



EASTERN MARRIAGE PROCESSION.

WEDDING IN PALESTINE.

It has been well said that the lands of the Bible are the best commentary on the books of the Bible, that the unchangeable manners and customs of the Orient explain a great many allusions and descriptions of the sacred Scriptures. This is especially so of the marriage and funeral customs, of which we saw many illustrations in our recent visit to Egypt and Palestine, and which we will describe fully in our article in the *Methodist Magazine* on "Tent Life in Palestine." These processions generally take place at night, with great illumination of the houses and brilliant array of torches or lamps, and a loud din of rather discordant music. The bride is thickly veiled and carried in a closed carriage or palanquin. Indeed, most of the women wear veils or strange mufflings like nose-bags, and even the little children, as shown in the picture at the right hand side, wear them. Sometimes this veil is so thin that the features can be seen through, but that is only among the fashionable Turkish women. The peasant people sometimes wear figured veils over their entire faces, so that you cannot get the faintest glimpse of their features.

The use of lamps and torches in these marriage processions will explain the allusion in the parable of the wise and foolish virgins. While the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept, but when at midnight the cry came "Behold, the bridegroom cometh," those that had oil in their lamps went out to meet him, but those that had no oil had no time to buy, and were shut out of the marriage feast. How solemn is the lesson that our Lord conveys to those who in time of youth and health and strength make no preparation for the coming of the heavenly bridegroom, for at such an hour as they think not the summons may be heard, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him."

One of Tennyson's sweetest, yet saddest poems is founded upon this parable of our Lord. It is the song of the little novice in the convent to the hapless Queen Guinevere:

Late, late, so late and dark the night and chill!
Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

No light had we: for that we do repent;
And learning this the bridegroom will relent.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

No light: so late! and dark and chill the night!
O let us in that we may find the light!
Too late, too late: ye cannot enter now.

Have we not heard the bridegroom is so sweet?
O let us in tho' late, to kiss his feet!
No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now.

LESSON NOTES.

FOURTH QUARTER - REVIEW.

LESSON XII. - December 18.

GOLDEN TEXT.

And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him.—Dan. 7. 14.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

God is guiding his Church to fuller truth and larger conquests.

QUESTIONS.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

I.—The Extension of Christianity into other Regions.

Over how much time do these lessons extend?
How long had the Church been in existence?
In what places had the Gospel been preached?
To what places did Peter go?
Name the places where Paul went on his mission.
Trace out their journey on the map.
What city had a large Gentile church?

II.—Progress in Gaining Disciples.

How many became Christians on the day of Pentecost?
Did the number increase very fast?
How was it at Antioch?
In what other places were many disciples gained?
What great man was wonderfully changed?
What army officer became a Christian?
What governor?
What kind of people did the Gospel make those who believed?

III.—Divine Forces in the Development.

What great power was working these changes?
What were some of the works of the Holy Spirit?
Name the miracles that aided the Gospel.
What influences came from God to Peter?
to Cornelius? to Paul? to Ananias?
On what two occasions were angels sent?
What answers to prayer do you find?

IV.—Hindrances and Difficulties.

What Jew was a great persecutor?
What king persecuted?
Whom did he kill?
Whom did he put in prison?
In what cities was Paul persecuted?
In which one was he stoned?
How did some Jewish Christians make trouble?
Why was it hard for Jews and Gentiles to live together?

V.—Era of Progress.

What change was made by Saul's conversion?
Why was the receiving of the Gentiles a forward step?
What council was held in Jerusalem?
What new step started at Antioch?
What lessons do you learn from this review?

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