A BARTERED LIFE.

BY MARION HARLAND.

INTERNATIONAL PRESS ASSOCIATION

CHAPTER VIII.

THE conclusion was in her mind often enough every day of her life to become hackneyed, yet it always brought with it a strange, sweet thrill. Truly sisterly affection was a holy and a beautiful thing! She had read as much in moral philosophy, and likewise in poetry. Few feelings could compare with it in unselfish fervor and constancy. And, as she had said, Edward was one brother in ten thousand—and not to be compared with common men.

She began the preparations for the drive at half-past two, pursuant to her husband's directions. Not that she expected to leave the house that afternoon, Edward's judgment being, in her estimation, but one remove from infallibility; she could not believe that the trial of the horses would result as Mr. Withers had predicted, but that they would be remanded to the stable and custody of the unreliable jockey without approaching her door, or gladdening Harriet's eyes. Nevertheless, the order had gone forth that she should don her cloak, furs, hat and gloves before three o'clock, and Mr. Withers would be displeased were he to return at five and find her in her home dress. Harriet tapped at her door before she was half ready.

"Just to remind you, my dear madam," she said, sweetly, "of what my cousin said about keeping the horses standing." She was equipped cap-a-pie for the excursion, and Constance renewed her silent accusation of impertinent forwardness as she saw her trip down stairs to take her station at a front window, that "my cousin" might see, at the first glance, that she was ready and eager for the promised—and because promised by him—certain pleasure of the jaunt.

Constance was surprised, five minutes before the hour designated, to hear a bustle and men's voices in the lower hall. They had really come, then, in spite of her prognostications. Drawing on her gloves that she might not be accused of dilatoriness, she walked to the door of her chamber, when it was thrown wide against her by her maid.

"Oh, ma'am!" she blubbered, her cheeks like ashes and her eyes bulging from their sockets. "May all the blessed saints have mercy upon ye! There's been the dreadfullest accident! Them brutes of horses has run away, and Mr. Witherses and Mr. Edward is both killed dead! They're a bringing them up-stairs this blessed minit, and"—catching her mistress's skirt as she dashed past her—"you're not to be frightened, ma'am, the doctor says! He sent me up for to tell you careful!"

Unhearing and unheeding, Constance wrested her dress from the girl's hold, and met upon the upper landing of the staircase four men bearing a senseless form. The head was sunk upon the breast, and the face hidden by the shoulders of those who carried him, but her eyes fell instantly upon the right hand, which hung loosely by his side. She recognized the fur gauntlet that covered it as one of a pair of riding-gloves she had given Edward Withers at Christmas, and which he had worn since whenever he drove or rode. She had seen him pocket them that morning before going out.

"Mrs. Withers! my dear lady! you really must not touch him yet!" said the attendant physician, preventing her when she would have thrown her arms about the injured man. He pulled her back by main force, that the body might be carried into the chamber she had just quitted.

"Let me go! Let me go! Do you hear me?" her voice rising into a shrill scream that chilled the veins and pained the hearts of all who heard it. "Dead or alive, he belongs to me, and to no one else! Man! how dare you hold me? You do not know how much I loved him—my darling! Oh, my darling!"

The doctor was a muscular man, but, in her agony of despair, she was stronger than he, bade fair to master him, as she wrestled to undo his grasp upon her arms.

"Is there no one in this place who can persuade her to be calm?" he asked, imploringly, looking back down the stairs.

There was a movement at the foot of the steps, then the crowd parted instantly and silently, unnoticed by the frantic woman. She was still struggling, threatening and praying to be released; when a pallid face, streaked with blood, confronted her—a tender hand touched her arm. "Constance, my dear sister, my poor girl, come with me! Will you not?" said compassionate tones.

"She has fainted. That is the best thing that could have happened," said the doctor, sustaining the dead weight of the sinking figure with more ease than he had held the writhing one.

They bore her across the hall to Edward's room as the most convenient retreat for her in her insensible state, and while the maid-servant loosened her dress and applied restoratives, a more anxious group was gathered in her apartment about her husband. His visible injuries were severe, if not dangerous. His collar bone and right arm were broken, but it was feared that there was internal and more serious hurt. Just as a gasp and a hollow groan attested the return of consciousness, a message was brought to Edward from the opposite bedroom.

"She do call for you all the time, sir, or I would not have made so bold as to disturb ye," said the girl who had beckoned him to the entrance. "She is a bit out of her head, poor lady!"

"Where is Miss Field? Why does she not attend to Mrs. Withers?" asked Edward, glancing reluctantly at his brother's bed.

In after days he could smile at the recollection of the reply, uttered with contemptuous indifference: "Oh, she's a-going into high strikes on the back parlor sofy."

At the time, he was only conscious of impatience at the call of pity that obliged him to leave his perhaps dying relative in the hands of comparative strangers. He ceased to regret his compliance when the tears that burst from Constance's eyes at sight of him were not attended by the ravings which had terrified her attendants. He sat down upon the edge of the bed, and leaned over to kiss the sobbing lips. "My dear sister, precious child!" he said, as a mother might soothe an affrighted daughter, and she dropped her head upon his shoulder, to weep herself into silence, if not composure.

When she could listen, he gave her the history of the misadventure in a few words. Mr. Withers had insisted upon handling the reins himself. This accounted to the auditor for his use of Edward's gloves as being thicker than his, although their owner made no mention of having lent them to him. The horses had behaved tolerably well until they were within three blocks of home, when they had shied violently at a passing omnibus, jerked the reins from the driver's hands, and dashed down the street, the sleigh upset at the first corner, and both the occupants were thrown out, Mr. Withers striking forcibly against a lamp-post, while Edward was partially stunned against the curb-stone. They had been brought to their own door in a carriage, the younger brother reviving in time to alight, with a little assistance from a friendly bystander, and to superintend the other's removal to the house and up the stairs.

Constance heard him through without interruption or comment, voluntarily raised her head from its resting place, and lay back upon her pillows, covering her face with her hands. One or two quiet tears made their way between her fingers ere she removed them, but her hysterical sobbing had ceased. "I am thankful for your safety," she said so composedly that it sounded coldly unfeeling. "Now go back to your brother. He needs you, and I do not. I shall be better soon, and then I must bear my part in nursing him. If he should ask for me, let me know without delay." She sent her servants out when he had gone, and locked her door on the inside.

"Who'd have thought that she and Mr. Edward would take it so hard?" said the cook, as exponent of the views of the kitchen cabinet. "If so be the masther shouldn't get over this, it will go nigh to killing her. I never knowed she were that fond of him. Ah, well, she ought to be, for it's her he'll leave well provided for, I'll be bound! Them as has heaps to l'ave has plenty to mourn for them."

An hour elapsed before Mr. Withers understood aright where he was and what had happened, and then his wife's face was the first object he recognized. It was almost as bloodless as his, yet she was collected and helpful, a more efficient coadjutor to the surgeons than was fidgety Harriet, whose buzzings and hoverings over the wounded man reminded Edward of a noisy and persistent gad fly.

The moved gentleness of Constance's tone in answering the patient's inquiries was mistaken by the attendants for fondest commiseration, and the family physician's unspoken thought would have chimed in well with the servant's verdict. Mr. and Mrs. Withers were not reputed to be a loving couple, but in moments of distress and danger, the truth generally came to light. No husband, however idolized, could be nursed more faithfully or have excited greater anguish of solicitude than spoke in her dry eyes and rigid features, even if her wild outbreak at first seeing him had not betrayed her real sentiments.

In her calmer review of the scene, Constance could feel grateful for the spectators' misconception which had shielded her from the consequences of her madness; could shudder at the thought of the ignominy she had narrowly escaped. But this was not the gulf from which she now recoiled with horror and self-loathing that led her to avoid meeting the eyes bent curiously or sympathetically upon her, and to cling to the nerveless hand of him whose trust she had betrayed. To him, her husband, she had not given a thought when the dread tidings of disaster and death were brought to her. What to her was an empty marriage vow, what the world's reprobation, when she believed that Edward lay lifeless before her? "Man! you do not know how I loved him?" she had said. She might have added, "I never knew it myself until now." And what was this love—coming when, and as it did—but a crime, a sin to be frowned upon by Heaven and denounced by man? A blemish, which, if set upon her brow, as it was upon her soul, would condemn her to be ranked with the outcast of her sex, the creatures whom austere matronhood blasts with lightnings of indignant scorn, and pure virgins blush to name.

CHAPTER IX.

SHALL you be too much engaged at the office today, Edward, to drive out with Constance at noon?" questioned Mr. Withers one morning when his brother came to his room to inquire after his health, and to receive his commands for the business day.

"Certainly not! Nothing would give me more pleasure!" As he said it, the respondent turned with a pleasant smile to his sister-in-law, who was pouring out her husband's chocolate at a stand set in front of his lounge.

She started perceptibly at the proposition and her hand shook in replacing the silver pot upon the tray. "I could not think of it!" she said hastily. "It is kind and thoughtful in you to suggest it, Elnathan, but, indeed, I greatly prefer to remain at home."

"It is my preference that you should go!" The invalid spoke decidedly, but less irascibly than he would have done to anyone else who resisted his authority. "It is now four weeks since my accident, and you have scarcely left the house in all that time. You are growing thin and pale from want of sleep and exercise."

"I practice calisthenics every day, as you and Dr. Weldon advised," rejoined Constance, timidly.

"But within doors. You need the fresh out-door air, child. You have taken such good care of me, that I should be very remiss in my duty, were I to allow you to neglect your own health."

He had grown very fond of her within the period he had mentioned, and showed it, in his weakness, more openly than dignity would have permitted, had he been well. He put his hand upon her shoulder as she sat upon a stool beside him, the cup of chocolate in her hand. "Recollect! I must get another nurse should your health fail. You see how selfish I am?"

A jest from him was noteworthy, for its rarity; but Constance could not form her lips into a smile. They trembled instead in replying. "I see how good and generous you are! I will drive, if you insist upon it, but there is not the slightest necessity for your brother's escort. John is very careful and attentive. Or, if you wish me to have company, I will call for Mrs. Mellen. She has no carriage, you know?"

"Send yours for her whenever you like, by all means. But, until I am able to accompany you, it is my desire that Edward shall be with you in your drives whenever this is praticable. My late adventure has made me fearful, I suppose. Call this a sick man's fancy, if you will, my dear, but indulge it. At twelve, then, Edward, the carriage will be ready. Ascertain for yourself before you set out that the harness is all right, and have an eye to the coachman's management of the horses."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

FEATHERED LOVERS.

The Male Song Bird Studies His Lady's Wants.

A class of lovers that may well be considered is that of which the bluebird is one conspicuous example and the goldfinch another—the class in which the females do all the work of nest-building, while the males devote themselves to singing, says the Chautauquan. At first thought these males are so very much like some men that we all know—men who are pretty and are given to compliments and who are enabled to dress well through the wisdom and labor of their wives—that they are slightingly spoken of by nearly all students of bird habits. Even the gorgeous Baltimore oriole is but half complimented, for he only occasionally helps at the nest-making. But let the observer consider the cases of these birds a little further and it appears that the oriole, at least, is deserving of sympathy rather than faint praise. No one can watch the oriole lady at her knitting; for any length of time without seeing her good man try to help. He will bring something and offer to weave it in, but the chances are that the madam will first order him off and then, if he persists, make a dash at him with her bill that sends him mourning to another tree. He really mourns, too, though in silence. I have known of a case where a male oriole sat watching his wife for a half hour without singing a single note. The bluebird, too, is often treated very brusquely by his little better half. The truth is the poor fellows who have been derided for singing in idle delight while their wives toiled are not a little henpecked. The goldfinch cannot be called henpecked but he certainly does not deserve censure. Madam builds her nest because she can do it better than he can. That he would like to help is perfectly plain to one who watches, for he goes with her as she flies away for material, sits by her as she picks it up and flies back with her as she returns to the nest to weave it in. And wherever he goes he bubbles over with song. People who blame the males for not helping to build do not understand, I think, the difference between work as we see it and work as birds see it. To us labor is drudgery; to the birds it is delightful play.

How It Happened.

Aunt Mary—"But tell me, how did you happen to marry him?" "Bertha—"Why, you see, everything was ready. He had asked me to have him and I had consented; he had procured the license and engaged the clergyman, and I had sent out cards and ordered the cake; so, you see, we thought that we might as well go through with it. There, aunt, that is the reason, as near as I can remember it."—Boston Transcript

FARM AND GARDEN.

MATTERS OF INTEREST TO AGRICULTURISTS.

Some Up-to-date Hints About Cultivation of the Soil and Yields Thereof—Horticulture, Viticulture and Floriculture.

BULLETIN 119, of Cornell University experiment station, speaking of the texture of soil, says:

Every good farmer knows that a hard and lumpy soil will not grow good crops, no matter how much plant food it may contain. A clay soil which has been producing good crops for any number of years may be so seriously injured by one injudicious plowing in a wet time as to ruin it for the growing of crops for two or three years. The injury lies in the modification of its physical texture, not in the lessening of its fertility. A sandy soil may also be seriously impaired for the growing of any crop if the humus or decaying organic matter is allowed to burn out of it. It then becomes leachy, it quickly loses its moisture, and becomes excessively hot in bright sunny weather. Similar remarks may be applied to all soils. That is, the texture or physical condition of the soil is nearly always more important than its mere richness in plant food. A finely divided, mellow, friable soil is more productive than a hard and lumpy one of the same chemical composition because: It holds and retains more moisture; holds more air; presents greater surface to the roots; promotes nitrification; hastens the decomposition of mineral elements; has less variable extremes of temperature; allows a better root-hold to the plant. In all these ways, and others, the mellowness of the soil renders the plant food more available and affords a congenial and comfortable place in which the plant may grow.

The reader will now see the folly of applying commercial or concentrated fertilizers to lands of poor texture. He will see that if potash, for example, were applied to the hard lumps of clay it could not be expected to aid in the growth of plants, because plants cannot grow on such soil. If the same quantity were applied to proper soil, however, the greater part of it would be presented to the roots of plants at once, and its effects would no doubt be apparent in the season's crop. The reader will readily understand that it is useless to apply commercial fertilizers to lands which are not in proper physical condition for the very best growth of crops.

Farmers do not appreciate the importance of humus as an ameliator of land. In farm lands, it is usually supplied in the form of green crops, stubble or sward, and barn manures. When humus is absent, sandy soils become too loose and leachy and hot, and clay soils bake and become lumpy.

The writer has much of this hard unproductive land. What is to be done with it? To cover it with commercial fertilizer would be of little benefit. It must first be put in fit condition for the growing of crops. A crop of clover plowed under would quickly improve it, but the land is newly planted to orchard and he does not care to seed it down. The next recourse is stable manure. Of this enough can be had to cover the hardest spots. For the rest, catch or cover crops must be used. Following beans or potatoes, he can sow rye and plow it under very early in the spring. Now and then he can use a fall crop of sowed corn or oats or something of the kind. After a time, he may be able to get the land in such a condition of tilth as to secure an occasional stand of crimson clover. This practice, continued judiciously for a few years, ought to radically change the character of the land; but all this will be of little avail unless the plowing and cultivation—which are now so inadequate—can be done in a timely and intelligent way. All this will take time and patience. He wishes that there were some short-cut and lazy way of improving this land by making some application of fertilizer to it, but there is not. The most he can do is to slowly bring it into such condition that it will pay to put concentrated fertilizers on it. In short, the first step in the enrichment of unproductive land is to improve its physical condition by means of careful and thorough tillage, by the addition of humus, and perhaps by underdrainage. It must first be put in such condition that plants can grow in it. After that, the addition of chemical fertilizers may pay by giving additional or redundant growth.

L. H. Bailey.

Horticultural Notes.

Prof. J. L. Budd, writing in the Iowa State Register, gives some important suggestions, which we republish, as follows:

Cherry on Own Roots: Careful observation will show that the cherry trees that are sprouting in garden and orchard are mostly on their own roots. Our cherry trees are either budded on Mahaleb stocks or crown grafted on Mazzard seedlings. The mahaleb root never sprouts. So if sprouts appear it shows that the tree has been planted deep enough so that roots come from the scion which throws up sprouts. The Mazzard root may sprout, but as usually planted it rarely does. If it does sprout, the leaf is so peculiar that it can be detected at once. The point we wish to make is that every little sprout of a valuable variety, if set in nursery row, will make a valuable tree. Within the past week we have seen valuable sprouts in farmers' gardens who were talking about buying more cherry trees. Do not forget that the sprout from a good variety is more valuable than a grafted tree.

* * *

Clean Up and Plow the Garden: We again repeat the statement that the garden cleaned up and plowed in the fall is in better condition for planting in the spring, and it is rarely infested with cut worms. Indeed, during the past twenty-five years we have not failed to plow the garden in the fall and we have rarely had a plant cut off by a cut worm. We also never fail to turn over in the fall land on which we expect to plant the spring small fruits, tree or shrub seeds or root grafts. With this care little if any damage is done by cut worms. But it has happened that not quite enough plowing was done in the fall. In every case the part planted in the spring plowing suffered from cut worms, and plum seedlings were totally destroyed.

* * *

Why so Few Plums: Several have asked why the native plums bore so shyly this season, as they blossomed very full and we had a mild winter and no frost. The reason is very simple. While the blossoms were expanded we had continuous moist or rainy weather in most neighborhoods, which was not favorable for pollination. In some neighborhoods the sun shone more and plums were quite plentiful. But on soils where the trees suffered severely last summer from drouth the blossoms last spring of the native plums were not perfect. On the college grounds our trees on hardpan, within six feet of the surface, blossomed very full, but not one blossom in a hundred was perfect. In our work in crossing it was difficult to find a blossom with a perfect pistil and not one of our crossed blossoms developed a plum. But on more favorable soil the blossoms were perfect and fruited well where a few hours of sunshine came at the right time. Many corn fields also show the effects of moist weather. When the period came for filling out the ears several days of moist weather prevented the flying of pollen. Hence in some neighborhoods the corn is not filled out on most of the ears, while in others where the weather favored the ears are perfect.

Planting Apple Seeds.

Having planted more or less each year for the last forty-two years, and tried spring and fall with varied success, the fall planting did the best, writes P. M. Gideon in the Cultivator. I sow the seed in the drill and cover not more than one inch deep, and so planted, scarcely a seed will fail to germinate the next spring. The seeds to do their best should be planted not less than one inch apart, and if to be grown as orchard trees without grafting, they should take one winter in nursery to test their hardiness, and then reject all that fail to make a hardy growth and a perfect terminal bud. Take up and set in orchard at one year old, for at that age the tap root can be had entire and easily planted. In growing a healthy tree the most important part is the tap root. Small fibrous side roots are better cut off, doing more injury than good. I grow and fruit thousands of seedlings, and in a promiscuous lot not more than one in fifty will be a fairly good apple. To make seedlings a success requires experience and careful culling. My best success was 1,200 culled from 10,000, and even then some poor ones.

Nitrogen Gatherers.

Nitrogen is the most costly constituent of commercial fertilizers; and, in many instances, the increased cost of the fertilizer due to the nitrogen it contains will balance or even exceed the increase in the proceeds from the crop, due to the nitrogen. Fortunately, we are not obliged to rely entirely upon commercial fertilizers for our supply of nitrogen to enrich our soils. Recent investigations have proved that the class of plants called "leguminous plants," to which the clovers, peas, beans, etc., belong, have the power of deriving from the air a part of the nitrogen required in their growth. For this reason they are sometimes called "nitrogen-gatherers." This fact helps to explain why clover is so valuable in restoring and enriching poor soils. The clover plant is rich in nitrogenous matters and, when the crop is plowed under, they decay in the soil and add to its supply of nitrogen for the next crop.

Ground and Cooked Feed the Best.—All animals are provided with a means of crushing or grinding or putrifying their food, preparatory for the action of the digestive fluids. The digestive system of the chicken is provided with a strong muscular organ, containing more or less gravel, by which the food is ground up. The cow has four stomachs, in the first of which the food is macerated and then returned to the mouth for final mastication. The hog gulps his food down and depends on the length of his alimentary canal to secure proper digestion. Throughout the whole animal economy, whatever may be the method of taking and digesting food, thorough mechanical division. Grinding and cracking feed therefore assists nature has provided largely for its nature's efforts.

Begonias.—Keep your begonias free from dust. When sweeping, cover with an apron or sheet. If you wish to sponge their leaves, do so in the morning, that they may have a chance to dry off before night. Drops of water remaining on Rex begonias will rot a hole in the leaves, which makes the plant look unsightly.—Ex.

In one consignment recently a feather dealer in London received 6,000 birds of paradise, 360,000 birds of various kinds from the East Indies, and 400,000 humming birds. In three months another dealer imported 356,398 birds from the East Indies.

Light is essential to the health of the hens, therefore have good windows.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

LESSON XII, DEC. 20—BIRTH OF CHRIST.

Golden Text: "And the Angel Said Unto Them, 'Fear Not; for Behold I Bring Tidings of Great Joy'" — Christmas Lesson.

THE section included in this lesson, the whole of which should be read, includes John 1: 1-18; Luke 1: 1-80; and Matt. 1: 1-25; 2: 1-12. Historical Setting. Time. The last of December, B. C. 5, four years before the commencement of our common era, A. D. 1 (Anno Domini, year of the Lord), so that Christ was born 1900 not 1896 years ago. The visit of the wise men was in February, B. C. 4, when Jesus was six or eight weeks old.

Place. Bethlehem of Judea, a village five or six miles south of Jerusalem. Bethlehem means "House of Bread," a very fitting name for the place where he was born who was the Bread of Life.

"The far east" included the lands of the captivities,—Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia, where Ezekiel prophesied, and Daniel ruled, and Esther was queen. To-day's lesson, Matt. 2, verses 1-12, follows:

1. "Now when Jesus was born." Jesus, the divine son of God, became man by being born of the Virgin Mary. "In Bethlehem of Judea," probably about Dec. 25, B. C. 5. It is not told in Matthew how Jesus came to be in Bethlehem. For that we turn to Luke. "In the days of Herod the king." Herod died April 1, B. C. 4 (Lewin's Fasti Sacri) at Jericho, at the age of seventy, so that the visit of the wise men must have been a few weeks previous. This Herod was Herod the Great, founder of the Herodian family.

2. Saying, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews?" The inquiry, more literally translated, is, Where is the born King; that is, the newly born King of the Jews? The Magi expected, no doubt, to find him in the capital city and in the royal palace.—Morison.

"For we have seen his star in the east." Seen by them in the eastern countries, or seen in the eastern sky. "And are come to worship him." To acknowledge his worthship; to do homage to him.

3. "When Herod the king had heard these things." The tidings would run like an electric shock through the palace of the usurping Herod.—Trench. "He was troubled," agitated, disturbed, lest he should lose his throne and his power. He was old, and feeble, and wicked. His life had been full of crimes. He knew he was hated by his subjects. The least disturbance would inflame his conscience and arouse his fears. "And all Jerusalem with him."

4. "And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes." The chief priests were probably the heads of the twenty-four courses into which the sons of Aaron were divided (2 Chron. 23: 8; Luke 1: 5), but the term may have included those who had, though only for a time, held the office of high priest. The "scribes" were the interpreters of the law, casuists, and collectors of the traditions of the elders, for the most part Pharisees.—Ellicott. "He demanded (rather, inquired) of them where Christ," in the original, The Christ, not the proper name, but the Messiah, the official title of the promised Deliverer, "should be born." What do your scriptures say? What is your expectation?

5. "And they said," i. e., the chief priests, etc. The answer seems to have been given without any hesitation, as a matter perfectly well understood and settled by divine authority.—Alexander. "Thus it is written." What is quoted in the next verse. "By the prophet" (Micah, in chap. 5: 2). It should be noticed that "by" is literally "through," and that in every case this expression is used.

6. "And thou Bethlehem." This is quoted freely from the Septuagint (the Greek version of the Old Testament), just as such quotations were popularly made at that time, for there were no Bibles in circulation, and quotations must be made chiefly as remembered from hearing them read. "Bethlehem, in the land of Judah," in the original there is no "in the" but the expression is, "Bethlehem, land of Judah," as we say "Chicago, Ill.," or "Newport, R. I." "Princes" is, according to a usual figure, put for the towns where the princes, or heads of thousands, lived.

7. "Then Herod . . . privily (privately) called the wise men." Privily, for he was already hatching, still more privily, his malicious plot. "Inquired of them diligently;" or, rather, ascertained from them accurately.—Morison. The verb for "inquired diligently" is derived from "akros," a point. The idea is, he ascertained to the last point.—M. R. Vincent. "What time the star appeared." That he might know what was the exact age of the infant whom he wished to slay.—Abbott.

8. "He sent (or directed) them to Bethlehem," a short six miles from Jerusalem. "Search diligently." Better, as before, accurately, carefully.

9. "Lo, the star." Unexpectedly the star they had seen in the east (it was not now in the east, but in the south) appeared to them in the evening as they went toward Bethlehem. "Stood over where the young child was"; i. e., over the house, as implied by verse 11; not merely over the village of Bethlehem.

10. "When they saw the star," guiding them, and pointing out the place. "They rejoiced." Because their journey was now ended, their search was successful.

11. "When they were come into the house." This could scarcely have been the stable where the Lord was born. Joseph and Mary remained for 40 days in Bethlehem, and would find temporary lodgings.

12. "And fell down." In the Oriental manner of showing homage and worship. "And worshipped him." "Opened their treasures." The word points to caskets, or chests, which they had brought with them.—Ellicott. "They presented unto him gifts." According to the Oriental custom in paying visits to royalty. Setting forth greater truths than they knew, they offered to the Son of man and Son of God myrrh, hinting at the resurrection of the dead; the royal gold; and frankincense that breathes prayer,—"myrrh to a mortal, gold to a king, frankincense to God."—Upham's Wise Men. "Frankincense."

13. "Being warned of God." In a dream, in the same manner as God may have spoken to them before. "Into their own country another way." They could easily go direct from Bethlehem to the Jordan River, leaving Jerusalem to the north and west.

GEMS OF THOUGHT.

A man must be excessively stupid, as well as uncharitable, who believes there is no virtue but on his own side.—Addison.

Trouble is a thing that will come without our call; but true joy will not spring up without ourselves.—Bishop Patrick.

Statesmanship is the art of understanding and leading the masses. Its glory is to lead them, not where they want to go, but where they ought to go.—Joubert.