

## The Rockwood Review.

I followed with mingled trepidations regarding the possible effect of Bridget's heels, and the probable dislocation of the bride's neck. So much for a wedding in Palestine to-day.

Last night I attended a betrothal ceremony, and as the complement of the wedding must add a few words in description. The preliminaries, of course, are of a purely monetary character, between the bridegroom and the male relations of the bride. The lady among the Christians merely gives a formal consent—among the Moslems she is not consulted at all, she simply goes to the highest bidder; and according to a man's wealth so is the number of his wives. The betrothal last night was that of one of our teachers, and took place in the house of Dr. Barton, the medical missionary here.

There were about thirty guests and witnesses, with the would-be bridegroom and the brother of the intended bride. The proceedings began with a hymn, then the native pastor read the chapter in Genesis where Abraham charges the steward to depart to Harem and take a wife for his son Isaac from the members of his father's house. On this he based some very good advice to the groom-to-be. This was followed by prayer; then the formal betrothal, consisting of certain questions and answers in the presence of witnesses, with the payment of the "lump-sum" tied up in a white handkerchief to the brother of the bride, who of course promptly pocketed the "value of a sister" according to eastern notions. The ceremony then closed with another hymn, which unfortunately for western ears, was set to the tune of "Old Black Joe." After this, of course, the inevitable refreshments; but even this did not end the occasion, for an adjournment took place to the house of the groom, where we were welcomed and entertained in truly native fashion. The welcome consisted of two or three women standing just outside the door, and including the names of the chief

guests in turn in a weird chant. The screeching powers of the women here are simply indescribable. The chant varies according to whether the occasion is a wedding or a funeral: at both it is equally atrocious. Last night it was something like a combination of the hooting of a barn owl and the yelping of a pack of jackals: heard at midnight in the depth of a Canadian forest it would freeze with terror the blood even of a red Indian.

The entertainment consisted of the inevitable sweetmeats, cigarettes and coffee. I do not smoke, and as related above, am always duly grateful for the first chance at one of the coffee cups.

At Dr. Barton's house there is one of the nicest examples of the confidence of birds in man that I have ever seen. Nearly all eastern houses are constructed with a very broad hall running from the front to the back, and known as the "Divan." When occupied by Europeans a portion of the divan is screened off, and used frequently as a diningroom. This is the case at Dr. Barton's. A little in front of the dining table is a hanging lamp, suspended by a rod from the vaulted ceiling. Around the top of this rod a pair of swallows have built the mud walls of their little home. Last night with about twenty voices singing to the tune of "Old black Joe," somewhere about ten feet below the nest, the swallows remained sitting calmly and quietly upon the eggs. Of course the nest is situated quite in the centre of the house, and the birds are locked in with the rest of the family every night. These birds have returned regularly to the same spot for several years, and the doctor has constructed a circular platform around the hanging rod below the nest for their particular accommodation.

For such timid birds as the swallow I have never heard of a similar instance.