

LESSON ILLUSTRATIONS.

1. *A King Rebuked.*—Bishop Latimer once displeased Henry VIII by a sermon he preached at court, and the king commanded him to recant next Sunday. But when he rose to preach, he prefaced his sermon thus: "Hugh Latimer, dost thou know to whom thou art this day to speak? To the high and mighty monarch, who can take away thy life if thou offend. Therefore take heed how thou speak a word that may displease." But, as if recalling himself, "Hugh, Hugh, dost thou know from whence thou comest, upon what message thou art sent, and who it is that is present with thee? Even the great and mighty God, who is able to cast both body and soul into hell forever. Therefore be sure that thou deliver thy message faithfully." He then confirmed and urged with more earnestness the offending truths he had spoken the week before. Instead of punishing him, the king expressed his thankfulness that he had a religious adviser who could deal so faithfully with him.

2. *Oriental Dancers.*—Dr. Selah Merrill, than whom no one is more competent to speak on Oriental manners, says, "The attempt to illustrate New Testament Jewish customs by the practices of Mahomedans living in Palestine now, may not always be satisfactory, or just. Women are now secluded entirely, and one could not now appear before men as a

dancer without incurring reproach. But if we take Jewish history as a background for Salome's action, no rule of propriety was violated by her dancing on this occasion. The dancing of women in public was an ancient custom of which many noted examples might be given. (Ex. 15: 20; Sam. 18: 6.) It was not done for lewdness, but to celebrate some particular event. There was no indecent exposure of the person, and there were no improper attitudes.'

4. *An oath evaded.* Such rash and pompous promises are very common with Eastern potentates. Even Arab Sheiks indulge in them. They are considered irrevocable. Analogous to this is the decree granted by Ahasuerus to Haman against the Jews. When the fulfillment of the oath turns out against the interest or inclinations of the tyrant, he soon manages to nullify it, without seeming to break his word. Such was the case according to Arab tradition, of the Sheik who repented of his solemn promise to give his daughter's hand for a certain service. The bridal party hardly left his tent when he sent forth his bandits to waylay them, and bring back his daughter, together with the groom's head. Had the damsel asked for something truly dear to Herod's heart, the record of his craftiness justifies us in thinking that he would not have hesitated to overthrow the plot. (Ezra Isaac.)

