

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, March 19, 1892, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to her husband, Dr. Alexander Graham Bell
Florence Saturday March 19th 1892 My dear Alec:

I have decided that it is not right for me not to cable you about Elsie as you will be worried if you know afterwards that I have not kept you fully informed about us. I have told you the exact truth in my cable just now — fortunately it is not a hard one to say. I should not suspect her to be sick. She is so well and in such thoroughly good spirits. All day yesterday she worked hard ripping up her dress and all today she has been busy and happy painting or rather coloring picture papers like the little girl she really is. And her throat is very much better today — so she has nothing to do but get well. The only thing is that it is evident that just at present she is very delicate and that I must be very careful of her health in every way. I feel that I do not want the responsibility of travelling about alone with her and consequently I have taken advantage of your permission and asked Mr. McCurdy to remain this side the ocean and escort us home. I do not need him now and do not care about having him here since Elsie is so well and the Misses Clark so thoroughly all I want them to be, but I don't want him to go way off to America and leave me utterly without anyone on whom I can rely in case of trouble. I propose telegraphing him to go off on his own work and simply to meet us in Paris. I just want him within some hours call and not weeks away. I am afraid you will be more worried about Daisy and me than about Elsie since she is doing so well, but we are both well. I have not allowed Daisy to go in Elsie's room since she went to bed and in the parlor the windows are open all the time. The doctor did not tell me until this morning that Elsie had diptheria and I did not know that it was possible to have diptheria without fever, so I have not quaranteened Elsie as strictly as I have done today. The Misses Clark think the Dr. an alarmist and that Elsie will be able to leave before the fortnight he gives me, but of course I will be on the safe side.

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Sunday. I could not send my cable yesterday and now I have concluded 2 not to. It would only disturb you unnecessarily because it would be impossible for you to believe how little ill the child is — you would think I was making the lightest of it and beside you would worry about us. If I were anxious about Elsie I would not dare keep it from you, but there is really nothing to trouble one except that of course diptheria is always alarming. Dr. Baldwin says there is no mistaking the fact and that fever would have supervened in ten hours if he had not been called in time. Her throat is better today and she continues bright and happy. She is perfectly delighted at having diptheria and has sent up a poem of rejoicing to Miss Kinnan so you may imagine how little discomfort she is experiencing fancy her clapping her hands and jumping up in bed because she has arrived at the dignity of diptheria and now “I have had everything Daisy has had except typhoid fever and pneumonia”. The weather continues most favorable so that I can keep the parlor window wide open all day. Daisy and I went to drive towards Fiesole yesterday and bought such a lot of wild purple anemones and double daffodils from a pretty little boy on the roadside. The country is beginning to put on its spring garb, the blossoms are out on the trees and the meadows are yellow with the wild daffodil. How I wish you were here and Elsie well so we could go for long drives and walks. The air is so fresh and bracing that you would like walking over those picturesque hills I am sure. I enclose a note I had from Gussie Gillette this morning. I think it is quite a nice one don't you. Your first letter arrived yesterday just as Day and I were going out. I am afraid I was disappointed in getting so little for I had been looking forward to a continuation of the journal. I know I cannot expect much while you are under examination, but I did think you would have leisure on shipboard for a nice letter. Please don't stop to think about the time of day here when you telegraph. I don't believe we can tell when a cable goes. For instance I did not get your cable until after dinner Tuesday evening. If you had sent it when you arrived I would at least have received it sooner and been spared some worrying.

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I had a note from Mrs. Burton saying that she is better and wants to see me, but of course I cannot go now. Mrs. Costellae called one afternoon but I was out. Mr. McCurdy has not replied to either of my two telegrams, one of them telling of Elsie's illness and the other asking him not to sail next week, and I do not understand why he does not. I can not tell you how good the Misses Clark have been — in just the nicest way. You know it is possible to be very kind and yet be an awful nuisance. They are so full of tact and strive to encourage me and are so capable and know how things should be done. They are feeling very badly over the death of that young Englishman Robinson who was shot in Japan by the American Lieut. Hetherington. If you see anything about it in the papers will you please send them cuttings. They knew the young fellow very well and cannot believe that he was worse than very foolish. What a reputation American husbands must be getting abroad— what with Mr. Deacon in Nice and Hetherington in Japan.

I haven't a thing to say evidently so I will close now and not try your poor dear eyes and brain deciphering my scribble. Elsie saw Mr. and Mrs. Stoddard in the streets and asked them to call and said Mrs. Stoddard did not seem very enthusiastic in her assent — so you see what mischief you did in obliging us to spend two evenings alone together in Sorrento.

Take good care of yourself please .

Lovingly always, Mabel