

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, August 1883, with transcript

A Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Mr. Alexander Graham Bell. (August 1883)

My dear Alec:

I have been watching for you all day, and been disappointed each time a train left without depositing the stately form of my “little boy” on the platform. Nevertheless I should have been surprised if you had appeared, and so cannot claim to have expected you. What would Ruskin say to the above? I am deep in him just now, and came across this sentence which has struck home. “A few words well chosen and well distinguished will do work that a thousand cannot, when every one is acting equivocally in the function of another”. There is still another sentence which could not have been a more direct rebuke to me if the man had known me and said, “I say this to you Mabel G. Bell”— It is “A woman may always help her husband by what she knows however little — by what she half knows or mis-knows she will only tease him”. I think the man must have been looking over my shoulder when I have tried to translate German for you and failed — “half knowing” it.

(An unfinished letter)