

## Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, April 25, 1879, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. Thursday, (April 25, 1879) Dear Alec:

I write a few lines before seeing Mamma in answer to yours of the 21st. It makes me feel how careful we should be in judging of people. I think Papa's letter is most injudiciously written, and eminently calculated to rub you the wrong way. There I think any fault finding must end. All your heroics about the trust fund is quite unnecessary, for notice Papa expressly says "As you are disinclined to use the trust fund for that purpose (i.e. his expenses) I will go at my own expense." That is the end, nothing further is said about his expenses merely that he would not reimburse himself by a half interest, no hint of any repayment now or hereafter. I think it is a very generous proposition, especially as he goes on to say he does not think much of what you have to look after. As to Prof. Baird his proposition is very badly worded. He simply means Prof. Baird may be very anxious to have you in the Smithsonian, but it is quite impossible for him to freely offer the place to you as you desire, because there is no appropriation for such a place and Prof. Baird has no power to get any. Papa simply means that if Prof. Baird likes the idea of having you there, he will get the necessary power and authority and money to pay the salary from Congress. It is no trouble to Mr. Baird, it is merely making it possible for him to offer you the position if he desires to do so. Still I think it would have been wiser for Papa not to have spoken to you about it. Some one will have to get that appropriation if 2 any one is to have the position it would only have been better if it could be some one not connected with you, and without your knowledge. Still it is a perfectly fair and honorable proposition, and not an odious one, and I for one cannot see how merely wishing for the position and saying you'd be glad if it were offered you is intriguing for it. It is very hard on Papa that you should always misunderstand him and if you cannot at first glance understand

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what he says, go and say "I don't like his way of managing business matters." It is just as much as to say, "I don't think it is a perfectly honorable way. I am more honorable than he." Whereas his proposition re my patents is just not a business proposition, but a most generous loving offer, which I for one am not capable of. He means that he is ready to leave wife and children, and go out alone across the ocean among strangers, prepared to dislike him and to be annoying, not being gentlemen. (Messrs Brand Schiff Quitter and Co.,) to brave insult passive at least as you experienced to spend his holiday working hard day and night to take expensive journeys all over Europe, the money of which coming out of his own pocket—and all, all, just for love of you and me. He says he don't like the looks of things, he thinks there is very very little to save, so little that he will not take a half interest in anything he may save, yet he is ready to do all this to help us. And you know he has none too much money to spend. Mamma talks of the short allowance she is to be put on this summer.

Would you be willing to leave me and spend your short time of rest in working on a chance of helping Elsie? And is it not the least of Papa's generosity that he says not one word of the 3 sacrifice he is offering to make. Another person would show how good and noble he was. Papa only manages to offend you and make you think it a bad business arrangement. How is it a business arrangement? Another man would have tried to get some profit out of it or at least not lose anything. Papa is deliberately proposing to lose a great deal of money. Come home for Sunday if you possibly can, you are tired and excited all in a quiver and I can understand how it was impossible for you to look under the business-like words and see the kind loving heart striving to help you and place you in a position where you will be free from care.

My darling your letter is honorable to you, but it was written hastily and was unjust to another. Sister was simply feeling the weather as we all were, Mamma wanted to be on the safe side and send her off before she got run down. She does not seem at all anxious.

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Mary is wading through your papers, you have no idea what hard work it is. Mary has been at work all day yesterday and today, and she and I every evening since Sunday, yet we are barely half done.

Lovingly yours, Mabel.

Telegram received, so glad you are well, do keep careful.

P.S. Your note-books—by any chance or combination of chances, could they be in Baltimore? It occurred to me that you might have taken them there when you took your gold and silver medals. Have you asked Cousin Mary or Cousin Sam about them. Could they have been left in the Hospital. Have been searching through the house, 4 and find my red bag where you kept all your letters to me, but all the letters except one, which seems left accidentally, are gone. Where are they, could your books be with them? The last I remember certainly about them was your writing in one of the old books I think while on a visit to me for the hospital.

Mamma says Prof. Baird says he is most anxious to obtain some one to fill Prof. Henry's place, but he has not the money, nor the power to get the money to pay the man he would be willing to see in that position. Prof. Barker says the same thing, they have but \$1500. and no eminent scientific man would accept that and do the work that would be required. Mamma is indignant that you should for a moment have thought Papa other than the most honorable high-minded man, and if you have not confidence that he will do anything that can't bear the light, would condesend to bribe for himself or any one, she is sorry for you. I only showed her Papa's note and what you said about Prof. Baird. Forgive me if that wasn't right, but you must give her a chance to explain, about the rest I did not think it necessary to say anything, please notice carefully what Papa says, and do nothing until ? you see me.