

peeped shyly at us from the folds of their mothers' robes until they finally found confidence enough to lisp out, "Backsheesh."

Lunch having been laid out on a rug in the front room we proceeded to eat it, sitting *à la* native on more rugs on the floor; a position which the supple grace and flowing robes of an Oriental permit him to assume with ease, but in which an Englishman is the very picture of angular discomfort. We never had chairs or tables for this midday meal and had adapted ourselves to the situation with no little enjoyment of each other's awkwardness.

Our attention was presently attracted to a melancholy procession creeping slowly along the road below us, which was pronounced to be our camp, though we utterly failed to recognize it. There were no songs from the men, who were muffled from head to feet in their *abayehs*; the mules dragged sadly along with drooping heads; their very bells had a mournful sound, and the conviction came suddenly home to us that our camp was not likely to be ready for us to-night. An anxious inquiry of Abdallah confirmed this fear. We should probably be obliged to sleep in a native house in the village of Kefr Hawar. The prospect evidently had no charms for the rest of the party, but I secretly rejoiced. The exceeding simplicity of the domestic arrangements here had fascinated me, but I wanted to be sure that this household was a type, not an exception.

About one o'clock there was a lull in the storm, and, going to the door to reconnoitre, we saw "Mr. Cook" seated on a stone in front of the house, busily plucking fowls, with the air of being perfectly at home and quite satisfied with the situation. The prospect of dinner was consoling; and the rain actually ceasing now, we distributed "backsheesh,"* and set out, warmed and dried and hopeful that the worst was over. This hope was speedily dispelled, for our road still ascended toward the region of cloud and storm. Fierce gusts of wind and rain threatened to tear us from the saddle; sharp, stinging sleet fairly blinded us at times. For an hour we met successive blasts, with sometimes a little breathing space between; but, at length, when the increased cold proved that we had nearly reached the snow level, our road turned somewhat, and we gladly saw what we had long looked for anxiously—the water was running with us instead of meeting us; in a word, we had commenced the descent. Gradually the

* Before leaving, each one of the two wives came to us in turn and furtively informed us that she was the genuine wife and that the "backsheesh" should be given to her and not to her rival—from which we inferred that this domestic arrangement was not without its infelicities.—Ed.