

LESSON VII. THE STAR.

WHO are those men in rich and handsome garments, going about the streets of a great city?

They seem to be strangers, who have come from far. They are asking questions of the people they meet. Every one seems surprised at what they say; and many seem troubled and terrified yet no one can give an answer to the strangers.

But see! the strangers are standing at the gate of a fine palace. The servants lead them into a room of enormous size, adorned with gold, and fitted up with large marble seats.

An old man, in a magnificent purple robe, receives them; he speaks to them graciously, yet his countenance is fierce and cruel. But the strangers appear pleased with what that old man says, and they go away in good spirits.

They mount their camels by night, and leave the city quietly, for so that old man wished they should.

Their way lies among the chalky hills, where the shepherds feed their flocks. Did those shepherds see them pass, who lately heard the angels sing at midnight?

When the strangers have gone six miles they reach a hill, covered with vines, and watered by running streams. They enter a small town built on that hill, but they know not where to go till, looking up, they see a bright star.

It is a long while since they saw that star, but they remember it well, for it is not like other stars. It moves along the sky. It shows the way, even as a bird might do, flying in the air. How full of joy those strangers are at the sight of that beautiful travelling star! They watch it as it moves over roofs of the houses. Lo! it stops over that lowly roof.

How quietly the strangers enter that house! There they find a gentle mother holding a sweet babe in her arms. They bend down on that floor; they worship that child. They rejoice to see that babe, as once the shepherds did.

But they are richer than those shepherds.

They take the burdens from their camels' backs, and open their treasures at the baby's feet.

Here are costly boxes of precious gums, which flowed from the trees in their own land.

Here are bags of gold, found near rivers in their own land.

Those precious gums will make sweet ointment to anoint the holy babe. That precious gold will purchase food for the poor babe in the long journey it is going soon to take.

The babe's mother was so poor that she could not afford to buy a lamb for her sacrifice when she went to the temple. God feedeth the fowls who know him not, much more does he feed his own children who trust in him.