

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, May 5, 1890, with transcript

Copy of letter written by Alexander Graham Bell to his wife, Mabel (Hubbard) Bell. Boston, May 5th, 1890 My darling little girl:

The funeral is over and here I am back again at the hotel feeling desolate and alone. The body lay in my room — my little study — and visions of the past came over me as I thought of all that had happened in that room and in that very place — and of all the kindness shown to me by good Mrs. Sanders in the old days of long ago. On the very spot where the coffin stood — I had dared my fate for the second time — and with tears in my eyes had tenderly kissed a beautiful girlish face — how long ago it seems now — and how hopeless it all seemed then.

I remember the love that was in my heart when I drew you to me then — and — my darling — it is still here after all these years — as strong and pure and true — though I fear I do not always show it to you.

You have grown into my heart my darling — you have been a good and loving wife — yet somehow I feel desolate that we are so much apart. Others can interest and please you but I can not. Our minds are apart and it is my fault. I remain solitary and alone — and every year takes me further from you and my friends and the world — and I seen powerless to help. But for you I should lead the Life of a hermit — alone with my thoughts. I hang like a dead weight on your young life — and crush you. What can I do? Is it in me to be young again? I fear I am older than my years — while you my dear are young. What can I do now to make you happy? I have already made an appointment with the head of the Labor Bureau to examine tomorrow the returns of the Mass. Census — without a

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thought of Hollander, or Hovey, or Jordan 2 and Marsh! — but I will visit these places too for you before I return if I have to spend another day.

Poor Mrs. Sanders looked living as she lay in her coffin — a peaceful sleep — not death — seemed to be on her. Her husband died many years ago but they brought his body home today and the two were buried in one grave.

As I went to the house a lady stopped me in the street — a sweet pretty face that I remembered but could not name — and a voice that told me she was deaf. She was Miss Lucy Swett! George had pleaded with his mother to let him take her to the house that she might see his grandmother. She did not remain for the funeral but came away at once — and met me going.

We agreed to meet when the funeral services were done — and I drove her to Beverly — to her home — and saw the school. She is a very sweet girl and I do not wonder that George is in love. I think she loves him too — for himself I mean and not for his money.

I remained to supper and while I was there George came in and kissed his lady love before them all. He has grown to be a manly fellow and everyone likes him. I am afraid the attachment has become too strong for prudence to have away. They will surely marry — but what then? Will lovers ever consider the good of these that will come after them? Deafness has come down through four generations to Miss Swett, yet prudence will not prevent her from marrying one who was born deaf — and George chooses danger to his offspring — for her love. Yet I can understand it too.

Upon my return here I find that Miss Fuller and little Helen Keller 3 have been here twice to see me — in vain. I must call on them tomorrow.

Much love to Elsie and Daisy and to my little wife — and kind regards to Mr. McCurdy.

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Your loving husband, Alec.