

THE DESERT WEEKLY

PIONEER PUBLICATION

ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION.

ESTABLISHED

TRUTH AND LIBERTY

JUNE, 1850.

NO. 23.

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, SATURDAY, JUNE 1, 1889.

VOL. XXXVIII.

A PRAYER IN THE DARK.

I stretch my hand out through the lonesome night,
My helpless hand, and pray Thee, Lord,
to lead
My ignorant steps, and help me at my need;
Far off from home, pity my hapless plight,
And through the darkness guide me on to light!

I have no hope unless my cry Thou heed—
Be merciful; for I am lost indeed,
Unless Thy rising sun the darkness smite.

How shall I find, who know not how to seek?
Kindle my soul, enlighten my dull mind;
My heart is heavy, and my faith is weak,—
A stone I am, and deaf and dumb and blind,—
Unhelped of Thee, my footsteps helpless stray,—

Have pity Thou, and lead me to the Day!
—*Youth's Companion.*

GREAT MEN OF ANCIENT AMERICA.

LEHI.

Any community will be affected, in a large degree, by the character of its founders. This fact is strikingly illustrated in the distinctive characteristics of the different sections of the United States which, by these characteristics, are divided into groups; as the New England States; Northern and Southern States, etc.; and each group, and sometimes a single State, possesses peculiar social features derived from its original founders.

Thus the English Puritans who first settled New England; the English and German Quakers who settled in Pennsylvania; the French Huguenots in the Carolinas; the Spanish in Florida and Texas, and the "Mormons" in Utah, have stamped ineffaceable marks of peculiar manners and social traits upon their respective communities.

And so the races which have sprung from the Jerusalem colony exhibit in clean-cut lineaments, the racial and inherited constituents of Lehi's spiritual and physical char-

acter. This consideration should invest with peculiar interest the distinctive traits of the Lehi emigrants; and Lehi, as the central figure, should draw special attention.

The few glimpses afforded in the Book of Mormon, of the private life and public career of this ancient father, discover him in the light of a prudent and an anxious parent, a faithful and zealous servant of God; submitting with patient resignation to the Divine will, and maintaining a steadfast trust in the Lord, while suffering the severest trials, and performing uncommon and peculiarly difficult duties. In his character and calling; in his self-sacrifice and faithful obedience to the voice of inspiration; in his prophetic gifts and sacerdotal ministrations; as a pioneer and empire-founder, Lehi was pre-eminently a leading spirit, a venerable patriarch, worthy to stand among the illustrious heroes who have stood for God and the truth, in this wicked, rebellious and God-hating world.

As he was not one of the world's favorites, we may look in vain for his features among the sculptured busts of earth's mighty ones. But while art has essayed to perpetuate the names and forms of the Nimrods and Pharaohs, the Alexanders and Cæsars, by incising portraits in the cold, dead granite, Lehi's character and practical virtues are impressed upon the face of the wide-spreading continent; and though we have not his earthly image in antique sculpture or painting, it endures in a still livelier and more palpable form. Lehi lives and speaks, in the characteristics of his descendants, and in the relics and ruins, in the monuments and colossal features stamped upon the broad face of the country.

Nephi, Lehi's fourth son, writes as follows:

"Having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father. * * * Yea, I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews, and the language of the Egyptians. * * * And now I, Nephi, do not make a full account of the things which my father hath written, for he hath written many things which he saw in visions and in dreams; and he also hath written many things which he prophesied and spake unto his children, of which I shall not make a full account." I Nephi, i: 1, 2, 16.

"And now I, Nephi, do not give the genealogy of my fathers in this part of my record, * * * for it is given in the record which has been kept by my father; * * * for it sufficeth me to say, that we are a descendant of Joseph."

We learn from the above that Lehi was an educated man; a prophet of God, and an inspired writer. We learn further concerning him, that he left his home, his gold and silver, and other valuable property, and, at the command of the Lord, took his wife and children and departed from the then opulent city of Jerusalem, out into the barren wilderness; where, in true patriarchal style, he offered sacrifice and burnt offerings unto the God of Israel. I Nephi, ii: 1-4; v: 9.

The character and acts of this great man are worthy of the close study of the Book of Mormon student; for, from his individuality radiated, as lines from a central point, traits, customs, and essential characteristics, which fastened themselves upon his descendants, and took such root in the ancient institutions of this country that they are its distinguishing features today. The character of Lehi, furnishes a key to many of the otherwise unsolvable problems of pre-historic America.

Lehi was acquainted with the "learning of the Jews," and this is what he taught his children; and