

Oxford, my Christmas, 1887

My dear little grand children, Mary Belden,
Ellen Belden, William Belden and Evelyn Belden,
you can all gather around your Mother lap-
and fold your hands, and keep very still, while
she reads you grandpas letter to you for I
suppose you have not yet learned to read
written letters but only those that are printed -
but you will soon be big enough and old enough
to read writing except that Willy and Evelyn will
not be able to do so quite as soon as Mary and
Ellen will - but I suppose by this time that Willy
knows some of his letters. If he knows them all by the
next time he comes to Oxford I think I will let him
ride on Bob, and if Evelyn by that time can
spell dog & cat without anybody telling her
then I'll let her play with Beauty and our cat
that has the four white feet and a white end to
her long tail. She is a very funny cat. he is so
lazy that I have to set a mouse trap & catch
him to eat. The old Mother cat, dead,
poor thing she grew old, and worn out, and died

Our nice dog Beauty has been very sick he came
near dying. he could not eat hardly a thing for
two weeks. he had a kind of distemper and I
had to give him Quinine pills, and soda & salt
and bathe his feet in warm water. and I believe
thinks he will get well now, he can a big snow here
about half as high as the fence. It was so deep
of Billy had been here he could not have gone out
in it at all. & now went as high as his head.
Emanuel & Gotwade have a splendid Christmas
tree full of candles and all kind of presents
Beautiful dolls. & each has got a real watch &
then mother has made presents to every one in
the watches keep just as good time as a clock
I cant begin to tell you all the things they got
but when you come here they will show them to you
Let you play with them Eugene may is very well
He expects to have a tree tonight & get things on it.
& now I must stop to go to meeting so good bye my
dear little children. try to be good you have my
dear love & I hope you will have a happy & merry
Very affectionally. Your dear Grand Pa
John Swanton