

Letter from Alexander Melville Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, May 19, 1873, with transcript

Brantford, Ont. Canada. May 19th, 73. (A. Graham Bell Esq., 35 West Newton Street, Boston, Mass. U.S.) My dear Al.,

You have no cause to worry you in connection with that paper. It is a part of your ailment to brood on the subject as a difficulty. Don't write a word. Talk and demonstrate. You can fill up any amount of time in this way without mental labor beforehand. You know that I am not a croaker, but I have serious fears that you have not the stamina for the work your ambition has led you to undertake. Set your life and health before all other objects, and the work deferred will be accomplished all the better when it does not wear out the worker. Be wise. Stop in time. You want what you can't get under present circumstances. You have had caution on caution, warning on warning, and you have opportunities of gaining what your system needs, such as man's wish could not improve on. I feel so strongly that you are endangering your future powers of work, and your life, by your present course, that I can write on no other subject. Wind up existing engagements as soon as possible, and profit by the opportunity to make yourself strong by a country life.

Spend all your days in the open air and earn sleep by the exercise of your muscles. Break your pens and ink bottles. In short follow the indications of your physical condition and submit to the inevitable. My dear boy, not contented with what you have done, as an earnest of what you may hope to do in future years. "Now is the appointed time" to choose your course. Wisdom points only in one direction. Stop work. Better a temporary end with hope of renovated powers, than a breakdown.

Don't spurn this counsel of, Your loving father, Alex. Melville Bell.