

**Letter from Charles TANT to his sister Ann Marie Macbeth (Jillian GG Grandmother)**

Boorandora (Boroondara)

Upper Hawthorn

Near Melbourne

18 June 1853

Dear Sister

Last week I found yours of May 13 at the Bog hole of palsied helplessness ..... The Melbourne Post Office and I on the whole felt refreshed by your reports and not the least of our discomforts in these ends of the earth arises from mail and postal failure. I have at least a dozen letters and sundry dozen newspapers due from friends and on business since my arrival and have only seen two of the former and not one of the latter and so I suppose it will be while the Mammon worshippers of both ends of the earth remain deaf to that wise charmer Eilhu Burritts of Rowland Hill.<sup>1</sup>

I presume your William (son born 1831) has told you how we met and given you Charlie's (*older son who did not emigrate with the rest of the family*) note and the newspaper and such other tidings as we could give him. I was too much embarrassed with our own ways and means to be over hospitable to him but he seemed anxious about you I thought it best not to detain him and I am not without hope that we shall meet under better circumstances when I shall be only too happy to use him better. I have not seen his father nor do I wish (*William born 1803, Ann's husband*).

I have acted on one of your plans but which prevents my seeing you or Adelaide at present. I however intend paying both a visit as soon as I can. I spent a month in Melbourne paid 2 pound 10s a week for one room/empty and without board the/while my few goods were landed and sold, and looking for something to do I found all wages and prices high as you are aware and no lack of chances in employ or business for strong energetic capitalists, or others of colonial experience. But to the new arrival, the wet season, horribly muddy streets, the eager covetousness, dearth of good feeling, expensive living and want of comfort in the English sense of the term or even safety, that everywhere prevails, is fearfully appalling, we have felt our share but it is trifling compared with many of our fellow passengers who had left home abandoning every comfort and landed without resources, and broken health we have been mercifully preserved in the latter item having enjoyed good health throughout the passage and since our arrival.

I left Melbourne 3 weeks ago having engaged for 3 months with a gentleman to take charge of house and land he has recently bought which he is going to improve, he is to give me 40 guineas, the use of his house, wood and water for the Dr (*duration?*) this will be better than spending time and money in Town and give me time to decide on the next step, we are 3 miles out/East/ of Melbourne or one mile from Richmond Bridge, here is a good garden/2acres/abounding in excellent young fruit trees vines --- but overrun with

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<sup>1</sup> Elihu Burritts of Rowland Hill was the saint of Penny postage 1810-1879

weeds and sadly neglected, about 8 acres are ploughed and sown, the rest is fenced in but thickly covered with timber, the cottage has 4 rooms, is brick built, and has detached kitchen, stable and outhouse pigsties and so if undisturbed we reckon on weathering the winter here on our little hill beside the Yarrow.

We left poor Dad and family enjoying their usual health, but somewhat depressed with the idea that they would see us no more. I spent more time than usual with him at Leyton for the three months prior to my leaving England and he visited me several times at Dalston and Great Newingham, He is feeble of limb but hale in appearance and cheerful and bore up well to the last and wrote to me several notes while we lay at Plymouth, he and Sarah are my chief ties, the links that bind me to the old country and will certainly cause me to revisit it if they and I are spared and opportunity given – but at present tis idle to talk about it. Sister Sarah spent the last 3 weeks at our house and never enjoyed a holiday better she has good health in general but her fits still return at times. Mrs Tant Snr is also well and keeps the old Cottage pretty snug and neat.

I told William about his brother Charlie. I called on Mr Ellis just before I left London. Mr E. gave Charlie a good character and said he should look after him. Mr Ellis said he was homeward bound from India and that the ship was last spoken with at Mauritius, we are happy to hear that your Henrietta (*20 years old*) comfortably married and unite in wishing her long contented happiness and give our love to Mary (*15 years old*) and Jessie (*7 years old*) and to any other of your young folks within reach (*my GG Grandmother Louisa 13 years old*). I have written to Anna and to Henrietta (sister of Ann, William & Charles who married Daniel Wright) but have not heard from either in reply. I have not time to write more just now shall be happy to hear from you or from Mary or William or Henrietta when convenient. Farewell accept our united love

Your Affectionate Brother

Chas Tant

For the present address

Mr C Tant

Care of Mr Lush Senr

Collins St

Melbourne

( ) include explanations or detail added by **Jillian Rigby** (néé WEIR) born 1942