



THE VISIT OF THE WISE MEN

It is One of the Most Beautiful of the Many Legends That Surround the Birth of Christ—Traditional Names of These Three Oriental Sages Who Journeyed from Afar to Worship at the Lowly Cradle of the New Born King—The Splendor of Their Retinue.

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king behold there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying: Where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east and are come to worship him. When Herod the king heard these things he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Then Herod, when he had privately called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem. When they had heard the king they departed, and lo! the star which they saw in the east went before them, till it came and stood where the young child was. When they saw the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house they saw the young child with Mary, his mother, and fell down and worshipped him, and when they had opened their treasures they presented unto him gifts; gold, frankincense and myrrh. And, being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.—Gospel of St. Matthew.

When the wise men saw the star they said one to another: This is the sign of the great king; let us go and search for him and offer him gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh. Alleluia.—First Vespers of Epiphany.

There is something exotic in the beauty of this whole story. It reads in St. Matthew's gospel like a foreign legend. The strange secrecy, too, with which this kingly oriental procession with picturesque costumes and jeweled turbans and the dark-faced slaves and the stately stooping camels, passed over many regions, makes it more like a visionary splendor, a many-colored apparition and not a sober mystery of the humble incarnate word.

What a scene for the imagination was the birth of the infant! His first worshipers in that poor cave of Bethlehem are poor shepherds who have been brought to the child by the angels' voices. But now a caravan comes over the scene hardly in keeping with the lowliness of Bethlehem. A cavalcade from the far east approaches Bethlehem. The camel bells are tinkling. A retinue of attendants surrounds the three kings as they approach to God, men, we may be sure, of meditative habits, of ascetic lives. The fragments of early tradition and the obscure records of ancient prophecies, belonging to their nations, have been to them as precious deposits which spoke of God and were filled with hidden truth. They, too, pined for a redeemer, for some heavenly visitant. Their tribes, doubtless, lived in close alliance, and they themselves were bound together by the ties of a common faith which the same pure religion after greater goodness and nobler things exalted. Never yet had their more royal souls. In the calm blue of the hazy sky there rose a new or hitherto unnoticed star. Its apparition could not escape the notice of these oriental sages, who were watching the skies; their science was also their theology. It was the star of which an ancient prophecy had spoken, perhaps it dropped low toward earth and wheeled a too-swift course to be like one of the other stars. Perhaps it trailed a line of light after it, slowly yet with visible movement, and so little above the horizon or with such obvious downward sailing course that it seemed as if it beckoned to them—as if an angel were bearing a lamp to light the feet of pilgrims and timed his going to their slowness and had not shot too far ahead during the bright day, but was found and welcomed each night as a faithful indicator pointing to the cave at Bethlehem.

Wild and romantic as the conduct of these wise enthusiasts seemed, they did not hesitate. After due counsel they pronounced the inauspicious finger to be the star of the old prophecy, and therefore God was come. They left their homes, their state and their affairs and journeyed westward, they knew not whither, led nightly by the star that slipped onward in its silent groove. The light shone out in the blue heavens

slowly sank eastward over the hills of Bethlehem and presently the devout kings are at the feet of Jesus. Who that has ever read the jeweled sentences of Faber's "Bethlehem" will ever forget them? Many have read "Ben-Hur," with its description of the journey of the wise men, who know nothing of this great book. And yet there is not in the whole cycle of English literature a more wonderful bit of writing than "Bethlehem."

Dr. J. C. Slack,

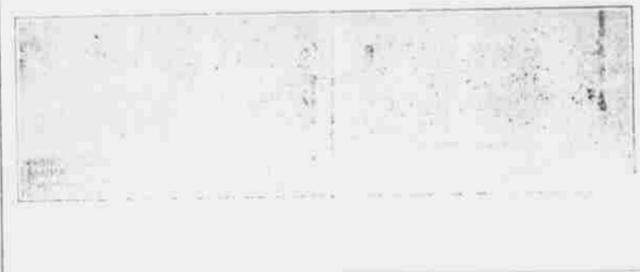
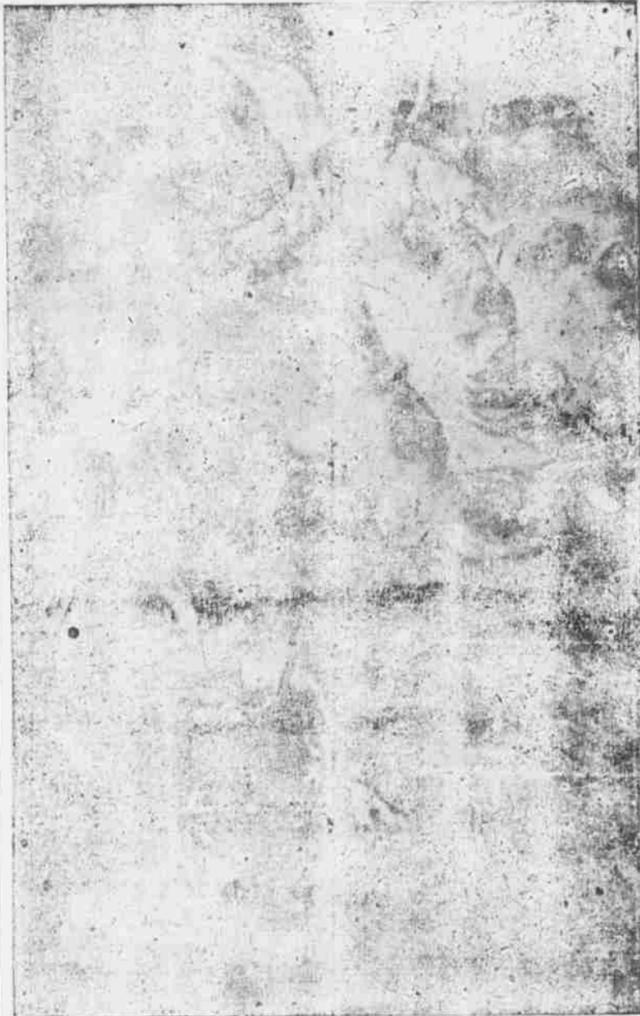
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As rendered to the Comptroller of Currency. At the close of business November 12, 1906.

RESOURCES	
Bills Discounted	\$199,853.90
Furniture and Fixtures	2,000.00
Five Per Cent Funds	2,500.00
United States Bonds	104,540.00
Cash Sight Exchange	115,280.09
Overdrafts	3,441.73
	\$427,595.72
LIABILITIES.	
Capital	\$ 75,000.00
Surplus	4,000.00
Circulation	50,000.00
Deposits	\$149,053.34
Certificates of deposits	51,841.58
United States Deposits	49,450.00
Territorial deposits	20,000.00
Banks	20,796.55
Other Liabilities (Including dividends unpaid and undivided profits)	7,454.27
	\$427,595.72

The above statement is correct to the best of my knowledge. N. E. WHITWORTH, Cashier.

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