

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, from May 9, 1898, to May 11, 1898, with transcript

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL TO MABEL (Hubbard) BELL Beinn Bhreagh, C. B. Monday, May 9, 1898. JOURNAL

Left Truro about 9:45 A. M. Lina McCurdy made her appearance on platform just as train was starting. She had reached Halifax by boat from Boston and had decided to come the rest of the distance by rail. She seemed to be as much surprised to see us as we were to see her.

She didn't know whether her cottage was ready and had not notified Miss McCurdy definitely of time of coming so we decided to take her to Beinn Bhreagh for the night.

The Blue-hill was in waiting at the Grand Narrows — and we found comfortable chairs, cushions and rugs on board for my father and Mrs. Bell. Also Mr. Atwater — as large as life — and as jolly as ever. Gave us all the news of Baddeck — comprised in none at all.

The Point was brilliant with lights as we approached it — every window had a light and a plentiful display of candle-lanterns beside. Usual salute of bell-ringing and gun-firing by Duncan. Canadian flag at the mast-head.

Central wharf was a blaze of light. Myriads of candle-lanterns— in addition to the lantern WELCOME.

A triumphal arch of evergreens — and spruce bushes decorated with lights on the Wharf beside the warehouse. All the people on Beinn Bhreagh present to welcome us here. Miss McCurdy and the three boys were there also (and I shrewdly suspect they had something

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to do with the decorations.) They 2 returned to Baddeck on the Blue-hill. A large number of Canadian and American flags flying on arch — warehouse — and poles on pier.

The spring-board wagon with Wash and Alpha — harnessed in — a beautiful pair — awaited us — and the Phaeton with Champ.

Champ seemed to recognize me and came up to ask for sugar.

John McDermid's wife died here January five — the anniversary of my Mother's death.

House looked beautiful — and splendid log-fire in Hall. Maggie was on hand with Mrs. (Morrison?). All retired early tired out.

Tuesday, May 10th, 1896 — at B.B. Hall.

My father actually walked with me to the warehouse to see the bear. A five fellow but reported as inclined to be savage. Mr. McInnis and Mr. Stewart have completed a splendid cage for him — better than anything at the Zoo. He seems to be in good condition. He is a black bear. Cage of thick iron rods made by Baddeck blacksmith. As he can get his paws through the bars — an outer cage of wire-netting has been made to keep boys out of danger.

One of the foxes has succeeded in escaping but evidently injured herself in the process judging by the blood left behind. Mr. McInnis thinks she is dead. The other fox is in good condition but confined to the house as the wire-netting outside has not proved sufficiently strong. The owl is dead — but the two eagles are still to the fore in good condition.

3

Drove my father and Mrs. Bell and Lina to the cow barn where they saw all the cows in place. A nice little calf has made his appearance.

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Princess has a colt born on Monday — a pretty — long-legged fellow — the third born on the place.

The first “Alpha” goes well with Wash. The second “Berta” is loose in a stall with a halter on her head — and the new colt “Gamma” fits the name exactly. The Greek alphabet can give names to a good many more.

A hen with two little chickens took Lina's fancy — and she has been given them as pets. She found her parrot in good condition.

Miss McCurdy, Bessie Macrae, George, Douglas and Lucien came over after lunch. Miss McCurdy and Bessie came to talk about Flower Show. Lucien brought over his battery and Electric Light to show me. George read books while here — and Douglas hunted round for bird's nests and found one in a spruce-bush beside the back door with four eggs.

After they had gone — John McKillop spent afternoon and evening looking over his sheep records — and straightening them out. At night went to work upon my own sheep records and found in the book — two letters from you — one for McInnis and one for Mrs. Bell.

Wednesday, May 11th, — at BB. Hall.

Hard at work with John over sheep records.

4

Walked carefully up the mountain without ill effects — so I presume I am all right if I go carefully. Yesterday I walked down — slowly — to warehouse with my father — without trouble — but walked back briskly, starting up the old pain in the head showing that all is not right there yet. I am very much pleased that I have walked up mountain and down again — without headache. John McDermid reports considerable damage to shrubs and young trees on lawn near house from field mice. They have guard the bark. The place fairly over-run with them. Taking advantage of your absence I have decided to get an old

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cat with kittens — to be kept in the kitchen with full liberty to visit the kitchen pantry — and run out on the lawn.

I telephoned Miss McCurdy to start the boys hunting for CATS. They are delighted with the commission. Miss McCurdy telephones that the Ladies' Club propose to give a Reception next week to my father and Mrs. Bell.

I am much annoyed to find that our papers and magazines were not sent to the Reading-Room but have been allowed to accumulate here unopened — a wicked shame. A cart load of reading material has thus been wasted. I think of getting Bessie Macree or Flo MacDougall to come over and sort them out and cut the pages so that Mrs. Bell and my father may have something to read — Also your humble servant.

Took another walk tonight on South Road — “Bras 5 d' Or Avenue?” as far as the Bridge. Just finished a bath — and now complete my Journal for my little wifie.

AGB.