

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, April 21, 1901, with transcript, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. GRAND HOTEL. Siracusa, Italy. April 21, 1901. My dear Alec:

My first inquiry on reaching here was for my cable. At first they said there was none, but on my insisting one was discovered at the telegraph office and I could hardly wait until it came. My disappointment was very great when I opened it and found not one thing I really wanted to know through all its extravagant length. You can't have read my cable. I know you don't always read my letters, but it is rather hard to spend a lot of money for nothing. I felt as if I had paid a big price for a today's newspaper and received one a fortnight old. My dear how could I purpose returning to Baddeck with you June first if I still supposed you were going to give your lecture on June 7th. I didn't ask you how "all" were. I thought you would certainly recognize the significance of the different code word employed when in my cable from Naples I added the word "all" to the code word. I was glad to know about Grace, but that was not what I wanted to know especially.

I have heard that you "sit up night after night until six o'clock", that you "go without your meals half the time", "that you are not taking any sort of care of yourself". All of which of course means that if you are not ill now you are on the high road to being so. Most certainly you need your wife, but the question is— "Where and how is she to meet you"? and that is what you won't tell me. I don't want to go to Washington if you are leaving very soon for Baddeck and I would rather not go there in May. The only thing left is for you to come to meet me in Europe on your way to Beinn Bhreagh. I suggested Germany because that gave me a few more days with Mamma and allow you to meet her, but I could go to England. It seems to me that it might be very important, quite worth a journey across the ocean expressly to see Chester. If he has declined your written proposal he

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might not refuse a personal urging. Besides I do particularly want you to see Mamma. You won't otherwise until October at least and I do want you to see her. She is very well and is enjoying every moment, at least she did in Taomina where I would have staid another day if I had got a satisfactory cable there. Yet, well she is perfectly lovely and sweeter and dearer than ever and I want you to see her.

If you won't come to me I will have to leave her so much the sooner which I shall hate to do anyway, but the question still remains — Where am I to meet you? I hope not in Washington. You certainly expected to leave it some time in May to come over here. Why can't you still come, but come a little earlier and let us at least have the voyage home together. In Baddeck as in Washington we each have our own different occupations. On board ship we are all in all to each other and think how much we have to talk about. I am not asking you to travel about, only to come over for me, see Mamma, Chester and incidentally take a couple of sea voyages and the rest you so much need. My thoughts are full of you all the time now. Why if it hurts you so to hear of a slight ill turn of mine, will you not realize what it is to me to hear of your deliberately “taking no sort of care of yourself” and “going without your meals half the time.”

I hope your answer to my last cable will come soon and be more satisfactory, for how can I make any arrangements to return until I know what you will do, whether you will come, or if not where I am to meet you.

We passed a place where they make cheese of sheep's milk. I am trying to get some for you. Daisy is also trying to get a photograph of the milk bags of the goats of Syracuse. I never saw anything so perfectly huge. There are two of them and I believe they must be nearer 10 than 8 inches round and 4 or 5 long. They swing in what looks like a most uncomfortable fashion whenever the goat tries to run, seeming as if they would get caught between her legs. The goats bags are big enough anywhere in Sicily, but are phenomenal here.

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Write me and come for me and take care of yourself. Please do be regular and take your meals properly. Please for I love you so.

Yours e ever.