what a goose I am! I can't wait the slow process of time — and I rebel against the dictates of fate.

So long as you were here — and I could see you whenever I chose — I was satisfied, and felt that I could wait in patience — for the time to come that should unite us forever.

But now I am rebellious — and feel like doing something rash — I am so mad with myself — for having neglected all my opportunities for personal advance.

Before I saw you I was rich — for I had all that I desired — and coveted no more — than to live as I chose — & be my own master. But now I am poor 2 indeed — for I cannot have you — and I must submit to the stern dictum of fate that separates us now — without a murmur. You may be whisked off to San Francisco or Washington — and I must smile and say how pleased I am. Well! I am pleased dear — so long as you are happy and comfortable — but it is with a dull aching sort of pleasure — that mocks its own smiling.

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Love makes me so selfish that I cannot bear you out of my sight. It is so miserable to feel that I can neither accompany you nor offer you a home to induce you to stay.

Forgive me dear if I write as I do. There is no safer vent for emotion than in words. Don't think I am sorry you went to San Francisco for I am not — I am only I could not go too. I shall only be sorry if you have had cause to feel unhappy. I wish I could have seen the beautiful scenery you describe. I love Nature even more than Science — the poetry of scenery is a thing I revel in. I know no passage in literature that sets my heart beating so much as that beautiful passage

“There is a pleasure in the pathless woods  
There is a rapture by the lonely shore,  
There is society where none intrudes,  
By the deep sea — and music in its roar,  
I love not man the less — but Nature — more  
From these our interviews; in which I steal  
From all I may be or have been before  
To mingle with the universe — and feel

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What I can ne'er express — yet cannot all conceal.”

( You must never think that Science can blunt my sensibilities to Nature. On the contrary I think it increases ones adoration of the beautiful.

In boyhood I have spent many happy hours lying among the heather on the Scottish hills — breathing in the scenery around me with a quiet delight that is even now pleasant for me to remember. -

But I look at these things now with other eyes. There are fresh beauties — unsuspected then — that fascinate me now. I catch glimpses of the harmonies of nature — of how one part fits into another — like the wheel-work of a complicated machine — forming a beautiful and symmetrical whole.

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I just see enough to feel how little I know of the universe around me — and to long to know more. I just see enough of the perfect adaptability of everything to its surroundings — to make me regret that Darwin has demolished the reasoning that made this the proof of an ever-living ever-present God.

Yet why should we regret the abandonment of imperfect reasoning. Truth need not fear the logic of evidence. The more we scrutinize — and the more we weigh the evidence of facts — the more likely is it that we shall arrive at the Truth. )

But where am I wandering to? You will see from this rhapsodical letter how excited I am tonight — and how much I long to see you again.

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( Our experiment last Sunday was very nearly a failure. Mr. Watson was in North Conway and I in Boston — so that we were 143 miles apart. Unfortunately the wire had been injured the day before by the cold snap. It had been broken in no less than five places — and had been hurriedly mended. Some of the connections had been left in an imperfect state, and the result was that when I put the telephone to my ear a most extraordinary succession of noises made their appearance. It seemed as if a hurricane was going on for my express benefit — A roaring rushing sound like wind mingled with the crashing of branches and all the noises of a storm — utterly prevented us from hearing the faintest trace of Mr. Watson's voice a hundred and forty three miles away. It seemed as if a cyclone had been imported express by telegraph for the occasion. It was all the more mortifying — as quite a number of skeptical telegraphic people were present on the occasion. Mrs. Eustis Hubbard was there too. After trying all sorts of experiments for nearly an hour — at last the telephone triumphed — and Mr. Watson's voice was heard above the roaring of the storm — singing “The last rose of summer”. I was glad that all present had the opportunity of hearing his voice even though the experiment was not as satisfactory as I had hoped. The power of the telephone was sufficiently demonstrated —

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and after the lapse of another half-hour Mr. Watson & I were able to hold conversation by word of mouth without much difficulty.

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When will this thing be finished! I am sick and tired of the multiple nature of my work — and the little profit that arises from it. Other men work their five or six hours a day — and have their thousands a year — while I slave from morning till night — and from night till morning — and accomplish nothing but wear myself out. I expect that the money will come in just time enough for me to leave it to you in my will! Oh! how I long for a nice little home of my own — and a nice little wife in it — and some time to rest. Don't scold me dear fee giving way now. I am sad at heart and can't keep my feelings bottled up like wine in a wine-cellar. They don't grow any better by keeping — so I may as well let them come out and then I will be easier.

I find that I am to be the recipient of two Centennial medals — one for Visible Speech and the other for the Telephone. Did I tell you I wonder — that the Japanese are taking up Visible Speech in the way I want it taken up — as an alphabet for every day use and not merely as a means of teaching the deaf. The Japanese Commissioners were struck by my exhibit at the Centennial and I now have a Japanese student — Mr. Isawa — studying the system for the purpose of introducing it into the public schools of Japan. Just fancy! I am now teaching a Japanese youth to read and write Japanese although I don't know a word of the language!! And yet I flatter myself I can teach him to read his own language much more easily than a Japanese would do. )

And now this voluminous epistle must come to an end — and I suppose you must be extremely glad. Forgive me Mabel dear for writing as I do — I shall try to make my next a brighter letter. I am so glad you have come home — for I suppose you must be nearing the East now — and I hope that you are none the worse for your journey.

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I trust that Gertrude has returned with a couple of red roses of her own — quite independently of those belonging to you — and that your father too is well. And now with ever so much love to you all — and a heartfelt over for yourself -

Your own loving Alec. Miss Mabel Hubbard New York.