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The Gadianton: A Story of Zarahemla, Chapter XI

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A STORY OF ZARAHEMPLA

By E. Heloise Merkley

XI

Jarom was surprised at the deference which was paid him as he entered the chamber devoted to the most serious and deliberate councils of the Gadianton leaders. He had been for some time uneasy lest it might have been known that Giddianhi fell at his hand, but this reassured him.

"Brave men, and brethren of our Secret Order," Zemnariyah addressed them as Jarom took his seat, "the situation surrounding us is serious and becomes more serious day by day as the game seems to decrease. We have just suffered a terrible defeat at the hands of our enemies. They are well fortified and seem to be well supplied with food. We have no means of keeping alive except by plunder of them, which is now impossible, and by hunting, which becomes more difficult every day. Among our people many schemes of working vengeance upon them for the wrongs they have done us are being discussed. You are brave men, brave in battle and experienced in council. Many of you are older and wiser than I. But you have given me the responsibility of leadership among you. Help me then, with your wisdom tonight, as I know you will always help me with your courage. Consider well, let us discuss your ideas, and we shall decide tonight what policy we may pursue with a reasonable hope of improving our own condition and revenging ourselves upon the Nephites."

When he had ceased speaking, there was a brief silence, which seemed to be one of approval for their young chief's words. It was apparent to Jarom that as a leader Zemnariyah would probably be even more success-

ful than Giddianhi had been. How, then, he wondered, could he lead this astute captain to compass his own destruction and that of his followers?

Presently a gray headed man whose muscles and sinews seemed not to have been touched by the years that had whitened his scant hair, just growing long enough to show itself after having been shaved for the battle, arose and spoke. "One of the schemes among our people," he said, "and one that seems to be generally approved, is to lay siege to the Nephites and prevent them from cultivating their lands outside their walls, so that we may starve them to death."

For a long time they discussed this plan and finally when it seemed to be rather the most popular idea they could propose, Zemnariyah turned to Jarom. "We are all aware," he said, "that there is but one among us who has been able during the last two years to enter within the Nephite fortifications. Therefore we can depend only upon Jarom to inform us what hopes such a plan may have of succeeding. Jarom, speak."

"As has been well said," Jarom replied, standing up to face them as they turned toward him, "it seems highly improbable that so vast a number of people could survive much longer without greater lands to till than are enclosed within the Nephite walls. Yet, so far as my investigations have gone, it has appeared to me that they still have a most exceptionally plentiful supply of food for them all. I would that you could send somebody else than myself to enter the Nephite walls and investigate for you. And if it be the pleasure of this body, I shall undertake to find a way to get another into Zarahemla. How I can do it, I thus

far cannot say, but there must be a way. In the meantime, perhaps it would be well to consider other plans until you can have the testimony of more than one as to the condition of the Nephite stores."

After a great deal of discussion, and suggestion of various schemes to get another Gadianton inside the Nephite possessions, it was decided to leave the scheme to Jarom to invent, and they turned to other suggestions.

One of the younger men, whose flashing dark eyes and nervous movements proclaimed his fiery temper now presumed to speak.

"It seems to me," he said, "that we have been talking like women. Lay siege to the Nephites and wait a few years for them to starve! Are we not already on the verge of starvation ourselves? When will you learn that Jarom has told the truth that they cannot be starved for seven years or more? Does one battle settle forever the destinies of men? I have heard you older men tell of how after one defeat you have rallied and beaten those who first beat you. The Nephites scattered us, true, because they killed our leader. But we have a new leader now, and one who will not be so easily killed in battle. Let us rally once more about him and challenge them again, and this time we will kill their captains and slay them until there are none left able to bear arms. Then we can enter their cities and claim as ours their fair women and their wealth of goods. Are we cowards that we should be afraid to fight?"

Some few, young and high spirited like himself, seemed to approve this plan, but the majority were not so confident, and finally the sentiment against him prevailed. And now spoke another, one whose days of fighting were over, but whose renown had been so great that even his failing strength did not exclude him from the councils or condemn him to half starving with the women and children.

"We have fought and failed," he

said simply, "and we may not be able to starve the Nephites before they starve us. When they first left their cities and fortified themselves in one place, we occasionally went down to take possession of their lands. But they outnumbered us so that it was not safe. And we had no means of tilling the soil that had once yielded so abundantly. We who enter the order of Gadianton do not like to labor with our hands, but who would not prefer labor to starvation? Have you forgotten the narrow neck of land that separates this land from the land northward? Have you forgotten how easily it may be defended? Do you know of any Nephite army that has been left to retain it for them? Let us consider well, then, the possibility of marching forth into the land northward and taking possession there of all the fair cities lying empty and desolate. Let us till the soil and defend the narrow neck of land between us and the Nephites. Then after a year or two, when we have become well established, we can come against the Nephites and take many of them prisoner and make them our servants to work for us. Thus it shall not be necessary very long for us to soil our hands with menial labor. What think you, my friends, of the land northward for the Gadiantons?"

"Would you, then," demanded a younger man, "have us leave the Nephites unbeaten and flee like cowards before them and work like slaves when we might gain revenge and the richest of plunder? Empty houses and desolate cities? What rich plunder, indeed, for us who have lived upon the fat of the land! Let us destroy the Nephites and possess all their lands, not merely the empty shell of what they used to own."

The debate grew hot and lasted long, before the more spirited and courageous gained the ascendancy and it was decided that the old man's scheme was unacceptable. Even then, as Zemnarihah brought the discussion per-

emptorily to a close he said, "Perhaps the day may come when we shall consider the land northward as a good possession. But until we have become so unfortunate, let us be bolder and seek our revenge."

This concluded the parley and all save Jarom and Zemnarihah departed. Zemnarihah motioned Jarom to sit beside him.

"Do you think there is any possibility that a siege would gain us any advantage?" the new leader asked bluntly.

"I think there may be, although Gidgiddoni has led me to suppose that there is not," Jarom replied, "but it is possible that, knowing I am the only Gadianton who comes and goes between there and here, he suspects me of being less his friend than he pretends to consider me. In that case he may have deceived me purposely. And so I wish that another beside myself could gain admittance and study their provisions."

"Then you must have in mind some scheme for getting another inside the walls with you. If you have, speak it, and I will be the one to go with you."

"You, Zemnarihah! Do you not realize that the danger to you would be greater than to any other one of us?"

"If I were afraid of being in greater danger than anyone else, I should not have become leader of the brave order of Gadiantons. Besides, the Nephites do not know that I am their greatest enemy, and there is only one of them who could recognize me if they did know."

"You mean Orpah?"

"I mean the daughter of Gidgiddoni, yes. Tell me your scheme."

"Perhaps it would not work. But I have noticed that except in time of battle, and especially among the women of the Nephites, they are very tender hearted. If then, the guards should discover a Gadianton sick and wounded and helpless, lying outside

their walls and begging for only a little drink of water, they would perhaps take him inside and care for him, thus giving him a chance to learn their situation. I had thought that one might go with me and we could quarrel and I could wound him, all within view of the Nephite guards. Then, pretending to be worse hurt than he was, he could perhaps gain admittance. But I could never presume to use such a scheme with you, Zemnarihah."

"And why not with me?"

"Should I dare to wound my leader? Suppose my blade were to enter farther than I calculated? No, no, we must think of some other way."

"We need think of no other way. This is sufficient. You have proved over and over, Jarom, your loyalty and devotion to our cause. Giddianhi did not appreciate you, but I realize that you are more clever than I in such things as this. Each to his own talent. You the spy, I the warrior. Give me, then, a few months to strengthen myself with my people and to renew their courage, and we will try this scheme. But I must bid you, Jarom, when you strike me in our fight, to strike deep. Zemnarihah does not know how to whine and beg for water over a slight pain. It must be genuine, for I am no actor. But leave me, now, for I must organize so that we can secure a greater supply of food. I cannot have the women starving. Even if I cared nothing about their sufferings, as Giddianhi did, I realize that there are men among us who do care, and when the women suffer the men lose courage. Farewell."

Exchanging the secret sign of the order, Jarom left the presence of his young chief, admiring his courage and wisdom, in spite of his hatred for the man and the cause he supported.

He had still greater cause to admire Zemnarihah, within the next few months. For, with an organizing skill which Gidgiddoni might have envied, he arranged a scheme for groups of hunters to go in turn in every direction

in the wilderness seeking game. And so carefully did he arrange his plans, that there was scarcely a man among them who was not either going or coming upon the hunt every day. Zemnarihah sent them out in relays, and within a short time, the skill and regularity of their hunting gained them sufficient meat so that the entire order became once more well fed.

Meanwhile, Zemnarihah allowed his hair to grow and finally called Jarom to him and said that he was ready now to try their little scheme. At the last moment Jarom balked at his own plan and insisted that another be the one to wound Zemnarihah and that he enter the Nephite walls at a different point. So Zemnarihah finally chose his most trusted and intimate confidant and explained to him that portion of the plan which he needed to know and proceeded to carry it out. Jarom, admitted quickly at another gate, hastened to Gidgiddoni.

"You look anxious my friend," Gidgiddoni remarked as Jarom was admitted to him.

"I am," Jarom replied, "because I fear that you cannot do that which I wish you could."

"Name it."

"In order to convince the Gadiantons that your supplies are low, I have agreed to get another of us admitted here. He and a third one are to quarrel and fight outside the walls in view of the soldiers. He is to be wounded and the third one to go and leave him to beg succor from the Nephites. They will be at the East gate of the old city wall of Zarahemla. Thus far it is easy, but the hard part comes. It will be necessary that he be convinced that the Nephites are upon the verge of starvation. In order to convince him, the entire Nephite nation must be crying and wailing that their food supplies are gone. Can such a thing be possible?"

For some time Gidgiddoni walked back and forth across the room thoughtfully, with head bent and hands

clasped behind him. Then he raised his head and smiled, saying, "I think it can be done easily. But I believe I shall prefer to have your Gadianton friend under my own roof the better to convince him. Let us go and see this mock battle. We will take Orpah with us, also."

The brief journey to the eastern gate was all too short for Jarom. To talk with Orpah and her father, to exchange smiles and glances with her, was a taste of such heaven as he had longed for many months. And now it lasted but a few minutes.

When they reached the gate the fight between the two Gadiantons was just ending. Zemnarihah staggered so realistically when wounded, that Jarom almost thought he must be mortally hurt. His friendly opponent watched him as he sank to the ground and then turned his back and went away.

The observers at the gate could hear Zemnarihah calling and pleading with him not to leave a fellow member of their band to die thus, but he did not turn. The voice of Zemnarihah grew weaker and ceased and the other man disappeared. Orpah, not knowing that there was anything unreal, was weeping and begging her father to have the man rescued. Several of the soldiers were seconding her words with appealing glances. But Gidgiddoni remained unmoved. Then Zemnarihah raised his head and staggered weakly a few steps toward the wilderness, but fell again and lay still.

"See, father," Orpah pleaded, "he is not dead, but if we leave him there he will surely die or be killed by wild beasts. And perhaps if we bring him in and save his life, he may repent and renounce his evil ways. Oh, let us be merciful as we desire God to be merciful to us."

"Very well," Gidgiddoni replied with apparent reluctance, "bring him in."

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Cyrus E. Dallin

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a happy thought that the day being hot the back flap of the tent would undoubtedly be raised to let in air. Creeping along Indian fashion to a rise in the ground at the rear of the tent we found our surmise to be true. This sight I can never forget. It was inspiration for my first statue in Boston, "The Signal of Peace." That powwow, the war paint, the commanding figures of those Red Men on horses following their leader was visualized in my mind forever."

"I owe my art to my mother, Jane Hamer Dallin,* who loved beauty. In childhood days she modeled things out of clay and baked them in the oven. It was a case of heredity. I always liked art and began sketching and modeling when just a child and she, with my father Thomas Dallin, gave me every encouragement."

"Years ago I made a bust of my mother. The committee in charge of erecting the statue to "The Pioneer Mother" at Springville, considered her face the ideal type for this memorial. The next question was the raising of

*Jane Hamer was a Great Aunt of A. Hamer Reiser, General Secretary, Deseret Sunday School Union.

funds, for they wanted a bronze statue. I wanted nothing for my work, for I was only too proud to do my part for the town of my birth and to keep alive such a sentiment, for women shared with pioneer men the honor of making this West what it is today. At least \$2000 was agreed upon for the erection of a pedestal and other necessities such as having this statue in bronze. Kind fate seemed to follow me, for a wealthy Boston woman, seeing the bust, offered to pay half the cost if she could have a cast for her estate, which was done. I was only too glad to make the design and also design the pedestal depicting "Covered Wagon" days, the pioneer man driving his ox team, while his faithful dog follows slowly on.

"To boys and girls with a love of art, don't be discouraged. Hard work will bring success. Parents, encourage your children in this work which is too fast dying out, and too little appreciated. Utah has just cause to be proud of many of their native sons and daughters in this line."

At parting the artist warned this writer about using superfluous adjectives in describing what he termed, "just a home boy coming home."

The Gadianton

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The guards hastened to obey, and when they arrived with Zemnah, it was apparent that he had really fainted. He recovered for a moment on the way to Gidgiddoni's home and Jarom whispered to him, "Your best plan will be to feign repentance and let Orpah convert you to Christianity. That was the argument she used to soften her father."

Zemnah nodded his handsome head weakly, and Jarom said no more, as he fainted again. During the days that followed the household of Gidgiddoni was unusually busy. Orpah constituted herself chief nurse, and Jarom shared her vigils as often as Gidgiddoni did not ask him to accompany

his many expeditions to the keepers of the stores. To each of these, Gidgiddoni talked very privately, leaving secret orders, and each soberly promised careful obedience. Gradually rumors began to spread among the people that mold and rats and vermin and plant diseases were ruining their grain and that the cattle and sheep were sick with mysterious contagions.

But this gave Jarom's jealous heart little balm. For Zemnah was openly making love to Orpah, and her pity and patience with his weakness bore so close a resemblance to a response in kind that Jarom cursed himself for bringing his chief to her care.

(To be concluded next month.)