



Type: Magazine Article

There Were Jaredites, Part VIII: Our Own People— concluded

Author(s): Hugh W. Nibley

Source: *Improvement Era*, Vol. 60, No. 2 (February 1957)

Published by: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Page(s): 94–95, 122–124

Abstract: This wide-ranging series discusses the “epic milieu” of the second millennium B.C. and places the Jaredites in their historical context alongside the Babylonians, Egyptians, early Greeks and others. It makes a comparison between the Book of Ether and ancient writings of Babylon, Egypt, Sumer, and others. The description of the Jaredite boats seem to resemble the boat of Ut-Napitshtim who was the Sumerian counter-part of Noah. Old Jewish and even older Indian sources record the use of shining stones that protect the owner beneath the water. These have been traced back to Babylonian tales of the deluge. Since the Jaredite record reports that their boats were patterned after Noah’s ark, ancient myths that surely have their foundation in real events help to provide greater understanding of the book of Ether. The book of Ether meets all the criteria of epic traditions of heroic societies. The remains of heroic societies are difficult to identify. The eighth and final part concludes the series.

There Were Jaredites

by Dr. Hugh Nibley

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

OUR OWN PEOPLE

CONCLUDED

PERHAPS THE GREATEST and certainly one of the longest of all heroic cultures was that of the East Iranians," F. continued, "yet, though those people 'had already learned to dwell in fixed habitations' the (Avesta has a great deal to say about their magnificent castles), archaeology has not yet brought to light a single edifice built at this early period.³⁶ One might list a hundred great and mighty nations of old, the reality of whose existence and whose deeds there cannot be the slightest doubt, since literary and historical evidence for them is abundant, yet of whose deeds and buildings not the slightest physical trace remains.

"Of course heroic peoples built much, as all their records tell us they did, but the trouble is that none of the stuff can be identified. The situation is thus stated by Chadwick: 'Archaeological evidence is abundant, though not as a rule entirely satisfactory. Great numbers of raths or earthen fortresses, usually more or less circular, still exist, and very many of them are mentioned in the stories of the heroic age.'³⁷ The problem is to identify them. Nowhere have these mounds and barrows been more exhaustively studied through the years than in England; yet the diggers still cannot agree on whether a given mound is Celtic, Roman, Norman, Stone-Age, Saxon, Danish, or even late Middle Ages. They have been guessing for hundreds of years, and the game still goes on."³⁸

"May I be allowed to point out," Blank interposed, "that 'earthen fortresses, more or less circular' are exactly what used to be found in great abundance all over the eastern United States; and there again it is the same story: a given mound might be almost anything, and every possible age and date has been attributed to some of them, from pre-human to Spanish. It may well be that Jaredite remains still exist: the problem is, as with all heroic remains, to identify them."

"That is what Chadwick says here," Schwulst volunteered, ". . . Archaeological evidence demonstrates the existence of the conditions required by a heroic story at a given place and time, though it can supply no names, unless writing is found,³⁹ —and unless, we might add, that writing can be read. Without that, all we can hope for is a general indication of the type of thing indicated —nothing specific. The classic illustration of that is, of course, Schliemann's discovery of Troy. Today every schoolboy knows that the city which Schliemann identified as Homer's Troy was not Homer's Troy; what is not often realized is that *no* city in the mound of Hissarlik has been identified as Troy, and that to this day the ruins of Hissarlik are still properly referred to by archaeologists as 'the presumed site of Troy.'⁴⁰ Yet Homer has described the city of Troy at far greater length and in far more detail than the Book of Mormon describes *any* city. In view of that, can we hope for any better luck in America?

"The main trouble seems to be that these people did not build of stone. In all the epics we have mentioned, the great castles are specifically or indirectly shown to have been built of wood. Even the few stone edifices which have survived, such as the first royal tombs of Egypt, display, as Ricke notes, the nomadic nature of their builders, every detail of their construction being in careful imitation of the wooden beams and boards and the matting walls and hangings of the original models. This is equally true of the palaces, as well as the tombs of heroic royalty, whether in Egypt, Persia, or Babylon: they are all faithful reproductions of wood and cloth originals.⁴¹ Again, the few surviving temples of Greece are naturally of stone, yet they still preserve in marble all the meticulous details of the boards, logs, pegs, and joinings of the normal Greek temple, which was of wood.⁴² . . . But for a few monumental exceptions, the ancients (save in the Near East) seem almost never to have built of stone; but since those

exceptions were the only buildings to survive, they have given the world the impression that the ancients never built of anything *but* stone! Pliny, like St. Jerome, even claims that it is immoral to build of stone, and certainly before his day there was very little stone building in Rome.⁴³

"Of course, where there is no wood, that is another problem. In the Near East we know from many sources that the timber shortage was acute in early times: there they had to build of stone.⁴⁴ But consider Europe in contrast. Scandinavian bogs have brought forth an abundance of articles in metal, leather, wool, and wood that show the presence of a high, even brilliant, civilization, while the records tell of most wonderful cities and castles, such as the fabulous Jomsborg; yet no traces of those castles and cities have been found save earthen mounds and embankments. The Welsh tales are full of mighty castles, yet long and careful search failed to reveal a single stone ruin older than the time of the invader Edward I, who brought the fashion of stone castles to Britain from the Near East, where he had been crusading.

"An official account of Roman castles from the time of Justinian enumerates five hundred imperial strongholds, and yet, while the stone temples and amphitheatres built at the same time and the same places still survive, not a scrap of one of those castles has ever been found.⁴⁵ The explanation is obvious: until the end of the Middle Ages, stone building was almost entirely unknown in Europe. An ambassador of that same Justinian to the court of Attila describes the great imperial city and huge castle of that mighty conqueror as being all of wood."⁴⁶

"But surely there were some great heroic structures of stone!" cried F. "Think of Troy and Mycenae!"

"The mighty Cyclopean works of the Mycenaean and Hittite fortress-palace complexes are the exception that proves the rule," Schwulst replied, "for Cyclopean masonry is decidedly not a style of construction employed by people long accustomed

to working in stone. It is a skilful shift, an intelligent step in the adoption of a new medium, or else, as has recently been suggested, a deliberate attempt to build in the 'megalithic' style, keeping the stones deliberately irregular. But this style is exceedingly laborious, awkward, and expensive, and is never long continued. It never becomes a style."⁴⁷

"Isn't it rather strange that wandering nomads should build cities at all?" F. asked.

"Not if they are engaged in the kind of nomadism we have been describing in these discussions. Actually the strange thing is that the building of cities should ever have been attributed to farmers, who neither need nor like them, as the case of many a peasant civilization will show. Cities are primarily administrative and commercial centers, bases of operation for wide-ranging rulers, soldiers, and merchants, rather than market places for truck gardeners. There is a general and growing awareness among students today that ancient cities did not evolve from farming villages as was once thought to be the invariable rule. The names of ancient cities are in themselves evidence enough of their founding by great individuals: They are almost always the names of persons—human or divine."⁴⁸

From prehistoric Egypt and Mesopotamia to the remotest regions of the North and the farthest stretches of Asia it is the same story: The great conquerors are the great city-builders, and the cities last no longer than their empires. Indeed there is a great deal of evidence for the custom of requiring each king to inaugurate his reign with the building of a *new* capital—a system which adds greatly to the complexity of early Egyptian history.

"There are a few perennial centers, such as Babylon, Thebes, and Rome, but where are the others? In the center of every great epic cycle there looms one great super-center, with its fabulous castle and its many-gated city—Camelot, Tara, Susat, Troy, Sigtun, Heliopolis, Liere, Assur, etc.; yet after generations of searching, none of these mighty centers has ever been located with certainty. We have already mentioned Troy, but no less persistent has been the search for On or Heliopolis in Egypt. The earliest

written records constantly refer to Heliopolis as the religious and political center of everything through long centuries; yet generations of the most exhaustive searching failed so completely to turn up so much as a single button or bead to show where Heliopolis had stood that until the very recent discovery of a predynastic cemetery on the spot, some of the foremost investigators, such as Miss Baumgartel, insisted with fervor and conviction that there *never had been* such a place, though the written documents are full of it! I could give you scores of other examples just like that."⁴⁹

"Wouldn't you say," asked Blank, "that the most significant thing about the Jaredite cities is not that they were great, many, or mighty, but that they were built up all at once, instead of gradually evolving? Here, for example, we read that Coriantum 'did build many mighty cities,' (Ether 9:23) and later Shez 'did build up many cities upon the face of the land' as the people moved out and 'began again to spread over all the face of the land.' (10:4.) Morianton, a descendant of Shez, not only gained power over many cities (10:9), but he also 'built up many cities' (10:12) in restoring land after a total collapse and revival; just so, after a great slump and revival, the people under King Lib 'built a great city by the narrow neck of land,' (10:20), just as we have seen that the first Pharaoh did upon establishing a new order in Egypt. Also we find that cities could vanish as quickly as they arose, as when Shiz 'did overthrow many cities . . . and he did burn the cities.' (14:17.) Now granted that there may be cities on the earth which have grown up on the evolutionary pattern of hut-to-hamlet-to-village-to-town, and so forth, it must be admitted that our book of Ether cities were not of that kind. They are definitely of the 'heroic' variety, which are now known to have arisen and perished all over the ancient world, but which leave only a very drab and undramatic type of ruins if they leave any at all."

"Professor Nilsson has given us a good description of the type of thing that went on," Dr. Schwulst observed as he sought out a passage:

'For the great expeditions through which

the Greeks founded colonies far away and went so far eastwards cannot have been disconnected raids of small roving bands but must needs have been backed by some power, even if it was a loose feudal organization. The seat of this power was Mycenae, at least in the beginning of the Late Mycenaean age, when a great building activity set in and a large palace, the great ring wall with the Lion Gate, the Grave Circle, and the statliest of tholos tombs were erected."⁵⁰

"There you have it: the invaders spread into new lands and take them over, but they do it systematically, their movements being controlled and directed from a main center, where a magnificent complex of headquarters buildings, so to speak, is erected. This is what we have found everywhere in our discussions."

"But is it safe to generalize about the ancient world as a whole?" F. asked somewhat dubiously.

"It is the thing that all the leading men are doing today," Schwulst retorted, "and they seem to know what they are about. The best over-all picture to date is that which is at present being presented by Claude Schaeffer, the eminent excavator of Ras Shamra-Ugarit, that ancient center at which all the cultural and ethnic lines of the ancient East came together. Schaeffer carefully compared and correlated the archaeological findings at all the main centers of ancient civilization, from Asia Minor to the heart of Asia (as far as available materials would allow), and came up with most significant and consistent pictures. Six times between 2400 and 1200 B.C., he discovers, all the principal centers of the ancient world were destroyed, and each time they all went up in flames and down in earthquake ruins *together!* Earthquake, famine, plague, and weather were to blame for this series of world-wide catastrophes, according to Schaeffer, who puts most of the blame on earthquakes. After each of these major world-collapses, we find a sharp diminution in population, while people everywhere revert to a nomadic way of life and great invading hordes of mixed racial and linguistic stocks sweep down from the more sorely afflicted areas to the more fortunate ones—the terror they bring with them being actually less than that which they are leaving behind. Of the first of

(Continued on page 122)

Free Milk, Butter and Eggs—For You!

(Concluded from preceding page)

free by tearing open the carton or widening the spout before discarding. But the real free soap comes from using a rubber spatula for a quick

scraping of your dishes before you put them into the water. By pre-removing much of the food and grease you cut your kitchen soap needs in half.

As the Scots say, "Many a muckle

makes a mickle." If you don't value free groceries for yourself, think of the joy you'll bring by donating the two extra CARE packages a year on what you could save by a little extra kitchen attention.

There Were Jaredites

(Continued from page 95)

these calamity-driven waves of humanity Schaeffer writes: 'Perhaps the vast movement of peoples which accompanied it was led by a warlike element which, thanks to the superiority of its arms and its physical vigor, was able in spite of numerical inferiority to extend its conquests over vast areas of Western Asia.'⁵¹

"In other words," said Blank, "Schaeffer, using purely *nonliterary* evidence, begins his history with a typical heroic migration, exactly as Kramer does using 'purely literary evidence' while deliberately avoiding the archaeological remains."

". . . and exactly as Hrozný does using neither archaeological nor literary evidence, but purely linguistic indications!" F. added.

"It is remarkable how all the types of evidence are beginning to fuse into a single image of the past," Dr. Schwulst observed, "and such a different image from what it used to be! Instead of a long and gradual upward evolution we find repeated regressions as well as advances, and there is no guarantee at all that the regressions even in the aggregate are less considerable than the advances! Those setbacks, as Schaeffer is at great pains to point out, are the result of forces totally beyond human control. 'Compared with the scope of these general crises,' he says, 'the exploits of the conqueror and the combinations of leaders of states appear quite unimportant. The philosophy of history where it concerns the Ancient East seems to us to have been singularly distorted by the too convenient adoption of dynastic patterns, however convenient they may be for chronological classification.'⁵²

In other words, it is not man who makes ancient history; yet even in strictly human affairs there now appear to be curious ups and downs, with regression quite as normal a part of the picture as progression. Take

A Christmas of Contrasts

Richard L. Evans

WE CANNOT BUT be aware that this is a Christmas of contrasts. No doubt all Christmases have had their contrasts. And there is no doubt also that the same forces that have always opposed the plans and purposes of the Christ, the Prince of Peace, still oppose those plans and purposes. And the gospel that gives man his free agency, his right of choice, is sharply seen in contrast to oppression and coercion, and the enslaving of men's minds. One would think that the world would have learned, for there never was a good way of life that was founded on fear or on force. Both have been tried many times before—both fear and force—sometimes subtly, and sometimes with complete and brutal abandon. But they never succeed in subduing a people permanently or in establishing permanent peace—for there is in man an inner awareness of his own eternal nature, an awareness that will always emerge no matter who seeks to enslave the minds or souls of men. And when all brutality and arrogance and evil have spent themselves, there will remain, always, the irrevocable reality of man's eternal continuance, and of ultimate justice, and the triumph of truth. There are many things that wouldn't matter very much if man were just a machine. If he were just an educated muscle (with death being the end of all that he is), there is *much* that wouldn't matter very much. But blessedly he is an immortal child of the God and Father who made us all in his own image, and who sent his Only Begotten Son, also in his own image, to redeem us from death, and to open up for all of us limitless eternal possibilities of peace and progress and everlasting life with those we love. It was this our Savior did for us; this for which he was born; this for which he died; this that we would witness to the world. And so, despite sharp contrasts, let there be comfort and courage this Christmas. Let it be a time for re-examining ourselves and for dedicating our lives to the values that endure; a time for calling our families together in grateful humility for all that is ours, and with prayers for the preservation of free principles and oppressed peoples; and a time for teaching our children of the divine reality of him who said: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace."¹ His peace and promises are unto all who repent and conform to the principles of Jesus the Christ, the Prince of Peace. May God bless us every one.

¹John 16:33.

"The Spoken Word" FROM TEMPLE SQUARE
PRESENTED OVER KSL AND THE COLUMBIA BROADCASTING
SYSTEM, DECEMBER 23, 1956

Copyright 1956

the case of iron, for instance. Here Schaeffer writes:

'A most curious and intriguing phenomenon would seem to be the disappearance of this metal after its first utilization at the end of the Old Bronze period, and its apparently total eclipse during the entire Middle Bronze. It seems to have been rediscovered anew in the course of the Late Bronze period and, to judge by all the evidence, in the very same region—in Asia Minor.'²⁵⁸

Here we have an important step in human history that has to happen all over again!"

"And when you have that," said F., "how do you know that it has not happened and unhappened already dozens of times before?"

"You don't," answered Schwulst. "You must not suppose, for example, that the first of Schaeffer's great world calamities with its accompanying heroic migrations was the first occurrence of such an event. Long ago the philologists were able to trace with certainty 'migrations of people for which there is not the slightest archaeological evidence,'²⁵⁴ and these carry the pattern back and back to the earliest migration of all when, according to the dean of all living philologists, the forefathers of all the languages and cultures of the world scattered in all directions from a single point searching desperately after grass for their cattle."

"We can sum it all up, then," said Blank, "with the safe and conservative observation, that whatever the particulars may be, it is certain that we now have a totally new setting in which to study the book of Ether, a background of whose existence nobody thirty years ago would have dreamed; and the history of the Jaredites fits into that background as if it were made for it. Who can claim that this is merely a happy accident? Consider the new materials, the scope, and detail of the epic sources, now being read with a new understanding and a new sense of reality; place them beside the compact and powerful history of Ether, presenting all the salient features of heroic times of migration and the ages of feuding that follow, committing nothing vital and including nothing conflicting or trivial—you will at once recognize that there is small room here for luck or chance. Men once denied categorically that Atrous or Arthur or Mopsus or even Moses ever lived, but now we know they were wrong: there

(Concluded on following page)

FEBRUARY 1957

SAVE with the **FINEST** **NEW ALL-WEATHER** Motor Oil

SAVE Gasoline

—up to 2 extra gallons
from a
tankful of gasoline

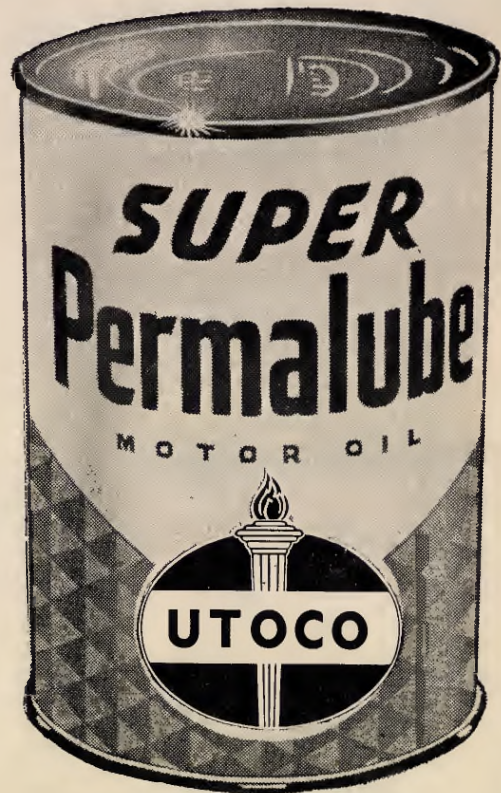
SAVE Motor Oil

—up to 88% more
miles per quart

SAVE Your Motor

—eliminate valve
lifter rusting

Available
in 44 States



**Give your car the care it deserves at Utocho dealers
where you expect more and you get it!**

IN USE for SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS

Aids in treatment of Canker, simple sore throat and other minor mouth and throat irritations.

HALL'S REMEDY

Salt Lake City, Utah

DRINK
Ficgo



A delightful hot beverage for those who don't drink coffee.

AT YOUR GROCERS

Comfort

**invites
reverence**



and International church seating is proving its worth in more and more churches every day. Ask today for full information

**International SEAT DIVISION OF
UNION CITY BODY CO., INC.**
Union City, Indiana

FREE

30 DAYS SUPPLY

Safe High-Potency Nutritional Formula

VITAMINS

MINERALS and AMINO ACID



25 proven ingredients - 11 vitamins (including blood-building B-12 and folic acid), 11 minerals, choline, inositol and methionine

Yes, we'll send you this \$5.00 supply free to prove how much healthier and peppier you may feel after a few days' trial! We'll also send details of an amazing new plan that provides a full supply of vitamins every month for just \$2.00! You're not obligated to buy from us now or ever. Mail coupon now!

Mail Coupon Now!

VITASAFE CORP., Dept. 147A-1
43 W. 61st St., New York 23, N. Y.

Please send free trial vitamins and details of new Plan which I will accept or reject. I am not obligated to buy anything.
(I enclose 25¢ for packing and postage.)

Name.....
Address.....
City, Zone, State.....
Only one trial supply per family.

"BANQUETMASTER"

THE NEW! ALL-NEW FOLDING BANQUET TABLE DESIGNED FOR TODAY!



Made in the West by I.D.S. workmen.

BISHOPS—Before you buy, compare Banquetmasters for quality of material and workmanship, beauty of design. Low cost—only \$22.66 in lots of 12 or more.

Unlimited Guarantee
Sample table sent for your inspection.
Write or telephone collect 4390.

D. H. LOOSLI CO., INC.
Idaho Falls, Idaho

WE OFFER...

A COMPLETE ENGRAVING SERVICE

From Missionary Portraits to the Largest Catalogues.

Mail Orders Given Prompt Attention

UTAH ENGRAVING CO.
231 Edison St. Salt Lake City, Utah

BIND YOUR ERAS FOR 1956

Subscribers who wish to bind the 1956 volume of THE IMPROVEMENT ERA are informed that the annual index is now being prepared. Reserve your index by sending your name and address to THE IMPROVEMENT ERA, 50 North Main Street, Salt Lake City 1, Utah. Please enclose a three-cent stamp.

There Were Jaredites

(Concluded from preceding page)

was an Achaean host just as surely as there was a Hebrew host of the Exodus,⁵⁵ and the very tests that prove it to be so can now be applied fully and rigorously to show that there were Jaredites.

(The end)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ³⁶W. M. McGovern, *The Early Empires of Central Asia* (Chapel Hill, 1939), p. 78.
- ³⁷H. M. Chadwick, *Growth of Lit.*, p. 173.
- ³⁸Typical are O. G. S. Crawford, in *Antiquity* I, 434, and E. C. Curwen, *Ibid.*, IV (1930), 22.
- ³⁹Chadwick, *op. cit.*, p. 134.
- ⁴⁰Winifred Lamb, "The Site of Troy," *Antiquity* VI (1932), pp. 71-81.
- ⁴¹See our discussion in *Westn. Pol. Quart.* IV (1951), p. 238ff.
- ⁴²L. Whibley, *Companion to Greek Studies* (Cambridge, 1931), p. 261.
- ⁴³Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 36.1.2.
- ⁴⁴R. J. Braidwood, *The Near East and the Foundations for Civilization*, (Eugene, Ore., 1952), p. 13.
- ⁴⁵These points are all made by Ed. King, "Observations on Ancient Castles," *Ibid.* IV, (1777) 364-413. M. Barrington, in *Archaeologia* I, 286-290, cf.
- ⁴⁶Priscus Rhetor, *de legationibus*, etc., in *Patrol. Graec.* 113, 731ff, 737.
- ⁴⁷For a good description of this type of architecture, see O. R. Gurney, *The Hittites* (London: Penguin Books, 1952), pp. 145ff, 210, with interesting illustration.
- ⁴⁸A perfect example of this is the city building operations of King Azitawaddu as described in the newly discovered Karatepe Inscription: "... and I builded fortresses in all the remotest borders, in the places in which there were lawless fellows, chiefs of robber band, . . . I Azitawaddu, placed them beneath my feet, and I built fortresses in those places so that the Dananians might inhabit them. And I built this city, and I determined (its) name Azitawaddiya (after himself), . . . that it might be a bulwark for the Plain of Adana and for the House of Mupshu. . . . So I have built this city, named its Azitawaddiya . . . and instituted sacrifices." Note that the city was founded by the great chief and given his name, as a means of control, a "bulwark," ". . . and this city shall possess grain and wine, and this people whose children shall dwell (here) shall possess cattle and sheep and grain and wine . . . and they shall be exceedingly mighty. . . ." Note how exactly this system corresponds to that described in Ether! The inscription was quoted and discussed in THE IMPROVEMENT ERA 59 (October 1956), pp. 711ff. The text with photographs may be found in *Orientalia*, 19 (1949), pp. 174ff.
- ⁴⁹E. Baumgartel, *The Cultures of Prehist. Egypt*, pp. 3-9. The eminent Lord Raglan has recently maintained that Troy never existed! The Jomsborg is a classic example. "Lyonesse" is another, for which see O. S. G. Crawford, "Lyonesse," *Antiquity* I (1927), 5-14.
- ⁵⁰Nilsson, *op. cit.*, p. 22ff.
- ⁵¹Claude Schaeffer, *Stratigraphie Comparee et Chronologie de l'Asie Occidentale* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1948), p. 537.

⁵²*Ibid.*, p. 565.

⁵³*Ibid.*, p. 546.

⁵⁴W. Vycichl, in *Orientalia* XXIII (1954), p. 218.

⁵⁵C. H. Gordon, *Jnl. N. E. Stud.* XI, 213: "The Exodus is the epic of the Birth of a Nation, even though most of the text is now in prose form (Ch. 15 preserves a poetic fragment) . . . the narrative content includes epic episodes."

Perfect Thought-Models

(Concluded from page 113)

that too is generally manifested in an untidy home.

Good is more natural and more powerful than evil. Only a few muscles come into use in a smile; but a frown involves a strain on many muscles. We should stamp upon our hearts thoughts of humility, courtesy, truth, love, and integrity in order to carve a helpful, noble life. As the sculptor turns to his model in order to perfect his work, so must we turn constantly from the imperfect and illusive ideals of the material life in order to mould and chisel a beautiful, spiritual life. In Galatians we read:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

"Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." (Gal. 5:22-23.)

The poet Longfellow expressed the importance of perfect thought-models in the following verse:

"Sculptors of life are we as we stand
With our lives uncarved before us,
Waiting the hour when at God's
command

Our life dream passes o'er us.
If we carve it then on the yielding
stone

With many a sharp incision,
Its heavenly beauty shall be our
own,—

Our lives that angel-vision."

CARPENTER

By Lori Petri

IT HAS A lightsome, airy sound,
Although connoting sinewed strength;
Hinting the buoyancy and bound
Of wood released from a tree's taut length;
Suggesting fragrant shaving curls
Tossed off to the drone of a giant bee,
As if from heads of carefree girls
That, dryad-like, no one can see;
And One who built a house alight
With faith the centuries cannot dim,
But pleaded that small children might
Be suffered to come unto Him.