

the Persians think a cup defiled if a Christian drink from it. In a wedding procession in a village, the musicians lead with fife and drum, and "the virgins" follow in all the finery they can muster. At times of mourning also, they act just as the Gospels describe. Friends gather to "weep and bewail." I have seen a roomful of women swaying and sobbing, while a mother chanted a plaintive refrain: "Alas! alas!" repeating the beloved name of the dead; often tearing her hair, and beating her breast. I have often seen blear-eyed women, who said they had become so by excessive weeping over the death of a child. To such comes Jesus' message, "Weep not."

Religious observances in Persia are such as give special significance to Gospel teaching. I had a visitor whose lips were continually mumbling while she fingered her beads. She told me she was making merit, by repeating the hundred names of Allah. Often when in their homes, our hostess will excuse herself, because "it is the hour of prayer," and going to a corner of the same room, will go through the forms and gestures of Mohammedan worship. "Vain repetitions" they seem, when we know the words are Arabic, a language she does not understand; and as in the midst of her prayers she calls out directions to her servants, one can see there is no devotion in them.

Fasting is a terrible burden, when, for a month, from dawn to dark, not a morsel of food, or drop of water, or a whiff of the loved cigarette or pipe can