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Corianton, Chapter II

Author(s): B.H. Roberts

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Abstract: A fictional portrayal of events in the life of Corianton, one of the sons of Alma the Younger. To the grief of his father, Corianton is among the supporters of Korihor that accompanies him to his trial. Although acquitted by the law of the land, Korihor initiates a conflict with the High Priest, Alma the Younger, who boldly declares his testimony and witness of God. Korihor demands a sign, and receives one in being struck dumb and losing his ability to speak. Seeing he has lost his supporters, he flees. As the people disperse, Alma the Younger goes to speak with his son.

wild condition. The victors knew nothing of irrigation, and those who could have taught them had perished, so the canals became filled up and destroyed, and the land became a wilderness. Finding not enough wild game to sustain them, the victors finally returned to their home in the south.

One cannot but see how closely this legend agrees with the history of the final driving and overthrow of the Nephites, as chronicled in the Book of Mormon, and it may be regarded as in some degree a collateral proof of that record, taken in connection with the traditions of other Indian tribes.

The Pah-Eed Indians of Southern Utah, many years ago, related to the writer the following tradition, something like that of the Yaqui's, but more in detail. They said the destroyed people were white, and, like the Mormons, had farms, while their enemies were wild and savage, like the Utes, subsisting only by war and the chase. The white Indians were many years led by a great general or leader, who for years made head against their enemy, with more or less success, until his death; after which his people could no longer hold their own, but were driven from the country and finally destroyed. When their leader perished each one brought a stone and placed it upon his grave until finally the pile became a high hill, and so remains to this day. They say also that a great battle was fought which continued five days, leaving a countless number of dead

upon the field—so numerous that one could walk for miles upon the dead without touching the ground. And that they often hear the wailing of the slain over the field of death at night. This battle, they say, was fought not many miles from Harmony, in Iron County, Utah. This tradition the Pah-Eeds religiously believed, and no Indian would venture near that haunted spot at night for any inducement; nor cross it in daylight, unless compelled by necessity.

Some traditions of the southern tribes locate these battles at various places, where the rocks and cliffs are covered with hieroglyphic engravings, which, as the Indians say, have been there for many generations. They do not know who made them, nor when; but say it was to commemorate some great event which had there occurred.

Although the foregoing legends have no special bearing in relation to the ancient races of Arizona—that is, no positive value,—the writer regards them as interesting traditions held in reverence by the members of a despised and persecuted people, who are rapidly melting away, unless they shall be rescued by the over-ruling hand of that God, who was worshiped by their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

At present, the history of this ancient race seems shrouded in mystery; but we confidently hope the time is not far distant when the veil will be lifted, and much that pertains to their rise, continuance, and fall as a nation or people will be known. *Santiago.*

CORIANTON.

CHAPTER II.

THE next morning the sun shone more brightly than on the day before. Through the night a terrific storm had raged. Black clouds burdened with moisture had been split by vivid flashes of lightning, and poured down all their floods. But with the approach of light the storm ceased, the clouds parted and drifted into great cumulous heaps light-

ened to snowy whiteness by the glorious morning sun. The air was fresh and pure, the electric storm having dispelled the mists and fogs so common to the tropics.

Long before the sun had reached midway between his rising and high noon, the open square before the hall of justice was filled with groups of men, some boisterously disputing the rightfulness

of Korihor's treatment, and others with equal warmth defending the action of the authorities of Gideon.

The hall of justice was crowded to overflowing with men anxious to see and hear the man, who had by a few leaps and bounds sprung into notoriety. The hall within was circular in form, with tiers of stone seats rising one above the other, their regularity broken only by three promenades extending three-fourths of the way around the building. The entrance was through two wide double doors in the south, along a walk leading into a circular space, around which ranged the first row of seats, and from which ran flights of steps leading to the seats and promenades above. On the west side was a spacious platform with two seats well to the back of it, raised on a dais, evidently intended for the high officials of the state.

A murmur, that commenced near the entrance and then extended to all parts of the house, gave notice that some one of importance—perhaps some of the chief actors in what was to take place that day—were coming in. Two men walking side by side and followed by two guards passed up the short flight of steps to the platform and occupied the seats before mentioned. One of them was still in the prime of manhood, with a full beard and glossy black hair. The eyes were deep set and black, the forehead low and broad, the lower part of the face square and heavy. The stature of the man was in keeping with the face; below the common height, broad shouldered and ungraceful, the whole aspect was stern, almost harsh—such was the Chief Judge of the whole land. His companion was a different type of man; tall in person, slightly stooped with age, a high receding forehead and hair of silvery whiteness. In that face one could see compassion, patience, tenderness—all the qualities in fact that go to make up the highly spiritual temperament. But, as one may say, back of the indications of those qualities stood others of a sterner character. The closely compressed lips, together with the

whole form and movement was expressive of determination; while the light that flashed from the eyes when animated, bespoke a quick spirit within. But now as he takes his seat by the side of the Chief Judge, his whole air is calmness, almost sadness; and indeed care had drawn many and deep lines in that noble face.

Neither of these officers, though the foremost men in the great Nephite republic, wore any badge of office; but were dressed very similar to hundreds of common people in the hall. The dress consisted of a sort of tunic drawn over a close fitting under garment, gathered in at the waist by a girdle and extending to the knees, but leaving the arms and legs bare; over the tunic was generally thrown a light robe, very often of rich material and varying in color to suit the taste of the wearer; on the feet sandals were worn, fastened to the feet and legs by broad thongs of tanned deer hide—such was the male dress of that period among the Nephites. The chief judge's tunic was of a light brown, with a dull red robe thrown over the shoulders. The tunic of the high priest was white, and his robe a light blue gathered in graceful folds about his person, something after the fashion in which the Roman toga was worn.

At a signal from the Chief Judge one of the guards left the hall and soon returned, conducting to the platform Korihor and the guards who brought him from Gideon, a few others following—friends of the accused. Among the latter there was one whose graceful form towered above the rest, whose step was more firm, and whose every limb and feature and movement seemed conscious of power and pride. As he followed Korihor up the steps to the platform and stood near him, the High Priest started from his seat—there was a convulsive twitching of the fine features, and then the tears stole silently down his furrowed cheeks. He had recognized his son Corianton, as the follower of this unbeliever. He was aware that his son had called upon him the day before, knew that he had expressed some sympathy

for him, but he was not prepared to see him thus openly identify himself with the cause of the scoffer against God; and it wrung his heart with anguish.

As Korihor took his place before the Chief Judge the latter unrolled a parchment which contained the charges against him, as set forth by the authorities of Gideon.

"Korihor," said he, the voice was strong and harsh, "you are charged, by the authorities of the land of Gideon, with having sought to stir up sedition, disrupt the government and destroy religion. It doth not appear, however, that you have set on foot any society or organization looking to the accomplishment of these unworthy purposes, but have merely agitated them by your speeches. Our law cannot punish a man for his belief nor for the expression of it, therefore it is our decision that you be set at liberty. However, it becomes my duty to caution you that the path you tread is filled with danger, both to yourself and those you may induce to follow you. Let me remind you that our present system of government has been most fruitful of happiness to the people, and holds out to them the fairest promise of future good; and he who becomes its enemy, becomes the enemy of the people, and in the end must come to sorrow. Let not, therefore, your love of notoriety, or any other motive betray you into seeking it, by paths so pregnant with danger to yourself should you fail, and so disastrous to the public weal should you succeed. You are acquitted before the law of the land; but the High Priest may have some advice for you."

"Acquitted by the law of the land—now I suppose I am to be tried by the law of—heaven!" said Korihor. "Well, we've heard from earth, now we are ready to hear from heaven—what a pity the other place," pointing significantly below, "is not also represented, we would then have a trinity of you to hear from. Proceed heaven!" said he, turning to the High Priest.

"Korihor," said the High Priest, "your speech ill becomes your intelligence, your"—

"What, has heaven turned flatterer! can a priest speak to an opponent in fair, well-seeming words? You know well to whom you speak—one who will not kneel in the dust before you—one who fears neither you nor your gods, but whose soul abhors you both, and is free from your superstition and the slavish submission it begets, else we should have had thunder from God's mouth-piece, and not the mellifluous tones breathing softly—'Korihor, your speech ill becomes your intelligence,' but go on, speak as is your wont, I despise your flattery as I defy your power."

"Think not I meant to flatter," continued the High Priest unmoved, by the rude interruption, "for I meant to say, had you listened patiently, that your speech would not do credit to a perverse child."

This was a conclusion of the sentence Korihor had scarcely expected, and the scoffer felt that his impetuosity had placed him at a disadvantage.

"Why do you go about to destroy the people's belief in God and their hope in Christ?" continued the High Priest.

"To undeceive them, to free them from a groveling superstition, which bows down their souls that they dare not assert their rights and liberties, nor raise their heads in manly pride, nor gratify their appetites, lest they offend this traditionary God—a being who never has been seen or known, nor ever will be. I seek to strike off the servile chains, with which your priests have loaded them, in order to bring to pass your own designs—that you may glut yourselves with the labors of their hands, and hold them at your mercy. I would see men free from superstition, acknowledging no power more potent than their own. I would teach them that intelligent management is providence, that genius is God; that this life—so far as we know—terminates existence, and therefore they should encompass all the happiness possible, by enjoying what the appetites and passions crave. I tell thee proud priest, now playing at humanity," he exclaimed with sudden vehemence, "your religion is slavery;

your priesthood, a fraud; your Christ, a delusion; your God, a lie!"

The great audience grew breathless at the fierce denunciation, and then the calm but strong voice of the High Priest rang through the hall—"Could a deception, a lie produce such supreme joy in the hearts of men as the faith of this people in God does?"

"Yea it could, and the proof of it is in that it does; but the joy this people think they have is not joy; man never tastes joy until he breaks away from all restraint, and feels himself accountable to no one for his actions, then and then only is he capable of joy."

"'Tis a lying spirit prompts thee so to answer, for never while sense and judgment keep their seats in the mind of man can he cast off restraint, or become dead to the sense of moral responsibility; therefore what you would call joy would be the wild delirium of the madman or the drunken—long may this people be preserved from such joy as this—its spirit is drawn from the alembic of hell, its effect is destruction. Equally false is your statement that the priests glut themselves on the labors of the people. From the commencement of the reign of the judges, seventeen years since, until now, I have labored with my own hands for my support; and notwithstanding all my travels for the church, and labors in it, I have never received even one senine for my labors, nor have my brethren, save it were in the judgment seat; and then we have received only according to law for our time. What doth it profit us to labor in the church, then, but to declare the truth, that we might have happiness in the joy of our brethren?"

The scoffer was silent at this calm statement of fact, but he stared boldly in the face of the speaker. Corianton, however, manifested some uneasiness, as he saw the spirit in his father awaking.

"Korihor," said the High Priest, and there was an intensity in the voice which thrilled the whole assembly, "you mock at religion, you deny the existence of God, but I testify to you there is a God,

and now will you deny his existence or blaspheme his name?"

"Yea, that I will! What, thinkest thou because a high priest says in solemn tones, 'I tell thee Korihor, there is a God,' that I will crouch at his feet and confess what ye would call my sins, and like an echo say amen to your testimony? By the gods, if such there be, you must think my spirit easy over-awed! I tell thee no, there is no God—ye have no evidence that there is—give me proof of his existence—let me see a manifestation of his power—show me a sign!"

"All things testify of his existence. The traditions of our fathers affirm it"—

"The traditions of our fathers!" contemptuously broke in Korihor, "I demand a living sign, and you talk to me of tradition!"

—"The written testimony of many of the prophets from the beginning of the world to the time our fathers left Jerusalem, as recorded upon the brass plates they brought with them into the wilderness, prove his existence; the testimony of all the holy prophets that God hath raised up to minister to this people declare it; and back of these witnesses stands all nature—the earth with its wealth of fruits and flowers and vegetation and animal life; the rains which make it fruitful, the glorious sun, which kisses its fruits and grains to ripeness; day and night, seed-time and harvest—all proclaim the Creator and his goodness and wisdom and love! The existence and harmonious movement through space of many other worlds than ours, in such exact order and regularity, proclaim his power and glory; and more than all, the still small voice of the spirit of God, testifying to the secret soul of man of the being of God and man's accountability to him—all these things united give ample proof of God's existence and power and majesty; yet there stands a man," and he pointed his finger at Korihor, and addressed himself to the audience, "who denies there is any proof; turns from all this and impiously demands a sign!"

The scoffer stood awed before the awful form of the priest; and well indeed he might, for he had risen in delivering

the above; his face shone with intelligence, his eyes reflected the light of heaven, his voice trembled with the power of God; and the form drawn up to its full height was magnificently grand.

"I—I do not say—there is—no God," said Korihor in subdued, husky tones, and trembling with fear—"I do not believe there is,—I will not believe except ye show me a sign!"

"Then this shall be thy sign—I tell thee, in the name of God, thou shalt be dumb and never speak again!" The voice was trumpet toned now and seemed to shake the building and the whole audience had started to their feet. There was a half stifled exclamation from the scoffer, and he wildly clutched the air; his eyes seemed bursting from their sockets and his face was purple with his effort to speak. Those who had stood with him drew back as if by instinct, and he stood alone writhing under his curse. Exhausted at last by violent contortions of his whole frame, he became more calm; and in answer to the question by the Chief Judge—"Art thou now convinced of the power of God?" he wrote an answer, saying that he was; that he knew there was a God, but the devil had deceived him by appearing to him as an angel of light, that he had taught his

words because they were pleasing to the carnal mind, and his success made him believe, finally, that they were true. He pleaded piteously that the High Priest would remove the curse, but Alma replied: "If this curse should be taken from thee, thou wouldst again lead away the hearts of this people; therefore it shall be unto thee, even as the Lord will."

Korihor looked around him, but no one gave him recognition as a friend; those who had accompanied him into the hall stood terror stricken, and amazement blazed in every countenance. He realized that he was deserted in this his extremity, and with a gurgling cry in his throat he fled from the hall and the city.

The vast audience which had breathlessly witnessed this remarkable scene and demonstration of the power of God, began to break up, and quietly leave the hall, each person too deeply impressed with what he had witnessed to speak to his neighbor. The Chief Judge and the High Priest were among the last to depart. As the latter was approaching the door his robe was clutched, and turning round he stood face to face with his wayward son—Corianton.

[To be continued.]

LEAVES FROM A NOTE BOOK.

A STRANGE MAY-DAY.

IT WAS but a sorry May-day we have had this year, and a most peculiar one. Winter may be said to have lingered in the lap of Spring with a vengeance, or more properly, that he tried to trample her under his feet. Led on by bright-blue skies, and soft balmy winds, the April just past was one unusually forward. Already the snow on the mountain tops had begun to assume that gleaming silvery hue that makes it appear so beautiful, and which usually heralds an early Flora's season. Over head

"——White fleecy clouds,
Were wandering in thick flocks
Shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind."

and in the gardens, the first gush of fragrant violets had come and gone, along with the crimson Japonicas. The peach, the apple, the cherry trees were covered with masses of blossom, and the flags had begun to flaunt their purple finery in the sunlight.

With a changing moon there came a change of skies. When May morning dawned, all nature lay robed in white. From morn to noon fell softly the feathery snow, and then the sun came forth. It was a curious sight, for soon the broad valley appeared as if dressed out in motley, bands and patches of green alternated with white, where the snow faded quickly from off the green