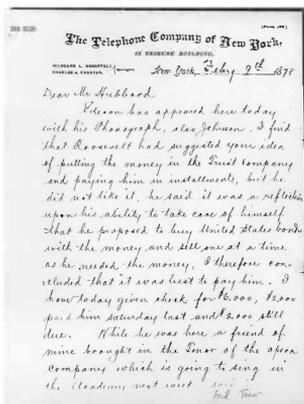


New York, Feby 9th 1878^a

Charles Cheever to
Gardiner Hubbard



Dear Mr Hubbard

Edison has appeared here today with his Phonograph, also Johnson. I find that Roosevelt had suggested your idea of putting the money in the Trust company and paying him in installments, but he did not like it, he said it was a reflection upon his ability to take care of himself that he proposed to buy United States bonds with the money and sell one at a time as he needed the money. I therefore concluded that it was best to pay him. I have today given check for \$6,000, \$2,000 paid him Saturday last and \$2,000 still due.¹ While he was here a friend of mine brought in the Tenor² of the opera company which is going to sing in the Academy next week, said Tenor interviewed the Phonograph which very much delighted himself and Edison as well. Edison suggests the following. That 500 small Phonographs be made similar to sketch enclosed,³ with the cylinder only large enough to hold about 50 words. He says these machines to be sold at a low price, say \$25 or \$30 merely as specimens of the Phonograph for the use of scientific individuals of various sorts, says he has a large number of applications from professors of various colleges and other people who wish to buy them just as a novelty and he thinks pending the time when he will have the perfect machine completed a good deal of money could be made in selling these small traps as a novelty, explaining to the customer that it was merely as an example of what the machine would do and not a finished working machine which was sold them. I told him that I did not think it was best to do that until after the patent was issued at any rate. He agreed with me in that, but said he expected to see the patent issued in a very little while.⁴ On first thought I think this would be a very good idea, it seems as if we might sell upwards of a thousand of them at net profit clear of the commissions &c of \$15 to \$20 each. Johnson says that he wishes to make an arrangement to have the use of a Phonograph for exhibition purposes at once, that he finds it attracts large numbers of people and will pay. I did not tell him what you said on the subject on Sunday last. I did say to him that I would write and consult with you on the subject. Please send me such a letter as I can show Johnson.⁵ Upon

consideration I do not fully agree with you as to the point of not showing the phonograph until we are ready to supply the demand. I think it would be better perhaps to let it be seen and talked about and get people anxious about it and at the same time by constantly showing and hearing the criticisms and suggestions thereon, we will get a great many ideas which we would not otherwise obtain. I think this point is also an argument in making the small show Phonographs spoken of as above by Edison.

Edison is making 2 of these small machines now, they will be done next week one of them is to be sent to Puskas and the other one Edison has promised to me. By the way Edison received a telegram yesterday from^b Puskas saying that he had been offered for the English patent on the Phonograph £2,000 and half the profits of the business. Edison is pleased to death with the offer but replied to Puskas that he would do it for £3,000 and half the profits Yours truly

Chas A Cheever

P.S. Nothing heard yet from the Western Union⁶ Orton will be back in about a week^c

LS, NjWAT, Box 1205. Letterhead of the Telephone Co. of New York. "New York" and "187" preprinted. ^bRepeated at end of one page and beginning of next. "Orton . . . week" in Cheever's hand.

1. This refers to the \$10,000 due Edison under terms of the 30 January agreement for his phonograph (Doc. 1190).

2. Operatic tenor Charles Adams made his New York debut at the Academy of Music on 11 February 1878 with the Pappenheim-Adams Opera Company, singing a lead role in Giacomo Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*. A native of Massachusetts, Adams had only recently returned to the United States after eighteen years abroad, during which he had a long tenure as the Vienna Imperial Opera's principal tenor. "'The Huguenots'—Debut of Charles R. Adams," *New York Daily Graphic*, 12 Feb. 1878, 686; *NGD*, s.v. "Adams, Charles R."

3. Not found; see Doc. 1195.

4. U.S. Patent 200,521 issued on 19 February.

5. Not found.

6. On 4 February, Cheever had submitted a proposal to William Orton and Norvin Green on behalf of the Bell Telephone interests regarding a merger of the telephone business. On 9 February, Orton had not yet returned from a trip west and Green wrote Cheever rejecting the proposal but suggesting that they hold further meetings. Tosiello 1979, 239–43.