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Sketches from the Book of Mormon: The Expedition of Ammon

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Abstract: This article is a brief summary of the events recorded in the Book of Mosiah. Maeser mentions King Mosiah, Abinadi, Limhi, Gideon, and King Noah, and the expedition of Ammon.

a professedly common privilege in these United States. We came here where there was nothing to make the place naturally desirable, leaving to others the auriferous and argentiferous regions of Colorado, Dakotah, Montana, Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, and California. We chose the naturally poorest place of all these regions, just on purpose that nobody else should have any reason to covet it, and they did not covet it until we proved that we could live here, and until we had made it somewhat handsome to look at.

Why should anybody covet our places of residence now, and in the hope of getting them say all manner of evil of us, as they were wont when we were living in the States? Good as we have made this place, there are plenty of better in almost every part of the Union. We do not envy you your better localities, why should you envy us our poorer ones? Greatly as we do desire to accommodate our neighbors, and do them all the good we can, we do not see that it is required of us to give up our homes to them again. We have done that thing several times, and we cannot see why we should do it again. If there is to be any more moving through uncongeniality of dispositions, we shall consider it all right if our friends and neighbors will do all the moving, and let us rest here awhile longer. This is a stubborn region and unfit for anybody but "Mormons" to manage.

Other people could do very little with it, particularly as there is no gold nor silver here. But as it is essential to the welfare and convenience of the country that this region be settled and made productive, and in all probability none but the "Mormons" could make anything creditable of it, it becomes a high patriotic duty for our people to stay here, and make this part of the country as valuable as possible to the nation. Other people, of less energy, industry, and unity, can get along and do good, if they half try, on the rich prairies of Illinois and other States out in that direction, and in any of the richest gold fields around us. But these valleys require our presence for a few years longer. They are hardly brought up to a sufficiently high condition of productiveness and beauty for us to leave them at present, and we do not see how we can consistently do it.

A word of advice to those who are constantly saying bad things of our people. Just go your way and do better than we do. There is plenty of room for you. This is a great nation, abundance of room, not half filled up yet. There is abundance of room in it for all the inhabitants to live peaceably, if they have only half a mind to do so. And please do not complain of us again until you are doing better than we are, of which there are certainly sometimes some reasonable doubts.—*Salt Lake Telegraph.*

SKETCHES FROM THE BOOK OF MORMON.

BY ELDER KARL G. MAESER.

THE EXPEDITION OF AMMON.

King Benjamin, after having retired from the throne and office of High-priest, lived three years longer, and had the joy to see his noble son Mosiah II. continuing in the course he had been pursuing himself for so long a time; and it is even said that the young king, in order not to be a burden to the people and to set them a praiseworthy example, cultivated the soil with his own hands.

That the nation of Zarahemla had not quite forgotten, however, those wayward men who had started out in the latter days of Amalecki in search of their former homes, but that even some faint rumors of their existence must have reached the city is apparent from the consent we see Mosiah II. give to a squad of sixteen men under the command of a certain Ammon, a descendant of Zarahemla. This name Zarahemla as applied to an individual

may not have been the proper name of the man, but was very likely only the title of the chief, as we see several kings or chiefs of the Lamanites, for instance, called Laman, or in the Bible the kings of Egypt, Pharaoh. The record of Mosiah II. proceeds to tell how these men had arrived on a hill situated north of the country of Shilom, from which place Ammon, with only a few others, started down into the plains to reconnoitre.

The complaint that the narrations of the Book of Mormon are not more explicit in regard to the geographical characteristics of the sections of country in which the various scenes were enacted, so that they might be the readier recognised again in our days, may not be altogether without just foundation; but if we consider, on the one hand, that it was not the intention of the writers to hand to posterity a complete history in our sense of the term, and that on the other the Bible also is topographically and etymologically subject to the same imputation in many instances, we fail to see the logic in making this a point against the veracity of the Book of Mormon, as several wisacres have attempted to do.

The deplorable condition of dependency in which Ammon discovered the descendants of those that had started out in search of the land of their forefathers, among whom there was also a brother of Amalecki, is another evidence of the foolishness of human calculations, when deviating from the directions of the Holy Spirit; and the Shilom chief Limhi, throwing Ammon and his companions chained into prison, simply because he had found them outside his town, when he himself was on a scouting expedition, taking them for emissaries of his enemy Noah, gives so striking an illustration of the wretched state of distrust and anarchy these people were in, that their consequent joy on discovering their mistake and finding long looked for friends, scarcely was needed to make us understand how heartily they must have repented the secession of their progenitors.

The address of Limhi to his subjects makes it plain to us, however, that they had retained among themselves

some glimmering light of Gospel truth, and that the Lord in His mercy had even given them a prophet, to see if this self-separated branch of the main-tree could be nourished into a self-sustaining and flourishing plant; but he had to share the fate of other messengers of truth before and after him, and we soon will see that there was no hope for them save in a reunion with the old stock.

In conformity with the habits of their ancestry, that stray waif of Nephi had kept up records of their sojourn in the wilderness, on plates, the main feature of which will be presented in the next sketch; but there had been made also archaeological discoveries by them of considerable interest, consisting of 24 gold plates, covered with hieroglyphics unintelligible to them, breastplates, arms, &c. But having neither the key to decipher the former, nor the gift of interpretation, they are directed by Ammon to his King and Prophet, Mosiah II., who had the stone of a seer, by which means he could read and understand hidden things.

The warning voice from the ground, of the Book of Mormon, against all astrologers and those that pretend to have the gift of seeing through so-called peepstones, is here lifted up in the words of Ammon, in ascribing these powers to the Prophet and Seer, who receives them from God alone, that miracles might be wrought by faith.

Ammon and his companions remained long enough with Limhi's people to make them thoroughly acquainted with the principles and spirit of Zarahemla, causing quite a revolution in the ideas and feelings of the people; for what an Abinadi had vainly sealed with his blood, and an Alma had left as a hopeless case, these sturdy adventurers, in holding out to the people a tangible temporal blessing in the shape of a reunion with the free and happy people of Zarahemla, to be attained by their previously preparing themselves for it in embracing the truth, succeeded, in a marvellously short time, to have many asking for baptism, which Ammon declines, however, to administer, evidently restrained by the Spirit,

but points out to them the necessity of previous deliverance from the yoke of the Lamanites ; and it is therefore not to be wondered at that a Gideon soon was found who, by his plans, contrived the escape of the people from

the surveillance of their tormentors, and the fugitives arrived under the guidance of Ammon in Zarahemla, to be grafted back again into the old tree.

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MILLENNIAL STAR.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1867.

REFLECTIONS ON THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR.

THROUGH the tender mercies of a kind Providence we are brought nigh to the close of another year. The present number closes the volume for 1867. In it are chronicled the leading events which have transpired among the nations, also the distinguishing features which have marked the progress of the Church.

The faithful and wise will discern the hand of the Lord in all his providences, and derive profitable instruction therefrom. The wicked will not understand, but the wise, who have in their vessels the oil of the Spirit, will discern the signs of the times, and will diligently prepare themselves by subjecting their whole natures and their earthly stewardships to the law of life—the truth, and the government of the holy Priesthood—so that the will of God may haste to be done on earth, as it is done in Heaven.

The signs of the coming of Christ are appearing in such unmistakeable plainness, that none but those who are blinded by the god of this world, need be in any doubt that the long-looked-for day of His advent is very near at hand. The terrible hurricanes and earthquakes in the West Indies, and the fearful cyclone in the East Indies, attended by such immense destruction of life and property, stand out in awful prominence upon the vast record of storms, shipwrecks, and other disasters through the violence of the winds and waves in the year 1867. The casualties at sea have been greater than in any previous year.

On land, accidents in collieries, upon railroads, and in workshops, have been frequent and extensive. War has spread its desolation in some portion of the earth during the entire year. The Republics of South America, and Mexico on the Western Continent, and Candia, Italy, China, and Abyssinia on the Eastern Hemisphere, have felt the horrors of the battle-field. The Great French Exhibition, which was to dazzle the world and unite the nations, and especially to secure peace to France, had scarcely closed its doors when France sent forth her hostile forces to fight for Papal Rome.

Rumors of wars continue to spread fear and distrust among all people, but especially in political and commercial circles. The immense standing armies kept up by the Great Powers keep all the world in dread of a universal European war. The nations of Europe are situated as a number of barrels of gunpowder,