

Feb. 18th 1902

Dear Stone-birds

All yours just arrived and I feel moved to reply at once. I have just come back from lunch and as work is seldom begun till two I thought I would seize the opportunity and write a few lines at any rate. You don't know how surprised and pleased I was when I opened my little box, for you must know I did not expect anything this year from any of you. On acct of so many unavoidable expenses, signs etc. The gloves are lovely my favorite kind as I suppose you knew. Am going to keep them for very best. The little piece of lace is very pretty too. And however much I might want it something I would not have made for myself. I opened the box in the office and of course then I had to show its contents to everybody & they all think I am very lucky & must have some people who think quite a little bit of me. Nobody down here shows of the momentous fact that I celebrate my 24th b-day I did not want Mary to know because she is hard up. Has \$7.00 to meet in March. She makes a lot of money but her

expenses are very heavy. \$300 for her store and about \$50 a week
to pay the girls, ~~then~~ the expense of keeping house so you see she
needs to do a good deal. She talks of going to Dawson or Victoria
or some place where she could make a good deal of money and not
spend much, for a few years. till she made enough to be
able to retire and live on her place. I don't suppose she'll do it
but she likes to talk about it. It seems strange for anyone to be
so absolutely alone in the world as she is. Chack Duff is the only
one she has left. and by the way she is out the only one who is
talking of going west. The Kennedys say they have made up their
minds to go this summer. Uncle John is to go in the Spring to
locate, and the others are to follow later. They think it will be
to South Alberta, & do not seem to know whether they will
have a ranch or farm. Probably the former. Mrs. Charlie Blair
and Ron have been home visiting from out there and they
have done so well and tell such glowing tales of the
West that the others have caught the fever. Tho it seems a

fully risky thing to me. Two old men, one almost as poor as
useless. And three delicate airy girls, who can't even set
a table alone. Uncle Alex and Aunt Sarah will have
the hard part as usual. Uncle John just trusts to
Alex and Providence and reads half the day long. I
think myself Alex has a heavier load than Providence.
Aunt Sarah said something about marrying the girls off
and perhaps they will, I am afraid that in the ordinary
course of events, it would be a much more difficult matter here.

Helen is a rather a nice girl and quite poor-looking, but a
little brusque in manner. She seems to be the strongest of the three
after all. The other two haven't an idea more than $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch deep.
But that's a nice way to be talking about my own cousins, isn't it.

Well so I'm at the height of my matrimonial
chances am I, Stacky, & you insinuate I'd best be gathering
my rose-buds ^{perhaps orange blossoms would be better.} while I may. Alas I'm afraid I've a very
indifferent taste for rose-buds and don't care if there are any
growing in my garden-patch or not. I've been doing some

calculating lately and I've about made up my mind to go to the Normal College a year from this fall. I can't save up enough to go this year. I guess by doing my very best I'd only have about \$100 by Sept. but by the next year I ought to have \$200 or more enough to pay every cent of my expenses if what I want. You see I'm still thinking of that European tour and I don't see how I could ever manage it in three weeks' holidays. There's not much show here for anything but the slowest advance. You see the Hon. David's out of it now and perhaps all the liberals will be in a few years. I'll only be 25, then. (Sapish. I don't know a person felt so horribly juvenile at that apparently advanced age.) and that's just about ~~enough~~ to recommend itself to school boards etc. Where is Mabel Smith. Have you ever heard anything about her.

Wish I could be home to get the benefit of some of the bacteriology experiments, it will be fine I'm sure. You should read "The Tempest" to understand Caliban, & the interesting theories connected therewith.

We are to have a toboggan party to-morrow night. If it is fine weather, it ought to be moonlight. Just Harry & Dan & Gerard Brown & etc. Prud'homme to manipulate the toboggans. It's very exciting. If you please I hope you aren't going to send me anything more for my birthday or I won't know what to pay. I wonder how many more birth-days it will be before we are together again. Lovingly Fussy.

MB to Home-birds, Feb 1902

Transcription / Additional Information

Feb 18th 1902

Dear Home-birds

All yours just arrived and I feel moved to reply at once. I have just come back from lunch and as work is seldom begun till two I thought I would seize the opportunity and write a few lines at any rate. You don't know how surprised and pleased I was when I opened my little box, for you must know I did not expect anything from any of you, on account of so many unavoidable expenses, signs, etc. The gloves are lovely my favorite kind as I suppose you knew. I'm going to keep them for very best. The little piece of lace is very pretty too, and however much I might want it something I would not have made for myself. I opened the box in the office and of course then I had to show its contents to everybody & they all think I am very lucky & must have some people who think quite a bit of me. Nobody down here knows of the momentous fact that I celebrate my 24th b-day I didn't want Mary to know because she is hard up. Has \$700 to meet in March. She makes a lot of money but her

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pretty risky thing to me. Two old men, one almost as good as useless, and three delicate airy girls, who can't even set a table alone. Uncle Alex and Aunt Sarah will have the hard part as usual. Uncle John just trusts to Alex and providence and reads half the day long. I think myself Alec has a heavier load than Providence. Aunt Sarah said something about marrying the girls off and perhaps they will, I am afraid that in the ordinary course of events, it would be a much more difficult matter here. Alison is rather a nice girl and quite good-looking, but a little brusque in manner. She seems to be the strongest of the three after all. The other two haven't an idea more than ½ an inch deep but that's a nice way to be talking about my own cousins, isn't it.

Well so I'm at the height of my matrimonial chances am I, Stalky [her brother Ernie's nickname], & you insinuate I'd best be gathering my rose-buds or perhaps orange blossoms would be better while I may. Also I'm afraid I've a very indifferent taste for rose-buds and don't care if there are any growing in my garden-patch or not. I've been doing some

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Lovingly Fuzzy [MB's family nickname]