

picnic to the top of a neighbouring hill, where was a tomb of a very holy sheikh. The Moslem idea of enjoyment seemed to be to climb on a hot day a high hill and picnic amid the rude plaster-covered tombs of the shadeless, sandy cemetery. The men drank black coffee and smoked their hubble-bubble pipes apart by themselves. The women and children partook of their humble lunch also by themselves. All were dressed in their gayest-coloured robes—the fair-faced Syrian women chiefly in white and pale blue, the men in yellow silk gowns with crimson girdles. The multitude looked like a great bed of tulips and poppies covering the whole slope of the hill.

As we rode up, I uttered the salutation "Neharabsaid,"—"May your day be pleasant"—and instantly a smile, half an acre in extent, passed over the entire group as they responded, "May yours also, O traveller," most of them rising to their feet at the salutation. They were very courteous and made room for our horses at the best point of view, and forthwith began to feed them with leaves of lettuce from their own lunches, with an eye keenly expectant of backsheesh. A procession of dervishes on donkeys, with a rabble retinue of boys and men carrying green flags and beating drums, came up the hill, and began their chanting and dancing and weird incantation.

It was a strange sight, a perfect kaleidoscope of colour, a living bouquet of people swaying to the music like poppies in the wind. Like a map lay far beneath the village of Baalbec and the solemn ruins of the Temple of the Sun. To right and left stretched the slopes of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, covered with gleaming snow, the green valley of Cælo-Syria spreading between.

Mr. Read and I lingered long after the rest of the party had descended the hill, and had to follow in a headlong gallop amid scattered ruins of half-buried capitals and columns. About half an hour's ride from Baalbec is a rude Moslem shrine, "probably," says Dr. Thompson, "once the tomb of some great saint or sinner." An empty stone coffin served as a prayer niche. The shrine is known either as the bed of Adam and Eve or the Tomb of Darius—one legend is about as authentic as the other.

We rode on through a fertile country, clothed with vines and mulberry trees, studded with good stone farm-houses two stories in height—the best we had seen in Syria. About mid-afternoon we passed the so-called Tomb of Noah. It is a low structure, one hundred and thirty-two feet long, covered with a crumbling arcade, with a dome at one end and a small mosque at the other. The Moslem tradition avers that the patriarch was so tall that even this tomb was not long enough and that his legs, from the knee