

## Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, December 5, 1889, with transcript

Copy of a letter written by A. Graham Bell to Mabel (Hubbard) Bell Twin Oaks, Thursday, December 5, 1889. My dear little wifie:

How time flies — I intended when you set out on your journey to write to you — if only one word — every day — and I think this is the first letter dated this month. I have been having a glorious sit-up over my work — but I am well and bright. I went yesterday to attend funeral services of Judge MacArthur's son. His father tried to bring him home from New York — where business matters had turned his brain — or it may be — as some whisper — that something else had accomplished this. Anyway his brain was affected, and he thought that people were after him to murder him. He was only married a short time ago — in fact so recently that I can hardly think it possible that dissipation could have been the cause of his condition. The worst man surely would not be in delirium tremens within two months or so of his wedding day. Surely a wife would have some influence — so I dismiss the D. T. theory — and stick to insanity pure and simple. Judge MacArthur tried to bring him to Washington but in the train the young man was haunted by the idea that the people in the train wanted to kill him. His father had to hold on to his arm to keep him still. Judges Field and Harlan of the Supreme Court were, I believe, in the same train. At last young MacArthur said he wanted a drink of water — and rose followed by his father. In a moment — before any one could restrain him — he bolted. Flung open the door of the car — on to the platform — and out into the darkness — with a leap though the train was an express going at full speed. The cord was pulled — the train 2 stopped — and backed about half a mile to where the body lay — (he had been killed instantly). This reminds me that another accident happened — I think yesterday. Miss Foote, (sister of the first Mrs. Sen. Hawley) was run over in the streets. A wagon of some kind went over her body. She was carried, (unconscious) into a drug store. When she recovered consciousness she was so dazed

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that she could not tell where she lived — though, fortunately she remembered her name — so that the address was soon discovered. “Dr. Carr” is attending her at Mrs. Lundars house — I presume “Carr” is our “Kerr” but don't know. Newspapers report her condition as more serious than was at first thought — concussion of brain but no internal injuries in body of serious nature. On account of her infirm state of health accident may have serious consequences to her. My uncle seems all right again — was out walking yesterday.

In accordance with your instructions I wrote to Mrs. Bancroft about meeting of Fortnightly Club, etc. — also to Sen. Stanford. I have forwarded letters from Sen. Stanford to your father — North Yakima, etc.

Pierson and Sarah Radcliffe have diphtheria — which is epidemic at Northsmpton Inst. More than twenty cases and one death. Pierson O. K. — Sarah convalescent.

Elsie, the other day, caused a great sensation at the dinner table during my absence — by her description of how we spent our evenings in Beinn Bhreagh. Among other things she said that “Papa would pray for them while they danced”! “what?” “Yes — sometimes we would dance and sometimes we would sing and pray with Papa.” She was quite unconscious of the lapsus linguae that led her to substitute an R for an L — until the laughter that went round the table recalled her to herself.

Your loving husband, Alec. P. S. I engaged Mr. Ellis yesterday. He opens the workshop in the Lab. today — and the long disused engine will puff once more. He commences on my automatic handling of statistics and on Jan. 1st, 1890 we will start on the “Phonographophone.” AGB