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The Mastodon of the Book of Ether

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Abstract: Omer, a descendant of Jared, departed the Jaredite lands to a place by the seashore. His community's domesticated animals consisted of elephants and other unidentified animals that had perished by the time the Nephites arrived. Pratt muses about the disappearance of these animals and the remnants of curious animals found in New York.

phant. The two tusks each measure 8 feet in length, and their true position is well marked on the upper jaw. The hip bone is 5 feet long, and weighs 100 lbs., while the shoulder blades measure 10 feet 9 inches, and weigh about 50 lbs. each. The under jaw, found some weeks since, precisely fits the upper jaw now exhumed, and the ribs are found to be $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet in length. The measurements show that the animal must have stood at least 15 feet in height, and have been a little upwards of 20 feet in length, independent of the tusks, already stated to be each 8 feet

in length. Professor Marsh, of the Yale College Scientific School, gives it as his opinion that the remains discovered are those of a great North American mastodon, comparing in all its parts fully with the description of the animal given in the scientific works as follows:—The animal has the vaulted and cellular skull of the elephant, with large tusks in the upper jaw and heavy form. From the character of the nasal bones and the shortness of the head and neck, it has been concluded it had a trunk.”

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MILLENNIAL STAR.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1866.

THE MASTODON OF THE BOOK OF ETHER.

THE Book of Ether is a condensed Sacred History of the great nation of the Jaredites, who colonized North America from the Tower of Babel; and after dwelling therein about sixteen centuries were destroyed. The name of their last Prophet was Ether, who wrote his book about six centuries before Christ upon TWENTY-FOUR PLATES OF GOLD. Moroni, who was the last Prophet of the Nephites, abridged the Jaredite History. Moroni's abridgement was written, in the beginning of the fifth century of the Christian era, after the destruction of the Nephites, and was compiled as the Book of Ether, among other Sacred Books, in the collection of the Prophet Mormon.

The Jaredites, after being 344 days upon the water, landed upon the western coast of North America. In the days of Omer, who was a descendant of the fourth generation from Jared, a branch of the Jaredites founded a colony upon the sea-shore, east from the State of New York. Moroni gives a description of their journey, and of the locality of the colony, as follows:—

“And the Lord warned Omer in a dream that he should depart out of the land; wherefore Omer departed out of the land, with his family, and travelled many days, and came over by the place where the Nephites were destroyed, and from thence eastward, and came to a place which was called Ablom, by the sea-shore, and there he pitched his tent, and also his sons and his daughters, and all his household.” (See Book of Mormon, p. 532.)

In the days of Emer, the son of Omer, we have a description of their great prosperity, and, among other things, of their domesticated animals. We extract the following :—

“And the Lord began again to take the curse from off the land, and the house of Emer did prosper exceedingly under the reign of Emer ; and in the space of sixty and two years they had become exceeding strong, insomuch that they became exceeding rich, having all manner of fruit, and of grain, and of silks, and of fine linen, and of gold, and of silver, and of precious things, and also all manner of cattle, of oxen, and cows, and of sheep, and of swine, and of goats, and also many other kind of animals which were useful for the food of man ; and they also had horses, and asses, and there were ELEPHANTS, and CURELOMS, and CUMOMS ; all of which were useful unto man, and more especially, the Elephants, and Cureloms, and Cumoms.” (p. 533.)

When the Nephites came from Jerusalem, they gave us no account of finding these huge animals upon the continent, although they found an abundance of the other animals above referred to. We may, therefore, reasonably conclude that the three last named perished with the Jaredite nation. But it is remarkably strange that the bones of these animals should resist decomposition for the immense period of three or four thousand years. The mind also naturally inquires, How came the bones of this Curelom or Cumom to be 83 feet below the surface of the earth ? Were its deep coverings the result of the 3000 years' accumulations of the *debris* or washings of the Mohawk river ? Or was the skeleton suddenly engulfed during the tremendous convulsions of the New World, at the time of the crucifixion ? (See Book of Mormon, p. 450.) Professor Agassiz, by an inspection of the locality, will no doubt be able to throw much light upon these questions. The Omerites who inhabited all that region of country, nearly four thousand years ago, would have been filled with the wildest astonishment, had they foreseen, the intense curiosity and peculiar care, which the New Yorkers are now bestowing upon the bones of one of their domestic animals.

O. P.

APPOINTMENT.—Elder Joseph Lawson is released from laboring in the Isle of Man, and is appointed to preach in the Welsh District, under the direction of President Abel Evans.

SACRED METALIC PLATES.

BY O. PRATT.

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Let us next inquire, how the Nephites preserved the knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures ? Did they carry a copy with them from Jerusalem ? Or were they merely dependent upon their own memories ? They inform us, that they carried a copy with them, engraved on Brass Plates. These are described by Nephi, as follows :—

“My father Lehi took the records