



EASTERN
HOUSE-TOP
AND
BALCONY.

HOUSES IN THE EAST.

An interesting article on the subject of Oriental houses was lately contributed to *The Sunday-school Journal*, by Prof. James Strong. He says :

"Isolated residences are very rare, the houses being generally massed, for convenience, economy, and safety, in villages and towns, and in many cases surrounded by a wall, with guarded gates. To enter one of these dwellings, the visitor is ushered through a dark and narrow alley in the middle of the ground floor into an open court, with a corridor running on its four sides. The better class of houses are of two stories, often with a dome on the roof.

"The lower floor is for rough purposes, such as reception rooms, storage, kitchen, etc.; and the upper part for residence—the front for the men and the rear for the women.

"The house-top has a parapet around, according to the Mosaic injunction. In the villages the streets are so narrow, and the roof-beams project so far over the streets that one can readily run from end to end on the roofs. When our Lord said, 'Let him that is on the house-top not come down,' he meant let those who are on the house-top in time of attack upon the city, not try to come down into the city, but jump across from roof

to roof to the end of the town, and then escape into the country.

"Town-meetings are held on the house-tops, proclamations are made on the house-tops; the olives, figs, and grapes are here spread out to dry. Before the wheat is ground it is washed and spread on the house-top, and the children watch it while drying, to keep away the sparrows. Here the washed clothes are hung out; and here the women of the household meet and lean over the parapets, either to see what is passing in the street or to talk with the

neighbours. The Mohammedans pray on the house-tops, turning their faces toward Mecca.

"In the cities the roofs are made of cement, and in the mountain villages of earth, a foot thick. I once preached on a house-top to several hundred people, in a Lebanon village.

"Sometimes bonfires are built on the house-tops; and watchmen often watch the village vineyards, in fruit-time, sitting in booths on the highest house-tops in the village. An Oriental house-top is a great convenience; but, alas! these flat roofs too often leak, and sometimes—when covered with earth and soaked with rain—they fall in, and bury the whole family alive in the ruins."

SAVED FROM DROWNING.

Little Tommy Perkins, with some more of the boys at school, went out one day at noon upon the newly-formed ice. When two or three of them got close together the ice broke through, and little Tommy was immersed in the cold water. His big brother Jack, who was playing not far off, saw his danger and rushed with a couple of oars from the boat-house to his help. Little Tommy was none the worse for his adventure, but was very thankful for his timely rescue.

The time is approaching when the boys and girls will be playing on the ice. They should be particularly careful not to venture on it till some older and heavier person has tried it to see whether it will bear or not. If they do not they might incur the same danger as did little Tom, without the same providential rescue.

To-day is the only time we can call our own. Yesterday has passed by; to-morrow has not come.



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