

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

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

I can't help writing to you, though it is late and Mamma thinks I am safe and sound in bed, which I am and asleep, which you see I am not.

All this which you told me tonight has worried me so much. If this could not have been helped I should not mind so much, but is it so? Please do not think I am going to scold you, for I am not- No, for I know that in your case I should have done no more, rather less. And it is this too that troubles me. This slowness and procrastination which is I think your great fault, is mine also, and I don't know what we are going to do if this goes on. I am trying so hard to conquer this in myself. Cannot we join and each try to conquer it in ourselves. They say two can do so much more than one. If I were only smart and quick like Berta this in you might not matter so much or if you were like Papa who pushes through everything of his to the end be he well or sick things would go well, but since we both have it I fear one effort alone can do little. I know that you are even more worried about this misfortune than I. I only want to take advantage of it to try and prevent a similar thing happening by curing the fault that produced it, then will this not be a misfortune and even if the whole matter fails I shall be glad .

Let us resolve that when there is a thing to be done we will do it as quickly and as soon as may be and let no other things save what are absolutely necessary come to interfere with it, let us determine that no pleasure shall take us away from it, and that while it is on hand we will undertake no new thing. That we will give our whole mind to it while at work.

O I know how easily all this is said and how hardly done I know that I have but the faintest idea of what is comprehended in what I have said I know I shall fail over and over again till

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it seems impossible to do it. But still let us try and surely if we put our whole will to it and ask God's help we shall in the end succeed and then our friends will not be disappointed in us, and will not be afraid to trust us. Sure we will do our best speedily. You will try with me won't you, for I feel almost in despair and if you cannot hurry, cannot deny yourself any passing gratification as in not coming out here, when so much is at stake I fear you never will, fear friends will not be so willing to aid you with help and money.

I love you so much dear Alec I cannot bear that anyone should write to you and with too much justice, as my father has done. And I cannot bear that procrastination should rob you of the fruits of hours of hard study and of the great abilities God has given you.

I know that ill health has the last week or two prevented you from working as hard as usual. But it seems to me when the thing to be done was so very important, when if it failed you lost the reward of past toil and suffering, you might perhaps have put even that aside for the time I say perhaps for I don't know whether you ought, I only know Papa would have. I know I never yet have done so, and fear if the trial came I should fail, and I sympathize with you and feel O so badly when you are suffering. If I could only have helped you.

Dearest Alec, Goodnight. It is too late to think what ought to have been done but not to determine that in future we two joined together and helped by God Almighty will not let this happen again. And two will win where one failed.

Goodnight, I love you very, very much and am so sorry for you my own Alec,

Your, May.

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In the cars, I have read over this epistle. I hardly know whether to send it or no. I know how much troubled you are, and do not want to increase it, but if I do I also am trying to help you to avoid this worry another time.

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This I have said is a fair bargain for I am the weaker nature and my tasks are as hard for me as yours for you, and when I think what I have undertaken I am almost in despair. But I will try and surely if I and you too are faithful in little we will be so in great. Do not think I want you to overwork yourself usually. I only thought in just important matters as this you might for a few days and then rest. Perhaps a little timely overwork would save months of constant toil, as I fear a law suit would make you.

And do not suppose I should not miss your visits. You have no idea how I enjoy and look forward to them, and how sorry I am when you do not come and when you go.