

Letter and enclosure from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, March 2, 1901

Volta Bureau, March 2, 1901. Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell, 6 Rue de Longchamp, Paris, France. My dear Mabel: —

I have been too busy during the past week to do more than send you copies of things that are passing. The Spencer letters, proposed Joint Resolution to Congress, Census Thoughts, &c. and I don't feel like writing now, although I feel that I MUST, because I propose to run away somewhere this evening for a breath of sea air — oh for Beinn Bhreagh — can't afford to go — can't afford the time. I have sent Dr. Phelps up to look after sheep babies).

This is Saturday, tomorrow is Sunday, and Monday is the 4th of March. I think I shall run down to Old Point Comfort and return by Tuesday morning. If I get away from Miss Safford's neighborhood I am afraid that I won't write many letters. — TIRED OUT. I had better stop.

Glad you liked my letter to Prof. Langley — hope he did — haven't heard a word from him in reply. Robert Adams is all right. Glad you approved of the idea of bringing poor Smithson to the United States and giving him honored resting place beside the Institution which he founded. Trouble was I couldn't get the Regents to see it. I knew before hand that my Resolution would not pass, but all the same I offered it in order to put myself on record. The proposition to bring Smithson's body here received ONE VOTE — my own — and that was all

Poor little Daidums, I am very sorry she failed to get a 2 cablegram from me and Elsie. I, was at Elsie's rooms and told Mr. Tyler, and then went to the telegraph office with Bert to send her a cablegram. Unfortunately I wanted to send her a particularly nice one, a cypher

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of twenty-one words; one for each year of her life — and not having the cypher book about me I took the cable blanks to George town to write my cablegram there. One thing and another happened and it was late at night before I could sit down to prepare it. Couldn't send it in the middle of the night, so thought I would have it sent in the morning — BUT —

The empty cable blank is still here — but I sent Daidum my message IN MY HEART. Mental telepathy and all that sort of thing. Wireless telegraphy, &c. I hope Daisy received my letter, it will at all events have shown her that I did not forget her.

Haven't had a chance to see Charlie about memorial building. He is too busy with business matters and the inauguration. Will see him when I return from the ocean.

Glad you are going on with the Subtil Art. Something Mr. Hitz sent you on the subject has been returned to him through the Dead Letter Office as the party could not be found. I looked at the envelope to see what the trouble was. He had addressed it 3 Rue de Longchamp instead of 6.

Bert is very much pleased with long letter just received from you about Magazine.

I will ask Miss Safford to enclose some quotations that have pleased me. A little verse published in the Evening Star, another from Judge of "March 2" 1901, which I saw last week, 3 although this is only March 2 today. Don't think it is HONEST to put a wrong date on a published paper. Judge and several other papers I know of come out long before the dates printed upon them. I enclose also quotations from "Lacon".

Haven't got a JOKE — at least don't remember one. I'll look in my note book and see. Yes, I have quite a number of them — Good gracious — a whole lot of them — some of them will probably be unintelligible to you unless you have been able to read American papers.

The papers have been full of late of the doings of a fanatical little woman — Mrs. Carrie A. Nation, of Kansas, who has organized a woman's crusade against the (illegal) liquor

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saloons that exist in Kansas — a prohibition state. Armed with axes these ladies visit the saloons and smash everything in them that they can get their hands on. Smash goes an axe through a fine plate glass window. Valuable mirrors are broken. Beer barrels, wine casks, &c., &c. are emptied. The idea being that as Kansas is a prohibition state and the saloons therefore established contrary to law, the proprietors will be unable to obtain redress in the courts.

Be this as it may, the papers are full of the doings of Mrs. Nation and her colleagues, and this gives the key to the jokes of the day.

“Hide the spirit thermometers — here comes Mrs. nation”, says one paper.

In a funny paper Mike appears with his trousers legs all torn to ribbons — (of course in Kansas —) and exclaims: — 4 “My own dog did it — I came home sober last night and he didn't know me”.

In another place in Kansas a Mind-reader gave a public exhibition, but failed completely from SCARCITY OF MATERIAL.

“It goes without saying” — is a common phrase; but — “Nothing goes without saying over the ‘phone”.

When is a man's salary damp? When it is dew in the morning and mist at night.

There is another one about birds — “with their little bills all over dew” — but I don't remember the question.

One of the funny papers likens McKinley to “a receipted bill” (re-seated Bill) — poor.

Why is it impossible for me to spell “cupid”? Because when I come to see you I can go no further.

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I wish I could C U now.

Good bye, Alexander Graham Bell Mrs. A. Graham Bell, Your loving husnabd,

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P. S. My contribution to the A.A.P. T.S.D. and the National Geo. Soc. have not been paid and several large bills are now coming in; one from Demonet (\$407) for Elsie's reception. I have been trying to get an idea of the total amount required for everything — McInnis and all and find it comes more than three thousand five hundred dollars, with a balance in the bank of \$900 in the bank to pay it with! Of course the bank would allow us to overdraw our account until dividends come in, but — as you know — I have a particularly strong objection to doing anything of the sort. I don't think I have done so — consciously; and it always makes me nervous when I find our account overdrawn without our knowing it. That is my danger line. Whatever we do we must not overdraw.

As I understand from Charlie that your unexpected dividend from the International Bell Telephone will come in in the middle of this month, I have thought it best to borrow four thousand dollars for one month and re-pay the note out of the dividend when it comes in.

Be very careful not to draw upon your Washington account without letting me know before hand so that I can make provision here to meet your draft without overdrawing the account.

I suppose you read my last letter to Daisy about an aqueous vapor atmosphere. I have advanced the subject a good deal since I wrote to her — but what do you think — I have just discovered that a man has stolen my ideas — and HAS PUBLISHED THEM! Miss Safford says that she is afraid that you will think that she has given away my ideas to someone. But she hasn't. The man who has stolen my ideas and published them under his own name is Dr. John Frederick Daniel. He not only develops the idea of “an atmosphere of pure aqueous vapor” starting with the assumption of a world covered 6 with water and

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all at a uniform temperature — and considering the case of a temperature of 80° with the vapor pressure equivalent to one inch of mercury, but he also takes my experiment of the two bottles connected together by a tube, one warmer containing water, and the other, the cooler, nothing. He gives a diagram of the arrangement and describes the process of continuous distillation that goes on from the one bottle to the other just as I did to Daisy. He compares this to nature's process and draws the inferences that I did from the experiment. But HE NEVER MENTIONS MY NAME, nor gives me any credit.

Don't you think this outrageous. What do you think I had better do? I am not in the habit of entering into controversies relating to priority of conception, so I better let the whole thing pass.

In France they are great sticklers for priority, and Daisy, therefore may feel like taking up the cudgels in defence of her father — but don't let her do it until she sees Dr. Daniel's paper. It is headed “Elements of Meteorology; Meteorological Essays by the LATE John Frederick Daniell, D. C.L., Oxon.”, and is dated 1845, TWO YEARS BEFORE I WAS BORN! I am afraid that my claims to priority could not be sustained?! A.G.B.

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EXTRACT FROM “THE TEST OF THE HEART”.

It is easy enough to be pleasant
When the world flows by like a song,
But the man worth while is the one who will smile
When everything goes wrong. For the test of the heart is
trouble
And it always comes with the years
And the smile that is worth the praises of earth
Is the smile that shines through tears.

Horace Parker Chandler.

(Evening Star, Feb. 23, 1901).

INNUENDO

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It isn't the thing that you say, dear But the thing that you leave unsaid — The meaning shrug of the shoulder That leaves a character dead. In the spoken word lies peril; One might be brought to book; But who can convict an eyelash, Or prove murder against a look.

Margaret Wentworth.

(Judge, March 2, 1901.)

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From LACON

Or “Many Things in Few Words Addressed to Those who Think”

By Rev. C. C. Colton.

p. 30 “The whole world is turned upside down once in twenty-four hours”.

p. 218 “It has been observed that a dwarf standing on the shoulders of a giant will see further than the giant himself.”

p. 109 “Mystery magnifies danger, as a fog the sun; the hand that warned Belshazzar, derived its horrifying influence from the want of a body.”