

Cambridge,

Dec. 3, 1921.

Dear Richard:

It was good to hear from you under date of Oct. 28. I would have replied at once were it not that you indicated you were to be out of the State for some time and would probably write to me again before I should write. As you are probably again in Utah by now, I am writing without waiting to hear from you.

With reference to the questions bearing upon the Book of Mormon which you sent, I am enclosing a few comments. I have not felt it necessary, unless the author of the questions may amplify his grounds, to go into the matters any more extensively. In some points I think you will see that he is obviously inaccurate and has made statements without much effort to get at the facts. There are many questions concerning the native races of America that cannot now be answered scientifically; and it may be even generations before the data shall furnish grounds for the answer. In the meantime the opinions of particular men, even where they merit the title of scientists, must not be given as the conclusions of Science. If I have not supplied what you wish, I shall be glad to do any thing further that I can in case you will let me know.

Things are going nicely with me here. I am very busy and am trying to be happy and contented for the time being.

I am to be the speaker at our church here tomorrow.

Shall be looking forward to the letter you promised soon.

Cordially yours,
R. W. Chaubalier

1. The statement that philologic studies on the American Indian languages "indicates that the division of the Indians into separate stocks occurred long before their language was developed beyond the most primitive kind of articulations" is not in accord with the findings of the profounder students of the subject and cannot be substantiated. The conclusions reached by DuRoi, Humboldt and Steinthal, and supported by such recent students as Brinton, have not been successfully brought into question. These conclusions are that there are certain general and distinctive grammatical principles underlying all American languages, proving their unity at a date far more recent than the quoted statement intimates. No Indian language when thoroughly understood can be placed in the status regarded as most primitive. Max Müller once declared that the language of the savage Iroquois in its extent and complexity of grammatic forms was comparable to the Sanscrit and that the native intellectual capacity required to maintain this linguistic machinery must be of high order. We are, furthermore, in no position at this time to speak confidently or positively as to the length of time required to account for the diversity in the American Indian languages. We have very little knowledge as to the rate, manner, or causes of change in these languages. The statement of Sagard, author of a dictionary of the Huron language published at Paris in 1632 that the Huron language was constantly changing so that in a generation or two it would be like a new language may be extravagant; but there can be no doubt that languages, particularly those of small groups with no written forms, at times change very rapidly. Dr. Beauchamp once wrote: "The Onandagas have not moved over twenty miles in two hundred and fifty years, yet how much their tongue has changed in half that time!

A migration to new and distant homes would have produced many new words, and then the language would have remained much the same for a time, waiting for other disturbing causes." Certainly if any conditions could favor linguistic change it would be the complete isolation of an initially small band of people in an extensive and entirely new environment. Much of an old vocabulary would become useless almost at once and so quickly abandoned, and a new vocabulary would of necessity be produced. In the absence of all the ordinary conservative influences initially slight changes in structure might quickly become pronounced. We are not in position to speak on scientific grounds as to the rapidity with which changes regressive on the one hand and progressive on the other might occur under such conditions before a harmony might be reached between the requirements of a radically new physical and intellectual life and the language. Scarcely a beginning has been made toward the accumulation of data that must be had before final conclusions can be drawn in this field. In the meantime dogmatism is not in place.

2. It is true that the evidence seems to show that the horse was not in America at the time of the discovery by Columbus. The true modern horse, however, was in existence in America after the ice age ^X and its remains are found contemporaneously with those of men. It is not known precisely when it became extinct on this continent or what mysterious cause may have brought on its apparent obliteration. Geological estimates of time are not reliable within limits at all narrow; and it would be hazardous now to say just how late bands of horses may have lingered. The evidence is far from all in under any conditions.

X East Retreat of the ice
in the N.W. from 10 to
20 thousand yrs. ago
MS Pt III R24

3. There is no room for doubt that the Jews may have had a knowledge of steel 600 years B.C., in fact it is practically certain that steel implements were known among them and all neighboring peoples. The remains of iron implements manufactured in prehistoric times are so numerous as to leave no question as to the extreme antiquity of the use of that metal. In the time of the Assyrians iron was in extensive use" saws, knives and other analogous tools having been found by Layard in Nineveh, many of which are very similar to those in use at the present day. Both Homer and Hesiod refer to the forging of iron, whilst the hardening and tempering of steel also appear to have been operations in common use among the early Greeks." (Encyc. Britannica, 9th ed., XIII, p. 289, etc.) Certainly, then, if the manufacture of steel was commonly understood and practiced among the early Greeks and other early Mediterranean peoples the possession a steel bow by a Jew in 600 B.C. would be easily possible and wholly natural.

4. As to the statement "The use of the word 'scimeter' does not occur in other literature before the rise of the Mohammedan power and apparently that peculiar weapon was not developed until long after the Christian era", it may be said that any question about the particular word 'scimeter' is irrelevant. The question is wholly one as to the early existence of the curved type of sword to which the Mohammedans applied a word which we have adopted. Contrary to the statement made, there is no distinct evidence as to the origin in either time or place of the crescent-shaped Asiatic sword or sabre now commonly indicated under the general term scimeter. It is sufficient, in showing its antiquity, to refer to the fact that in Egypt in the nineteenth dynasty (1550-1205 B.C.) the Pharaoh is represented as fighting: "He even takes

place in the hand-to-hand fight and his dagger and sickle-shaped sword are close at hand." (Cf. Erman, Ancient Egypt, p. 527). Other similar cases of the picturing of the ~~sickle-shaped~~ ^{curved} sabre or scimeter ain very early times might be given. The implement was known in pre-Christian centuries even as far west as Italy. It was used by the ancient Etruscans. (Cf. Dennis, The Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria, I, p. 201, etc.) There is thus no force or foundation for the statement that the curved sword or scimeter was not developed or known "until long after the Christian Era."

5. It is not clear what is meant by the statement: "As silk was not known in America at that time the question arises, where did they ~~get~~ ^{obtain} the silk?" If the author of the statement means that the Chinese silkworm was not native to America, he is quite right; if he means to infer that there were not in America related forms he is wrong. Several different species of ~~caterpillar~~ ^{caterpillars} moths have caterpillars ~~which~~ ^{which} produce silk that has been out to commercial use; but the superiority of the Chinese species has long since led to neglect of the others. However, a civilized people in America might well have found ~~a~~ way to use another form. Furthermore, silk of very fine quality is produced by some spiders and has been made into cloth, notably in the case of spiders of the genus Nephila, several species of which are common from the southern United States southward into South America. While cloth from this source has not been produced among us on a commercial scale, a method of doing so would doubtless be found if we did not have a better source. So far as natural sources are concerned, the Nephites might have had a true silk in any amount. Aside from this there is the possibility that the word may be used in a

translation simply as the nearest equivalent of the name of a fabric not used and not known by us. We ourselves have applied it to an artificial product made from wood, etc.: