LEHI IN THE DESERT

PART I
THE PROBLEM

The first eighteen chapters (approximately forty pages) of the Book of Mormon tell the story of how one Lehi led a company of Israelites from Jerusalem across Arabia to the sea at the beginning of the sixth century B.C. Since the publication of this account, other ancient travel stories have been unearthed in the Near East and been accepted as genuine or pronounced fictitious as they fulfilled or failed to fulfill certain conditions. Thus Professor Albright declares the story of the Egyptian Sinuhe to be "a substantially true account of life in its milieu" on the grounds (1) that its "local color [is] extremely plausible," (2) it describes a "state of social organization" which "agrees exactly with our present archaeological and documentary evidence . . .," (3) "The Amorite personal names contained in the story are satisfactory for that period and region," and (4) "Finally, there is nothing unreasonable in the story itself . . ."*

The story of Wenamon the same authority accepts as true in its political history and geography, noting that "it correctly reflects the cultural horizon and the religious ideas and practices of its time." Certain Egyptian episodes in the Odyssey Lieblein considered authentic because they posit "a rather good knowledge of Egyptian conditions and institutions" in whoever composed them.* On the other hand, such tales as the Shipwrecked Sailor may be regarded as fanciful because "they lack specific historical or geographical background, and by their mise-en-scène, which is either mythical or extravagantly improbable."

With such examples before us, we may proceed to test the story of Lehi: does it correctly reflect the cultural horizon and religious and social ideas and practices of the time?" Does it have authentic historical and geographical background? Is its mise-en-scène mythical, highly imaginative, or extravagantly improbable? Is its local color correct, and are its proper names convincing? Until recent years men were asking the same questions of the Book of Exodus, and scholars were stolidly turning thumbs down until evidence accumulating in its favor began to turn the scales. As one student described it, the problem "is rather to prove, by innumerable small coincidences, that which Ebers has so well called the 'Egypticity' of the Pentateuch, than to establish any particular historical point by external and monumental evidence."* Just so the problem of I Nephi is to establish both its 'Egypticity' and its 'Arabicity' by like innumerable coincidences. The fact that the Book of Mormon is a modern text, and yet not modern enough to have exploited the fruits of archaeology, gives it a double handicap at the outset, and yet in view of the claims made by Joseph Smith, it can plead no immunity from the same exacting tests that have revealed the true nature of documents of known antiquity. If the book can pass those tests, there is no point to arguing about its age and authorship.

Virtually all that is known of the world in which Lehi is purported to have lived has been discovered within the last hundred years—mostly within the last thirty.*

*Numbers refer to bibliography at end of article.

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mostly within the last thirty." How does this information check with that in the book of I Nephi? Before we can place the two side by side for comparison, we must describe briefly the nature of the modern evidence. It falls, for us, into four classes:

1. First and most to be prized are documents found in the country of Lehi and dating from his very time. A number of these have come to light in recent years—seals, jar handles, inscriptions, and, most notably, the Lachish letters discovered in 1935. These are the remains of the correspondence of a military officer stationed in the city of Lachish, about thirty-five miles southwest of Jerusalem, at the time of the destruction of both cities, and so give us an eyewitness account of the actual world of Lehi, a tiny peephole, indeed, but an unobstructed one; in these letters we find ourselves brought into close contact with the inner religious, political, and military life of Judah at this period." Since I Nephi pretends to bring us into even closer contact with the same society, we have here an important "control."

2. The new finds have called for extensive review and reevaluation by the ablest scholars of the situation in Jerusalem at the time of its fall; these learned summaries will save us the trouble and risk of making our own.

3. Book of Mormon descriptions of life in the desert must be checked against eyewitness accounts of life in the same deserts, for the same period of time, if possible. Since the country and people concerned are among the most unchanging on earth, there are many things that are as true today as they were in 600 B.C., providing data of a well-nigh timeless but highly-specialized nature which has been made available in:

a) numerous scientific journals and surveys of the country, with the Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly taking the lead

b) a growing treasury of great classics on life among the Arabs, beginning with Burckhardt in 1829 but mostly confined to our own age: Doughty, Philby, Lawrence, Hogarth, Thomas, etc.

c) the conversation of modern Arabs. The author has consulted extensively with modern Arabs, Syrians, Iraqians, Lebanese, Egyptians, etc., and after fifteen years of searching is ready to declare Mr. Mose Kader of Provo, Utah, a true Bedouin. The same adventurous spirit that brought this remarkable man to settle on a solitary farm near the mouth of Rock Canyon drove him from his father's farm near Jerusalem in his youth, to spend many years with the Bedouins of the desert; and the same tenacious conservatism that has enabled him to rear a family as strict Moslems a thousand miles from any other Moslems has kept fresh his memory of days in the desert in the olden times before World War I. On fine points he is a marvelous informant.*

d) As a check on the above reports we have the words of the ancient poets of the Arabs. The prose story of the Beni Hilal is also very useful both as a "standard work" on desert migration and as telling a story that parallels that of Nephi very closely on some points.

Taken together these sources allow a far closer scrutiny of the book of I Nephi than would have been possible a generation ago. Though what follows is little more than a general survey, we believe it persists the lines that a correct examination of the story of Lehi should take, and that enough evidence is offered to justify the remarks with which we shall conclude the study.

THE SITUATION IN JERUSALEM

When we speak of Jerusalem, it is important to notice Nephi's preference for a non-Biblical expression, "the land of Jerusalem," in designating his homeland. While he and his brothers always regard "the land of Jerusalem" as their home, it is perfectly clear from a number of passages that "the land of our father's inheritance" cannot possibly be within, or even very near, the city, even though Lehi "had dwelt at Jerusalem in all his days." (I Nephi 1:4.) The terms seem confused, but they correctly reflect actual conditions, for in the Amarna letters we read of "the land of Jerusalem" as an area larger than the city itself, and even learn in one instance that "a city of the land of Jerusalem, Bet-Ninib, has been captured." It was the rule in Palestine and Syria, as the same letters show, for a large area around a city and all the inhabitants of that area to bear the name of the city. This was a holdover from the times when the city and the land were a single political unit, comprising a city-state; when this was absorbed into a larger empire, the original identity was preserved, though it had lost its original significance. The same conservatism made it possible for Socrates to be an Athenian, and nothing else, even though he came from the village of Alopeke, at some distance from the city. This arrangement deserves mention because many have pointed to the statement of Alma 7:10 that the Savior would be born "at Jerusalem which is the land of our forefathers," as sure proof of fraud. It is rather the opposite, faithfully preserving the ancient terminology to describe a system which has only been recently rediscovered.

We know very little about the city government of the Jews, save that the "elders" played the principal role. By "elders" has been understood "the heads of the most influential families of a city." This would make them identical with those princes, notables, and officials who are designated as sarim in the Lachish letters; the word sarim applies, according to J. W. Jack, to "members of the official class, i.e., officers acting under the king as his counselors and rulers." In the Lachish letters we find the sarim denouncing Jeremiah to the king and demanding that he be executed because of his bad influence on the morale of the people. In accusing the prophet of defeatism, the influential men of Jerusalem were supported both by the majority of the people and by a host of prophets by whose false oracles "Judahite chauvinism was whipped to a frenzy," making it, to say the least, (Continued on following page)
a risky business to hold an opposite opinion." For the government, with the weak and ineffectual Zedekiah at the head, had set its heart on a suicidal policy of military alliance with Egypt and "business as usual."

The country had just come through a great economic boom, thanks mostly to commercial dealings with Egypt, which had produced an unparalleled efflorescence of great private fortunes." Phoenician galleys filled the Nile mouths, and Semitic merchants... thronged the Delta," the bulk of sea trade passing through Sidon, which from first to last dominated the commercial scene. Lists of goods imported into Egypt from Palestine show that the great men of the East took the gold of Egypt in return for their wine, oil, grain, and honey, the first three far outclassing all other commodities in importance." Among inland cities like Jerusalem the caravans of the merchant princes passed as in the days of the Amarna letters, for there were no real roads until the time of the Romans.

At the turn of the century the international situation was casting a dark shadow over the picture. Babylon, suddenly freed from other concerns, moved quickly towards a showdown with Egypt, the "broken reed," with which the leaders of Judah had unwisely cast their lot. Yet, the clouds of impending war were not so dark as the shadow of religious laxness and moral decay which, according to Jeremiah, followed upon excessive prosperity and an overindulgence for things Egyptian. It is no wonder that the "sarim" facing problems enough in maintaining a program of "business as usual," denounced the melancholy prophet as a traitor, defamist, and collaborator with Babylon. The country was divided into two factions, "the two parties, pro-Egyptian and pro-Babylonian, existed side by side in the land--King Zedekiah, his rulers and princes, and probably most of the people, favored Egypt... while the prophet Jeremiah and his followers advised submission to Babylon."

It was a time of "dissension and heart burning, when divided counsels rent the unhappy city of Jerusalem," and as things became worse in an atmosphere "charged with unmixed gloom... Zedekiah... stubbornly followed the path to ruin by conspiring with Pharaoh."

The alarm was justified, for when the blow finally fell it was far more catastrophic than scholars have hitherto been willing to believe, with "all, or virtually all, of the fortified towns in Judah razed to the ground."

The fatal infatuation for Egypt, which was largely responsible for the calamity, is a striking feature of the story. Why did the government of Judah stick so loyally to an Egypt that had long since lost the power to compel obedience? For one thing, we now know that cultural and economic ties were far stronger between the two nations than anyone had hitherto supposed. J. W. Jack noted in 1938 that "excavations have shown a closer connection with the land of the Pharaohs than was suspected... the authorities at Lachish were probably using, or at least were accustomed to the Egyptian calendar and the Egyptian system of numeration in their local records." Though this goes for an earlier time, all indications point to this connection with Egypt continuing unbroken right down to the end of the Jewish monarchy. One anthropologist went so far as to claim that Lachish was actually an Egyptian colony, but investigation shows that the same "Egyptian" physical type and the same predominance of Egyptian culture prevails elsewhere in Palestine. Recently, it was found that Egypt, seals, inscriptions, and the preliminary study of mounds throughout the land all tell the same story: overwhelming and unexpected preponderance of Egyptian influence, to the equally surprising exclusion of influences from Babylonia and Assyria. At Jerusalem itself, where excavation is necessarily limited, sealings on jar handles attest the same long reign of Egyptian culture. At the same time, the Elephantine papyri tell us another thing that scholars never dreamed of and which they were at first most reluctant to believe, namely, that colonies of Jewish soldiers and merchants were entirely at home in upper Egypt, where they enjoyed free practice of their religion. The ties between Palestine and Egypt were, moreover, of very long standing, centuries of "a common Hebrew-Egyptian environment" being necessary to produce the "permeation of Egyptian modes of thought and expression into Hebrew," and to load the Egyptian vocabulary with words out of Palestine and Syria. The newly identified Aeitungstexte shows that as early as 2000 B.C. "Palestine was tributary in large part, at least, to Egypt," while the excavation of Byblos, a veritable "little Egypt," proved the presence of Egyptian empire in later centuries.

To say that Egyptian culture is predominant in an area is not necessarily to argue the presence of Egyptian domination. According to Hogarth, Egypt exercised three degrees of empire: the first degree was rule by direct force, the second by "fear of reconquest which a few garrisons and agents and the prestige of the conqueror could keep alive in the minds of indirect administrators and native subjects," and the third degree "meant little more than a sphere of exclusive influence, from which tribute was expected but, not being secured by garrisons or representatives... tended to be intermittent." Thus we see that the position of Egypt as "most favored nation" in Judah may represent any degree of decayed dominion—even to an "empire" of fourth degree. It was the (Continued on page 66)

THE IMPROVEMENT ERA
visit with me," he gave a sickly laugh, "and attend the Prom—I had written about that—naturally she's interested—"

Sue was hanging onto the phone as if she'd faint if she let go. Mr. Silver had paused for her to say something, and she made a husky little murmur before he went on, sounding embarrassed, "Well, the point of the whole matter is, I simply cannot find accommodations for her on such short notice. You know—there seems to be absolutely nowhere she can stay—the convention coming at the same time as the Prom—"

His voice trailed off, and I saw Sue gulp. Now, I've always thought Sue was quite an actor, dramatizing herself, you know, always being some character she'd read about till you never knew what the real Sue was like. But this time she was up against the real thing. I couldn't help thinking it was a kind of test, and the way Sue took it would show whether she was a thoroughbred or a phony. Well, she rated an A on that test. Play-acting or not, Sue proved she was no phony. Her face was dead white, and it looked old and grownup, like maybe she'll look when she's thirty, but she didn't hesitate more than a couple of seconds before she said, as warmly as Mother ever did, "Why, bring her right over here, Mr. Silver! We have plenty of room, and we'll love having her. I'll go and tell Mother."

I slipped out while Mr. Silver was thanking her. I didn't want to see Sue's face when she hung up. But there was nothing unusual to see. She stayed alone in the hall for a minute or two, but when she came back into the living room, no one but me, who had the low-down, noticed she was paler and quieter. While she was telling Mother about Mr. Silver's fiancée, the telephone rang again.

Believe it or not, it was Paul again, and was I ever glad to hear his manly voice! The awful thought had come to me that he had probably given up. After all, it was not Paul who usually did the chasing, and if he'd quit, where would Susie be, then, poor thing! But it must have been the difficulties he

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SUSIE AND THE SUBCONSCIOUS

Well, Sue was what Grandma would call the belle of the ball, as was only to be expected for Paul Stronge's girl and date. Boys danced with her who hadn't known she was on earth, although they had probably been in the same classes. Even the senior girls were respectfully jealous and treated her like she was One Of Them. Mr. Silver broke away from his girl friend long enough to dance with her. Though when I say dance, I am using the term loosely, for Sue admitted to me, some time later, that his dancing is definitely dated, and I think that went a long way toward helping her to forgive Old Sub for failing her in a crisis.

"Do you know," she said, late that night after Paul had finally gone and Mr. Silver was saying a lingering good-night to his girl on the front porch (she certainly was an ordinary-looking Jane, not even in Sue's class). "Do you know, Johnny, it's the funniest thing," (she and I were in the kitchen eating peanut-butter sandwiches, before going to bed) "but yesterday, in chapter thirty-six of the psychology book it said, 'Occasionally the Subconscious, rather than assisting, seems at the time to be frustrating one; but in that case, one is apt to learn later that it was for his best good the plan in question did fail.' The Subconscious, with the infinite wisdom of Time and Space to draw upon, had acted for the best."

"That's right," I said, heartily, glad for once to be on the side of the Subconscious. "If we have to lose faith in anyone, let it be Mr. Silver, by all means. Let's never go back on dear old Sub!"

LEHI IN THE DESERT

Egyptian cultural heritage that was all-powerful, Egyptian influence being strongest in Palestine after Egypt had passed her peak as a world power."

In the great days of Egypt the renowned Ipuwer had said, "the foreigners have become Egyptians everywhere" and a near-contemporary of Lehi can boast, "behold, are not the Ethiopian, the Syrian, and all foreigners instructed in the language of Egypt?" For centuries it was the custom of the princes of Syria to send their sons to Egypt to be educated. No matter how sorry the plight of Egypt, the boastful inscriptions of her rulers—sometimes very feeble ones—proclaim the absolute and unquestioned superiority of Egyptian civilization to all others: with Egyptians that is an article of faith. Like the English in our own day, the Egyptians demonstrated time and again the ability to maintain a power and influence in the world out of all proportion to their physical resources; with no other means than a perfect and tenacious confidence in the divine superiority of Egypt and Ammon, Wenamon almost succeeded in overthrowing the great prince of Tyre. Is it any wonder then, that in a time when Egypt was enjoying the short but almost miraculous revival of splendor that marked the XXVI Dynasty, with its astonishing climax of world trade, the credit of that country should stand high in the land of Jerusalem?

Palestine, always a melting pot, was more so than ever in this period of internationalism and trade. It was a time of great mixing of cultures and nationalities throughout the ancient world, both through the operations of commerce and of war. Lists of skilled workers living in Babylon immediately after the fall of Jerusalem show an almost unbelievable mixture of types. As for the internationalism of business, the princes of the Delta were merchants; the princes of the Syrian and Palestinian cities were also, as the Amarna tablets show, merchants; the story of Wenamon is enough to show that the princes of Phoenicia and Philistia were merchants; the Arab princes of the desert were merchants, and the merchants of Egypt and Babylonia would meet in their tents to transact business; the two wisest of the Greeks, Lehi's great contemporaries, Solon and Thales, both traveled extensively in the East—on business. In short, Lehi's world was a world of merchants.

But it is now time to turn to the Book of 1 Nephi. How perfectly the author depicts the very situation we have just described! He explained that he did not intend to write a political history, and so we must often look between the lines; yet the amount of information he imparted in the most casual and unlabored manner imaginable is simply astonishing. Consider first the picture of Lehi.

Lehi was a very rich Jew; he was proud of his Egyptian education, spoke and wrote Egyptian, and insisted on his sons learning the language. He possessed exceeding great wealth in the form of "gold, silver, and all manner of precious things," not manufactured at Jerusalem: he had close ties with Sidon (one of the most popular names in the Book of Mormon, where it appears both in its Semitic and its Egyptian form of Giddonah); yet he lived on an estate in the country, "the land of his inheritance," and was something of an expert in vine, olive, fig, and honey culture: so there can be little doubt of the nature of his business with Egypt."

Now this man, coming from one of the oldest families and having a most unobjectionable background and education, suddenly found himself in bad with the "people that..."
count.” First, there was mockery, then, anger, and finally, plots against his life (1 Nephi 1:19-20) which, since they were serious, must have been supported in high places, for in openly siding with Jeremiah (Ibid., 7:14) he had made himself a traitor to his class and his tradition: members of his own family turned against him and, taking the side of “the Jews who were at Jerusalem,” as Nephi explains, accused their father of criminal defeatism in thinking and preaching “that Jerusalem, that great city, must be destroyed.” (Ibid., 1:4) exactly as the Sarim accused Jeremiah of treacherous talk. So vehement was their support of the government party’s point of view, that Lehi’s two eldest sons shared with the Jews the great crime of plotting against their father’s life. (Ibid., 17:44.) Nowhere is the “dissension and heart-burning that rent the unhappy city of Jerusalem” more clearly shown forth than in those impassioned scenes within Lehi’s own household. The elder sons, reared to a life of Egyptian elegance and heirs to a fortune that owed much to Egypt, were staunch defenders of the status quo, while the younger sons, less spoiled by all accounts, had been made aware of the real nature of the crisis in Jerusalem, which was not really an economic or a political but basically a moral one. (Ibid., 1:19.) The older men could not see this at all: “the people who were in the land of Jerusalem,” they protested, “were a righteous people; for they kept the statutes ... according to the law of Moses; wherefore, we know that they are a righteous people.” Such was the holy chauvinism of the false prophets with their gospel of business as usual. The atmosphere of hysteria and gloom that prevails in Nephí’s story of Jerusalem is, as we have seen, strictly authentic, and the danger of utter annihilation of Jerusalem that runs like an ominous fate motif through the whole book was, as the event proved, perfectly justified.

The world has always cast a superior and mocking eye on the inordinate concern of the Book of Mormon for things Egyptian. With surprise and incredulity it is now learning that Egyptian culture counted for far more in Palestine in

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(Continued from preceding page) 600 B.C. than anyone had ever supposed. It is significant that the Book of Mormon concern with Egypt is strictly cultural—it never mentions Pharaoh or speaks of Egyptian government, but only of Egyptian culture and especially language. It makes it perfectly clear, however, that Egyptian was for Lehi a second language, “for he having been taught in the language of the Egyptians, therefore he could read these engravings, and teach them to his children.” (Mos. 1:4.) We have seen that Egyptian was taught to “Ethiopians, Syrians, and all other foreigners” in Lehi’s day. Mormon tells us (Mor. 9:32-34) that the language of Lehi’s descendants was not Hebrew or Egyptian but a mixture of both, both being corrupted in the process, so that “none other people knoweth our language,” which would certainly not have been the case had they spoken only Hebrew. Ancient Hittite was just such a dual language. The reason “none other people knoweth our language” today is that English is the result of imposing cultivated French on native Saxon, just as cultivated Egyptian was imposed on pure Hebrew in Lehi’s Palestine. On a ceremonial dagger which with its handle of white gold reminds us of Laban’s sword, we read the name Ja-goh-her. “Jahveh is satisfied,” a name which neatly combines Egyptian and Hebrew in a process of fusion for which a great deal of evidence now exists, and which had been in progress long before Lehi’s day.

It was common in ancient as in modern languages to use one and the same word (e.g. Eng. “speech,” Egypt. “ra”) both for “utterance” and “language.”

When Nephi says, “after this manner was the language of my father in praising of his God,” (1 Ne. 1:15) he is not telling us what language his father spoke, but giving notice that he is quoting or paraphrasing an actual speech of his father. Likewise when he says, “I make a record in the language of my father,” (Ibid., 1:2) he says that he is going to quote or paraphrase a record actually written by his father. (Ibid., 1:16.) He explains that his father wrote the record in Egyptian though it dealt with Jewish matters, but he never affirms that Egyptian was his father’s native tongue.

But it is not only a dual culture that is thus reflected in the Book of Mormon. The same mixture of types that turns up among the captives in Babylon is vividly depicted in the proper names of Lehi’s descendants. The temptation to list a few of these here is too great to resist, and such a list furnishes a really helpful commentary on Lehi’s own background. Hebrew and Egyptian names together make up the overwhelming majority and occur in about equal strength, which is exactly what one would expect from Mormon’s claim that both languages were used among them, but Hittite, Arabic, and Ionian elements are not missing.

Some Egyptian names: Aha (“Warrior”), Giddonah (Eg. Djidewnah, i.e., Sidon), Korihor (Eg. Herihor, Khurhor, etc.), Paanchi
(Eg. Paan-khi), Pacumeni (Eg. Pakemen, "Blind man," a proper name). Laish (Eg. Liver, "Joy"). Aminadab (Eg. & Canaan. Aminadab, a name of the hawk-god). Zemar (Eg. Zeb, a very common, also Senep-ta), Zemar-ti-ah (Eg. Zarmha-re, the same elements in different order. Zemar, a common Eg. practice). Zenek (Eg. Zenek, once a serpent-god). Zeze-em and Zeze-ram (Eg. Zezer, Zezer, etc.). Ammon (Eg. Amon, the commonest name in the Eg. Empire and also the Book of Mormon). Pachus (Eg. Pa-kh, Pach-as). Phahor (Eg. Pa-her-an, in its Canaan. form Phaura, in Eg. as Pa-her-it, means "the Syrian"). Gimgin-no (Eg. Kenkeme, cf. Kipkip in Nubia and Bibl. No-Amon "City of Amon"). Morianton (Eg. Maruaton), Sinim (Eg. Sanam, i.e. Napata), Ziff (Eg. Sepa in its Semit. form), Sam (Eg. Sam), Ezias (Eg. Azahe, Azizie), Kish (Eg. Kush, Kesh, etc.). Hem (Eg. Hen, "Servant"). The great frequency of the element Mor- in Book of Mormon proper names suits with the fact that in the Egyptian lists of Lieblein and Ranké the element Mr is, next to Nfr alone, also the commonest. The Book of Mormon names Gidgiddoni and Gidgiddonah have interesting resemblance to an Egyptian compound meaning, according to its ending, "Thoth hath said. He shall live," and "Thoth hath said. Shè shall live"; the Book of Mormon forms suggest "Thoth hath said I," and "we, shall live" respectively. Nephi, of course, has a wealth of Egyptian possibilities.

Since the Old Testament was available to Joseph Smith, there is no point in listing Hebrew names, but their Book of Mormon forms are significant. The strong tendency in Book of Mormon names to end in -iah is very striking, since the vast majority of Hebrew names found at Lachish end the same way, indicating that -iah names were very fashionable in Lehi’s day. Non-Biblical Shalum and Mattanah from Lachish suggests Book of Mormon Shilem and Mathoniah, while Hebrew names turned up on ancient jar handles from other places have a familiar Book of Mormon ring: Hezron, Mamshath, Ziph, Jether, Epher, Jalon, Ezer, Menahem, Lecah, Ammon, Zoheth, etc., would never be suspected if inserted into a list of Book of Mormon names. The Book of Mormon does give the right type of Hebrew name.

What comes as a surprise is that a number of Book of Mormon names are possibly Hittite and some of them are undoubtedly so. Thus while Manti suggests Eg. Monti, Manti, Menedi, etc., it also recalls the Egyptian name of a Hittite city, Manda, and a characteristic element of Hurrian names -anti, -andi, likewise fairly common in the Book of Mormon. So likewise Kumai, Kumen-ani, Kish-kumen (Eg. -Hitt. Kumani, an important city), Scantum (Eg. -Hitt. Sandon, Sandas), Akish (Eg. -Hitt. Akish, a name of Cyprus), Gadianti (Eg. for Hitt. city: Cadyanda). Their Egyptian form shows that these names reached the people of Lehi not directly but through normal routes, though it has recently been noted that some of Lehi’s important contemporaries in Israel were Hittites, and that Hittite settlements and names still survived in the hill country of Judah at that time.

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Near East." Lehi's people, even apart from their mercantile activities, could not have avoided considerable contact with these people in Egypt and especially in Sidon, which Greek poets even in that day were celebrating as the great world center of trade. It is interesting to note in passing that Timothy is an Ionian name, since the Greeks in Palestine were Ionians (hence the Hebrew name for Greeks: "Sons of Javanim"), and—since "Lachon- eus" means "a Laconian"—that the oldest Greek traders were Laconians, who left colonies in Cyprus (Book of Mormon Akish) and of course traded with Palestine."

(To be continued)

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"Albright, loc. cit.

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"Though archaeological research goes back over a century in Palestine and Syria, it is only since 1920 that our material has become sufficiently extensive and clearly enough interpreted to be of really decisive value." Albright, op. cit., p. 37. We shall treat the chronological problem in our last article.

J. W. Jack, "The Lachish Letters, their Date and Import," PEFO 1938, p. 165

"In 1932 Mr. Kader returned to Palestine to get himself a wife. Though she has not, like her husband, traveled in the desert, Mrs. Kader's knowledge of the customs of Palestine is encyclopedic, and she has the uncanny memory of one who has never been handicapped with a knowledge of reading and writing.

"After they had failed in Jerusalem, Nephil's advice to his brethren was 'therefore let us go down to the land of our father's inheritance...'

(1 Ne. 3:16; 3:21.) And it came to pass that we went down to the land of our inheritance..." (1 Ne. 3:21.) And it came to pass that we went down to the land of our inheritance..."

"To go down" in the Book of Mormon means to travel away from Jerusalem (ibid., 4:33-35), while to go up to the land is to return to Jerusalem. (ibid., 5:9; 7:15.) Down and up have the same sense in Egyptian, ha meaning basically "to go down," but when applied to travel specifically "to go to Egypt." (A. Emmerich & H. Grapow, Wortenbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache, 1928, II. 472-4): so in the Old Testament one "goes down into Egypt." (Gen. 12:10); and "up to Jerusalem... up out of the land of Egypt." (I Kings 12:28).

So the Lachish letters, "Down went the commander to Egypt..."

H. Torczyner, The Lachish Letters (Oxford, by the Trustees of Sir Henry Wellcome, 1938) p. 51 (No. 3). The elevation of Jerusalem was well appreciated by the Jews, as was the lowness of Egypt, and this fact lies behind the use of these expressions, always correct in the Book of Mormon. On the other hand in the Book of Mormon one simply goes "unto" a house within the city (1 Ne. 3:4; 11), so that when the brother "went down to the land of our inheritance..." and after... went up again unto the house of Laban" (1 Ne. 3:22f), it is perfectly clear that their property included land as well as a house and necessarily lay outside the city, as the terms "down" and "up" attest.

A. Alt., "Die syrische Staatengeschichte vor..."

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The parallel development of an original Athens embracing many small communities is described by G. Busolt, Die Griechischen Staaten, Kriegszeiten u. Privataltertumer (Noerdingen, 1856). p. 106ff.

Nowack, op. cit. p. 300f.

"In PEQF 1938, pp. 175f.


"Albright, op. cit., for a recent summary of the international situation cir. 600 B.C.


"It is often maintained that there was no Egyptian Empire in Asia during the twelfth century . . . this entirely erroneous conception . . . is due exclusively to lack (Continued on following page)
Lehi in the Desert

(Continued from preceding page)


The exact nature and degree of Egyptian control in Palestine in the later period is a debated subject. The discussion is discussed in Greater History of Egypt, pp. 516, 518, 526, 529 ("Solomon was evidently an Egyptian vassal ..."), 580, and by A. C. Helck, Vorzeitige Geschichte III, 250, 256, 2571, 261, 292-293.

Hogarth, op. cit. I, 13-14; Egyptian cultural influence was most active from the tenth to the seventh centuries B.C.

"Egyptian civilization was one to be feared and admired," says Cook, CAH III, 257. "Even the Davidic state owed its administrative organization largely to Egyptian models ..." Albright, Archael. & Relig. of Is., p. 108; the same writer discussed the weakness of Egypt in the later period in Egypt's Early History, pp. 106-107. Negev, Jnl. Pal. Or. Soc. IV (1924) 1418.

But though the statement seems to apply to Syrians within Egypt, it illustrates the cultural contact and the cultural ascendancy of Egypt. H. Frankfort, "Egypt and Syria in the Intermediate Period," Jnl. Egypt. Archael. XII (1926), 96.

A. Moret, Hist. de l'Orient II, 787, citing his Fraga. des Maximes d'Ani.

Albright, op. cit. II:1, 132, this was under Amenophis III "the initiation of an attempt to assimilate the Syrians to the Egyptians through the education of the princely youth of the former as of the Nile," Hogarth, Jnl. Eng. Arch. I, 12.

"We shall deal with Wenasnom below," Albright, "King Joashin in Exile."


CAH III, 256.

Meyer, op. cit., I, 2, 156.

The only other source of great wealth in Israel would be money-changing or banking, or to engage in that Lehi would have had to live in the city itself which he avoided (above, p. 51).

Meyer, op. cit., I, 2, 297. The contact of the two languages produced the phenomenon which are the subject of W. F. Albright, The Vowel Sound of Egyptian Syllabic Orthography (New Haven, Am. Or. Soc., 1934).

Yahuda, Language of the Pentateuch, etc., is the only other source of great wealth in Israel would be money-changing or banking, or to engage in that Lehi would have had to live in the city itself which he avoided (above, p. 51).

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"The letters of Ahmose of Peniite," Int'l. Eng. Arch. XIX, 304, line 10. To the parent cited by me in The Improvement Era, 51 (Apr. 1948) p. 203, may be added the Pa-nepi of the Greek inscriptions, which represents an original Nisphi, with a movable "h" according to W. Spiegelberg, "The God Panepi," Jnl. Eng. Arch. XII (1926) p. 35. The other names in the list may be found in Rank, op. cit., J. Lieben, Dictionnaire de Noms Hieroglyphiques (Christiania, 1871), and scattered throughout the Journal of Egyptian Archaelogpy.

H. Torczyner, The Lachish Letters, p. 198. We are following the spelling used by Torczyner in his text rather than in his list.


E. A. Speiser, Introduction to Hurrian, in Annual of Am. Schools of Or. Research XX (1940), index. But J. C. Lieben, Schackelbarth, Ugarit-Meru, p. 143 finds the Anti name in the far north, and in Videnkabs-Selskabet Forhild. Aar 1910, No. 1 (Christiana, 1911) it shows that it means "insane." Other Egyptian-Hittite names may be found in Int'l. Eng. Arch. X, 108f. 113; XI, 20 (Cadyanda); XI; XVIII, 27-29, 43 (Sandon); 35, 38, 40 (Akish).

"The Hurrite names are all treated in articles in JEA: Manda and Kuma in S. Smith, Kizzuwatna X (1924), 133 and 108ff. resp.; Sandon and Akish in G. A. Wainwright, Keftiu XVII 27-29, 43, 35, 38, 40; Ladyanda is mentioned by La Mayer and J. Garstang, XI, 24.


"At Tel-el-Hesey, just west of Lachish, the Greek influence begins at 700, and continues to the top of the town." W. M. F. Petrie, in PEQ 900, 325; D. G. Hogarth, "Alexander in Egypt and some Consequences," Int'l. Eng. Arch. II (1923), 42f. Milne, op. cit., p. 108; Nelson Glueck, BASOR 80 (1940) p. 3; BASOR 81 (1941) 25-29.

Meyer, G.d.A. II:1, 553.

The Missionaries

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hunger, and homesickness for the things that make life for the rest of us stable and comfortable and secure. They cannot possibly know before starting forth just what temptations, difficulties, and hardships they will meet. Talking with returned missionaries can but give faint indication of what may be ahead; for one thing, conditions vary in different parts of the country and the world, and no two missions are alike. Circumstances vary with each missionary who sets forth; for another thing, certain conditions of living, certain rebuffs and frustrations are infinitely more trying and exhausting for some than for others. If a new missionary kneels in prayer at the sacrament meeting on Sunday with strain showing in his face and voice and drops of perspiration on his forehead, you may be sure there is an inner cry for strength going up that is desperate and real. If these sensitive boys can be made strong in the Lord their God, as they can be, they turn will be especially cognizant of the needs of others. Growth comes to these missionaries in hard and proving ways. Some may suffer from the rudeness, the bitterness, the lack of comprehension on the part of those they meet concerning the reasons they are either Latter-day Saints or on a mission, but I am convinced that greater pain comes from more insidious foes.

Most missionaries seem to come from families that have an unusually closely knit relationship. Separation from such a home, where sheltering love has encompassed them from birth, is not easy. Neither is the absence of the expression of close human affection to which they have been accustomed. It is all part of the security and happiness, along with music and books and dates and sports, that they have left behind them. At times the tug of everything represented by the word "home" is not easy to withstand. Then, too, there is a new discipline and a new arduousness to life. There is constant study, all along one line.

They learn, finally, what we all must learn—that there are many things that cannot be evaluated in definite terms, and that this is especially true in the matter of Christian influence; that where one sows another reaps is just as much a fact today as in the days of Paul. With some people God seems to work slowly—with others it is as if an instant miracle came to pass. With some, only a light veil seems to come between them and the truth of God. With others, it is as if...
PART II

THE compiler of this article was once greatly puzzled and perplexed over the complete absence of Baal names in the Book of Mormon. By what unfortunate oversight had the authors of that work failed to include a single name containing the element Baal, which thrives among the personal names of the Old Testament? Having discovered, as we thought, that the book was in error, we spared no criticism at the time, and indeed had its neglect of Baal names not been strikingly vindicated in recent years it would be a black mark against it. Now we learn that the Book of Mormon stubborn prejudice against Baal names is really the only correct attitude it could have taken, and this discovery, flying in the face of all our calculations and preconceptions, should in all fairness weigh at least as heavily in the book's favor as the supposed error did against it.

It just so happens that for some reason or other the Jews, at the beginning of the sixth century B.C., would have nothing to do with Baal names. An examination of Elephantine name lists shows that...the change of Baal names, by substitution, is in agreement with Hosea's foretelling that they should no more be used by the Israelites, and consequently it is most interesting to find how the latest archaeological discoveries confirm the Prophet, for out of some four hundred personal names among the Elephantine Papyri not one is compounded of Baal.......

Since Elephantine was settled largely by Jews who fled from Jerusalem after its destruction, their personal names should show the same tendencies as those in the Book of Mormon. Though the translator of the Book of Mormon might by the exercise of superhuman cunning have been warned by Hosea 2:17 to eschew Baal names, yet the meaning of that passage is so far from obvious that Albright as late as 1942 finds it...very significant that seals and inscriptions from Judah, which...are very numerous in the seventh and early sixth centuries, seem never to contain any Baal names."

It is very significant indeed, but hardly more so than the uncanny acumen which the Book of Mormon displays on this point.

Let us close our short digression on names with a quotation from Margoliouth. Speaking of the occurrence of a few Arabic names in the Old Testament, that authority observes, "Considering...that the recorded names are those of an infinitesimal fraction of the population, the coincidence is extraordinary device that is highly characteristic of Egyptian compositions." Typical is the famous Bremer-Rhind Papyrus, which opens with a colophon containing (1) the date, (2) the titles of Nasim, the author, (3) the names of his parents and a word in praise of their virtues, with special mention of his father's prophetic calling, (4) a curse against anyone who might "take away" the book, probably "due to fear lest a sacred book should get

There is ample evidence in the Book of Mormon that Lehi was an expert on caravans, as one would expect.

This consideration applies with multiple force to the very frequent coincidence of Book of Mormon names with non-Biblical Old World names.

There is much in Nephi's writing to show that, as he claims, he is writing in Egyptian—not merely in Egyptian characters, as some have maintained." When Nephi tells us that his record and that of his father are in the language of the Egyptians (not that the language of his father was the language of the Egyptians), we can be sure he means just that. And what could be more natural than that he should choose to record his message, addressed not only to the Jews but also to "all the house of Israel" (I Nephi 19:19) and all the Gentiles (Ibid., 13:39-40) in a world language rather than in his own tribal Hebrew? Did not later Jews adopt Greek, an international world language, in preference to Hebrew, even as a vehicle of holy writ, for the purpose of commanding the widest possible hearing not only among the Gentiles but also among the Jews themselves?

The first three verses of I Nephi, sharply set off from the rest of the text, are a typical colophon, a literary device that is highly characteristic of Egyptian compositions. "Typical is the famous Bremer-Rhind Papyrus, which opens with a colophon containing (1) the date, (2) the titles of Nasim, the author, (3) the names of his parents and a word in praise of their virtues, with special mention of his father's prophetic calling, (4) a curse against anyone who might "take away" the book, probably "due to fear lest a sacred book should get..."

Numbers refer to bibliography at end of article

THE IMPROVEMENT ERA
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Self was diligent in keeping this seboyet." It was the Egyptian, not the Hebrew gentleman who advertised his proficiency in the arts of the scribe." Thoroughly Egyptian also is Lehi’s didactic spirit and his habit of giving long formal addresses on moral and religious subjects “in the manner of the fathers” to his sons. Like a good Egyptian he wrote all this down, of course. The form of these discourses, with their set introductions and formal imagery might have come right out of an Egyptian schoolroom, though their content smacks more of the “learning of the Jews,” as Nephi himself observes. (Ibid., 1:2.) Both in form and content, however, the writings of the prophets and the wisdom of Israel are found to resemble the prophetic and “wisdom” literature of Egypt very closely,” so that we need not be surprised if Lehi’s prophecies do the same. At the end of the last century scholars were mystified to find that a demotic prophecy datable to the time of Bocchoris (718-712 B.C.), in which coming destructions were predicted with the promise of a Messiah to follow, was put into the mouth of “the Lamb” (pa hib).” Greek sources inform us that this prophecy enjoyed very great circulation in ancient times.” The strange wording of Lehi’s great prophecy, uttered by “the Lamb” (Ibid., 13:34, 41) is thus seen to be no anachronism, taken from Hellenistic or Christian times, as was once maintained.

Typical of the Egyptian prophets is one Neferroolu, whose prophecies, though of uncertain date, were credited with great antiquity. This man describes himself as a commoner, but withal a valiant man and “a wealthy man of great possessions,” and he is proud of his skill as a scribe. Like Lehi in other things, he recalls also that he brooded much “over what should come to pass in the land,” and having done so was moved to prophesy: “Up my heart, and bewail this land whence thou art sprung . . . . the land is utterly perished, and nought remains . . . the earth is fallen into misery for the sake of yon food of the Bedouins who pervade the land . . . .” Yet he looks forward to a savior-king who is to come.” The situation is not unique but is a characteristic one both in Egypt and Judah, and no one could deny that if Lehi was not a fact, he was at least a very authentic type. Nephi says his father was but one among many prophets in his own day.

LEHI AND THE ARABS

Lehi was very rich, and he was a trader, for his wealth was in the form of “all manner of precious things” such as had to be brought from many places. Very significant is the casual notice that he once had a vision in a desert place “as he went forth” (Ibid., 1:5): as he went he prayed, we are told, and as he prayed a vision came to him. The effect of the vision was to make him hasten back “to his own house at Jerusalem,” where he had yet greater visions, showing that it was not necessary for him to “go forth” either to pray or to have visions; he did not go forth expecting a vision, but one came to him in the course of a regular journey as he went about his business and forced him to change his plans. Lehi’s precious things and gold came to him in exchange for his wine, oil, figs, and honey (of which he seems to know a good deal), not only by sea (hence the great importance of Sidon) but necessarily by caravan as well. There is ample evidence in the Book of Mormon that Lehi was an expert on caravans, as one would expect. Consider a few general points before we introduce particulars.

Upon receiving a warning dream, Lehi is ready, apparently at a moment’s notice, to take his whole “family, and provisions, and tents” out into the wilderness. While he took absolutely nothing but the most necessary provisions with him (Ibid., 2:4), he knew exactly what those provisions should be, and

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when he has to send back to the city to supply unanticipated wants, it was for records that he sent and not for any necessities for the journey. This argues a high degree of preparation and knowledge in the man, as does the masterly way in which he established a base camp in order to gather his forces for the great trek, in the best accepted manner of modern explorers in Arabia. Up until Lehi leaves that base camp, that is, until the day when he receives the Liahona, he seems to know just where he is going and exactly what he is doing: there is here no talk of being "led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand ... " as in the case of Nephi in the dark streets of Jerusalem. (Ibid., 4:7.)

His family accuse Lehi of folly in leaving Jerusalem and do not spare his personal feelings in making fun of his dreams and visions, yet they never question his ability to lead them. They complain, like all Arabs, against the terrible and dangerous deserts through which they pass, but they do not include ignorance of the desert among their hazards, though that would be their first and last objection to his wild project were the old man nothing but a city Jew unacquainted with the wild and dangerous world of the waste places.

Lehi himself never mentions inexperience among his obstacles. Members of the family laugh contemptuously when Nephi proposes to build a ship (Ibid., 17:17-20) and might well have quoted the ancient proverb, "Show an Arab the sea and a man of Sidon the desert." But while they tell him he is "lacking in judgment" to build a ship, they never mock their brother as a hunter or a dude in the desert. The fact that he brought a fine steel bow with him from home and that he knew well how to use that difficult weapon shows that Nephi had hunted much in his short life.

Lehi has strong ties with the desert in his family background. Twenty-six hundred years ago the Jews felt themselves much closer to the people of the desert than they ever have since. They themselves were desert people originally, and they never forgot it; for them the desert was always just next door, and there was a constant going and coming between the two realms, especially in the days of great commercial activity. The Jews always felt a spiritual affinity with the nomad which they never felt towards the settled cultivators of Palestine.

We have often been told that the patriarchs were wandering Bedouins; their language was that of the desert people; many of whose words are to this day closer to Hebrew than to modern Arabic. Farthest out in the desert, came into most frequent contact with the Arabs, intermarried with them most frequently, and at the same time had the closest of traditional bonds with Egypt. And Lehi belonged to the tribe of Manasseh. (Alma 10:3.)

The prominence of the name of Ammon in the Book of Mormon may have something to do with the fact that Ammon was Manasseh's closest neighbor and often fought her in the deserts east of Jordan; at the same time a prehistoric connection with the Ammon of Egypt is not at all out of the question. The semi-nomadic nature of Manasseh might explain why Lehi seems out of touch with things in Jerusalem. For the first time he did discover from records kept in Laban's house that he was a direct descendant of Joseph. Why hadn't he known that all along? Nephi always speaks of "the Jews at Jerusalem" with a curious detachment, and no one in 1 Nephi ever refers to them as "the people" or "our people" but always quite impersonally as "the Jews." It is interesting in this connection that the Elephantine letters speak only of Jews and Aramaeans, never of Israelites, while Lachish Letter No. 6 denounced the prophet for spreading defection both in the country and in the city, showing that Lehi could have been active in either sphere. Even the remark that Lehi "dwelt at Jerusalem in all his days" would never have been made by or for people who had never lived anywhere else, and a dwelling "at Jerusalem" would be an aid rather than a hindrance to much travel.

Of recent years the tendency has been more and more to equate Hebrew and Arab, and Guillaume concludes the latest study on the subject with the dictum that the two words are really forms of the same name, both referring originally to "the sons of Eber." The name Arab is not meant to designate any particular race, tribe, or nation but a way of life: Arab means simply a man of the desert and was applied by the Jews to their own cousins who remained behind in the wilderness after they themselves had settled down in the city and country.

Now of all the tribes of Israel Manasseh was the one which lived

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language of his fathers—he cannot possibly be speaking of Hebrew. The necessary precautions to preserve Hebrew would naturally include possession of the scriptures, but these could be had anywhere in Judah and would not require the dangerous mission to Laban. The language of Lehi’s forefathers was a foreign language; and when the Book of Mormon tells us it was the language of the Egyptians, it means what it says.

Not only do both Nephi and Lehi show marked coolness on the subject of tribal loyalty, but both also protest that tribe counts for nothing, that the same blessings are available to all men at all times and in all parts of the world (Ibid., 10:17-22), that “the Lord esteemeth all flesh in one” (Ibid., 17:35), there being no such thing as an arbitrarily “chosen” people. (Ibid., 17:37-40.) This is in marked contrast to the fierce chauvinism of the Jews at Jerusalem and is of a piece with Lehi’s pronounced cosmopolitanism in other things. Lehi, like Moses and his own ancestor, Joseph, was a man of three cultures, being educated not only in “the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians,” but in the ways of the desert as well. This three-cornered culture is an established pattern in that part of the world where the caravans of Egypt and Israel pass each other, guided through the sands by those men of the desert who were the immemorial go-between of the two civilizations. Without the sympathetic cooperation of the Arabs any passage through their deserts was a terrible risk when not out of the question, and the good businessman was the one who knew how to deal with the Arabs—which meant to be one of them.

The proverbial ancestor of the Arabs is Ishmael. His is one of the few Old Testament names which is also at home in ancient Arabia. His traditional homeland was the Tih, the desert between Palestine and Egypt, and his people were haunters of the “borders” between the desert and the sown. He was regarded as the legitimate offspring of Abraham by an Egyptian

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(Continued from preceding page) mother.” His was not a name of good omen, for the angel had promised his mother, “... he will be a wild man, his hand will be against everyone, and every man’s hand against him...” so the chances are that one who bore his name had good family reasons for doing it, and in Lehi’s friend Ishmael we surely have a man of the desert. Lehi, faced with the prospect of a long journey in the wilderness, sent back for Ishmael, who promptly followed into the desert with a large party; this means that he must have been hardly less adept at moving about than Lehi himself. The interesting thing is that Nephi takes Ishmael (unlike Zoram) completely for granted, never explaining who he is or how he gets into the picture—the act of sending for him seems to be the most natural thing in the world, as does the marriage of his daughters with Lehi’s sons. Since it has ever been the custom among the desert people for a man to marry the daughter of his paternal uncle (bint ’ammi), it is hard to avoid the impression that Lehi and Ishmael were related.

There is a remarkable association between the names of Lehi and Ishmael which ties them both to the southern desert, where the legendary birthplace and central shrine of Ishmael was at a place called Beer Lehai-ro’i.15 Wellhausen rendered the name “spring of the wild-ox (? ) jaw-bone,” but Paul Haupt showed that Lehi (for so he reads the name) does not mean “jawbone” but “cheek,”16 which leaves the meaning of the strange compound still unclear. One thing is certain, however: that Lehi is a personal name. Until recently this name was entirely unknown, but now it has turned up at Elath and elsewhere in the south in a form which has been identified by Nelson Glueck with the name Lahai which “occurs quite frequently either as a part of a compound, or as a separate name of deity or person, particularly in Minaean, Thamudic, and Arabic texts.”17 There is a Beit Lahai, “House of Lehi” among the ancient place-names of the Arab country around Gaza, but the meaning of the name has here been lost.18 If the least be said for it, the name Lehi is thoroughly at home among the people of the desert and, so far as we know, nowhere else. The name of Lemuel is not a conventional Hebrew one, for it occurs only in one chapter of the Old Testament (Proverbs 31:1, 4), where it is commonly supposed to be a rather mysterious poetic substitute for Solomon. It is, however, like Lehi, at home in the south desert, where an Edomite text from “a place occupied by tribes descended from Ishmael” bears the title, “The Words of Lemuel, King

THIS DAY—

With Its Problems and Promise

BY RICHARD L. EVANS

SOME nineteen centuries or so ago there walked among men one Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, the Son of God, the Prince of Peace. His fortunes varied from being acclaimed King to being condemned to death. Even the sick whom he healed did not always pause to give gratitude. And in his time of greatest need he could not even count on those who but a few days before had strewed his path with palms. The principles he proclaimed were not popular with the prevailing powers of his time and were not well understood by the people. And because his precepts and principles apparently have not prevailed, men have sometimes become cynical, have sometimes despaired, have sometimes lost hope and faith in the future. But let no man lose faith in the future: The spirit of this day is proof of what life could be like when his precepts are put even into partial practice. And the spirit of many darker days is proof of the price we pay for departing from his principles. But even though men have made many mistakes in the use of their God-given freedom, the promising part of the picture is this: not that so many men forsake these principles—but that the principles themselves persist—that they are here and await only a time when men shall turn to them. If there were no plan, no pattern, no purpose, if there were no all-prevailing Providence, no way provided for the solution of the problems, the depth of despair would be unbounded; but the fact is that there is an answer, that there is a pattern for peace, that there is an all-prevailing purpose, and that there is sound reason for an unfailing faith in the future—in the gospel of the Prince of Peace, which is here, and ever ready for us to turn to whenever men shall have learned their lessons. And now soon again, after this day and tomorrow, we shall go back to our pressing problems, back to the pressure of the daily pursuits that make more and ever more demands upon our patience. And as we do, we could well determine to take with us the spirit of this day, which lights the eyes of children and puts laughter on their lips and mellows the hearts of men. In the words of Dickens: “Nearer and dearer to our hearts be the Christmas spirit... God bless us, everyone.”

“The Spoken Word” FROM TEMPLE
SQUARE PRESENTED OVER COLUMBIA BROADCASTING SYSTEM. DECEMBER 25, 1949

THE IMPROVEMENT ERA
of Massa." These people, though speaking a language that was almost Arabic, were yet well within the sphere of Jewish religion, for "we have nowhere any evidence that the Edomites used any other name for their God than Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews.

The only example of the name of Laman to be found anywhere outside of the writer's knowledge is its attribution to an ancient Mukan or sacred place, in Palestine. Most of these Mukams are of unknown, and many of them of prehistoric date. In Israel only the tribe of Manasseh built them. It is a striking coincidence that Conder saw in the name Leuman, as he renders it (the vowels must be supplied by guesswork), a possible corruption of the name Lemuel, thus bringing these two names, so closely associated in the Book of Mormon, into the most intimate relationship, and that in the one instance in which the name of Laman appears. Far more popular among the Arabs as among the Nephites was the name Alma, which can mean a coat of mail, a mountain, or a sign.

It should be noted here that archaeology has fully demonstrated that the Israelites, then as now, had not the slightest aversion to giving their children non-Jewish names, even when those names smacked of a pagan background. One might, in a speculative mood, even detect something of Lehi's personal history in the names he gave to his sons. The first two have Arabic names—do they recall his early days in the caravan trade? The second two have Egyptian names, and indeed they were born in the days of his prosperity. The last two, born amid tribulations in the desert, were called with fitting humility, Jacob and Joseph. Whether the names of the first four were meant, as those of the last two sons certainly were (II Nephi 2:1, 3:1), to call to mind the circumstances under which they were born, the names are certainly a striking indication of their triple heritage.

(To be continued)

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


[4] The Persians in Egypt wrote Aramaic because Egyptian script was too clumsy and hard to learn, according to Th. Noebleke, Die Semitischen Sprachen (1909) p. 34, yet we are asked to believe that the Jews reversed the process and learned the awkward Egyptian script just as they could use it to write their native Hebrew in a little more space. It is unthinkable that they should have shelved their sacred and highly practical script (Torah, Lachish Letters, p. 15) to sweat out one or two systems of writing ever devised simply to save space—and that at the great risk of being misunderstood on every line. The main objection to the theory, however, is that one can't write Hebrew in Egyptian characters. Any script to compete with Hebrew in economy would have to be a shorthand. We know that the demotic Egyptian of Leman's time was almost that, and we also know that shorthand is short by virtue of being very closely adapted to the peculiar sound combinations of a particular language, i.e., it is the most highly idiomatically form of written and as such cannot be transferred from one language to another without losing its economy. Hebrew can be written in Egyptian characters, as Gemarian and Roman can, but writing it not economical, to say the least. Leman... and had taught the language of the Egyptians while he was still living in Palestine; and for what would he have used Egyptian in the desert? Not for writing Hebrew, certainly, but for writing the only language to which that script is adapted—Egyptian. That the prehistoric Semitic alphabet was derived from Egyptian characters has of course no bearing on the case—in the time our own English alphabet has the same origin, but that does not make it Egyptian.

[5] Granted that he knew his writing would have to be translated for both Jew and Gentile (this would not have been written in Hebrew!), the Nephite (Mormon 8:35), thinks of himself as actually addressing his unseen future readers. The natural thing in such a case is to condense as nearly as possible to the situation that one is illustrating. For Nephi the situation calls for Egyptians. And he wrote in Hebrew, the gift and power of God would not have been necessary for the translation of his work, which would have required at most a knowledge of Hebrew and a chart of but twenty-two symbols, which could easily have been reconstructed from the text. More than twenty-two symbols brings up the shorthand problem.


[11] The Teaching of Amenophis is addressed. "For his son, the youngest of his children, little compared to his relations..." follows a long passage presenting a number of surprising parallels to the Book of Proverbs (p. 282). It is remarkable to Ps. I, the righteous man being compared to a "tree growing in a plot" (Ps. 1:3) its fruit is sweeter its shade is pleasant). Compare this to II Ne. 2 and 3. Lehi's description of fruit as "white" (I Ne. 8:11) is a typical Egyptianism (A. Erman & H. Grapow, Woerterb. d. alt. Sprache III, 206ff.


[16] The danger of preparing for an expedition in the city is obvious, since the city turns around leads to dangerous questions and may have far-reaching effects, see Bertora Thomas, Aswan Papyrus (N.Y., Scribner's, 1952), p. 36, with the account of preparations and activities at the "bear camp" pp. 121-240, H. St. J., B. Phily, The Empty Quarter (New York, Harry Holt, 1955), pp. 9-13.


[19] To this day there are farmers in Palestine who spend much of their time digging in the desert; our friend Mose Kader was of this class, see G. E. Keel, "The Nergal, or Southern Desert and Palestine," PEQ 1944, p. 65. On the other hand, Lord Kitchener (PEQ 1884, p. 206) noticed tent-dwellers who were "playing hide-and-seek on the land around Gaza." Of the Moabite Arabic Doughboy writes (Trials in Arabia Deserta, 1935.

(Continued on following page)
LEHI IN THE DESERT

("Continued from preceding page")

I, 276): "Their harvest up, they strike the hammers of tents, and with their cattle go forth to wander as nomads." Karl Rauam, Drinkers of the Wind (H.N. Creative Age Press, 1944) describes at length the easy coming and going between desert and city, rich Arabs of the towns often going out to spend a season or a few hours on the sands.


Biblio 31 (1912) 63. This is not to say that the patriarchs were "primitive," for ... we are learning to think of the immigrants as nomads in the sense of being a group of families living on the move."

[A], Guillaum, "The Habita, the Hebrews, and the Arab "speak" PEQR 1946, 65ff. 67: "I do not think that there is much doubt that the Hebrews were not speaking the languages of the region they were in."

"P. Baldehneperger, in PEQG 1923, p. 176. As recently as 2000 B.C., Hebrew and Arabic had not yet emerged from "what was substantially a common language, understood from the Indian Ocean to the Taurus and from the Zagros to the frontier of Egypt. This common language (excluding Akkadian) was as homogeneous as was Arabic a thousand years ago." W. F. Albright, Recent Progress in North Canaanite Research. BASOR 70 (1938) p. 21. The curious and persistent homogeneity of culture and language among the desert people of the Near East has often excited comment, e.g., Malgoshop, op. cit. p. 5; Philby, The Empty Quarter, p. 652; Noedke, Semit. Sprachen, op. cit. pp. 52, 57; Meyer, Israeliten, p. 305, 307; Malgoshop even notes (op. cit. p. 8) that "A Sabaean (south Arabia) would have found little to puzzle him in the first verse of Genesis." 

NOVEMBER MISSIONARIES

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November 7, and departing November 16, 1949


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Ninth row: Carlos E. McCombs, Goll S. Young, Golden J. Woffle, A. Aaron Kunz, Gerald N. Atkinson, John H. Wilson, Gene Clegg, Leda P. Chadwick, Fredric Kirkman, Joel R. Mallon.


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Reading from left to right, first row: I7s Nelson, Arthur W. Reynolds, Robert Kent Richardson, Ted B. Secrit, Verda Escher, Dan B. Colton, director; Norma McKee, Dorothy Hunter, Anna Darlene Price, Lilo Carol Brimley, Fay Elizabeth Coombs, Norma Fae Lundberg, Barbara Anderson, Nancy Barker, Marion Cherrington, Thomas A. Williams, Elmo Calapp, Elizabeth Wagoner, Dorothy Cathell, Grace Johnson.

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Fourteenth row: Lyle H. Robinson, John D. Lenkendorfer, Jimmie Hughes.


"A man has an exclusive right to the land in his possesstion; he is not obliged to marry her, but she cannot without his consent, become the wife of another person." Burckhardt, Notes 1, 113. The fact that there was no obstacle to the group marriage of Lehi's sons with Ishmael's daughters may almost be taken as proof that the young people were cousins.

Meyer, op. cit., p. 322f.

"We, Haupt, "Heb. Lehi, chief, and lo'-aw, jaw," J. Jer. Lit. XXXIII (1914) 290-5.

N. Glueck, "Ostarea from Elath," BASOR 80 (1950) 5-6, 8f. 2.


B. R. Conder, in same vol., see above, n. 97, p. 272.

Jews of Wate Palestine., Name Lists, pp. 60, 17, 66.

LEHI IN THE DESERT

By
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The third of an enlightening series of articles on the Book of Mormon

PART III
THE PROBLEM

Lehi possesses in a high degree the traits and characteristics of the model sheikh of the desert. He is generous, noble, impulsive, fervent, devout, and visionary, and he possesses a wonderful capacity for eloquence and dreams. As to the dreams, when the Arabs wander, they feel they must be guided by dreams, and their sheikhs are often gifted dreamers. The substance of Lehi’s dreams is highly significant, since men’s dreams necessarily represent, even when inspired, the things they see by day, albeit in strange and wonderful combinations. It is common for men in every age, for example, to dream of ships, but a man in Lehi’s day must dream of particular kinds of ships, and no others will do.

In his dreams Lehi finds himself wandering “in a dark and dreary waste,” a “dark and dreary wilderness,” where he must travel “for the space of many hours in darkness,” lost and helpless. (I Nephi 8:4-8.) Of all the images that haunt the early Arab poets this is by all odds the commonest; it is the standard nightmare of the Arab; and it is the supreme boast of every poet that he has traveled long distances through dark and dreary wastes all alone. Invariably darkness is given as the main source of terror (the heat and glare of the day, though nearly always mentioned, are given second place), and the culminating horror is almost always a “mist of darkness,” a depressing mixture of dust, and clammy fog, which, added to the night, completes the confusion of any who wander in the waste.

Quite contrary to what one would expect, these dank mists are described by travelers in all parts of Arabia, and al-‘Ajjajja, one of the greatest of early desert poets, tells how a “mist of darkness” makes it impossible for him to continue a journey to Damascus. In its nature and effect Lehi’s “mist of darkness” (Ibid., 8:23) conforms to this strange phenomenon most exactly.

When Lehi dreams of the vanity of the world, he sees “a great and spacious building,” suspended in the air out of reach and full of smart and finely dressed people. (Ibid., 12:18, 8:26.) That is exactly how the Bedouin of the desert, to whom the great stone houses of the city are an abomination, pictures the wicked world; and as the city Arabs still mock their desert cousins (whom they secretly envy) with every show of open contempt, so the well-dressed people in the big house were in the attitude of mocking and pointing their fingers at the poor little band of bedraggled wanderers, hungrily eating fruit from a tree, and dully abashed that their poverty should be put to open shame. It is interesting that Joseph Smith, Sr., had almost the same dream, according to his wife, who took comfort in comparing the wanderings of her own family with different settings of the two: when the prophet’s father dreamed himself lost in “this field of the world,” he “could see nothing save dead, fallen timber,” a picture which of course faithfully recalls his own frontier background. When Dante, another westerner, sees himself lost in the midst of life’s journey (one of the commonest and oldest of dreams, we repeat—a very classic among dreams) he is wandering through a dense, dark forest, the forests of his native Tuscany.

In a pleasanter vein Lehi sees “a large and spacious field,” as if it had been a world (Ibid., 8:20), just as the Arab poet describes the world as a maidan, or large and spacious field. When he dreams of a river, it is a true desert river, a clear stream a few yards wide with its source but a hundred paces away (Ibid., 8:14), or else a ragging muddy wash, a silt of “filthy water” that sweeps people away to their destruction (Ibid., 8:32, 12:16, 15:27); such are the two and only types of “river” (for he calls them rivers) known to the desert Arab.

When Lehi dreams of people gone astray, they are lost in a trackless waste, “wandering in strange roads” (Ibid., 8:23, 32) or blundering “into broad roads, and they perish and are lost” (Ibid., 12:17) because of the “mist of darkness.” Losing one’s way is of course the fate that haunts every desert
dwellers sleeping and waking, and the Arab poets are full of the terror of "strange roads" and "broad ways." To symbolize what is utterly inaccessibile, Lehi is shown "a great and terrible gulf." (Ibid., 12:18) "an awful gulf" (Ibid., 15:28), a tremendous chasm with one's objective (the tree of life) maddeningly visible on the other side; all who have traveled in the desert know the feeling of utter helplessness and frustration at finding one's way suddenly cut off by single short poem the terror, the loneliness, the long journey, the mist of darkness (sultry and thick), the "awful gulf," the broad ways, and the paths that stray." The Book of Mormon, in giving us not a few such clear and vivid snapshots (there are many more to come) of life in another world, furnishes picturesque but convincing proof of its own authenticity. Nephi's complaint, "they sought to take away my life, that they might leave me in the wilderness and correct procedure when Arabs quarrel, and for all its popularity with the poets, no mere figure of speech."

The powerful speech by which alone Lehi kept his rebellious sons in line is a gift demanded of every real sheik in the desert, and, indeed against the proud and touchy tribesmen that is the only weapon the sheikh possesses. When the men assemble in the chief's tent to take counsel together (cf. Ibid., 15:12), the leader "addresses the whole assembly in a succession of wise counsels intermingled with opportune proverbs," exactly in the manner of Lehi: "people of any other country hearing them speak," says our informant, "would simply suppose them filled with a supernatural gift." "Poetical exclamations . . . rise all around me," Burton reports, "showing how deeply tinged with imagination becomes the language of the Arab under the influence of strong passion or religious enthusiasm . . . " If Lehi's language sounds strangely exclamatory and high-flown to us, it is because he is not a westerner, he himself explaining that the figurative language he uses is of ancient pattern, "by the Spirit of the Lord which was in our fathers." (Ibid., 15:12.)

When the Lord has a task to be done, he picks a man who is most suited for the work by temperament and training. When Moses fled into Midian, he traveled afoot in the very deserts through which he was later to lead the children of Israel, and he lived and married among the people of the desert in whose way of life he was to instruct his own people. Lehi was no less prepared and qualified for his great task: richly endowed with means and experience, at home on the march, firm, resourceful, cautious, and unhurried, independent, and not to be intimidated (Ibid., 1:18-20, 2:1-4), yet never provoking though he was sorely provoked, he exemplified what Philby has declared in a moving passage—that only the greatest strength of character in a leader can carry a party safely through a dangerous desert:

For many days now I had endured the constant and inevitable friction of my own fixed and unalterable purpose and the solid weight of the innate national

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LEHI IN THE DESERT

had had business connections in Egypt; living with the desert people, Sinuhe himself in time became a famous sheikh. This story, thirteen hundred years earlier than Lehi's day, illustrates that coming and going between the desert and the city which from the first offered obvious commercial and political advantages. As to the flight motif, had not Moses and the prophets and Father Abraham himself sought safety from their enemies by flight into the desert? Most significant is the behavior of those very Jews who had driven Lehi from the land, for when the city was finally besieged, the Jewish leaders, "the chiefs of the army... hid in the wilds during the siege," and after all was lost, they fled to Egypt. Hiding in the wilds" was exactly what Lehi was doing.

The desert to which Sinuhe fled was the country south of Palestine, the classic hide-out land both of Egyptians and Jews, where "men of all conditions and nations... look to the Arab camp as a safe retreat and refuge." While the Syrian desert is "the unenvied resort of defeated tribes," the proper paradise of the outcast was ever Edom and the south country, "the land of disoriented groups and of individual fugitives, where organized semi-nomad Arab tribes alternate with the flotsam and jetsam of sedentary society, with runaway slaves, bandits, and their descendants..." Even the great merchants who brought forth the civilized Nabataean state placed their confidence, says Diodorus, in their ability to disappear quickly and easily into the desert—like any common Bedouin. So Lehi is not the first big merchant to take to the back-country with his worried family. Even in the present century Arab farmers and town-dwellers, to flee excursions of a tyrannical Turkish government, fled to the desert and adopted the life of wandering Bedouins. At this very moment thousands of fellahin, raised to a life of farming, are starving in the Syrian desert as the result of hasty and ill-advised flight from their homes. As far as Lehi's flight into the wilderness is concerned, the Book of Mormon shows flawless judgment in every detail: the manner of his flight is strictly in keeping with the best conventions, and he takes what we know now was the only possible direction he could have taken.

We have mentioned that "the Jews at Jerusalem" who finally got away when the city fell ended up in Egypt. Many of them settled far up the Nile, at Elephantine or Yeb. It is in that region that we located, in a previous article in the ERA, "The Book of Mormon as a Mirror of the East," April 1948, p. 202) some important Book of Mormon names, not realizing at the time that those names belonged to the descendants of Lehi's own contemporaries. The famous colony has been described as "but an eccentric deviation from the broad pathway of Hebrew history: it led nowhere, and had no influence on the development even of Egyptian Judaism." In such words we might describe Lehi's own migration—an eccentric deviation breaking off completely from the main current of Jewish history, but, like the Elephantine settlement, preserving its own peculiar version of transplanted Judaism intact. The story of Elephantine, that scholars were at first most reluctant to believe, confirms the possibility of just such an emigration as Lehi's.

As to the direction taken by Lehi's party there can be no doubt: for many days they traveled south-southeast and finally struck out due east over a particularly terrible desert and reached the sea. Nephi is careful to keep us informed of the main bearing of every stage of the journey, and never once does he mention a westerly or a northerly trend. The party traveled for eight years in but two main directions, without retracing their steps or doubling back, and many of their marches were long, forced marches. This entirely excludes the Sinaic Peninsula as the scene of their wanderings, and fits perfectly with a journey through the Arabian Peninsula. The slowest possible march "in a south-southeasterly direction" in Sinai would reach the sea and have to turn north within ten days; yet Lehi's people traveled "for many days," nay, months, in a south-southeasterly

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direction keeping near the coast of the Red Sea all the while. Ten
days take a foot traveler the entire
length of that coast of Sinai which
runs in a south-southeasterly direc-
tion—and what of the rest of the
eight years?
What entirely excludes Sinai as
the field of Lehi’s journeyings is the
total lack at all times of timber to
build ships with, to say nothing of
a lush and beautiful Land Bountiful.
Thus the great Solomon had to
bring all his timber by land from
Palestine to the Red Sea because
there was no wood on the Red Sea
with which he might build ships.
Lehi was faced with the same prob-
lem and had to travel for eight years
before he reached the lovely for-
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On Knowing

THE FUTURE

BY RICHARD L. EVANS

People sometimes ask impatiently: “Why can’t we know
more about the future?” “Why shouldn’t we know
the future?” One part of a possible answer to this
problem, so far as our individual acts are concerned, is
that oftentimes we can’t know more about the future because
oftentimes the pattern of the future isn’t yet fixed. By this
we mean that many things that will happen in the future
will depend upon what we do and upon what others do,
and since in the use of our free agency we and other
men have left many decisions unmade concerning future
matters, the results that are to follow those decisions
may not now be known. Another reason, and an all-
sufficient one for many, is that it is part of the plan and
purpose of Providence that we should not in most in-
stances know what the future will bring in detail in our
own individual lives. For those who would like further
answer, suppose we ask ourselves what life would be
like if we did know everything that was going to happen
to us. Actually a detailed foreknowledge of trials and
tragedies to come might well destroy much of the happi-
ess that is. Also in knowing the future, there would be
less of the joy of discovery and less of the growth that
comes with faith and effort. Imagine the monotony of
a life in which each hour, each day, each year, everyone
knew everything he was going to do, everything that was
going to happen—nothing of the unexpected, nothing
of the unforeseen, no pleasant surprises, no unlooked-for
joys, no merciful concealing of sorrows. This, of course,
is carrying speculation to absurdity, but it does invite
attention to the wisdom of things as they are. And even
if there were some means of acquiring a detailed knowl-
dge of the events to come in our own lives, it still
wouldn’t bring us happiness. We must learn to live by
faith from day to day, shaping the future as best we can
with every earnest effort, and trusting the mercy and
the wisdom and justice of God as the future unfolds be-
fore us.

“The Spoken Word,” FROM TEMPLE SQUARE
PRESENTED OVER KSL AND THE COLUMBIA BROAD-
CASTING SYSTEM, JANUARY 15, 1950

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ests of the south Arabian coasts. The desert into which Lehi first retreated and in which he made his first long camp has been known since Old Testament times as the wilderness par excellence. Thanks to the Bible, it is this very section of the earth's surface to which the word wilderness most closely applies, so that Nephi is using the word in its fullest correctness.\textsuperscript{m} From 1 Nephi 8:4 and 7, we learn that by wilderness he means waste, i.e. desert, and not jungle. Today we call the region a desert, yet Woolley and Lawrence preferred

(Continued on following page)

"I READ IT in a Book"

BY RICHARD L. EVANS

In defending a statement that is questioned or challenged, not infrequently someone will say: "I read it in a book" (as if this were a final and unanswerable defense). But the books of men are no more infallible than are men. An error is an error—even in a book! It is true that print tends to give weight to what is printed. And if we have seen it in print, it leaves its impression upon us, and many will choose to believe it, no matter who wrote it, or when, or why. But much that is printed contradicts much else that is printed, and it therefore follows that much of what is written and read must be wrong: If, for example, we were to turn to a textbook of a generation ago, we would be astounded at how much was then proclaimed in print has since been set aside. And what reason have we to suppose that much of what we conclude today will not likewise seem absurd to those who follow in fifty years—or even in five? It doesn't seem likely that we shall be the exception—either in literature or in life. But even when an irresponsible person writes, if his words appear in print, they will almost certainly impress some people. A lie from the lips of a man may travel far and fast—but it may be forgotten when breath fails or memory fades. But a printed lie enjoys a kind of infamous immortality. It lives on the page long after those who penned it have passed. But fortunately we are not obliged to believe everything we read, any more than we are obliged to believe everything we hear. Man-made theories and "authorities" come and go, and so-called "final" findings have so often proved to be anything but "final." We should certainly read and seek knowledge out of the best books and be ever grateful for the blessed companionship of good books and for all the truth and beauty that have been preserved in print; but where controversial considerations are concerned, we can well afford to wait and watch, not being too hasty in assuming so-called "final" conclusions, for the books of men are no more infallible than men. What is written is written—but if what is written is not true, writing it or saying it doesn't make it so.

"The Spoken Word" FROM TEMPLE SQUARE PRESENTED OVER KSL AND THE COLUMBIA BROADCASTING SYSTEM, JANUARY 22, 1950

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Lehi in the Desert

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the older word to designate this particular desert—the Wilderness of Zin. "The term 'wilderness' does not necessarily mean an uninhabitable waste," wrote Kenyon (thus associating the two words as Nephite does), "rather it means a country such as nomads may inhabit, with oases and wadis where crops may be raised."42 So Lehi's wilderness had "more fertile parts" in which survival was possible. (Ibid., 16:16.) The particular waste in which Lehi made his first camp is among the most uninviting deserts on earth; though some observers think the area enjoyed a little more rainfall in antiquity than it does today, all are agreed that the change of climate has not been considerable since prehistoric times—it was at best almost as bad then as it is now.43 Even if Lehi took the main southern route down the Arabah, as he very probably did, since it was the direct road to the Red Sea, and a caravan way known to all the merchants, he would be moving through a desert so repelling that even the hardened Bedouins avoid it like the plague. Nor need we look there for any monuments of his passing: "The Egyptians, the Patriarchs, the Jews, the Romans, the Crusaders, and the Arabs all passed over these tracks, and they have given us place-names and no more. Probably in their eyes the country was too detestable to merit further reference... ."44 Detestable certainly describes the place in the eyes of Lehi's people, who "murmured" bitterly at being led into such a hell.

(To be continued)

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43Thus from the Mu'allaqat: Tazahah lines 34, 40-41; La'mil Quis 46-49; Astarah 25-26; Labid 40-45; W. Ahlwardt, Sammlungen alter arabischer Dichter (Berlin, 1903), II, Nos. 1-2, 8-20, 58-60, xiv, 1-5, xiv, 24-26; xv 40-49, xxii, 1-9, xxvi, 30-37, xxx, 9-11; xx, 51-69; xlii, 19-21. Other poets are cited in Bockelmann, Gesch, der arab. Lit., pp. 10, 164, 19, 20, 21, 22, 54, 92.
44The entire section on "Travel" in the Hamahat of Abu Tamman (Calcutta, 1856) 206-9, is taken up with the exhaustion and terror of travel in the dark. The mist of darkness is mentioned in nearly all the passages given in our preceding footnote. 45During November, December, and March, there are often dense mists. These mists depend upon the wind, and often alternate with intense droughts," Sir Ch. Warren, "Notes on . . . the Country lying between Egypt and Palestine," PEQ 1887, p. 44. At the opposite end of Arabia, Philby, The Empty Quarter, p. 96 reports "a thick mist descended upon the ground and blotted out the landscape after sunset." Id., p. 134. "Next morning the air was cold and clammy. Everything was

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grinded with sand and the sea was fleecy in the extreme," p. 183; "A light, chilly northern breeze gently fanned a thick damp mist...."

0 A-Ahijah, in Ahlwardt, op. cit. II, No. 1.
0 Arabesque homes of stone and clay: T. Canaan, in Jnl.Pale.Ori.Soc. 13, p. 37; Jacob "was honest and dwelt in a tent." A. Jeremias. Das Alte Testament im Lichte des Alten Orients (Leipzig, 1916) p. 316. One is reminded by Lehi's imagery of the great stone houses of the ancient Arabs, visible skyscrapers, with the windows beginning fifty feet from the ground, so that those who would certainly give the effect of being suspended above the earth.

0 Lucy Mack Smith, History of Joseph Smith (Ed. Preston N. Nibley, Stevens & Walls, Salt Lake City, 1945) pp. 47-50. These dreams must be considered only the most general aspects, since Mother Smith is here at an advanced age recalling purely from memory the dream of another person reported to her thirty-four years before (see Introduction p. Ix and Jz) moreover her constant and devout reading of the Book of Mormon, with whose characters she liked to identify her own people (Ivi, p. 196) may well have influenced her memory after so many years. But certainly the fallen timber is a striking image which may well have been part of the original dream.


0 The Arabic Maysal, Maysal, Musall, or Musul, is ... a hill water-course, which rolls, a torrent during and after rain, and is either partially or wholly dry at other seasons—the stream flowing slowly underground. In England we want that feature, and therefore there is no single word to express it. Our "river" is an imperfect way of rendering the idea. Sir Richard Burton, Pilgrimage to Al Madinah & Meccah (London, 1855), I, 250 n. 2. However inadequate our word "river," it is the only one available in the language; hence its use in the Book of Mormon.

0 E. H. Boeckler, in Ahlwardt, H. Noii; Th. Nordliec, Veteran Carthum Arachocum (Berlin, 1890), p. 111; the last verse of the First Psalm is another example.

0 The eastern wall of the Arabah, down which the southern trade-road ran, is interrupted frequently by such abrupt gorges,..."—...hilly drearily, huge, projecting bastions, and moats full of deep shade," says Burton (op. cit. I, 207) describing its southern extension. A famous Egyptian tomb text of the Ramessid period ("The Travels of an Egyptian") comments with wonder on the broken terrain and the great heights and depths that the traveler encounters in Palestine.

0 Ahlwardt, op. cit. III, No. 1.

0 Nordliec, op. cit. p. 95; Brockelman, op. cit. pp. 19, 21; Aitjah, 1.6, n. 107.

0 Thus E. H. Boeckler, op. cit. 107, cited by Brockelman, op. cit. pp. 6-7. In the Beni Hirz epic the first requirement of every leader in skilled and inspiring speech.


0 Burton, op. cit. I, 280.

0 W. J. Physicos-Adams, "The Mount of God," PEFQ 1930, 1934; Caiger, Bible and Spade, p. 5.

0 Philby, The Empty Quarter, p. 216.


0 P. Baldensperger, "Arab Life," PEFQ 1922, 170f.


0 Diodorus, Hist. Lib. XIX, 94-100, cf. Jerem. XLIV, 16:10, noting the great freedom of movement of the wealthy nation.


0 As this date it is plain that all other routes of escape would be closed; the intimate danger would be of course, from the north. see J. L. Myer, "The God and the Danger from the North in Ezekiel" PEFQ 1932, 218f. While the south desert remained open to the end, some Jewish settlements there actually "appear to have escaped destruction": Albright, in The Bibl. Archaeologist IX (1946), p. 67.

0 Albright, op. cit. p. 51.

0 The Improvement Era 51 (April 1948), 192f.

0 Caiger, Bible and Spade, p. 188.

0 See below, notes 150-152.

0 They were still near the Red Sea when their boat was cut, which could hardly have happened within a year of their departure from Jerusalem: see below, n. 12.

0 Significant is Margoliouth's suggestion (Relations, p. 47), that when Jeremiah (Lehi's contemporary) "speaks of them as dwelling in the wilderness, that word may be

in cleared space of same skilet; fry lightly.

(Continued on following page)
Lehi In The Deseret

(Continued from preceding page)

a general designation for the (Arabian) peninsula of which so large a portion is arid and unproductive. If this is so, Nephite’s “wilderness” is definitely the Arabian Peninsula.

A great deal has been written on this subject. We shall content ourselves with a single observation from Woolley and Lawrence, op. cit. p. 36:

“All our evidence points to the antiquity of present conditions. . . . It is, we think, both natural and correct to assume that at all periods in man’s history the southern desert has been very much the desert that it is today.”

Mission To Polynesia

(Continued from page 180)

was soon called, and, when she came in, she stood and eyed me with a very suspicious look. When one of her sisters tried to force her to me to shake hands, saying, “That is Pa,” she jerked her hand away saying, “It is not,” and left the room. Their mother soon came in. She looked quite natural and quite as young as when I left home, being more fleshy now than then. At Winter Quarters she, with the rest of the family, all but the youngest, suffered under severe fits of sickness, and the scurvy deprived her of her upper teeth, and when she talked her voice was unnatural; except for that, I could see no change in her. But the children had all grown entirely out of my recollection, and none of them knew me. I left them June 1, 1843, and now this was the 28th of September, 1848. Such a cruel separation causes emotions that none can know but those who experience it. It was more like the meeting of strangers than the meeting of a family circle.

Writing about the same event, Louisa recorded.

He looked rough and sunburned. None but the eldest daughter recognized him. The others did not seem pleased with his appearance. So much did we seem like strangers that we scarcely knew what to say to each other. . . . The scene evidently affected him as the feelings between him and his children were coincident. It was sad to realize what a change the lapse of years brings, changing forms and features in the domestic circle even to cause estrangement along with separation. Nothing short of the interest and advancement of the kingdom of God could justify so lengthy a separation.

(To be continued)
PART IV

The editors of the Book of Mormon have given a whole verse to Nephi’s laconic statement, “And my father dwelt in a tent” (1 Nephi 2:15), and rightly so, since Nephi himself finds the fact very significant and refers constantly to his father’s tent as the center of his universe. To an Arab, “my father dwelt in a tent” says everything. “The present inhabitants of Palestine,” writes Canaan, “like their forefathers, are of two classes: dwellers in villages and cities, and the Bedouin. As the life and habits of the one class differ from those of the other, so do their houses differ. Houses in villages are built of durable material... on the other hand, Bedouin dwellings, tents, are more fitted for nomadic life.”

An ancient Arab poet boasts that his people are “the proud, the chivalrous people of the horse and camel, the dwellers-in-tents, and no miserable ox-drivers.” A Persian king but fifty years after the fall of Jerusalem boasts that all the civilized kings “as well as the Bedouin tent-dwellers brought their costly gifts and kissed my feet,” thus making the same distinction as the later poet. One of the commonest oaths of the Arabs, Burckhardt reports, is “by the life of this tent and its owners,” taken with one hand resting on the middle tent pole.

If a man’s estate is to be declared void after his death, “the tent posts are torn up immediately after the man has expired, and the tent demolished.” If a woman wants to divorce her husband, she simply turns over his tent. And what applies today, as Doughty notes, applied to the children of Israel in Old Testament times. Indeed, Hebrew tent (ohel) and Arabic family (ahl) were originally one and the same word.

“‘The Bedouin has a strong affection for his tent,’” says Canaan. “‘He will not exchange it with any stone house.’” So Jacob was “an honest man and dwelt in tents,” though, let us add, by no means in squalor: “Casual travelers in the Orient, who have seen only the filthy, wretched tents of the tribeless gypsy Bedouins... would be surprised, perhaps, at the spaciousness and simple luxury in the tent of a great desert sheikh.”

So with the announcement that his “father dwelt in a tent,” Nephi serves notice that he had assumed the desert way of life, as performe he must for his journey: any easterner would appreciate the significance and importance of the statement, which to us seems almost trivial. If Nephi seems to think of his father’s tent as the hub of everything, he is simply expressing the view of any normal Bedouin, to whom the tent of the sheikh is the sheet anchor of existence.

It is not uncommon in the East for rich town and country people to take to the desert for a spell, so Lehi was by no means doing the impossible or unusual thing: only the people who do so are of course those who already have had a good deal of experience in the desert way and have acquired a taste for it.

THE ORDER OF MARCH

The Book of Mormon tells us a good deal about how Lehi and his people moved through the desert, and this can now be checked against the firsthand reports of life with the Arabs which the last one hundred years, and especially the last forty, have brought forth. All these would agree with Nephi that the keynote of life in Arabia is hardship: “his life is hard, a ceaseless struggle for existence against nature and man.” “It is no exaggeration,” writes a present-day authority, “to say that the Bedouin is in an almost permanent state of starvation.” Many times between their waterings. Doughty reports, “there is not a single pint of water left in the greatest sheikh’s tent.”

A passage from Palgrave is particularly impressive: “Then an insufficient halt for rest or sleep, at most two or three hours, soon interrupted by the oft-repeated admonition, ‘If we linger here, we all die of thirst,’ sounding in our ears, and then to remount our jaded beasts and push them on through the dark night with the constant probability of attack or plunder from roving marauders... at about an hour before sunset we would stagger off our camels as best we might, to prepare an evening feast of precisely the same description as that of the forenoon, or more often, lest the smoke of our fire should give notice of some distant rover, to con-
tent ourselves with dry dates and half an hour's rest on the sand."\(^{122}\) This, it is true, is marching under pressure, but the conditions — no fire, raw meat, "wading through much affliction," are exactly duplicated in the Book of Mormon.

Lehi's party is described as moving through the desert for a few days (three or four) and then camping "for the space of a time." This is exactly the way the Arabs move. Caravan speeds run between two and one-quarter and three and nine-tenths miles an hour, thirty miles being, according to Cheesmen, "a good average" for the day, and sixty miles being the absolute maximum.\(^{30}\) "The usual estimate for a good day's march is reckoned by Arab writers at between twenty-eight and thirty miles: in special or favorable circumstances it may be nearly forty."\(^{123}\) On the other hand, a day's slow journey "for an ass-nomad, moving much slower than camel-riders, is twenty miles."\(^{124}\)

Length of camps varies (as in the Book of Mormon) with circumstances. "From ten to twelve days is the average time a Bedouin encampment of ordinary size will remain on the same ground," according to Jennings Bramley, who, however, observes, "I have known them to stay in one spot for as long as five or six months."\(^{31}\) The usual thing is to camp as long as possible in one place until "it is soiled by the beasts, and the multiplication of fleas becomes intolerable, and the surroundings afford no more pasture, [then] the tents are pulled down and the men decamp."\(^{125}\)

"On the Syrian and Arabic plain the Bedouins encamp in summer . . . near wells, where they remain often for a whole month."\(^{126}\) Lehi's time schedule thus seems to be a fairly normal one, and the eight years he took to cross Arabia argue neither very fast nor very slow progress—the Beni Hilal took twenty-seven years to go a not much greater distance. After reaching the seashore Lehi's people simply camped there "for the space of many days," until a revelation again put them in motion.

Were Lehi's party ass-nomads or camel-nomads? The latter, there can be no doubt. The times required it, and the Book of Mormon insists on it. But before giving the proof, it would be well to correct the theory, sometimes propounded, that the party went on foot. When the Lord appoints a man to a task, he gives him the means of carrying it out, and to Lehi he had given ample means indeed. The sight of a rich merchant and his family setting out for the desert in a caravan

(Continued on page 320)

GEORGE ALBERT SMITH, Honorary Doctor of Humanities

President George Albert Smith receiving the honorary degree of Doctor of Humanities from President A. Ray Olpin at the University of Utah.

High honor was accorded President George Albert Smith at the convocation celebrating the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of the University of Utah on February 28, when he received an honorary doctor of humanities degree.

Kingsbury Hall was filled to overflowing with an audience, many of whom wore the colorful academic robes of some of the world's greatest academic centers. It was the President's privilege to offer the invocation for that group at the beginning of that meeting.

Later in the program, Dean O. Meredith Wilson of the university college arose and said:

Mr. President:

May I present George Albert Smith, three times President of societies for developing scientific farming, sixteen years President of the Society for the Aid of the Sightless, Founder and President of the Utah Pioneer Trails and Landmarks Association, Director of the Oregon Trails Memorial Association, twenty years executive of the Boy Scouts of America and recipient of the silver beaver and silver buffalo awards, for a generation a leader in and now President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who has traveled over a million miles in the interest of peace. He has helped to build a living economy, devoted years to the handi-
LEHI IN THE DESERT

(Continued from page 277)
even of some magnificence would never have excited the slightest comment: Burckhardt describes as a matter of course passing by the caravan of a rich merchant from Maskat in the midst of the desert—"he had ten camels to carry his women, his infant children, his servants, and his baggage."[23] Lehi would have been such a one. But for an elderly and aristocratic Hebrew to load himself, his wife, and his children with tents, weapons, food, gear, and other supplies would have been unthinkable then as now. "Without the camel," writes a modern authority, "it would be impossible for the nomads to carry their tents and furniture over the vast sandy spaces where asses can pass only with difficulty and carry only a very small load."[24] What clinches the matter is the fact that Lehi's party took grain with them, "and all manner of seeds of every kind." (I Nephi 8:1.) The Arabs, as we shall see below, do this when they migrate in earnest, carrying the seed in big, black, one-hundred-and-fifty-pound sacks, two to a camel.[25] At the very least there has to be enough grain either to make a worth-while crop or to supply substantial food on the way—and who could carry such a load on his back? To pass through the heart of Arabia on the best camel in the world requires exquisite suffering and almost superhuman endurance—no need to make the thing ridiculous by carrying a tent or a bushel of grain on one's back!

Raswan tells us that "camel breeders do not fear the waterless stretches of the desert as the sheep- and goat-raising Arabs do, and for that reason camel owners alone remain independent and free."[26] On the other hand, they are often in danger of starving, and when we read that Lehi's people were continually in such danger and supported themselves by hunting alone, so that a broken bow could mean death by starvation, we may be sure that they were camel-nomads without flocks, as indeed their hasty flight from Palestine requires; among the listing of the stuff they took with them, flocks are never mentioned, as of course they would be—an item of prime importance—had they had such.

But neither are camels mentioned. Why not? For the very reason that they receive no notice in many an Arabic poem which describes travel in the desert, simply because they are taken for granted. In the East to journey in the wilderness means to travel by camel, just as "to drive from Heber to Salt Lake" means to go in a car, though it could apply to travel by zebra or tricycle. Had Lehi's party gone afoot that would indeed have been a nine-days' wonder and something to mention on every page—such a thing was never seen nor heard of before nor since. But where camel is the only means of travel, it is as unnecessary to mention camels in describing a journey as it would be to specify that one sailed the seas "in a ship."

There is one episode, however, in which camels play a definite role in the Book of Mormon.

From the base camp in the valley of Lemuel, Lehi's sons made a flying trip back to Jerusalem. It was the
young men alone who made the trip, which turned out, as they expected (1 Nephi 3:5), to be a dangerous one. Now it is the established procedure among the Arabs for a few young men in a tribe to seek gain and glory by making quick raids on neighboring or distant towns and tribes. On such expeditions they never take tents, for their transportation is limited, and speed is of the essence. Nephi wants us to know that this journey to Jerusalem was no such raid, for they were going on legitimate business and took their tents with them (Ibid., 3:9); they went boldly and openly in to Laban and stated their business. Only when he treated them as robbers were they forced to act as such, slinking about like Bedouins outside the gates and entering the city by night. A typical Oriental episode of the story is the wild pursuit out of the city and into the desert (the Bedouins on their raids are everlastingly pursuing or being pursued), where, Nephi reports (Ibid., 3:27), “the servants of Laban did not overtake us.” They might have fled a short distance through the town on foot, but fleeing “into the wilderness” is another matter; there they would have been quickly run down by mounted riders, unless they first escaped notice, but Nephi tells us that they hid only after they had outrun their pursuers, who failed not to find them but to overtake them. The powerful and affluent governor certainly had fleet steeds that could run down a camel, but in the sudden getaway of the brethren there would be no time to saddle them—an Arab poet, Imrul Qais, speaks of a phenomenal horse that “passed the night with saddle and bridle on him . . . without being sent to the stable.” But Laban’s horses could not have been such super-beasts. As to the chance that Lehi’s people had horses, it is a remote one, for the horse cannot carry burdens in the desert, and even horse-raising Arabs seldom ride their animals on long journeys but lead them from their camels. The use of camels is implied at every turn of the story of the mission to Laban: the carrying of tents, the trip down-country to bring back “exceeding great property” to Laban’s palace (hardly on their backs!), the flight into open country and the pursuit in the desert.

from them we learn that Lehi knew it, too. Like a brilliant flash of illumination comes the statement that Lehi by divine instruction “led us in the more fertile parts of the wilderness.” (Ibid., 16:16.) Woolley and Lawrence describe such “more fertile parts” as “stretching over the flat floor of the plain in long lines like hedges. . . .” They are, of course, the depressions of dried-up watercourses; they furnish, according to Bertram Thomas, “the arteries of life in the steppe. (Continued on following page)

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Lehi in the Desert

(Continued from preceding page)

the path of Bedouin movement, the habitat of animals by reason of the vegetation — scant though it is — which flourishes in their beds alone..." In Arabia it is this practice of following "the more fertile parts of the wilderness" that allows both men and animals to survive, and Cheesman designates as "touring" the practice of moving from place to place as areas of fertility shift with the seasons."x

Lehi’s Altar

First of all, after pitching his tent for his first important camp, Lehi "built an altar of stones, and made an offering unto the Lord, and gave thanks to the Lord..." (1 Nephi 2:7.) It was for all the world as if he had been reading Robertson-Smith: "The ordinary mark of a Semitic sanctuary (i.e. Hebrew as well as Arabic) is the sacrificial pillar, caign, or rude altar... upon which sacrifices are presented to the god [Book of Mormon: "to the God of Israel" Ibid., 5:9]. In Arabia we find no proper altar but in its place a rude pillar or heap of stones beside which the victim is slain."x" It was at this same "altar of stones" that Lehi with his family offered a sacrifice in gratitude for the safe return of his sons from their dangerous expedition to Jerusalem. This is what the Arabs call dhabiyyeh-l-kasb, a sacrifice to celebrate the successful return of warriors, hunters, and raiders to the camp. "This sacrifice," writes Jauussen, at the return of an expedition is always in honor of an ancestor,"x" and Nephi twice mentions Israel in his brief account: immediately after the rite, Lehi fell to examining the "spoils." (Ibid., 5:10.)

To this day the Bedouin "lives under the constant impression of a higher force that surrounds him..." and it is for this reason and not to appease any savage gods, that he makes sacrifice on every important occasion."x" When Raswan reports, "A baby camel was brought up to Misha'il's tent as a sacrificial offering in honor of the safe return of Fuaz,"x" we cannot help thinking of some such scene before the tent of Lehi on the safe

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return of his sons. Nilus, in the oldest known account of life among the Arabs of the Tih, says, "they sacrifice on altars of crude stones piled together." That Lehi's was such an altar would follow not only from the ancient law demanding uncut stones, but also from the Book of Mormon expression "an altar of stones," rather than "a stone altar." Such little heaps of stones are still to be seen surviving from all ages throughout the south desert.

The Arab as a forager is eternally prowling, scouting, tracking, and spying; in fact, some believe that the root meaning of the name Arab and Hebrew is a combination of sounds meaning 'to lie in ambush.' "Every Bedawi is a sportsman both from taste and necessity," writes one observer, who explains how in large families some of the young men are detailed to spend all their time hunting. Nephi and his brethren took over the business of full-time hunters, and here again we suspect something of the desert tradition in the family, for Nephi had brought a fine steel bow from home with him. Though we shall deal with steel below, in discussing the sword of Laban, it should be noted here that a steel bow was no more a solid piece of steel than the Canaanites' "chariots of iron" (Josh. 17:16-18; Jud. 1:19, 4:3) were solid metal, or than various implements mentioned in the Old Testament as being "of iron," e.g., carpenter's tools, pens, threshing instruments, were iron and only iron. It was in all probability a steel-ribbed bow, since it broke at about the same time that the wooden bows "lost their springs." All bows in Palestine were composite; that is, of more than one piece, and a steel-backed bow would be called a steel bow, just as an iron- trimmed chariot was called "a chariot of iron."

Hunting in the mountains of Arabia to this day is carried out on foot and without hawks or dogs; in classical time the hunter in this area was equipped with a bow and sling—exactly like Nephi. Nephi's discovery that the best hunting was only at "the top of the mountain" (I Nephi 16:30) agrees with later experience, for the orxy is "a shy animal that

(Continued on following page)
Lehi in the Desert

(Continued from preceding page)

travels far and fast over steppe and desert in search of food but retires ever to the almost inaccessible sand-mountains for safety. . . .

In western Arabia the mountains are not sand but rock, and Burckhardt reports that “in these mountains between Medina and the sea, all the way northward, mountain goats are met, and the leopards are not uncommon.” Julius Euting has left us vivid descriptions of the danger, excitement, and exhaustion that go with the hunting of the big game that abounds in these mountains, which are very steep and rugged.

Things looked black when Nephi broke his fine steel bow, for the wooden bows of his brothers had “lost their springs” (note the use of the Semitic distributive, (Ibid., 16:21)) and though skilled in the art of hunting, they knew little enough about bow-making, which indeed is a skill reserved to specialists even among primitives. It was out of the question to make a composite bow and was something of a revolution when Nephi “did make out of wood a bow.” (Ibid., 16:23), for the hunter, the most conservative of men, would never dream of changing from a composite to a simple bow. Though it sounds simple enough, it was almost as great a feat for Nephi to make a bow as it was for him to build a ship. It is interesting that according to the ancient Arab writers the only bow-wood obtainable in all Arabia is nab’ wood, to be found “amid the inaccessible and overhanging crags” of Mount Judah and Mount Azd, which are situated in the very region where, if we follow the Book of Mormon, this crisis is supposed to have occurred. How many factors must be correctly placed and correlated in the apparently simple story of Nephi’s broken bow! There must be a high mountain near the Red Sea at a considerable journey down the coast; there must be game on the mountain but only on the peaks; there must be nothing else to eat in the area, hunting being the only economy; hunting must be with the bow and sling (1 Nephi 16:23); and here, if only here in all Arabia, there must be bow-wood growing. What are the chances of reproduc-
ing such a situation by mere guesswork?

Regarding the seed and the grain which Lehi carried, while "ordinary travellers scarcely ever carry grain for food" in the desert, it was not meant for food, and Lehi was not an ordinary traveler but a man in search of a promised land. It is common for migrating Bedouins to carry grain with them in the thought—sometimes very vague indeed—that possibly if the year is a good one, they might find a chance to sow a hasty crop. In Sinai "the Bedouin yearly sow the beds of the wadies, but they do this with little hope of reaping a harvest more than once in every three or four years." In traveling, "the wheat is put in the black homemade goat's hair sacks, farde (t). . . The farde, the Heb. saq (Gen. 42:25) holds about 150 to 180 pounds of wheat. Two are put on a camel." Thus we see that the custom of carrying grain into the desert still survives, and that from a time far earlier than Lehi's.

(To be continued)

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Doughty, Arabia Decerta 1, 257. In the same way, when the sheikh pitches his tent, all without discussion, follow suit, the chief's tent being as it were the totem pole, which leads them through the wilderness. It will be recalled that the Liahona was found at the door of Lehi's tent. It is notable that all the other sheikhs "say that she has never more than one tent," according to Burchardt, Notes 1, 42, speaking of the Anite.

Burchardt, in PEFG 1923, p. 122.

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Albright, Archaeol. & Relig. of Isr., p. 97.


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Burchardt, Travels II, 295.

PEFG 1922, p. 163.

Below, note 181.

K. Rawson, Drinkers of the Wind, p. 129.

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The classic description of these small-scale everyday raids by the youth of the camp is in Borchardt, Notos, 1. 1878.

11 Line 71 (in the McAllister)


13 Wilderness of Zin, p. 32, cf. p. 35.

14a Thomas, Arabia Petra, p. 141.

14b Chemman, op. cit., p. 358.


16 Rev. Biddlepope N.S. 3, 109

17 Id., p. 110.

18a Basman, op. cit., p. 237.


19 W. E. Jennings-Branam. "Sport among the Bedawins." REPEQ 1900, 809.

20a Balderdperger, in REPEQ 1925, p. 82.

20b Philby, The Empty Quarter, p. 249

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PART V
CONTACTS IN THE DESERT

THE Book of Mormon makes no mention of Lehi’s people meeting any other party in their eight years of wandering. Casual meetings with stray families of Bedouins then as now would merit no special attention, but how were they able to avoid any important contacts for eight years and some twenty-five hundred miles of wandering? One illuminating “aside” by Nephi explains the whole situation: It was only after reaching the seashore that they were able to make fires without danger. “for the Lord had not hitherto suffered that we should make much fire, as we journeyed in the wilderness: for he said: I will make thy food become sweet, that ye cook it not: and I will also be your light in the wilderness. . . .” (1 Ne. 17:12f). That tells all. “I well remember,” writes Bertram Thomas, “taking part in a discussion upon the unhealthfulness of campfires by night; we discontinued them forthwith in spite of the bitter cold.”242 Major Cheesman’s guide would not even let him light a tiny lamp in order to jot down his star readings, and they never dared build a fire on the open plain where it “would attract the attention of a prowling raiding party over long distances and invite a night attack.”243 Once in a while in a favorable sheltered depression “we dared to build a fire that could not be seen from a high spot,” writes Raswan.244 That is, fires are not absolutely out of the question, but rare and risky—“not much fire” is Lehi’s rule. Things are hardly better by day. Palgrave tells how his party were forced, “lest the smoke of our fire should give notice to some distant rover, to content ourselves with dry dates,” instead of cooked food.245 So again another of those strange-sounding passages from the Book of Mormon rings the bell.

As for the matter of cooked food, “Throughout the desert,” writes Burckhardt, “when a sheep or goat is killed, the persons present often eat the liver and kidney raw, adding to it a little salt. Some Arabs of Yemen are said to eat raw not only those parts, but likewise whole slices of flesh; thus resembling the Abyssinians and the Druses of Lebanon, who frequently indulge in raw meat, the latter to my own certain knowledge.”246 Nilus, writing fourteen centuries earlier, tells how the Bedouin of the Tih live on the flesh of wild beasts, failing which “they slaughter a camel, one of their beasts of burden, and nourish themselves like animals from the raw meat,” or scorch the flesh quickly in a small fire to soften it sufficiently not to have to gnaw it like dogs.247 Only too well does this state of things match the grim economy of Lehi: “they did suffer much for want of food.” (1 Nephi 16:19, “. . . we did live upon raw meat in the wilderness.” (Ibid. 17:2.)

All this bears out the conviction, supported both by modern experience and the evidence of archaeology, that Lehi was moving through a dangerous world. In ancient times Jewish merchants traveling through other . . . to surprise the enemy by a sudden attack, and to plunder a camp, are the chief objects of both parties.”248 “Raiding to them is the spice of life . . . might is right, and man ever walks in fear for his life and possessions.”249 Lehi could ill afford to get embroiled in perennial desert feuds, and the only way of avoiding them is to observe a rule which Thomas lays down for all travelers in the desert, even today: “an approaching party may be friend, but is always assumed to be foe.”250 In the words of the ancient Zuhair, “He who travels should consider his friend to be his enemy.”251 St. Nilus describes Bedouins on the move in the fifth century as possessed by the same jittery nervousness and unbearable tension that makes the accounts of Cheesman, Philby, Thomas, Palgrave, and others, such exciting reading.252 A state of almost hysterical apprehension.

ARABIC inscriptions from Lehi’s time show that “in the peninsula . . . there was constant unrest . . .” then as in modern times.

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gets it from his desert ancestors. Why not the Lamanite?  

Lehi's party, like the Beni Hilal, were trespassers wherever they walked. Every inch of the desert is claimed by some tribe or other that will demand the life of a trespasser. "Marked boundaries do not exist, and it is natural that questions of ownership should be settled by fighting, which becomes an annual affair, while looting of camels grows into a habit." After a raid a whole tribe will go into hiding, to avoid reprisals and Philby sums up the crazy economy in the simple formula "you chase me, and I chase you." Extreme caution and strict avoidance are therefore the first rule for travel in the desert. "In most cases," says Jennings-Bramley, "Arabs do not think it prudent to allow the raiders near enough to decide whether they are friendly or not," and he describes a typical meeting in the desert: "both we and they were doing our best not to be seen." Of course this sort of thing leads to comic situations, ignoble panic, and ridiculous anti-climaxes, but in a game of life and death one simply can't take chances, and Lehi was playing for the highest stakes. The picture of a wandering band sticking glumly to themselves for years on end, impossible as it seems to us, is a normal thing in the desert, where the touchy, dangerous, un-social Bedouin takes his stand as the most "difficult," challenging, and fascinating creature on earth.  

But how do the members of such closed corporations hit it off among themselves? It is the domestic history that presents the really difficult problem. To handle it convincingly would tax the knowledge of the best psychologist, and woe to him if he does not know the peculiar ways of the eastern desert, which surprise and trap the unwary westerner at every turn!

(Continued on following page)
LEHI IN THE DESERT

(Continued from preceding page) a great impulse to humility and an overwhelming repentance, only to be followed by renewed resentment and more unhappy wrangling! They cannot keep their discontent to themselves: "the fact that all that happens in an encampment is known, that all may be said to be related to each other, renders intrigue almost impossible." "We were all one family and friendly eyes," says Doughty, but then describes another side to the picture: "Arab children are ruled by entertainies... I have known an ill-natured child lay a stick to the back of his good cherishing mother, and the Arabs say, many is the ill-natured lad among us that, and he be strong enough, will beat his own father!" The fact that Laman and Lemuel were grown-up children did not help things. The daily quarrels between parents and children in the desert constitute the worst feature of the Bedouin character," says Burckhardt, and describes the usual source of the trouble: "the son... arrived at manhood is too proud to ask his father for any cattle... the father is hurt at finding that his son behaves with haughtiness towards him, and thus a breach is often made." The son, usually the eldest one, does not feel that he is getting what is coming to him and behaves like the spoiled child he is: Doughty has described the attitude of a great Bedouin sheikh to his son: "the boy, oftentimes disobedient, he upbraided, calling him his life's torment, Sheydan, only never menacing him, for that were far from a Beduin father's mind." In these altercations, the usual thing is for the mother to take the part of the son, just as Sariah joins with her sons in chiding her own husband, and rates him roundly when she thinks he has been the cause of their undoing.

Is it any wonder that Laman and Lemuel worked off their pent-up frustration by beating up their younger brother with a stick when they were once hiding with him in a cave? Every free man in the East carries a stick, the immemorial badge of independence and of authority; and every man asserts his authority over his inferiors by his stick; "a blow for a slave," is the maxim of Ahikar, and the proper designation of an underling is "abida l'-asa," stick-servant." This is exactly the sense in which Laman and Lemuel intended their little lesson to Nephi, for when the angel turned the tables he said to them, "Why do ye smite your younger brother with a rod? Know ye not that the Lord hath chosen him to be a ruler over you...?" (1 Nephi 3:29.) But age and dignity count for everything in the East—witness the importance of the beard—and Nephi's two brothers were never reconciled that our younger brother should rule over us." (1 Nephi 18:10; Ibid. 16:37.) All that saved Nephi's life on one occasion was the pleading of a daughter of Ishmael and her mother—another authentic touch, since the proud Semite may yield to the entreaties of a woman without losing face. Through it all, Laman, as the eldest son, is the nastiest actor: "when only one boy is in the family, he is the tyrant, and his will dominates over all." So we see Laman still thinking to dominate over all and driven mad that a younger brother should shew superior talents. The rivalry between the sons of a sheikh "often leads to bloody tragedies in the sheikhs household," and Nephi had some narrow escapes.

The nature of Lehi's authority is made clear in the Book of Mormon. Of the Arab sheikh we have noted Burckhardt's remark: "His commands would be treated with contempt; but deference is paid to his advice... the real government of the Bedouins may be said to consist in the separate strength of their different families... the Arab can only be persuaded by his own relations." The sheikhs' "orders are never obeyed, but his example is generally followed." Especially on the march it behoves all to follow that example; while the tribe is in motion the sheikh "assumes all responsibility and the whole power of government." Yet in leading the march he gives no orders: when his tent is struck "it is the rahlah..." and all the others without a word strike theirs; and "when the place of encampment is reached the sheikh puts his spear in the ground, and at once the tents are pitched." The sheikh's tent is always the center of everything: "a white flag is sometimes hoisted above his tent to guide strangers and visitors. All visitors are led directly to the tent of the sheikh." When Nephi urged the frightened Zoram to join the party in the desert, he said: "If thou wilt go down into the wilderness to my father thou shalt have place with us." The correctness of the proposal is attested not only by the proper role of Lehi in receiving members into the tribe but also in the highly characteristic expression, "thou shalt have place with us," for the proper word of welcome to a stranger in a tent is ahalan wa sahlan wa marhaban, literally, "a family, a smooth place, and a wide place!"

In the sheikh's tent the council of the tribe are held (1 Nephi 9:1-2) and all decisions for the journey are made, but "no sheikh or council of Arabs can condemn a man to death, or even inflict a punishment... it can only, when appealed to, impose a fine; it cannot even enforce the payment of this fine." Why, then, if there was no power to compel them, did not Laman and Lemuel simply desert the party and go off on their own, as discontented Arabs sometimes do? As a matter of fact, they tried to do just that (1 Nephi 7:7), and in the end were prevented by the very considerations that keep any wandering Bedouin party together, according to Philby: greed and fear. They hoped for a promised land and were bitterly disappointed when they reached the sea without finding it: "Behold, these many years we have suffered in the wilderness, which time we might have enjoyed our possessions..." (Ibid. 17:21.) It was by convincing them of the great

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PLANTING IN RAIN-FALL WEATHER

By Anobel Armour

He father had to spade the monstrous hole
Wider than wide to cover all the roots
Because the boy just reached the tree's top hole
Although he stretched from cowlick to brow boots.
And yet he didn't really mind at all.
Not being big enough to dig, that is.
Because his father was so strong and tall
And being here with him made all earth his.
Here, where they stood in early rain-fall weather
Planting a tree for growing tall together!

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LAMANITES ATTEMPT TO PRESERVE INDEPENDENCE

(Concluded from page 376)

liberties. The Indian who is not of the conservative group, it is held, can no longer take part in the ceremonies carried on by the "pure" members of the tribe. He must leave the religion entirely. Thus, those members of the Moenoki Village who accepted allotments of fertile land offered them by the government many years ago, were immediately considered to be excommunicated, and they themselves accepted this belief.

Later, being a sizable body, they took up the practice of their religion again, but in the eyes of the conservatives they are still excommunicated. Their practice of ceremonies is considered blasphemous, and they remain cut off from participation in the common efforts of the communities nearest to them.

And I quote a little further:

Indians holding this belief may trade with the white man, may work for him and earn money, (but not for the government), may use the white man's material and goods, but they may not take relief or other governmental handouts. They are consistent in this. The Hotsevilla conservatives and others of their belief have not accepted relief, have always insisted on paying for clothing issued to schoolchildren, and so forth. Normal trade is one thing; any action indicating acceptance of the government's, to them, blasphemous and irreligious plans for Indians, is entirely different.

This whole concept seems ridiculous to us, but it is vital to them. It should be emphasized that it is not a self-serving concept. On the contrary, it is a belief which has caused them to endure many hardships and for which they are prepared to endure many more. Be it noted that under this belief the extreme conservatives have remained the most self-supporting, industrious Indians on the reservation, denying themselves many assistance offered by the government, determined to get by solely on their own. For them, the orderly, notably industrious, even in that industrious tribe, and self-supporting.

The Lord bless the Indians. And brothers and sisters, may God bless you and me that we may go back to our stakes and our missions with the determination to pray for the red man and then to do something about it to see that he is treated in the ways of God; that he is educated, that he is given the opportunities he so richly deserves after this long period of suffering.

This I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

LEHI IN THE DESERT

(Continued from page 384)

danger of returning to Jerusalem (e.g. 7:15) that Nephi persuaded his brethren to stick it out. And indeed, where would they go if they deserted their father? As we have seen, with these people family was everything, the Arab or the Jew will stick to "his own people" because they are all he has in the world.284 The family is a religious society with the father as its head.285 To be without tribe or family is to forfeit one's identity in the earth; nothing is more terrible to these people than to be "cut off," and that is exactly the fate that is promised Laman and Lemuel if they rebel. (1 Nephi 2:21).286

Authorities on the East have often observed that the Arab, and only to a lesser extent the Jewish, character is remarkable for its two faces: on the one side the Semite is thoroughly proud and noble, the soul of honor, the impeccable family man, the true friend, and on the other, the low and cunning tramp, the sly assassin, dangerous companion, and unpredictable rogue. Every page of Doughty reflects this strange paradox of the desert character, which has received its classic treatment in the third chapter of Lawrence's Seven Pillars of Wisdom: pure gold mixed with basest dross within a single family. That also is the story of the Book of Mormon.287

(To be continued)

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299Nilo, Narrat. eii, Patro. غر. 79, 609: At the next signs of an armed man the Bedouk bed in alarm "as if seized by panic fear," and keeps on running. "For fear makes them exaggerate danger and causes them to imagine things to be real, magnifying their dread in every instance."
300They live always under the impression that an invasion is on the way, and every magical shadow on the horizon sets them on edge for attention.""Baldensperger in PEQF 1925, p. 81, Literature on the Arabs is full of this.
301Baldensperger, in PEQF 1922, p. 168f.
302Sir Richard Burton, one of the few individuals who ever knew both the Arabian legend and the Bedouin Arab at first hand was greatly impressed by his exact resemblance to each other, which he discussed in a detailed comparison of the two. (Pilgrimage to Al-Madina and Meccah II, 118f). He warns the reader against attributing the truly astonishing parallel to a common origin.

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yet he himself can only explain it by noting that "The almost absolute independence of the Arabs, and the fact that native observers among the North American Indians ... has produced a similarity between this word and others in Arabic."

"... A Javanese, No. 3; 1 (1906); 443; Ed. Palmer, The Desert of the Exodus (1822); op. cit., PEFG 1941, p. 69.

"... He could not see anything of the tribesmen and their cattle, and he was greatly disappointed.

"... The author of the second book, Mr. George Lambe, describes the inhabitants of Lebanon, of whom he has spent years both among the Bedouins of the desert and among the people of New Mexico as a preacher and teacher; he assures that there is absolutely no difference between the two races as far as man, woman, and child are concerned. The reader will see for himself, and he will find that the Bedouin is a more hospitable and honest man than the Arab."

"... He is regarded as an honorable and courageous man, and is very dear to the officers of the Shop and the Bedouin."

"... Continual strife between the tribes, whether for fear of a raid or for disturbance (as in the days of Abraham and Lot), or because of murder or suspicion as to their women, keeps the Bedouin aloof, roaming about the desert."

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"... In the Bedouin."

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LEHI IN THE DESERT

By Hugh Nibley, Ph. D.

VI

Place Names in the Desert

The stream at which he made his first camp Lehi named after his eldest son; the valley, after his second son (1 Nephi 2:8.) The oasis at which his party made their next important camp "we did call Shazer." (Ibid., 16:13.) The fruitful land by the sea "we called Bountiful," while the sea itself "we called Irreantum." (Ibid., 17:5.)

By what right do these people rename streams and valleys to suit themselves? No westerner would tolerate such arrogance. But Lehi is not interested in western taste; he is following a good old Oriental custom. Among the laws "which no Bedouin would dream of transgressing," the first, according to Jennings-Bramley, is that "any water you may discover, either in your own territory or in the territory of another tribe, is named after you." So it happens that in Arabia a great wady (valley) will have different names at different points along its course, a respectable number of names being "all used for one and the same valley. One and the same place may have several names, and the wadi running close to the same, or the mountain connected with it, will naturally be called differently by members of different clans," according to Canaan, who tells how the Arabs "often coin a new name for a locality for which they have never used a proper name, or whose name they do not know," the name given being usually that of some person.

Names thus bestowed by wandering Bedouins "are neither generally known nor commonly used," so we could of course not expect any of Lehi's place names to survive.

Speaking of the desert "below the Negeb proper," i.e., the general area of Lehi's first camp, Woolley and Lawrence report, "peaks and ridges have different names among the different Arab tribes, and from different sides," and of the nearby Til, Palmer says, "In every locality, each individual object, whether rock, mountain, ravine, or valley, has its appropriate name," while Raswan recalls how "miraculously each hill and dale bore a name." But how reliable are such names? Philby recounts a typical case: Zeyd and Ali seemed a little vague about the nomenclature of these parts, and it was only by the irritating process of continual questioning and sifting their often inconsistent and contradictory answers that I was able in the end to piece together the topography of the region.

Farther east Cheesman ran into the same difficulty: "I pointed out that this was the third different hill to which he had given the same name. He knew that, was the reply, but that was the way they named them." The irresponsible custom of renaming everything on the spot seems to go back to the earliest times, and "probably, as often as not, the Israelites named for them- in these mountains, the water bears a different name from the wadi," Likewise we might suppose that, the river having been named after his first-born, the location of the camp would be given, as any westerner would give it, with reference to the river. Instead, the Book of Mormon follows the correct Arabic system of designating the camp not by the name of the river (which might dry up sometime), but by the name of the valley. (1 Nephi 10:16, 16:6.)

Another surprise: Nephi more than once refers to the river of Laman as "flowing into the fountain of the Red Sea." Since when is the Red Sea a fountain, forsooth? Answer: ever since it was called a yam. "In Hebrew," writes Albright, "the word yam means 'large river' and 'fresh water lake' as well as 'sea' in the English sense. In our case we cannot, however, be sure whether the designation yam came originally from inland, referring to pure fresh water as the source of life, or... it referred to the Mediterranean as the main source of Canaanite livelihood." In the spring of the year it is by no means unusual to find rivers in the regions through which Lehi traveled.

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peninsula not only the mountains of the south part of the peninsula, but also the plain extending north... To the South we had a view of the greater part of the at-Tihama shore. From the Arabian side, then, the northeastern arm of the Red Sea for over a hundred miles (i.e., in the sector where Lehi’s party first came upon the sea, 1 Nephi 2:5) is not an open sea at all, and is not the Red Sea: it is a broad and elongated sheet of water like the Nile and Euphrates at flood, and like them it is not closed water—not a great lake—but opens out to the sea, flowing out through two channels, each but five miles wide. The corresponding western arm of the Red Sea anciently had the mysterious and much-discussed name of Yam Suph, “sea (or fountain) of weeds (or rushes).” If it was called a yam, what is more natural than that its twin gulf to the east should bear the same designation? The latter certainly was what the ancients called a yam, that word having, whether applied to salt water or fresh, the basic meaning of source or fountain. Please note that Nephi does not call the Red Sea a fountain, but rather refers to this gulf as a fountain of the Red Sea—a feeder, as it were, with spring torrents flowing into it (Ibid., 2:9), a yam in the very sense that the Nile and Euphrates at flood were yams.

When the party reached the ocean, “we beheld the sea, which we called Irrantum, which, being interpreted, is many waters.” (Ibid., 17:5.) But why did they not simply call it the sea and be done? Because there was no name in their language to designate this particular sea; so they simply gave it a name of their own. The ancients regularly resort to epithets when speaking of the great outer seas, as the “Great Green” of the Egyptians and the “Great Deep” of the Hebrews. In Coptic, the latest form of Egyptian, the Red Sea proper was called jayum nehab, literally “many waters.” If one wanted to speculate, it would be easy to trace Irrantum back to some derivation containing Eg. wr (great) and nt (Copt. nout “standing water”), or to identify the final un with the common (Eg., Copt., Heb.) yem, yam, yam, “sea” and the rest of the word with Copt. irrhnte “great or many.” But we need not go so far: It is enough to know that in Lehi’s day the ocean was designated by epithets, and that the sea to the east was called “many waters” by the latest Egyptians.

The first important stop after Lehi’s party had left their base camp was at a place which they called Shazer. The name is intriguing. The element shajer is quite common in Palestine place names: it is a collective meaning “trees,” and many Arabs (especially in Egypt) pronounce it “shazer.” It appears in Thoghret as-Sajur (the Pass of Trees), the ancient Shaghur, written Segor in the sixth century. It may be confused with Shaghur “seepage,” which is held to be identical with Shihor, the “black water” of Joshua 19:36. This last takes in western Palestine the form Sozura suggesting the name of a famous water hole in south Arabia, called Shisur by Thomas and Shisur by Philby. It is a “tiny copse” (Thomas) and one of the loneliest spots in all the world. So we have Shihor, Shaghur, Sajar, Segor (even Zoor), Shajar, Sozura, Shisur, and Shisur, all connected somehow or other and denoting either seepage—a weak but reliable water supply—or a clump of trees. Whichever one prefers, Lehi’s people could hardly have picked a better name for their first suitable stopping place than Shazer.

Before leaving the subject of waters, it would be well to note that Nephi’s mention of a river in a most desolate part of Arabia has caused a good deal of quite unnecessary eyebrow-raising. Though Hogarth says that Arabia “probably never had a true river in all its immense area,” later authorities, including Philby, are convinced that the peninsula has supported some quite respectable rivers even in his... (Continued on page 516)
USING EXAMPLES

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words the more vivid will be the picture. Instead of talking about children, talk about John and Mary and Jim. Use "nouns that bleed" and "verbs that sizzle and rattle." If you can choose between two words, choose the one that is simpler but conveys the more clear-cut image. Compare, for instance, the mental pictures the following sentences create:

*ibid., p. 88.

If a man can excel other men, the world will find and honor him.

If a man can write a better book, preach a better sermon, or make a better mousetrap than his neighbor, though he builds his house in the woods, the world will make a beaten path to his door.

Emerson. Lecture in 1871

Facts, figures, stories, comparison, pictures, and colorful words are tools of a successful speaker. Learn to use them effectively.

Lehi in the Desert

(Continued from page 487)

toric times. The point to notice, however, is that Lehi made his discovery in the spring of the year, when that part of the world is full of rushing torrents. Moreover, the very fact that Nephi uses the term "a river of water," to say nothing of Lehi's ecstasies at the sight of it, shows that they are used to thinking in terms of dry rivers—the "rivers of sand" of the East. One only speaks of "rivers of water" in a country where rivers do not run all the time. But in the spring it is by no means unusual to find rivers in the regions through which Lehi was moving, as a few examples will show.

"We . . . descended . . . into Wady Waleh. Here was a beautiful seal, quite a little river, dashing over the rocky bed and filled with fish . . . The stream is a very pretty one . . . bordered by thickets of flowering oleanders. Here and there it narrows into a deep rushing torrent. . . ."

Describing the great wall that runs, like our Hurricane fault in Utah, all along the Dead Sea, the Arabah, and the Red Sea, an earlier traveler says: "Farther south the country is absolutely impassable, as huge gorges one thousand to fifteen hundred feet deep (compare Lehi's "awful chasm") and nearly a mile wide in some places, are broken by the great torrents flowing in winter over perpendicular precipices into the sea."

The sea is the Dead Sea, but the same conditions continue all down the great wall to "the borders which are near the Red Sea." One is reminded of how impressed Lehi was when he saw the river of Laman "flowing into the fountain of the Red Sea." On the desert road to Petra in the springtime "there are several broad streams to pass, the fording of which creates a pleasant excitement." A party traveling farther north reports, "we presently came upon the deep Wady 'Allan, which here cuts the plain in two. How delightful was the splash and gurgle of the living water rushing over its rocky bed in the fierce heat of that Syrian day!"

Given the right season of the year, then—and the Book of Mormon is obliging enough to give it— one need not be surprised at rivers
in northwestern Arabia. It was this seasonal phenomenon that led Ptolemy to place a river between Yambu and Mecca."

When Ishmael died on the journey, he "was buried in the place which was called Nahom." (I Nephi 16:34.) Note that this is not "a place which **we** called Nahom, but the place which **was** so called, a desert burial ground." The Arabic root *NHM* has the basic meaning of 'to sigh or moan,' and occurs nearly always in the third form, 'to sigh or moan with another.' The Hebrew *Nahum*, "comfort," is related but that is not the form given in the Book of Mormon. At this place, we are told, "the daughters of Ishmael did mourn exceedingly," and are reminded that among the desert Arabs mourning rites for the dead are a strict monopoly of the women, related Hebrew rites being less exclusively female. Ishmael here seems more of an Arab than ever, while Nephi continues to display unerring accuracy on every point.

**Lehi's Qasid**

There is no more surprising or impressive evidence for the genuineness of the Book of Mormon than the eloquent little verses (they are a sort of *qasid*) which Lehi on one occasion addressed to his wayward sons.

It was just after the first camp had been pitched, with due care for the proper rites of thanksgiving at the "altar of stones." Lehi, being then free to survey the scene more at his leisure (among the desert people it is the women who make and break camp, though the *sheikh*, as we have seen, must officiate in the sacrifice), proceeded, as was his right, to name the river after his first-born and the valley after his second son. (I Nephi 2:6-8, 14.) They examined the terrain more closely, as Arabs always do after pitching camp in a place where they expect to spend some time, and discovered that the river "emptied into the fountain of the Red Sea," at a point "near the mouth thereof" (*Ibid.*, 2:8-9), which suggests the Gulf of 'Aqaba at a point not far above the Straits of Tiran. When Lehi beheld the view, perhaps from the sides of Mt. Musafara or Mt. Mendisha, he turned to his two elder sons and recited his remarkable verses. Nephi seems to have been standing by, for he takes most careful note of the circumstance:

And when my father saw that the waters of the river emptied into the fountain of the Red Sea, he spake unto Laman, saying: O that thou mightest be like unto this valley, firm and steadfast, and immovable in keeping the commandments of the Lord! (I Nephi 2:9-10.)

No subject has been more intently studied than that of primitive Semitic poetry, and nowhere could one find a more perfect illustration of the points that are now agreed upon as to the nature and form of the original article than in this brief account of Nephi's.

First there is the occasion: It was the sight of the river flowing into the gulf which inspired Lehi to address his sons. In a famous study, Goldziher pointed out that the earliest desert poems ever mentioned are "those *Quellentlieder* (songs to springs of water) which, according to the record of St. Nilus, the an-

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LEHI IN THE DESERT

Ancient Arabs used to intone after having refreshed and washed themselves in some fountain of running water discovered in the course of a long journeying. Nilus' own account is a vivid picture of what Lehi's party went through:

The next day... after making their way as is usual in the desert by devious routes, wandering over the difficult terrain, forced to turn aside now this way, now that, circumventing mountains, stumbling over rough, broken ground through all but impenetrable passes, they beheld in the far distance a spot of green in the desert and striving to reach the vegetation by which the oasis might provide a camp or even sustain a settlement for some of them (we are reading nomadikon for the senseless monadikon), as they conjectured, they turned their eyes towards it as a storm-tossed pilot views the port. Upon reaching it, they found that the spot did not disappoint their expectations, and that their wishful fancies had not led them to false hopes. For the water was abundant, clear to the sight and sweet to the taste, so that it was a question whether the eye or the mouth was the more delighted. Moreover, there was adequate forage for the animals; so they unloaded the camels and cattle and began to graze freely. For themselves, they could not let the water alone, drinking, splashing, and bathing as if they couldn't revel in it enough. So they chanted songs in its praise (the river's), and composed hymns in its honor... (To be continued)

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In PEQ 1908, p. 257, "You here is used in a general sense, referring to the individual or party that finds the water and so has the right of naming it.

Canaan, in Jbl, 1912, 139. cf. Hogarth, 'Penetration of Arabia,' p. 161

Canaan, Studies in Topography and Folklore of Petra, in ibid., IX (1925) 190-218 has become the standard work on desert nomenclature; passages cited here are from that work, p. 160.

Loc. cit. in Burton, Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah, etc., p. 195 n. 3; "a falcon vulture would not contain a three-months' collection of such names, so numerous are they.

The Wilderenss of Zin, p. 70

H. Palmer, The Desert of the Esdous (Cambridge, 1871) II, 20

Drinkers of the Wind, p. 51

Philby, The Empty Quarter, p. 39

R. E. Cheekman, In Eastern Arabia, p. 261

Woolley and Lawrence, Wilderness of Zin, p. 165, concluding that "to expect continuity and density of settlement in all: as in settled districts in Syria is vain. Speaking of the south deserts. Capt. Conder in PEQ 1875, p. 126 observes that while "The settled population have preserved the ancient names under forms more or less modified, the wandering Bedouin have replaced them by descriptive titles of their own.

B. Thomas, Arabia Felix, p. 50

W. F. Albright, Archaeology & the Relig of Israel, p. 148f

J. Olmsted, "The Red Sea," PEQ 1920, p. 179

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G. V. Springberg, Koptisches Handwörterbuch, pp. 204, 258


R. J. Conder in PEQ 1876, p. 136 and Survey of Wst. Palest. Name Lists, pp. 28, 93

Survey of Western Palestine II, p. 169

B. Thomas, Arabia Felix, p. 130f. Philby, Empt. Quarter, p. 231

Penetration of Arabia, p. 3

Nephi's story begins in "the commencement of the first month of the reign of Zedekiah" (1 Ne. 1:4) and moves very rapidly. Since, "in the Bible throughout the first month always refers to the first rainy month," (Yahuda, Accuracy of the Bible, p. 201), Nephi's 'commencement of the year' would fall in the springtime, regardless of when Zedekiah began to reign, since the Jews like the Egyptians dated a king's reign from the beginning of the next year, the ritual time of circumcision.

The term is also used by Egyptians and Greeks writers, e.g., Alexander the Great crosses a "river of sand" in the desert. The Arabs call a dry lake "sea of salt," or Bahr yilsa, etc. "Lake without water." Burton, Pilgr. to Al-Madinah, etc., p. 72 n. 1). To us it seems pedantic to distinguish between lakes of water and lakes of sand or something else, but the discrimination is important in a land where most lakes and rivers are dry ones.

E. H. Palmer, In Suv. of Wst. Palest. Special Papers, pp. 67f

R. J. Conder in PEQ 1876, p. 170

G. Hill, "Journey to Petra," PEQ 1857, p. 144

W. E. Strong, "Journey to the Hauran," PEQ 1857, p. 175

Burton, Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah, etc., pp. 154

Though Bedouins sometimes bury the dead where they die, many carry the remains great distances to bury them. A Jausen in Recueil Biblique X (1901), 607.

Jausen, loc. cit. in T. Canaan in Jbl, 1912, 139. "Funeral processions women may not mix with men... When the burial is over the women assemble around the grave. In visiting the tomb... they always go alone..." Cf. Baldensperger in PEQ 1901, p. 152; and Burkhead, Notes, 1: 101: "At the moment of a man's death, his wife, daughters, and female relatives unite in cries of lamentation..." Among the Jews

THE IMPROVEMENT ERA
Lehi in the Desert

The men play a more prominent part in mourning rites, and even professional male mourners were not unknown. Newcomb, H. E., Archaeol., p. 196.

The word gudh is used to denote various types of Arabic verse including the now unknown primitive poetry of the desert. It is in this sense that we employ it here. The root gudh means to "insist," hence it applies to a poem with an objective—truth, love, or moral instruction. Authorities disagree as to the original motif. Haider’s dictionary applies the word to any kind of poem.

The river would flow between these two mountains, as is indicated in the National Geographic Map of the area. The valley seems to be commodious enough. We suggest an investigation from the most ancient times it has been the custom for travelers in the desert to inscribe their names on rocks at places where they have camped (Th. Noldeke, Die Semitischen Sprachen, p. 37). It is almost certain that Lehi’s people left their marks at the more important stopping places.

Lehi, A. B. Akademischen zur arabischen Philologie (Leiden, 1896) I. 56

St. Nilus, in Migne Patrol. Gracce. 79, 68.

which in one way or another are regarding our national development.

—J. A. W.

THE JOURNEY TO THE PROMISED LAND

(Dela P. Neely. Deseret News Press, Salt Lake City, Utah. 122 pages.)

This book, which the author calls “the first book in the series called ‘A Child’s Story of the Book of Mormon’,” has been carefully prepared by Dr. Neely for all children to understand. Children with “fourth-grade reading ability will be able to read the book for themselves.” The fictional approach will delight young people and will be approved by older folk since the author deals very carefully with the original text, the Book of Mormon itself. The author tells the story of Jerusalem, the return for the plates, the wandering in the wilderness, the voyage, and finally the landing in the Western Hemisphere.

—M. C. J.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF WILL ROGERS

(Edited by Donald Day. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. 1949. 410 pages.)

Will Rogers has become an institution in the United States, an

(Concluded on following page)

On The Bookrack

(Continued from page 466)

In the latest edition, this set of books has been brought up-to-date and extensively supplemented to keep abreast of the ever-extending frontier of newer knowledge and recent happenings in the world. It covers the fields of Science, History, Hygiene, Geography, Civics, Economics, Nature Study, Physiology, Biography, Industry, Handicrafts, Transportation and Communication, Mining and Mechanics, Writing and Riddles, Arithmetic and Recreation, Art and Entertainment.

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A HANDBOOK OF HUMAN RELATIONS

(Everett R. Clinchy, Farrar Strauss and Company, New York. 146 pages. 1949. $2.00.)

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LEHI IN THE DESERT

Part VII

Ibn Qutaiba, in a famous work on poetry, quoted a great desert poet, Abu Sukhr, as saying that nothing on earth brings verses so readily to mind as the sight of running water and wild places. This applies not only to springs, of course, but to all running water. Thomas recounts how his Arabs upon reaching the Unm al-Hait hailed it with a song in praise of "the continuous and flowing rain," whose bounty filled the bed of the wady, "flowing along between sand and stream course..." Just so Lehi holds up as the most admirable of examples "this river, continually running..."; for to the people of the desert there is no more miraculous and lovely thing on earth than continually running water. In the most stirring episode of Saint-Exupery's Wind, Sand, and Stars, the Arab chiefs who view the wonders of Paris with cool indifference burst into cries of devout rapture at the sight of a torrent in the Alps. When the Beni Hilal stopped at their first oasis, the beauty of it and the green vegetation reminded them again of the homeland they had left; "and they wept greatly remembering it." It was because Laman and Lemuel were loud in lamenting the loss of their pleasant "land of Jerusalem...and their precious things" (I Nephi 2:11) that their father was moved to address them on this occasion.

If the earliest desert poems were songs inspired by the fair sight of running water, no one today knows the form they took. That can only be conjectured from the earliest known form of Semitic verse. This is the saj, a short exhortation or injunction spoken with such solemnity and fervor as to fall into a sort of chant. Examples would be magic incantations, curses, and the formal pronouncements of teachers, priests, and judges. From the earliest times the saj was the form in which inspiration and revelation announced themselves. Though the speaker of the saj did not aim consciously at metrical form, his words were necessarily more than mere prose, and were received by their hearers as poetry. The saj had the effect of overviewing the hearer completely and was considered absolutely binding on the person to whom it was addressed; its aim being to compel action.

Lehi's words to his sons take just this form of short, solemn, rhythmical appeal. The fact that the speech to Laman exactly matches that to his brother shows that we have here such a formal utterance as the saj. The proudest boast of the desert poet is, "I utter a verse and after it its brother." For the consummation of the poetic art was to have two verses perfectly parallel in form and content; few ever achieved this, the usual verse being followed at best by a "cousin" and not a brother. Yet Lehi seems to have carried it off. Of the moral fervor and didactic intent of his recitation there can be no doubt; the fact that Nephhi recounts the episode in a record in which there is, as he says, only room for great essentials, shows what a deep impression it made upon him.

In addressing his sons in what looks like a little song, Lehi is doing just what Isaiah does when he speaks to Israel in a shirat dodi, "a friendly chant," a popular song about a vine which, once the hearer's attention has been won, turns into a very serious moral tirade. On another occasion, as we have noted, he employs the popular figure of the olive tree. The stock opening line of the old desert poems is, "O my two friends!" an introduction which, says Ibn Qutaiba, should be avoided, "since only the ancients knew how to use it properly, uniting a gentle and natural manner with the grandiose and magnificent." Lehi's poem is an example of this: he addresses his two sons separately but with the vocative O! and describes the river and valley in terms of unsurpassed brevity and simplicity and in the vague and sweeping manner of the real desert poets, of whom Burton says, "there is a dreaminess of idea and a haze thrown over the object, infinitely attractive, but indescribable."

According to Richter, the best possible example of the primitive Arabic qasid is furnished by those old poems in which one's beloved is compared to a land "in which abundant streams flow down... with rushing and swirling, so that the water overflows every evening, continually." Here the "continually flowing" water is compared to the person addressed, as in Lehi's "song" to Laman. The original qasid, the same authority avers, was built around the beseeching (werbenden, hence the name qasid) motif, not necessarily erotic in origin, as some think, but dealing with praise of virtue (Tugendlob) in general.

Ibn Qutaiba even claims that the introductory love theme was merely a device to gain the attention of male listeners and was not at all the real stuff of the poem. The standard pattern is a simple one: (a) the poet's attention is arrested by some impressive natural phenomenon, usually running water; (b) this leads him to recite a few words in its praise, drawing it to the attention of a beloved companion; and (c) making it an object lesson for the latter, who is urged to be like it. Burton gives a good example: at the sight of the Wady al-Akik the nomad poet is moved to exclaim.

O my friend, this is Akik. Then stand by it. Endeavoring to be distracted by love, if not really a lover.

This seems to be some sort of love song, albeit a peculiar one, and some
have claimed that all the old qasids were simply love songs. But Burton and his Arabs know the real meaning, "the esoteric meaning of this couplet," which quite escapes us:

Man! This is a lovely portion of God's creation:
Then stand by it, and here learn to love the perfections of thy Supreme Friend.

Compare this with Lehi's appeal to Lemuel:

O that thou mightest be like unto this valley, firm and steadfast,
And immovable in keeping the commandments of the Lord!

Note the remarkable parallel: in each case the poet, a wanderer in the desert, is moved by the sight of a pleasant valley; he calls the attention of his beloved companion to the view, and appeals to his friend to learn a lesson from the valley and "stand by it," firm and unshakable in the love of the ways of the Lord. Let us list briefly the exacting conditions fulfilled by Nephi's account of his father's qasids, conditions fulfilled likewise by the earliest known desert poems.

(1) They are Brunnen — or Quellenlieder, as the Germans call them, that is, songs inspired by the sight of water gushing from a spring or running down a valley.

(2) They are addressed to one or (usually) two traveling companions.

(3) They praise the beauty and the excellence of the scene, calling it to the attention of the hearer as an object lesson.

(4) The hearer is urged to be like the thing he beholds.

(5) The poems are recited extemporaneous on the spot and with great feeling.

(6) They are very short, and one verse should be followed by its "brother," making a perfectly matched pair.

Here we have beyond any doubt all the elements of a situation in which no westerner in 1830 could have had the remotest conception. Nephi has described the very situation in which the great men of the desert were once long ago wont to speak the words that made their names immortal among the nomads and scholars of a later generation. And the words they uttered were, to the best of our knowledge, of exactly the same cast and content as those spoken by Lehi, who now stands before us as something of a poet, as well as a great prophet and leader. This is a reminder that in the world in which Lehi was moving, those three offices had to go together.

It has often been said that there is no real poetry in the Book of Mormon — no real English poetry, that is. By the same token there is no real Danish or Russian poetry. The explanation of this grave defect is a simple one: If there were any good poetry in the book, it would give just cause for suspicion, for Burton, even while praising the matchless genius of the desert poets, is careful to point out that they are utterly "destitute of the poetic taste, as we define it." (Italics author's.)

To Lehi's "literary" critics we need only reply that its authors were never supposed to have composed in English or Danish or Russian. The same literary critics may affirm with equal confidence that there is no good literature in Mutanabbi or the Kitab-al-Aghani, not one of whose vast store of poems has ever been done into great or even good English verse. Yet those who know these books best insist that they represent the high point not only in Arabic but in all poetry.

As if to prove that no westerner could possibly have dreamed up Nephi's account, we are challenged by the remarkable expression, "like unto this valley, firm and steadfast, and immovable." Who west of Suez would ever think of such an image? At the very least the proof-reader should have caught such a howler, which should certainly have been corrected in subsequent editions: for we, of course, know (Continued on page 587)
cemetery about half way from east to west. It is reached by following the path into the cemetery and then going to the south line. The original headstone is still in place.

Palmyra, key point in this month’s area, is twenty-three miles southeast of Rochester and is reached by highway thirty-one. It is sixty-five miles west of Syracuse and can be reached by taking highway 21 to Palmyra via Manchester Village and Hill Cumorah. Approaching Palmyra from the south, from the New York City area, a favorable route is highway 17 to Owego, then highway 96 to Manchester, and highway 21 to Palmyra, via Hill Cumorah which is four miles south of Palmyra.

From eastern New York points, highway 31 direct or highways 20 or 5 to Canandaigua, then north on highway 21, lead to Palmyra. Farther north highway 104, the “Ridge Route,” can be followed to William-son where highway 21 intersects it and follows southerly to Palmyra.

By bus, excellent service to Palmyra is maintained from Rochester, twenty-three miles northwest, and from Syracuse, sixty-five miles east.

and intermediate points including Lyons, the county seat of Wayne County, fifteen miles, and Newark (N.Y.) nine miles. There is no regular bus service from Canandaigua to Palmyra.

By air the most satisfactory approach is from Rochester where excellent air service is maintained by American Airlines on one of its principal routes. The same service is available approaching from Syracuse, but the distance to Palmyra is much greater.

Next month the Auburn, New York area, where Brigham Young spent his young manhood, became an expert carpenter and builder, married, and set himself up in business, will be discussed.

Note: When names of railroads, airlines, or bus lines are given, it should not be implied that there is any connection or arrangement with such concerns. This service is entirely independent and gives the best information available without influence from any outside source.

Persons traveling from the New York area to Palmyra can visit the Peter Whitmer home in the Town of Fayette, Seneca County, New York, by turning west three miles south of Waterloo and going one mile west. A sign on the left (going north) indicates the intersection.

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SCOUTING FOR 11-YEAR-OLD BOYS

(Concluded from page 565)

National and regional scouters, when they have had carefully explained to them the new program for eleven-year-olds in the Church, have been very enthusiastic about it. They see in the plan, as we do, the possibility of getting our youth out into the open in a planned program that will do more than anything else to teach them the ideals of scouting, which are the ideals of the Church.

President George Albert Smith, prophet, seer, and revelator, and ranking scouter of the Church, expressed his feelings and ours, as well as the policy of the M.I.A. and the Church, in the following words:

After many years of close contact with scouting through national and local leaders, and with many Scouts of various faiths, I am convinced that participation in this splendid program is one of the most worth-while experiences our boys can have.

The ideals of scouting, like the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ, are intended to make boys better companions, more useful citizens, and happier individuals.

It is my desire to see scouting extended to every boy in the Church where that is at all possible.

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LEHI IN THE DESERT

(Continued from page 567)

all about everlasting hills, but who ever heard of a steadfast valley? The Arabs, to be sure. For them the valley, and not the mountain, is the symbol of permanence. It is not the mountain of refuge to which they flee, but the valley of refuge.

The great depressions that run for hundreds of miles across the Arabian peninsula pass for the most part through plains devoid of mountains. It is in these prehistoric riverbeds alone that water, vegetation, and animal life are to be found.

(Continued on following page)
Lehi in the Desert

(Continued from preceding page)
when all else is desolation. They offer the Arab the only chance of escaping detection from his enemies and death from hunger and thirst. The qualities of firmness and steadfastness, of reliable protection and sure refuge when all else fails, which other nations attribute naturally to mountains, the Arabs attribute to valleys.34

(To be continued)

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34Annex de Saint-Exupéry, Wind, Sand, and Stars (N.Y., Reynal & Hitchcock, 1939)
35Bosch, Taifalchum Banu Tidul (Pub. Mch. Hashim in Syria), p. 54;
36Goldzemer, op. cit., 1, 67-69. Brockelmann and Jacob say the same
37Jay, 706
38ibid., p. 99
39ibid., pp. 77-75
40Le Quatre, op. cit., Pt. 23; Goldzemer, p. 74; the sura was very repetitious in form
42Le Quatre, op. cit., p. 541, n. 70
43I cannot well explain the effect of Arab poetry on one who has not visited the Desert. Apart from the power of words, and the music of the sound, there is a dreaminess of idea, etc." Pdg. to At-Madinah II, 99. Lehi’s language is of this simple, noble, but harsh kind.
45Ibid., pp. 593-5
46Le Quatre, op. cit., Sect. 12
47Brockelmann, Gesch. des Arabischen Litteratur (Weimar, 1898) I, 16
48Burton, Pdg. to Al-Madinah, etc., I, 278, n. 3
49Bosch, op. cit., p. 558
50While the greatest Arabic poems consist of disconnected couples, each a complete poem in itself and having no connection with the other lines; it was even thought bad taste to deviate from this rule, according to Brockelmann, Gesch. des arab. Lit. (Leipzig, 1929), p. 17
51Burton, op. cit., II, 296
52... from the place this grough is hardly suspected, ..." Woolley & Lawrence, Wilderness of Zin, p. 137, speaking of a particularly impressive valley.
53See above, note 36.
54This Zohair, in Mu'allimat III, 13: "And when they went down to the water, blue and still in its depression, they laid down their walking-sticks like one who has reached a permanent resting-place."

"Modern Missionary Campaign"

(Continued from page 560)
keen competition was apparent and where honors had to be won by intelligent effort:
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LEHI IN THE DESERT

By
Hugh Nibley
Ph. D.

VIII
ADVENTURE IN JERUSALEM

Nephi and his brothers made two trips back to Jerusalem. The second was only to "the land of Jerusalem" to pick up Ishmael, but the first was an exciting and dangerous assignment in the city itself. Though it was no mere raid, as we have seen, the men taking their tents with them and going quite openly, they were expecting trouble and drew lots to see who should go in to Laban. The story tells of hiding without the walls, daring exploits in the dark streets, mad pursuits, masquerading, desperate deeds, and bitter quarrels—a typical Oriental romance, you will say, but typical because such things actually do, and did, happen in Eastern cities. It has ever been a standard and conventional bit of gallantry for some Bedouin bravo with a price on his head to risk his life by walking right through a city in broad daylight, a very theatrical gesture but a thing which my Arab friends assure me has been done in real life a thousand times. It was while reading the Beni Hilal epic that the writer was first impressed by the close resemblance of the behavior of Lehi's sons on that quick trip to Jerusalem to that of the young braves of the Beni Hilal when they would visit a city under like circumstances. The tales of the migrations of the Amer tribe have the same pattern—camping without the walls, drawing lots to see who would take a chance, sneaking into the city and making a getaway through the midnight streets—it is all in the Book of Mormon and all quite authentic.

Thoroughly typical also is the hiding out of the young men in caves near the city while they waited for Laban's henchmen to cool off and debated with Oriental heat and passion, their next move. (I Nephi 3:27-28.) Since the Palais-
tine Exploration Fund Quarterly started to appear many years ago, its readers have been treated to a constant flow of official reports on newly-discovered caves in and near Jerusalem. The country is peppered with them: for the area southwest of the city, "it is difficult to give an account of the principal excavations of this type (caves) without appearing to use the language of exaggeration... to attempt a descriptive catalogue of these caves would be altogether futile, the mere labor of searching the hills for examples... would be almost endless." Farther out, the Beit Jibrin area "contains an innumerable number of artificial caves, and the deserts of Tiḥ and Moab swarm with them." Many of these caves are younger than Lehi's time, but many are also older and have been used at all times as hiding places. But who in America knew of these hiding places a hundred years ago?

The purpose of the first return trip to Jerusalem was the procuring of certain records which were written on bronze (the Book of Mormon like the Bible always uses "brass" for what we call bronze) plates. Lehi had a dream in which he was commanded to get these records which, as he already knew, were kept at the house of one Laban. Nephi does not know exactly the reason for this and assumes, incorrectly, that the object is to "preserve unto our children the language of our fathers." It is interesting that the Beni Hilal in setting out for their great trek felt it necessary to keep a record of their fathers and to add to it as they went, "so that the memory of it might remain for future generations." The keeping of such a daftar was also known to other wandering tribes.

But what were the records doing at Laban's house, and who was Laban anyway?

For ages the cities of Palestine and Syria had been more or less under the rule of military governors, of native blood but, in theory at least, answerable to Egypt. "These commandants (called rabis in the Amarna letters) were subordinate to the city-princes (chazan), who commonly address them as 'Brother' or 'Father.'" They were a sordid lot of careerists whose authority depended on constant deception and intrigue, though they regarded their offices as hereditary and sometimes styled themselves kings. In the Amarna letters we find these men raiding each other's caravans to build up their private fortunes, accusing each other of unpaid debts and broken promises, mutually de-nouncing each other as traitors to Egypt, and generally displaying the usual time-honored traits of the crooked high official in the East. The Lachish letters show that such men were still the lords of creation in Lehi's day—the commanders of the towns around Jerusalem were still acting in closest cooperation with Egypt in military matters, depending on the prestige of Egypt to bolster their corrupt power, and still behaving as groveling and unscrupulous timeservers.

One of the main functions of local governors in the East has always been to hear petitions, and their established practice has ever been to rob the petitioners (or anyone else) wherever possible. The Eloquent Peasant story of fifteen centuries before Lehi and the innumerable Tales of the Qadis from fifteen centuries after him are all part of the same picture, and Laban fits into that picture as if it were drawn to set off his portrait.

... and Laman went in unto the house of Laban, and he talked with him as he sat in his house.

And he desired of Laban the records which were engraved upon the plates of
brass, which contained the genealogy of my father.

And... Laban was angry, and thrust him out from his presence; and he would not that he should have the records. Wherefore, he said unto him: Behold thou art a robber, and I will slay thee.

But Laman fled out of his presence, and told the things which Laban had done, unto us. (I Nephi 3:11-13.)

Later the brothers returned to Laban laden with their family treasure, foolishly hoping to buy the plates from him. They might have known what would happen:

And it came to pass that when Laban saw our property, and that it was exceeding great, he did just after it, insomuch that he thrust us out, and sent his servants to slay us, that he might obtain our property.

And it came to pass that we did flee before the servants of Laban, and we were obliged to leave behind our property, and it fell into the hands of Laban. (Ibid., 3:25-26.)

Compare this with the now classic story of Wenamun’s interview with the rapacious Zakar Baal of Byblos. The Egyptian entered the great man’s house and “found him sitting in his upper chamber, leaning his back against a window,” even as Laman accosted Laban “as he sat in his house.” When his visitor desired of the merchant prince that he part with some cedar logs, the latter flew into a temper and accused him of being a thief (“Behold thou art a robber!” says Laban), demanding that he produce his credentials. Zakar Baal then “had the journal of his fathers brought in, and had them read it before him,” from which it is plain that the important records of the city were actually stored at his house and kept on tablets. From this ancient “journal of his fathers” the prince proved to Wenamun that his ancestors had never taken orders from Egypt, and though the latter softened his host somewhat by reminding him that Ammon, the lord of the universe, rules over all kings, he was given a bad time by the ruler, who, with cynical politeness, offered to show him the graves of some other Egyptian envoys, whose mission had not been too successful; the negotiations being completed Zakar Baal, on a legal technicality, turned his guest over to the mercies of a pirate fleet lurking outside the harbor. And all the while he smiled and bowed, for after all Wenamun was an Egyptian official, whereas Lehi’s sons lost their bargaining power when they lost their fortune.

A few deft and telling touches resurrect the pompous Laban with photographic perfection. We learn in passing that he commanded a garrison of fifty, that he met in full ceremonial armor with “the elders of the Jews” for secret consultations by night, that he had control of a treasury, that he was of the old aristocracy, being a distant relative of Lehi himself, that he probably held his job because of his ancestors, since he hardly received it by merit, that his house was the storing place of very old records, that he was a large man, short-tempered, crafty, and dangerous, and in the bargain cruel, greedy, unscrupulous, weak, and given to drink. All of which makes him a Rabu to the life, the very model of an Oriental pasha. He is cut from the same cloth as the military governors of the Lachish letters: Jaush, “probably,” according to J. W. Jack, “the military governor of this whole region, in control of the defenses along the western frontier of Judah, and an intermediary with the authorities in...” (Continued on following page)
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(Continued from preceding page)
Jerusalem. The author of the letters, Hoshiaiah, was apparently the leader of the military company situated at some outpost near the main road from Jerusalem to the coast." His character is one of "fawning servility."

As to the garrison of fifty, it seems pitifully small. It would have been just as easy for the author of 1 Nephi to have said "fifty thousand," and made it really impressive, but the Book of Mormon is very headstrong in such matters. It has reason to be. The number fifty suits perfectly with the Amarna picture where the military forces are always so surprisingly small and a garrison of thirty to eighty men is thought adequate even for big towns; and this is still more strikingly vindicated in a letter of Nebuchadnezzar, Lehi's contemporary, wherein the great king orders: "As to the fifties who were under your command, those gone to the rear, or fugitives return to their ranks." Commenting on this, Offord says, "In these days it is interesting to note the indication here, that in the Babylonian army a platoon contained fifty men;" also, we might add that it was called a "fifty,"—hence, "Laban with his fifty." (1 Nephi 4:1.) In great wars the organization of opposing armies quickly becomes similar in all essential respects, since neither side can allow the other to overreach it, and in the struggle between Babylonia and Egypt, individuals and groups change sides with great frequency—then as now the world was burdened with a single standard type of military organization. Laban, like Hoshiaiah of Lachish, had a single company of soldiers under him representing the permanent garrison, as against the "tens of thousands" he commanded in the field—it was not these latter but the "fifty" that frightened Laman and Lemuel; and like Jaush (who may even have been his successor) he kept in close touch with "the authorities in Jerusalem."

Returning by night in a third attempt to get the records, Nephi stumbled over the prostrate form of Laban, lying dead drunk in the deserted street. (Ibid., 4:7.) The commander had been (so his servant later told Nephi) in conference with "the elders of the Jews... out by night among them" (Ibid., 4:22), and was wearing his full-dress armor. There is a world of inference in this: we sense the gravity of the situation in Jerusalem, which "the elders" are still trying to conceal: we hear the suppressed excitement of Zoram's urgent talk as he and Nephi hastened through the streets to the city gates (Ibid., 4:27), and from Zoram's willingness to change sides and leave the city, we can be sure that he, as Laban's secretary, knew how badly things were going. From the Lachish letters it is clear that well-informed people were quite aware of the critical state of things at Jerusalem, even while the sarim were working with all their might to suppress every sign of criticism and disaffection. How could they take counsel to provide for the defense of the city and their own interests without exciting alarm or giving rise to general misgivings? The only way, of course, would be to hold their councils of war in secret. The Book of Mormon shows them doing just that.

With great reluctance, but urged persistently by "the voice of the Spirit," Nephi took Laban's own sword and cut off his head with it. This episode is viewed with horror and incredulity by people who approved and applauded the recent killing of far more innocent people than Laban by the armed youth of our own land. The Book of Mormon is no more than the Bible confined to mild and pleasant episodes: it is for the most part a sad and grievous tale of human folly. No one seemed more disturbed by the unpleasant incident than Nephi himself, who took great pains to explain his position. (Ibid., 4:10-18.) First he was "constrained by the Spirit" to kill Laban, but he said in his heart that he had never shed human blood and became sick at the thought: "I shrink and would that I might not slay him." The Spirit spoke again, and to its promptings Nephi adds his own reasons:

I also knew that he had sought to take away mine own life; yea, and he would not hearken unto the commandments of the Lord; and he also had taken away our property.

But this was still not enough; the Spirit spoke again, explaining the Lord's reasons and assuring Nephi that he would be in the right; to which Nephi appends yet more arguments of his own, remembering the promise that his people would prosper only by keeping the commandments of the Lord, and I also thought that they could not keep the commandments... save they should have the law.

which the worthless and criminal Laban alone kept them from having:

And again, I knew that the Lord had delivered Laban into my hands for this cause... Therefore I did obey the voice of the Spirit.

At long last Nephi finally did the deed, of which he is careful to clear himself, putting the responsibility for the whole thing on the Lord. If the Book of Mormon were a work of fiction, nothing would be easier than to have Laban already dead when Nephi found him or simply to omit an episode which obviously distressed the writer quite as much as it does the reader.

(To be continued)

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1Ne. 7:2-5. The expression "up unto the house of Laban" sets the house apart by itself in the land of Jerusalem. They traveled "into the Semitic way of saying "through the wilderness in the direction of Jerusalem." The fact that this was a simple and uncomplicated mission at a time when things would have been hotter than ever in the city for the brethren, who on their former expedition were chased by Laban's police, implies that, Jaush, like Lehi, lived well out in the country.

Gergontiou (Arabs and Israelites, p. 23) cites the Beni Hulail as illustrating migration even as early as the Exodus, and gives some rules also observed by Lehi's party (p. 24): "They do not migrate haphazardly... but send out scouts, and before making a move are careful to determine the will of heaven: "various omens and auguries entered into the process... If humans beings are unenhanced, it is likely that the electromagnetic would not at once lose all attachment to the tribes where they had sprung..."


36. Ibid. p. 269.

37. Survey of Western Palestine Special Papers, 1 1928.

38. Bliss, op. cit., p. 266. On the use of these caves as hiding places in ancient times W. B. Firth, "Hiding places in Canaan," PEQ 1894, pp. 61-70, also 1900, p. 3938 and 1841, p. 674.


40. As a matter of fact, that language was not (Continued on page 670)
Archives of Sweden

(Concluded from page 621)

brand, representing the Rekold Company, which company holds the contract to do the microfilming work throughout Sweden and Finland, presented Mr. Boethius with a brand-new American latest model microfilm reading machine for which he also expressed his appreciation.

"This memorable occasion, the sixth of April, 1949, 119 years after the organization of the Church, will never be forgotten in the Swedish Mission, and it bears out the prophetic utterance—A great and marvelous work is about to come forth among the children of men. The whole world marvels at what is being accomplished in the short span since the restoration of the Church. These things are only accomplished through the proper and inspired leadership of the Church."
—Margit J. Blomquist

These records from Sweden and Finland are arriving in regular shipments at the Genealogical Society and are being carefully inspected and catalogued for use by the general public.

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(Continued from page 642)

preserved even in antiquity, and when the time came for the record to fulfill its great purpose of bearing witness to the world, it had to be translated by the gift and power of God. Of this purpose Nephi at the time knew nothing.

The Elder D. B. Hild, p. 14

Meyer, G. T. A. II, p. 137


We are following the Wenanoot story as given in J. Breasted, History of Egypt (1906), pp. 513-514, the Arabic original.

It is given at length in almost any history of Egypt or the Near East, e.g. James B. G. D. Cochrane, The History of the Pharaoths (London, 1908), pp. 285-7; Comb. As. Hist. II, 193.

Jack, loc. cit.

The older brothers, though they wish to emphasize Labon's great power, mention only fifty, (3:31.) It is Nephi in answering those who say that the Lord is "mightier than Labon and his fifty, or even than his tens of thousands." (Ibid., 4:1.) As a high military commander Labon would command tens of thousands in battle, but such an array is of no concern to Laman and Lemuel, it is the "fifty" they must look out for, i.e., the regular permanent garrison at Jerusalem.

Joshua Offerd, "Archaeological Notes on Jewish Antiquities," PEPO 1940, p. 148

W. F. Albright, "The Seal of Eliahu," JBL, 51 (1932-33), 79-83, shows that the title "servant" in Jerusalem at this time meant something like "official representative," and was an honorable rather than a degrading title.

Samuel ibn Adiyah, the most famous Jewish poet of Arabia in ancient times, gained undying prominence among the Arabs when he allowed his own son to be cruelly put to death before his eyes rather than give up some costly armor with the keeping of which he had been entrusted by a friend. The story, true, or not, illustrates the difference between eastern and western standards and should warn the reader against being misled by some things at first glance; the Arab world were just as shocked by the callousness of Americans in some things. Brockelmann, Gesch. der arab. Lit. (1909), p. 34.

One of the reasons for the visit of Superintendent Curtis, who is one of the sectional vice-chairmen of Region 12, Boy Scouts of America, was the sectional meeting of the Boy Scouts in Honolulu. Scout meetings were also held in Kona, Hilo, and Maui.

Several national and regional officers of the Boy Scouts of America were there, including William V. M. Fawcett, National Chairman Explorer Committee; E. U. Berman, National Chairman of Region 12; Don Moyer, regional Scout executive; and Roland E. Dye, deputy regional executive.

Latter-day Saint boys are prominent in the Scout activities in the islands, as they are wherever the Church is organized. Scout work is being given an increased impetus on the island of Oahu by Elder Milt Allen, deputy under Scout executive, Hazen Shower. Elder Allen is giving special attention to the training of Scout leaders among the Latter-day Saints. Elder Harrald S. Alvord, recently appointed to the

MUTUAL CONVENTION IN HAWAII

Y.M.M.I.A. general board and a Scout executive, attended to aid the Scout work.

The Mutuals are teaching the fundamentals of the Church through spiritualized recreation and inspirational lessons. The age groups are following the lesson plan. The leaders of the M.I.A. there, as elsewhere, are trying to build a testimony in the heart of every boy and every girl.

Attendance at Mutual is almost phenomenal; one Mutual we attended had present 240 people. While we were in Hawaii, the Junior Girls held their rose award night. At an M Men-Gleaner banquet nearly four hundred were in attendance. It was an inspiring sight to see the representation of nations: Hawaiian, Portuguese, Chinese, Japanese, Samoan, and American. The tables were covered with banana leaves; the decorations consisted of gorgeous flowers, including hibiscus, bird of paradise, and anthurium—placed in the center of the table down its entire length. Place cards depicted this year's theme. The young people,
Lehi

IN THE DESERT

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IX

A Word About Plates

We have seen how the ruler of Tyre, to score a point in bargaining with Wenamon, had his family records and accounts brought out and read to him. In the Amarna tablets the Rabu of one small Palestinian city writes to a neighboring prince: "But now behold (note the Book of Mormon style) the king causeth that his true city should go from his hand; let the king search in the tablets which are kept in the house of his father, and learn whether the one who rules Gubla has been his true servant." Here as in Tyre the records were kept at the house of the ruling family: even in distant Rome in the time of Lehi the records from which the later annals were composed seem to have been preserved on tablets in the houses of the leading families. By that time the practice seems to have been universal around the Mediterranean. Where the record was one of real importance, plates of copper, bronze, or even more precious metal were used instead of the usual wooden, lead, or clay tablets. One of the most recent finds of this type from Palestine is "a copper or bronze plate" in Hebrew, dating from the twelfth century B.C., containing a message "of entirely secular, profane character," but "which must have seemed important enough to be engraved on the durable, though 'impractical,' material of metal." More precious documents, such as the famous treaty of 1278 between the kings of Egypt and the Hittites, were kept on silver plates, while the royal record of the deeds of Darius deserved nothing less than gold. The mysterious "reformed Egyptian" texts from Byblos are on bronze plates, and the Demotic Chronicle of Egypt was kept originally on plates. Significant in this regard is Idrisi's account (1226 A.D.) of the excavation of the tomb of Mycerinus, the builder of the great Third Pyramid. Idrisi reports that all that was found in the tomb was a blue sarcophagus containing "the decayed remains of a man, but no treasure excepting some golden tablets, inscribed with characters of a language which nobody could understand." The tablets were used to pay the workmen, and the gold in each of them was worth about two hundred dollars." We leave the reader to speculate on what might have been written on those plates of gold which one of the greatest of Pharaohs apparently regarded as the greatest treasure with which he could be buried.

From an unexpected direction comes new and possibly significant light on written plates. Of recent years a considerable number of copper plates, inscribed, perforated, and linked together with metal rings, have turned up in India. Typical of these (except that they are narrower than most) are the Kesarbeda Plates:

"The set consists of three copper plates strung together on a copper ring. . . . the circumference and diameter of the ring are about 7.4" and 2" respectively. . . . The plates measure roughly 7.5" in length and 1.5" in breadth each. The corners are rounded off. . . . The plates contain to their proper right hand a hole having a diameter of 1/5" for the ring to pass through. . . . All plates are written on both sides."

The date of these plates is about 324 A.D. The contents, a charter of royalty stating the conditions under which the country shall be governed. Further east, but still within the sphere of Indian culture, inscribed plates of the same type, but which no one can read any more, are "handed down from father to son as ancient charms of supernatural origin," showing that the tradition of the importance and significance of the plates survived after the knowledge of reading them had perished. Among the Karens such a plate, formed of "two kinds of plates welded together back to back," the one of copper and the other apparently of gold, was "the talisman by which the chief held his power over the people," who thereby preserved in supernatural form the knowledge that the plate was actually a royal charter to begin with.

Now Hither India seems to be far removed indeed from the cultural world of Lehi, yet the fact is that the writing on all those plates actually came right from that world. It is now known that the script of India was derived from Aramic and Phoenician forms in turn derived from Egyptian. Since the oldest writing in India is that found on the plates, it is at least probable that they preserved not only the earliest script but also the form in which the prototype of that script reached India: The people who introduced the Semitic alphabet to India were people who kept their records on plates bound together with rings, a form preserved by the Indians themselves in their oldest and most sacred records. The case of the Karens is par-
ticularily significant because those people have displayed such astonishing cultural affinities with the Jews that some observers have even claimed them to be of Jewish origin. If that is so, their history must have paralleled Lehi’s in more ways than one. Many chapters of the Diaspora remain to be written. At the very least the Indian plates bear witness to the importance of the linked-plate type document in ancient times.

Nephi was much impressed by Laban’s sword:

the hilt thereof was of pure gold, and the workmanship thereof was exceedingly fine, and ... the blade thereof was of the most precious steel. (1 Nephi 4:9.)

Such ceremonial swords and daggers with hilts of finely worked gold have been common in the Near East throughout historic times. Many exemplars from Egypt and Babylonia repose in our museums, and the Arab princes still wear them as a badge of nobility.

“Precious steel” is an interesting term. Wainwright has pointed out that from the earliest times the Egyptians made swords of meteoric iron, which was of course very valuable—far more “precious” than gold. The recently-discovered sword furnace at Gerar vindicates not only the Bible, which had long been thought to be in error on the matter of iron weapons, but the Book of Mormon as well. The famous Damascus blades are of unknown antiquity; their steel, of fabulous quality, was always made of meteoric iron, according to Jacob—an indication of very ancient origin. Even in modern (Metall von Himmelsfarbe) which may well have been steel. Ceremonial swords in very old Egyptian tomb painting are colored blue to represent either iron or steel, according to the same authority. While the problem of the origin and age of iron and steel remains unsolved, every step in the last forty years has been in the direction of proving a much greater antiquity and much more widespread use of those metals than was formerly believed to be possible.

How Nephi disguised himself in the clothes of Laban and tricked Laban’s servant into admitting him to the treasury is an authentic bit of oriental romance, and, we must repeat, of history as well, for such things did and do happen. During World War II just such melodramatic bluffing proved highly successful on innumerable occasions, effecting thousands of escapes from a watchful enemy.

When Zoram, Laban’s servant, discovered that it was not his master with whom he had been discussing the top secret doings of the elders as they walked the outskirts of the city, he was seized with terror. In such a situation there was only one thing Nephi could possibly have done, both to spare Zoram and avoid giving alarm—and no westerner could have guessed what it was. Nephi, a powerful fellow, held the terrified Zoram in a vice-like grip long enough to swear a solemn oath, “as the Lord liveth, and as I live” (Ibid., 4:32), that he would not harm him if he would listen. Zoram immediately relaxed, and Nephi swore another oath to him that he would be a free man if he would join the party:

Therefore if thou wilt go down into the wilderness to my father thou shalt have place with us. (Ibid., 1:34.)

We have already considered the correctness of the expressions “go down,” and “have place,” as well as the necessity of having Zoram address himself to no one but Nephi’s father. What astonishes the non-Oriental reader here is the miraculous effect of Nephi’s oath to Zoram: by speaking a few conventional words his fears were instantly and completely allayed.

(Continued on following page)

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Religious News Service Photo

Eastern tongue of the Red Sea, near Eziongeber, in the land of Edom.
made an oath unto us that he would tarry with us from that time forth . . . our fears did cease concerning him. (Ibid., 4:35, 37.)

The reaction of both parties makes sense when one realizes that the oath is the one thing that is most sacred and inviolable among the desert people: "Hardly will an Arab break his oath, even if his life be in jeopardy." But not every oath will do: to be binding and solemn an oath should be by the life of something, even if it be but a blade of grass; the only oath more awful than that by one's own life or (less common) "by the life of my head," is the wa hayat Allah, "by the life of God," or "as the Lord liveth," the Arab equivalent of the ancient Hebrew hai Elohim. Today it is glibly employed by the city riffraff, but anciently it was an awful thing, as it still is among the desert people: "I confirmed my answer in the Beduin wise," says Doughty. 'By his life . . . he said, 'Well, swear by the life of Ullah!' . . . I answered and thus even the nomads use, in a greater occasion, but they say, 'By the life of thee, in a little matter.' " So we see the one and only way that Nephi could have pacified the struggling Zoram in an instant was by uttering the one oath that no man would dream of breaking, the most solemn of all oaths to the Semite: "as the Lord liveth, and as I live . . . " (Ibid., 4:32.)

THE END OF THE DESERT

In desert travel, the experts tell us, one day is depressingly like another, and Nephi's record is not meant to be a chronicle of everyday life in the wilderness; most of the information he imparts is incidental to some event he is describing. He does not fail, however, to make special note of the marvelous way in which the women seemed to thrive on the hard Bedouin way of life (Ibid., 17:2), a thing that always impresses visitors among the Arabs. Nephi cannot conceal the excitement and surprise of these wonderful days that brought to a close the long, weary years of monotonous toiling through the sands.

After traveling a vast distance in a south-southeasterly direction, the party struck off almost due east through the worst desert of all, where they "did wade through much affliction," to emerge in a state of almost complete exhaustion into a totally unexpected paradise by the sea. The route indicated would bring them to the sea either at the mountains of Oman or of the Hadramaut, preferably the latter. Of the Qara Mountains in this sector Thomas, one of the few Europeans who has ever seen them, writes:

What a glorious place! Mountains three thousand feet high basking above a tropical ocean, their seaward slopesvelvety with waving jungle, their roofs fragrant with rolling yellow meadows, beyond which the mountains slope northwards to a red sandstone steppe. . . . Great was my delight when in 1928 I suddenly came upon it all from out of the arid wastes of the southern borderlands.

The "greatest living explorer" (as he has been called) goes on to describe the aromatic shrubs of the place, the wooded valleys, the "hazy rim of the distant sea lifted beyond the mountains rolling down to it," and the wondrous beauty of the "sylvan scenes" that opened to the view as he passed down through the lush forests to the sea. Compare this with Nephi's picture (Ibid., 17:5-7):

And we did come to the land which we called Bountiful, because of its much fruit and also wild honey. . . . And we beheld the sea . . . and notwithstanding we had suffered many afflictions and much difficulty, yea, even so much that we cannot write them all. We were exceedingly rejoiced when we came to the seashore: and we called the place Bountiful, because of its much fruit . . . And the voice of the Lord came unto me, saying: Arise, and get thee into the mountain . . .

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It is virtually the same scene: the mountains, the rich woodlands with timber for ships, the bountiful meadows for a paradise of bees (Ibid., 1900, p. 245) and the sea beyond, and above all the joyous relief at a sudden and unexpected deliverance from one of the worst deserts on earth. Much the same description would suit the mountains of Oman farther east, the discovery of which came as a great surprise in 1838. When Von Wrede gave a glowing description of the mountains of the Hadramaut in 1843, the great Von Humboldt and, following him, of course, the whole learned world, simply refused to believe him. (To be concluded)

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5Such was the theory of Ibn Vezir, VI. 80. 40. 37; the others were on tablets or "boards." (Ibid., 1914.)
6The same was the theory of Ibn Vezir, VII. 80. 40. 37; the others were on tablets or "boards." (Ibid., 1914.)
7Al-Sulaimani, in BASOR 73, 96 (1940), calls it "a Hebrew letter of the fourteenth century on a copper or bronze plate.
9The idrisi passage is quoted at length by E. A. W. Budge, The Book of the Dead, Papyrus of An (N.Y., Putnam's, 1913), 1, 14. 19; Noonan, "Kesbada Copper Plate," Int. Bibl. Research Society, 45 (1973), p. 22, with 28-35 lists besides the Kesbada plates (1) the Mattaprad plates of Damodini 65c1 by 11/2", (2) the Kotara plates of Vavvakandasvarra 5 1/2" by 1 1/2", (3) the Peddavalli plates of Salavakana Naavarudra 6 1/2" by 2 1/2", (4) the Kesbada copper plates of Vavvakandasvarra 7 1/2" by 2", (5) the Chakrilla plates of Vavvakandasvarra 7 1/2" by 2 1/2", (6) the Komarji plates of Chandavandasvarra 7 1/2" to 7 1/2" by 2 1/2" to 2 3/4". The plates with four lines of writing to a side are all royal grants and date after 146, while the others are later.
11Ibid., 1914, p. 22, 6 3/16 by 2 3/4 inches. "It is . . . of two different metals: the first half of the plate is copper, but the second half is in a much lighter yellow, and I am not sure that it is not gold. . . . It is too heavy for copper." Buser, op. cit., p. 175.
13The theory of Jewish origin was rejected as a matter of course, the school of "spontaneous, generation" of cultural elements being supreme. Today, however, anthropologists are much more prone to attribute a common origin to things that present remarkable resemblances than formerly.
14Erd. Mey, G.J.A. II, 205; R.M. Hvallo et al. in PEQ 1942, p. 33 (P.I., fig. 141); typical is an Assyrian bronze sword found in the hands of the Arab in 1875; an inscription on the blade shows it to date from the 16th century B.C. (Biblical Arachological Society Transactions IV (1865), p. 458.) An iron ceremonial weapon found recently in a virtually worked handful of copper and gold, T. H. Gaster. "On an Iron Axe from Ugarit," PEQ 1941, p. 33.
17Ibid., op. cit., p. 151; last century. "Sivian sword-sharpeners touted across the desert from Damascus to Meccâh, and sold the grinding machines on their backs," Aug. Ralli, Christians at Meccâh (London, Heinemann, 1909) p. 210. 18"wandering ironworkers, or the smiths of the primitive smiths, who went from place to place, have been variously described as both savages and monks." (P. E. T. Petrie in PEQ 1900, p. 245 and may well go back to the ancient Egyptians, see Gezer, vol. i, p. 291.)

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THE IMPROVEMENT ERA
Lehi in the Desert

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map, Bardehager, in PEFQ 1903, p. 168, noting that the same conditions apply in ancient times.


The Search

(Continued from page 705)

It was a month after my own wedding that Maida telegraphed me, "Francie, I'm married. He's wonderful. Coming home with him today. See you."

The telegram must have been delayed because just as soon as I had read it, a taxi drove up, and I saw Maida and a man inside. My daymaiden went to the door.

I streaked up the stairs, hoping at least to get my face powdered before greeting them, but Maida couldn't wait. She dashed up after me. "Francie, Francie, I'm so happy. Hurry, I want you to meet him. Oh, don't bother with your face. It really won't matter. Come on."

She pulled me, protesting, down to the living room. Her husband was staring out the window, but when we came in, he turned toward us, his eyes homing first to Maida.

He came toward us clumsily, and his gaze focused with embarrassment just above my head. He was nice. He was true blue, but he was big and fumbling, and shy. Why, I thought with an inward prickle, he was a masculine Maida, that is, the Maida that used to be, the one we all laughed at in high school.

Maida slipped her arm through his and stood against him. "Claude," she said softly, "this is Francie, our friend."

There it was, I thought, all out in the open just as if it were a picture she was holding up for me to see. She hadn't changed after all. Not Maida. She only looked different. She was still full of the old wounds, the old slights we kids had thoughtlessly inflicted upon her. They were there, tender and hurting even though the outer surface was smooth and perfect. But it didn't matter now. Maida was safe with Claude, who would always understand. Why shouldn't he, when he could match her every heartbeat?

I knew now what she meant when she said that only she would know when she met the man perfect for her.

It seemed to me that they both stood in a misty radiance of their own as I leaned toward them, holding out my hands and wishing them every happiness.

New Light on the Great Apostasy

(Continued from page 711)

Catholics, but few Protestants would deny that the early Church continued for a time with whatever gifts, graces, and authority it might have originally possessed. Actually, the Catholic concept of ecclesiastical authority has much more in common with Latter-day Saint views than does the Protestant concept.

Now let me proceed to clarify my analysis of the meaning of John's words.

1. The Apostle says "we know that it is the last hour," because his audience had "heard that antichrist was coming" and "even now many antichrists have come." The Savior was, of course, one of those whose predictions were known to John's readers. When speaking to his Apostles concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the spiritual difficulties of those days, our Lord said:

Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before.

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Conclusion

Watching Lehi's travel-worn band wending its way down those desolate mountains to the sea, one is moved to reflect that they have come an unconscionably long way just to build a ship. Well, let the reader suggest some other route. The best guide to Arabia at the time of the writing of the Book of Mormon imagined forests and lakes in the center of Arabia, while insisting that the coasts of that land were "a rocky wall . . . as dismal and barren as can be: not a blade of grass, or a green thing" to be found. The Book of Mormon reverses the picture and has Lehi avoid the heart of the continent to discover smiling woodlands on the southern coast. Where else could Lehi have found his wood on the coast? "It is quite probable," writes a present-day authority, "that Solomon had to transport his ships, or the material for them, from the Mediterranean, for where on the shores of the Red Sea could timber be found for ship-building?"

And by what other route could Lehi have reached his happy shore? The terrain is more passable in the north, but he could not have crossed north Arabia and then followed the east coast, for to do so he would have had to pass through strong and hostile kingdoms: the northern route was closed to him for political reasons. Equally impossible for the same reasons would have been a move to the west: the Mediterranean was a world of closed ports and closed seas. A direct route cutting diagonally across the peninsula would have taken the party away from the game-filled mountains of the coast and forced them to travel through what we now know to be difficult desert country, journeying three times as far in the sands as they actually did—and that was the limit of their endurance. Nor could they have followed the coast all the way, because the whole southwestern corner of the peninsula, which Lehi avoided even at the price of traversing part of the terrible Empty Quarter, comprised the kingdom of the Sabaeans, probably the strongest, richest, and most thickly settled state Arabia has ever had.

So, long and painful though it was, Lehi's itinerary turns out to have been actually the shortest and safest, if not the only one he could possibly have taken.

On the shore of the Arabian Sea the story of Lehi in the Desert properly ends. Though this has been but a preliminary telling, still there is enough to justify certain reflections by way of summary.

Some General Conclusions

We have never been very much interested in "proving" the Book of Mormon, for us its divine provenance has always been an article of faith, and its historical aspects by far the least important thing about it. But the "world" insists that it is a gross and stupid forgery, a bare-faced fraud perpetrated by an ignorant rustic who could hardly write his name. They have made the charge; let them prove it. That should be very easy indeed if they are right, since the accused has committed himself in no uncertain terms and at unsurprising length. The nature of the document he pretended to be translating is so singular and the conditions it must fulfill so unique and exacting, that its composer must certainly be convicted at a glance if he is lying. On the other hand, if his writing shows any tendency at all to conform to the peculiar conditions prescribed, its critics must be put to a good deal of explaining, and if it shows a constant tendency to conform to those difficult conditions, its critics will be bankrupt. We believe that this little study, tentative and limited as it is, nonetheless indicates such a tendency beyond reasonable doubt.

What has been proved? Simply that everything which the Book of Mormon says happened really could have happened. Not that it did happen: to prove that is neither necessary nor possible. Unique events in history can never be reconstructed with certainty; but characteristic, repeated events—manners, customs, rituals, etc., things that happen not just once but again and again in familiar patterns—may be the object of almost absolute certainty. Hence they, and not specific particulars, are the hardest things to fake; in testing forgeries and identifying documents it is the general pattern that is all-important. If a man claims, for instance, that he overheard a particular conversation or witnessed a certain act in Tahiti, we are wasting our time trying to reconstruct the particular event (which could happen anywhere) if only we can prove that the man was never in Tahiti—and on that head a few casual but searching questions will turn the trick. So in talking about Lehi in the Desert we have, as it were, put the old patriarch on the stand as a witness in the case of Joseph Smith versus the world. Joseph Smith has been accused of fraudulent practices, and Lehi is a witness for the defense. He claims to have spent years in certain parts of the Near East about 2550 years ago. Is he telling the truth?

Generations of shrewd and determined prosecutors have failed to shake Lehi's testimony or catch him contradicting himself. That should be enough to satisfy the most critical. But now, lo and behold! Out of the dust come new witnesses—Captain Hoshiaiah of Lachish, a host of sunburned explorers returned from Lehi's deserts to tell us what life there is like, the ancient poets of the Arabs—and with them crates and crates of exhibits, A to Z, seals, inscriptions, letters, artifacts from Lehi's own homeland. Whoever dreamed that Lehi would one day be
confronted with eyewitnesses to the very scenes he claims he saw? In the light of all this new evidence, the defense asks that the case be reopened.

So Lehi and the new-found witnesses are cross-examined and their answers compared. The questions come thick and fast: What is your name? Don’t you know there is no such personal name? (A shard is produced from Lehi’s time and place, and it bears the name Lehi—quite common in those parts.) Where did you live at the time? What do you mean, “land of Jerusalem”? Don’t you mean the city? (Defense produces an ancient letter showing that the territory around the city was all known as the land of Jerusalem in ancient times.) Who governed Jerusalem? What kind of men were they? What did happen to turn them against you? Where did you get this great wealth you talk about? How did you happen to learn Egyptian? Wasn’t that a waste of time? Why didn’t you learn Babylonia? What was all the trouble about in your family? I have quite a list of names here—your purported family and descendants: Do you expect the court to believe these are genuine? If this is a genuine list, why are there no Baal names in it? What is this expression, “the Lamb,” you use—don’t you know it is only found very late? (Defense produces example from the eighth century B.C.) You say you had dreams: about what? A river? What kind of river? What is this weird “mist of darkness”? Did you ever see anything like it when you were awake? (Dozens of witnesses testify.) Don’t you think a dream is pretty slim pretext for leaving your country? In which direction did you flee? How could you build up a big caravan without being apprehended? What did you take with you? How did you travel—on foot? How did you manage to survive with women and children in a terrible desert? How did you manage to escape being killed off by raiders? What did you eat? Did you march continually? When you camped, what was the first thing you did? What kind of altar? What sort of game did you hunt? Where? How? Who did the hunting? Your son made a bow, you say; where in desolate Arabia could he find wood for that? What right had you to go around giving new names to places? Do you think any sane person would give a river and its valley different names? (Roar of protest from Arab witnesses.) Whoever called the Red Sea a fountain? Don’t you know that there are no rivers in Arabia? This little speech you gave to your sons on the river bank—isn’t that whole story a bit farfetched? (More protest from the Bedouins.) Don’t you think it rather silly to describe a valley as “firm and steadfast”? Where did your sons stay when they went back to Jerusalem? What about this cave? You say the record was on metal plates. Isn’t that a rather clumsy way to keep records? Aren’t fifty men a ridiculously small garrison for a city like Jerusalem? You describe nocturnal meetings between the elders and the commandant: Wouldn’t it be much more sensible to hold meetings by day? Do you want the court to believe that you actually carried grain with you on this long and exhausting journey? Are you trying to tell the court that you found a paradise on the southernmost edge of the most desolate land on earth?

And so on, and so on. The reader may add to the list of searching questions at will—there are well over a hundred, and most of them such questions as no one on earth could have answered correctly 120 years ago. The writer of I Nephi was confronted by a hundred delicately interrelated problems of extreme difficulty. The probability of coming up with a plausible statement by mere guesswork once or twice is dim enough, but the chances of repeating the performance a hundred times in rapid succession are infinitely remote. The world through which Lehi wandered was to the westerner of 1830 a quaking bog without a visible inch of footing, lost in impenetrable fog: the best Bible students were hopelessly misinformed even about Palestine. Yet we find

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our guide confident and sure-footed, never retracing his steps to change his course, never hesitating a moment or seeking refuge in vague and non-committal vaporings, never begging to be excused and lamely falling back on an appeal to be understood in a "religious" sense only, never moving behind a smoke screen or becoming consciously or unconsciously confusing or involved.

The present treatment of the Lehi story leaves much to be desired (we can afford to crave the reader's indulgence for using the term too freely or engaging in rather fuzzy speculation on language), but if only a fraction of our information has been sound, I Nephi cannot possibly be explained on the grounds of mere coincidence. To illustrate this, let the reader make a simple test. Let him sit down to write a history of life in Tibet in the middle of the eleventh century A.D. Let him construct his story wholly on the basis of what he happens to know right now about Tibet in the eleventh century—that will fairly represent what was known about ancient Arabia in 1830. In writing your Tibetan fantasy you will enjoy one great advantage: since the canvas is an absolute blank, you are free to fill it with anything that strikes your fancy. So you should have no trouble in getting "smoothly launched into your narrative," one critic who seemed to think that is the only obstacle confronting the author of the Book of Mormon. But there are other obstacles, for in your chronicle of old Tibet we must insist that you scrupulously observe a number of conditions: (1) you must never make any absurd, impossible, or contradictory statements; (2) when you are finished, you must make no changes in the text; (3) you must give out that your "smooth narrative" is not fiction but true, nay, sacred history; (4) you must invite the ablest orientalists to examine the text with care, and strive diligently to see that your book gets into the hands of all those most eager to prove it a forgery and most competent to expose every flaw in it. The "author" of the Book of Mormon serves all these terrifying rules most scrupulously.

In your Tibetan epic you might get something right by happy accident once in a while, but you need not expect to have anything authentic. For consolation you may now take these or any of the best historical novels of any age dealing with a period a thousand or so years before the time of writing; then take a red pencil and get to work, checking every anachronism, incongruity, misinformation, and inaccuracy in the book. The result is scarlet carnage. But be merciful! To realize what difficulties confront the creative historian, one has but to contemplate the laborious production of the Book of Mormon's latest critics.

It was all too easy for the present author, lacking the unfair advantages of either wit or learning, to show where the above-mentioned critic contradicts herself again and again. It wasn't even sporting. It required not one iota of "scholarship." Since then it has been possible for others more diligent and more astute to go further and show how this author has doctored the footnotes repeatedly, while a more careful examination of the star witness, the notorious Bainbride court record, shows that that priceless treasure never existed.

A Victor Hugo or an Anatole France can tell a convincing story when he is near to his own land and time, but let any writer, even the most learned, slip back a couple of thousand years and five or six thousand miles around the globe, and he finds himself in a treacherous slough from which he can only extricate himself by taking frankly to the wings of fantasy. It is not the particular events but the general background and atmosphere of their stories and a thousand little slips of detail that oblige Messrs. White and Douglas to wink knowingly and tell us it's all in fun. Any handbook on Greek and Roman antiquities can supply a writer with all the accurate detail he can possibly use, but no writer yet has succeeded in integrating a mass of such stuff together into a simple, natural, and flawless whole. Naomi Mitchison comes nearest, perhaps, but only because she wisely confines herself to describing such timeless things as mountains, seas, and human emotions. Nephi imparts his information in such simple, effortless, and matter-of-fact discourse that the reader easily overlooks the vast mass of detail he has succeeded in weaving into a natural and uncomplicated pattern. What writer of historical fiction has ever remotely approached such an achievement?

But haven't we been decidedly partial in dealing with the story of Lehi? Of course we have. We are the counsel for the defense. Our witnesses have all been of our own choosing, but no one can deny that they are competent and unprejudiced. We invite the prosecution to cross-examine the witnesses. To date they have not done so, but instead have brought their own witnesses into court, up-to-date intellectuals who can tell us just exactly what the accused was thinking when he wrote the Book of Mormon. Such evidence is not evidence at all—it is bad science, bad history, and even bad newspaper-reporting and would be rejected by any court in the land. But it might impress the half-educated jury, and that is its purpose. We can best explain the new trend in Book of Mormon criticism by a little parable.

A young man once claimed he had found a large diamond in his field as he was ploughing. He put the stone on display to the public free of charge, and everyone took sides. A psychologist showed, by citing some famous case studies, that the young man was suffering from a well-known form of delusion. An historian showed that other men have also claimed to have found diamonds in fields and been deceived. A geologist proved that there were no diamonds in the area but only quartz. The young man had been fooled by a quartz. When asked to inspect the stone itself, the geologist answered with a weary, tolerant smile and a kindly shake of the head. An English professor showed that the young man in describing his stone used the very same language that others had used in describing uncut diamonds: he was, therefore, simply speaking...
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the common language of his time. A sociologist showed that only three out of 177 florists' assistants in four major cities believed the stone was genuine. A clergyman wrote a book to show that it was not the young man but someone else who had found the stone.

Finally an indigent jeweler named Snite pointed out that since the stone was still available for examination the answer to the question of whether it was a diamond or not had absolutely nothing to do with who found it, or whether the finder was honest or sane, or who believed him, or whether he would know a diamond from a brick, or whether diamonds had ever been found in fields, or whether people had ever been fooled by quartz or glass, but was to be answered simply and solely by putting the stone to certain well-known tests for diamonds. Experts on diamonds were called in. Some of them declared it genuine. The others made nervous jokes about it and declared that they could not very well jeopardize their dignity and reputations by appearing to take the thing too seriously. To hide the bad impression thus made, someone came out with the theory that the stone was really a synthetic diamond, very skillfully made, but a fake just the same. The objection to this is that the production of a good synthetic diamond 120 years ago would have been an even more remarkable feat than the finding of a real one.

The moral of this story is that the testimony brought out by the prosecution, however learned, has been to date entirely irrelevant and immaterial. It is hardly necessary to observe that it is also incompetent, since it is highly argumentative and based entirely on conclusions of the witnesses, who have furthermore already made up their minds, on other grounds, that the accused is guilty.

Another thing, the prosecution must prove their case to the hilt: it is not enough to show, even if they could, that there are mistakes in the Book of Mormon, for all humans make mistakes; what they must explain is how the "author" of that book happened to get so many things right. Eighty-odd years of zealous searching by the Palestine Exploration Fund have brought to light little or nothing proving the Exodus; to this day "of the story of . . . Saul, David, Solomon, or even of their existence, there is no trace whatever outside of Palestine." Yet this shortage of evidence by no means disproves the Bible. We should not have been disappointed or surprised to find all the records completely silent on matters relevant to the Book of Mormon; yet they have been far from that. If a man makes a mistake in solving a very complex mathematical problem, that proves nothing as to his ability as a mathematician, for the greatest make slips. But if he shows a correct solution for the problem, it is impossible to explain away his success as an accident, and we must recognize him, whoever he is, as a bona fide mathematician. So it is with the author of I Nephi: If we could find mistakes in his work, we could readily explain and forgive them, but when he keeps coming up with the right answer time after time, we can only accept his own explanation of how he does it.

One significant aspect of the story of Lehi in the Desert must not be overlooked. It is wholly, from beginning to end, a history of the Old World. There is in it not so much as a hint of the noble red man. Nothing in it ever betrays the slightest suspicion that the drama is going to end in the New World. Lehi's people thought they had found their promised land in Bountiful by the sea and were horribly upset when Nephi, who himself had thought the project impossible (I Nephi 17:8-9), undertook by special instruction to build a ship.

From what oriental romance, then, was the book of I Nephi stolen? Compare it with any attempts to seize the letter and the spirit of the glamorous East, from Voltaire to Grillparzer, nay, with the soberest oriental histories of the time, and it will immediately become apparent how unreal, extravagent, overdone, and stereotyped they all are, and how scrupulously Nephi has avoided all the pitfalls into which even the best scholars

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Lehi in the Desert
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were sure to fall. There is no point at all to the question: Who wrote the Book of Mormon? It would have been quite as impossible for the most learned man alive in 1830 to have written the book as it was for the unschooled Joseph Smith. And whoever would account for the Book of Mormon by any theory suggested so far—save one—must completely rule out the first forty pages.

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- Conder's Arabia, in The Modern Traveller series (London, 1835), p. 141; p. 91; "... small mountainous country... seem to form a continued line from the southeast of Palestine to Omann."  
- ibidem, p. 348.
- Stewart Perowne, "Note on I Kings, Ch. X. 1-13," PEQ 1939, p. 200
- This principle is well illustrated in Cheesman's criticism of Palgrave. Though the latter's descriptions of Hufuf are so full of "sheer inaccuracy" and "blatant inaccuracy" as to appear almost pure fabrication, and though "Palgrave's map of Hufuf is so full of inaccuracies that one cannot be tempted even to orient it," Cheesman nonetheless concludes that: "The picture Palgrave painted of Hufuf, its gardens, its archways, and its industries and people... could only have been composed by an eye-witness." No matter how imperfect the details, the general picture presents objects that would not have been mentioned if they had not been seen. (In Unknown Arabia, pp. 67-71). "It is only too easy," writes the same author, "however careful one may be, to fall into little inaccuracies in an endeavor to put color into one's own description of a country, and it is easier still, as I found, to come behind and point out the shortcomings of a predecessor," (id., p. 70.) This is a powerful argument indeed for the sober and detailed account of Nephri, whose mistakes of detail we could pardon if we could discover them. The same principle applies to the study of documents. How do we know, for example, that the text of Manetho, an ancient Egyptian, is actually preserved in the late Greek writing that has come down to us. Because, says Ed. Meyer (G.A.A., I.2.21), it is just the sort of text that one would expect to find in an Egyptian papyrus. Details are secondary.

- "Scientific study of the historical topography of the Holy Land" really began with the first journey of Ed. Robinson in 1838 (Bull. Am. Sch. Or. Res. 1838). Yet forty years later a leading authority on Palestine writes, "Few countries are more traveled than Palestine, and in few are the manners and customs of the people less known..." (Cheesman-Gannem in PEQ 1875, 1871.)

The official statement of the Partex, Expl. Fund, ten years later was: "There is scarcely anything definite known about the desert of the Wanderings." (Palmer in Surv. West. Pal. Spec. Papers, p. 73.) The Bible itself, instead of clearing up problems, is the main cause for the "great discrepancies" in the reports of observers according to Palmer. (Desert of the Exodus I. 2.) The classic example of this is Dr. H. Clay Trumbull's Kadesh Barnea, recommended by high authorities in 1888 as the standard work on the south desert and accepted by biblical geographers as the authority on the district, right down to our own times, when Woolley and Lawrence Hardly showed it to be utterly "fantastic" and worse than worthless. (PEQ 1914, p. 191; The Wilderness of Zin, p. 71.)" As to Clarke's work on the same area, published in the PEQ in 1883 (the year after Trumbull's face), it was so absurd that the same critics content themselves with remarking "We will not print comments on this." (Wilderness of Zin, p. 73, n. 1.) In 1935 Col. Newcombe wrote: "I had several books on the subject of the Wanderings, but nearly all were written by idealistic and very inexperienced visitors; most of these books had entirely missed the truth from lack of knowledge of the country or understanding of the Bedouin mind. Each seemed to exaggerate greatly his own little theory at the expense of anyone else's." (PEQ 1935, p. 116.] Yet even if the Bible were a foolproof guide, the story of Lehi goes far beyond it. The fact that the Rphaohs were masters of the country in the time of Joshua and the early judges... would not have been neglected by the readers of the Biblical narrative alone, but is one of the assured results of archaeology. (Clay, Bible and Spade, p. 696.) Just as the Book of First Nephi is full of things that "would not have been

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suspected by readers of the Biblical narrative alone," and yet are now among "the assured results of archaeology." The complete and general disagreement of the experts as to what happened when Nebuchadnezzar invaded Palestine is nicely illustrated by Prof. Albright in Jud. Bibl. Lit. 51 (1932), 88, 95, 971.

"See preceding note. Doughty feels that it is necessary to correct persistent misconceptions of "Orientalism" in the western mind: the "tires of an European Orientalism" are entirely romantic and misleading. (Arabia Deserta I, 96) in Arabia there is "little or nothing of Orientalism." (Ibid., I, 631.) "That fantastic Orientalism" (he writes in his Index) "which in it as were the odour of a lady's casket, is not Arabian but foreign." Travel in the East is by no means a sure corrective to these warped views, and might even have the opposite effect, according to Ed. Meyer (Gesch. u. Ate. I,2,10), for in the East in modern as in ancient times, uncritical guides and many other things conspire to "take" in the western traveler and ex- pleit and excite his gullibility. A present-day traveler would have a harder time than ever to duplicate the conditions of Lehi's day, for in large parts of the East "the old Bedu tradition has been shattered but nothing has taken its place." (E. Epstein in PEQ 1939, p. 69.) Also, in 1685 the Palestine Exploration Fund was founded to dispel the cloud of ignorance and misinformation that still enveloped the Holy Land. (PEQ 1910, p. 192.) Most of the area covered in I. Nephi has never been studied, and of the south desert, a main objective of the Palestine Exploration Fund for many years, a specialist could still write in 1931, "Our study of this interesting districts has only just begun." (G. E. Herz in Archaeological Journal, in the Southern Desert." (PEQ 1938, p. 214.) Today Arabia is still absolutely closed to the investigations of science," wrote Prof. L. Lagrange, Etudes sur les Religions Semitiques, in Revue Biblique, 39. In the 1930s, the American Consul in traveling in central Arabia, "searched all known maps for first-hand information without avail." (Unknown Arabia, p. 15), according to the same authority. "Nothing was known of the coast of Ophir beyond that it was far off." (p. 31), though this is one of the most approachable parts of Arabia. Edwin Burton could write: "Of the Ruha al-Khalif I have heard enough, from credible relations, to conclude that its herid depths swarm with a large and half-starved population." (Pilgr. to Al-Madinah, etc. I, 3); Philip and Thomas have in our own day that its herid depths do nothing of the sort, nor ever have. If intelligent people have let their imaginations run wild, it has been because there was no other way of supplying missing information: "The life of the nomad patriarchs and the wanderers of Israel (and, we might add, of Lehi) in the desert present the greatest contrast with our Europe," says Balderweiger (PEQ 1901, p. 185). "It is of course no wonder that Colenso was found in the book of Genesis to invent many statements which seemed to him incompatible with his own ideas." The proof of Genesis lies in the very fact that those statements are incompatible with western ideas. Conder's Arabia, p. 7, ber- itishes an interesting picture of how the most marvelous narratives regarding Arabia at the time the Book of Mormon was written: "The whole peninsula, Nebuchad, says, may be considered as an immense pile of mountains, inclosed with a belt of flat, arid, sandy ground," almost the exact opposite of the true picture.

The writer is here referring to his No Ma'am, That's Not History (Bookcraft, 1946), and to the more basic investigations of Alma Burton of Brigham Young University. Especially, however, the reader is referred to the definitive handling of the court records by Dr. Francis W. Kirkham, A New Witness of Christ in America (Enlarged 2nd Edition, Zion's Publishing Company, Independence, Mo., 1947), pp. 370-394.

Any reader possessed of boundless time and patience may discover the answers to these and hundreds of like searching questions in the foregoing articles. On one point the author has been to take hand by readers of the Book of Mormon in recent weeks:

At present the claim is being put forth in some quarters that the story of Laban's demise is absurd, if not impossible. It is said that Nephi could not have killed Laban and made his escape. Those who are familiar with night patrolling in wartime, however, will see this tale as a thrilling and realistic account. In the first place, the highly critical are apparently not aware that the lighting of city streets, except for festivals, is a blessing unknown to ages other than our own. Hundreds of passengers might be cited from ancient writers, classic and oriental, to show that in times gone by, the streets at night, even of the biggest cities, were very dark and hence very dangerous. To move about late at night without large bears and armed guards was to risk almost certain assault, in times of social unrest we know from many sources.

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Lehi in the Desert

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that streets at night were virtually given over to the underworld, as they were in some European cities during the blackouts of the last war. The extreme narrowness of the ancient streets made their blackout doubly effective. From the ancient comedy we learn how heavily barred and closely guarded the doors of private houses had to be at night, and archaeology has shown us Eastern cities in which apparently not a single house window opened upon the public street. East and West, the inmates simply shut themselves in at night as if in a besieged fortress. Even in Shakespeare's day we see the comical terror of the night watch passing through the streets at hours when all honest people are behind doors. In a word, the streets of any ancient city at night (the classic trial of Alcibiades proves this strikingly) were a perfect setting for the committing of deeds of violence without fear of detection.

It was very late when Nephi came upon Laban (1 Ne. 4:5 22): the streets were deserted and dark. Let the reader imagine what he would do if he were on patrol near an enemy headquarters during a blackout and stumbled on the unconscious form of some notoriouly bloodthirsty enemy general. By the brutal code of war the enemy has no claim to a formal trial, and it is now or never. Laban was wearing armor, so the only chance of dispatching him quickly, painlessly, and safely was to cut off his head—the conventional treatment of criminals in the East, where beheading has always been by the sword, and where an executioner would be fired for failing to decapitate his victim at one clean stroke. Nephi drew the sharp, heavy weapon and stood over Laban a long time, debating his course. (1 Ne. 4:9-13.) He was a powerful man and an expert hunter. With the care such a one would do a neat job and avoid getting much blood on himself. But why should he worry about that. There was no chance of meeting any honest citizen, and in the dark no one would notice the blood anyway. What they would notice, even in the dark, would be the armor that Nephi put on. The armor, incidentally, like the sword, could be easily wiped clean. The covering of the armor was the shivered and natural thing for Nephi to do. A number of instances from the last war could be cited to show that a spy in the enemy camp is never so safe as when he is wearing the insignia of a high military official. No one dares challenge such people (who are often tricky); their business is at all times "top secret," and their uniform gives them complete freedom to come and go unquestioned.

Nephi tells us that he was "led by the spirit." He was not taking impossible chances, but being in a tight place he followed the surest formula of those who have carried-off ticklish assignments. He was clear of the region before anything was discovered. In his whole exploit there is nothing the least improbable.

(End)

Three Appointed to Y.M.M.I.A.

General Board

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the mission in Czechoslovakia. Besides his twelve years in the mission field, he has served four years as a member of the Parleys Ward bishopric in Salt Lake City and been active in ward Mutual work.

He and Mrs. Toronto are the parents of six children—three sons and three daughters.

Elder Toronto has been assigned to the M Men Committee of the general board.

THE IMPROVEMENT ERA