

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, January 3, 1892, with transcript

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL TO MABEL (Hubbard) BELL Beinn Bhreagh, C. B. Sunday, Jan. 3rd, 1892. Dear Mabel:

Another quiet Sunday — nothing to report. Eye all right — head all right and — ahem — in fair condition.

Stayed quietly in bed till the temptation of one o'clock dinner was over — reading North American Review — upon Mr. Speaker and the Quorum. Then I walked to top of mountain and spent afternoon among the sheep. Most of them know me now. I fill my pocket with oats — and a line of noses appears at the openings in the fence — I give a tablespoonful of oats to each one as I pass. The six-nippled sheep has become quite a pet. Five-nipples has always stood aloof refusing to be tame. Today however she ate out of my hand. The lung-strangle sheep has become audaciously tame. Searches my pockets for oats — and paws me in the most cunning manner. Her appetite seems to be insatiable. She comes with her sides swelled out with food — and shovels oats into her mouth as though she had had nothing to eat for ten days.

Spent evening quietly reading Jules Verne's Giant Raft. Mr. McCurdy and George in town. After ten o'clock I took up my usual night reading Johnson's Encyclopedia. Find this makes splendid reading matter for night. Articles not too long — constant change in the subjects of thought — always learning something I have not known before — provocative of thought. Constant variety. For example I have read tonight articles on Fog-signals (by Henly) Force, Fortification, Fort Sumter, Fossil foot prints, fossil forests, and able article on "Foundation" — also Foundling Hospitals.

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By the by Dan McLean came here on New Year's Eve very anxious to see me — He had come a long distance — 15 miles I think. I was going to the Ladies' Club — and could not see him — asked him what the trouble was. Said he was unable to meet certain bills — great distress and etc., — and wanted to mortgage some land his father had left him in his will — wanted me to advance the money and etc., — Did not tell me amount — but could not wait to hear. Mr. McInnis took him in for the night and he appeared here next day. Expected to have been employed here longer than he was — and so had not means to meet bills due at the New Year and etc., etc., Would I advance money on security of mortgage and etc.,

Didn't give him much encouragement but told him I would like to hear all about it. Specially wanted to know the amount he wanted. Imagine my surprise when he replied “ten dollars”!! A mortgage for ten dollars! He owed ten dollars he said which was payable on the first of January. The people he said were not pressing him for the money — but he had promised to pay on the first of January — and he did not know how to raise the money — unless I would take a mortgage on his land. Evidently a question of honour. I declined the mortgage — but gave him ten dollars as a New Year's gift — and sent him away happy. Fancy the simple — honest nature of the boy — a mortgage for ten dollars! — to save his honour. Goodnight.

Your loving husband, Alec.