

Letter and enclosure from Eliza Symonds Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, March 28, 1875, with transcript

Tutelo Heights, Brantford, Ontario, Canada, Home, March 28th, 75. (Prof. A. Graham Bell, 292 Essex Street, Salem, Mass. U. S.) My dear Aleck,

My writing night has come round again, and almost for the first time, I feel at a loss what to say, for your last letter has quite bewildered me. You make no mention of your partners, Mr. Hubbard or Mr. Sanders, who we thought undertook the whole expense of bringing forward your invention. All the interest and attention you have excited in the scientific world, is certainly very flattering, but I do not like the idea of your incurring debt, and running into difficulties, which perhaps you may never recover from. If Mr. Gray has already patented his invention abroad, I mean on the European Continent, would not your doing so clash with him and give rise to law suits and the Lord only knows what? Papa and I have looked over all the letters we find of yours, but there is no hint of Telegraphy, till within the last two years. A large number of old family letters were destroyed before we left London, those from Bath, I suppose among them, as I have found none earlier than your Devonshire excursion with Chester. Uncle undertook to make the enquiry of him of which you spoke. Carrie received your letter which she let us see, and very much astonished and grieved we were at reading part of your narrative of Washington. We have seen Carrie three times for a few minutes each time. She was to be at church today for the first time. We hope she will be able to get on poor girl but Papa and I both feel very dull about her, fearing she will have a dreadfully laborious time. She has a nice house, but as yet there is not (of course) much furniture in it. I heard yesterday from Mrs. Ottaway, she is delighted at the idea of coming out, but Pollie objects to it, thinking her Mother too old and frail to take such a journey alone. Never-the-less the old lady is bent upon coming. It will be a relief to me if she comes, for I feel so much for her, and besides that, Carrie will need some friend at hand besides me, whose absence from home cannot be surely counted

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upon. I doubt very much however, if Mrs. O. would be available for the position you would require. She is at least 70 years of age, and besides that could never be so suitable as a wife, provided the wife be selected for her domestic and mental qualities, rather than for beauty and accomplishments. Do you remember Mrs. B. Cathcart? When Mrs. O. wrote, Mrs. Cathcart was lying upon what was believed to be her death bed. Probably she has gone long before this, as the Drs. had given her up. We have seen her once or twice, and her husband gave Carrie away, at her first marriage. Uncle is here today, but not Aunt. The roads being almost impassable for pedestrians, and dangerous for horses. In a 3 few days I suppose we shall be in a state of flood, as the Spring appears to be advancing. Mrs. Moncrief promises us a visit on Tuesday, on her way home from Toronto. Papa I believe will write a few lines. I was much pleased to receive a long letter from Miss Fuller a few days ago, which I shall answer bye and bye. We sympathizw with her and the family in the severe loss they have had. I must now, my dear Aleck, with love and with earnest prayers to the Almighty for your guidance in wisdom as well as knowledge. I am,

Your ever affectionate Mother, E.G.Bell. P.S. It is not certain yet about Uncle's building in the wood, there is some hitch in the law business. Give our very kind regards to Mrs. Saunders, she is your true friend.

My dear Al.,

I must answer your query, but you might know without my telling you, that neither I nor your Uncle have funds that could be spared for the purpose you mention.

When you were here last, you told me, in answer to my enquiry, that the \$1,000 with which you started in Boston, was still intact. I don't advise you to appropriate it in any speculation, but I fear from the tenor of your last letter, that you no longer possess this nest egg! Is it so?

Your arrangements with Messrs. Sanders and Hubbard, ought, as I pointed out to you, to include compensation for the time withdrawn from your profession and with the same

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reimbursement of outlay, otherwise you do yourself an injustice, which no amount of after-gain can counter-balance. You are getting into deep water! You are rash and unwise to set aside your professional work, for any speculation. You can't play fast and loose with duty. I hope that no irreparable mischief is yet done and that when you resume your proper work, you will devote your heart to it, and in future give no more than your surplus time to any other matters. Independently of the above, and all other considerations, you should postpone any more projects, until you have cleared your hands of existing undertakings. Unless you receive from S. and H. the full amount of your professional income, paid on joint business, don't give away another hour! Their calculations of profit can well afford that which is vitally important to you and only a matter of justice. Anxiously awaiting further intelligence and with best love from all,

Your affectionate father, Alex. Melville Bell.

A NEW STORY OF THE CREATION.

Mr. George Smith has written a letter to the London *Telegraph* concerning his efforts to read the Cuneiform tablets, which were procured by him in Assyria and deposited in the British Museum. These tablets contain the Chaldaic account of the creation and fall of man, and thus, at this comparative late day of the world, their report comes to strengthen or to weaken the Mosaic history as recorded in the Bible of the same great events. Mr. Smith, after giving an account of the discovery of the tablets, says that when complete they must have numbered nine or ten, and that the history as recorded on them of what occurred "in the beginning" was much longer and fuller than the corresponding reports in the Book of Genesis. He continues as follows:—

"The narrative on the Assyrian tablets commences with a description of the period before the world was created, when there existed a chaos or confusion. The desolate and empty state of the universe and the generation by chaos of monsters are vividly given. The chaos is presided over by a female power named Tislat and Tiamat, corresponding to

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the Thalath of Berosus; but as it proceeds the Assyrian account agrees rather with the Bible than with the short account from Barosus. We are told, in the inscriptions, of the fall of the celestial being who appears to correspond to Satan. In his ambition he raises his hand against the sanctuary of the God of heaven, and the description of him is really magnificent. He is represented riding in a chariot through celestial space, surrounded by the storms, with the lightning playing before him, and wielding a thunderbolt as a weapon.

“This rebellion leads to a war in heaven and the conquest of the powers of evil, the gods in due course creating the universe in stages, as in the Mosaic narrative, surveying each step of the work and pronouncing it good. The divine work culminates in the creation of man, who is made upright and free from evil, and endowed by the gods with the noble faculty of speech.

“The Deity then delivers a long address to the newly created being, instructing him in all his duties and privileges, and pointing out the glory of his state. But this condition of blessing does not last long before man, yielding to temptation, falls; and the Deity then pronounces upon him a terrible curse, invoking on his head all the evils which have since afflicted humanity. These last details are upon the fragment which I excavated during my first journey to Assyria.

“I have at present recovered no more of the story, and am not yet in a position to give the full translations and details, but I hope during the spring to find time to search over the collection of smaller fragments of tablets, and to light upon any smaller parts of the legends which may have escaped me. When my investigations are completed I will publish a full account and translation of these Genesis legends, all of which I have now been fortunate enough to find, some in the old Museum collection, others by excavation in Assyria.