

myrrh, but most probably gum labdanum; inasmuch as myrrh was not produced in Palestine, as the passages in Genesis speak of it as being exported from Gilead into Egypt. It was among the gifts brought by the wise men to the infant Jesus, and was highly valued by the Jews and other ancient nations. We are told that before Esther was presented to the King, "she was purified six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odors."

According to St. Mark, just before our Savior's crucifixion, the soldiers offered a draught of "wine mingled with myrrh." It is difficult to understand this passage. Commentators agree in assigning as a reason that it was intended as a "pain-killer, presented out of pity." But myrrh is not an anodyne. The other evangelists speak of the draught as "vinegar mixed with gall." As *gall* stands associated in other places with that which is poisonous, the probability is that the draught contained some bitter and anodyne herb; it may have been the poppy, intended to stupefy the sufferer.

*Saffron*, there is no doubt, is the correct rendering of the Hebrew word. From the earliest times it has been in high repute as a perfume. It was used, we are informed, for the same purpose as modern "pot pourri."

*Spikenard*—We read that "Mary took a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus." One of the disciples was displeased with so lavish an expenditure, asking, "Why was not this ointment sold for 300 pence and given to the poor?" It appears from this that its value was £9 7s. 6d. There is much difference of opinion as to what really the plant was which was rendered "spikenard." Sir William Jones, one of the most learned Oriental scholars, said of this famous perfume, "I am not of opinion that the nardum of the Romans was merely the essential oil of the plant, but am strongly inclined to believe that it was a generic word, meaning what we now call attar or otto of some plant; or the mixed perfume called "abir," of which the principal ingredients were yellow sandal, violets, orange flowers, wood of aloes, rose, musk, and true spikenard." The true spikenard, the "nardus indica," was highly esteemed as a perfume and as a stimulant medicine.

By *Aloes* we are, of course, not to understand the medical drug of that name, but either the Lign aloes or, what is quite probable, some kind of odoriferous cedar.

*Aniseed* is mentioned in connection with *mint* and *cummin*, which are represented as three of the smallest and most insignificant plants. No doubt mint and cummin are rightly translated, but the word translated *anise* Dr. Royle thinks should be called *dill*, as the anethum is more specially a genus of Eastern cultivation than the other plant. There is also an allusion to cummin in Isaiah, where the mode of separating the seeds from the plant is mentioned