

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, March 17, 1891, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. Shelburne-Hotel, Atlantic City, March 17th, 1891. My dear Alec:

Elsie and I have changed our travelling dresses for comfortable dressing-gowns, and now while she sits reading "All Sorts and Conditions of Men" by our solitary gas-jet. I will tell you of our adventures and wanderings. First however, let me thank you for your nice little note which was indeed a joyful surprise. I am very much pleased with your letter to Mr. Gallaudet. It is just exactly what it should be, to the point, dignified and wasting no words. I wonder how it will be answered. But I hardly see why a congressional investigation should be called for. Hasn't Congress something more important to do than to hear personal charges of this kind. It is however rather a different matter where the Directors of the College are concerned. If Mr. Gallaudet does not accept the loophole of escape you offer him, they should certainly be appealed to.

I am afraid you would consider your distrust of my judgement in selecting quarters fitted to the dignity of your wife well founded if you looked in upon us tonight. I came here because I was told that this was a quiet hotel, and I remembered the Brighton with dislike as a big vulgar place. But I fear I must be wrongly made as Mr. McCurdy says of himself, for while I do want a quiet place my soul bankers after the flesh-pots of Egypt in the shape of pretty carpets, fine woodwork and asthetic decorations which abound in the "Traymore" whither we went this afternoon. Atlantic City seems very 2 full, these two rooms we have here are the only ones vacant in this hotel, they are large and comfortable if the furniture is old and faded, but there is only a side view of the ocean. At the Traymore the only vacant rooms were small and only the very smallest had even a glimpse of the sea. They said the best rooms there were engaged for a New York party, if they don't come tomorrow

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we will have them. I told the people here that these rooms would not suit me not having a sea frontage, and that if I could do better at another hotel tomorrow I would leave. But really in spite of the carpets and palms a change from these big rooms to the little ones at the Traymore would not be advantageous. I will try the Brighton and some other hotels tomorrow morning. This seems just one immense city of wooden hotels. Irresistibly the thought comes to my mind what a splendid place for a blaze. With a good high wind this whole place could be swept out of existence. I hate it all, the only relief is the sea, big, grand, utterly immoveable, majestic and sublime in spite of all man's efforts to reduce it to the level of a fat woman show. If I can get rooms looking out on the water I guess I could exist through a week otherwise I shall go mad I warn you. Elsie seems very quiet and well, she has been sitting perfectly still absorbed in her book while I have been writing. Our rapid walk along the high plank walk to the Traymore and back before supper gave her a tremendous appetite, three helps of beefsteak and everything else in like proportion barely satisfying her. She says she hasn't had such an appetite since leaving Baddeck.

Goodnight my dear, take care of yourself, there are several bottles of vaseline on the shelf in the closet of the bedroom.

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Yours ever, Mabel. Do please just scribble a few words on paper to me every day. I promise to burn them up if they prove unworthy of preservation. I never would have harrowed your heart and helped to save your invention if your letters had been stupid and uninteresting.