

with which the Doctor stated his intention of starting immediately, and crossing the stream when we reached it. "Most of the ills of life," he, sententiously remarked, "are those which never happen." We started accordingly, and an Arab found a fordable place, though the white foam rising against the horses' legs gave token of the swiftness of the current.

The remainder of the ride was void of excitement until after lunch. We were riding lazily along, when Abdallah, pointing far away across the plain, thrilled us with the word "Damascus!" It was a never-to-be forgotten moment when we caught the first sight of the white domes and minarets, surrounded by a broad belt of green, and knew that at last we looked upon the oldest city in the world—"The Pearl of the East." The horses caught the excitement of their riders, and broke into a swift gallop; but it was very hot now, and the city much more distant than at first it seemed, so that it was three o'clock before we rode through the gate into a street, bordered on either side by gardens, whose rose and orange trees filled the air with sweetness; then past the ring of gardens, on through sunny, noisy streets, until, at length, we stopped before an unpromising blank wall, inscribed "Hotel Dimitri."

But, however inhospitable the outside seemed, the interior of the Hotel Dimitri presented a charming sight to weary, dusty travellers. The large, open court was cool and shady, and sweet with plants in bloom. Water dripped musically into a great stone basin in the centre; the very spirit of repose pervaded the place. The city outside might have been miles away, not a sound penetrated the thick walls. But we postponed the hour of rest and very soon started out to take a first preliminary peep at the bazaars.

The fact that we spent considerable time in these bazaars was not due to an excessive love of shopping, but to the discovery that they were more distinctly and delightfully Oriental than any place we had seen. All the races of the East seemed represented there, and the consequent variety of costume was always interesting to eyes accustomed to the sombre monotony of English dress. The rich fabrics in soft, harmonious, glowing tints were a continual feast of colour; and many an accidental group made a picture one stopped to admire and longed to preserve.

One of the most popular quarters of Damascus is the sweetmeat bazaar, famous throughout all Syria for the delicate perfection of its wares; and, above all, as being the true home of that queen of sweets, "Turkish Delight." There are base imitations elsewhere, pasty looking compounds with a gluey flavour; but the name is all