

## UNWITTING WITNESSES.

## VI.

According to the Book of Mormon the second race of people who settled upon the land of America were called Nephites. They left the city of Jerusalem B.C. 599, being the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Israel.

The colony comprised Lehi, a patriarch of the lineage of Joseph, who was sold by his brethren; his wife and six sons—Laman (after whom the Lamanites were named), Lemuel, Sam, Nephi (after whom the Nephites were called), Jacob and Joseph. After this family left Jerusalem they sojourned in the wilderness for a considerable time, and while there they were joined by another Israelite named Ishmael, his wife, three sons, and five daughters. The father died before the colony started to cross the ocean, and the sons of Lehi took the daughters of Ishmael to wife. There was also a servant of Lehi, named Zoram, belonging also to Jerusalem, who joined the company in the desert, married one of Ishmael's daughters, and emigrated with the colonists. This colony constituted the original founders of the second race, and were the aborigines of the present Indian tribes of the New World; the people of Zarahemla having become absorbed into this race.

While Lehi's company tarried at different points on their route from Jerusalem to the place of embarkation, they employed the time, like the Jaredites before them, in gathering provisions, grain and seeds, ship-building and other necessary preparations.

The course they took was "nearly a south, southeast direction until they came to the 19th degree north latitude; then, nearly east of the Sea of Arabia; then they sailed in a southeast direction, and landed on the continent of America, in Chili, thirty degrees south latitude." See Compendium, page 289.

Upon their arrival the colonists commenced tilling the land, and sowing the grain they had brought with them, and were soon rewarded with abundant harvests. They found "beasts in the forests of every kind, both the cow and the ox, and the ass and the horse, and the goat, and the wild goat, and all manner of wild animals, which were for the use of man. And we did find all manner of ore, both of gold, and of silver, and of copper." Book of Mormon, page 47.

The animals spoken of were imported into the country by the first colony. Book of Mormon, pages 572, 573 and 581.

Shortly after their settlement, and spreading over the face of the land, the Nephites discovered evidences of a former numerous race having previously occupied the country. This discovery, which was a surprise to the new settlers, was made by accident.

The first section settled by the colony of Mulek was called Zarahemla, which is supposed to have been north of the headwaters of the river Magdalena; its northern boundary being a few days' journey south of the Isthmus. About thirty years after the landing of the Zarahemla colony, Nephi had become a prominent leader, and thereby excited the envy and ill-will of his older brothers. In his record, Nephi declares that "their anger did increase against me, insomuch that they did seek to take away my life." Page 70. In consequence of this ill-will towards him, Nephi gathered together his family, and also Zoram and his family, and Sam, Jacob, and Joseph his brethren, and his sisters, their families, and as many others as would go, and departed into the wilderness to seek a home where they might dwell in peace.

The record says: "After we had journeyed for the space of many days, we did pitch our tents. And my people wanted that we should call the name of this place Nephi. And all those who were with me did take upon them to call themselves the people of Nephi."

"This land of Nephi is supposed," says Prof. O. Pratt, "to be in or near Ecuador." This was the first important division of Lehi's colony, and these factions were never again united.

Jacob, the brother of Nephi says:

"And it came to pass that Nephi died. Now, the people which were not Lamanites, were Nephites; nevertheless, they were called Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, Zoramites, Lamanites, Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites. But I, Jacob, shall not hereafter distinguish them by these names, but I shall call them Lamanites that seek to destroy the people of Nephi; and those who are friendly to Nephi, I shall call Nephites, according to the reigns of the kings." Page 129.

We find that the colony had spread now over a large area of country. After landing on the Chilian coast, they worked northward, toward the Isthmus. The Nephites had dwelt in the land of Nephi for nearly 400 years,

during which time they had many wars with the Lamanites; "and the more wicked part of the Nephites were destroyed." Mosiah, one of their prophets, was warned of the Lord to flee out of the land of Nephi; and as many as were desirous to escape the awful turmoil and bloodshed, were invited to accompany him into the wilderness. In their wanderings northward they came to the section of country called Zarahemla.

"Behold it came to pass that Mosiah discovered that the people of Zarahemla came out from Jerusalem, at the time that Zedekiah, king of Judah, was carried away captive into Babylon." Page 156.

There is little known of this small colony that left Jerusalem eleven years after Lehi. Their present leader was Zarahemla, after whom the country was named. Their forefathers journeyed in the wilderness, crossed the great waters, and had dwelt in the land for nearly four centuries, when Mosiah discovered them. They had brought no records with them, and, probably, had kept none, as their language had become corrupted. And after Mosiah had been appointed their king, they were taught the language of the Nephites; and then Zarahemla gave a genealogy of his fathers, "according to his memory." Whatever their religion might have been when they arrived, they now "denied the being of their Creator."

These were the people whom Coriantumr fell in with after the complete annihilation of his people, and with whom he dwelt "for the space of nine moons." It is probable that Coriantumr died and was buried at the end of that time; for it had been prophesied that if he would not repent, the whole of his people and also his household should be destroyed; "and he should only live to see the fulfilling of the prophecies which had been spoken concerning another people receiving the land for their inheritance; and Coriantumr should receive a burial by them; and every soul should be destroyed save it were Coriantumr." Book of Mormon, page 602.

The people continued to spread both north and south, and from the incidental description of the localities they settled it is easy to recognize their agreement with the localities in which have been discovered the ruins and relics of just such peoples, such customs, and such events as the Book of Mormon records register.

In North America they occupied tracts "covered with large bodies of