

twinkling lights from distant villages showing here and there over the plain, chatting of the day's wonderful experience, and glad of the anticipated rest and quiet of our Christian home in the midst of the famous and fanatical city. I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of two of the most peculiar notabilities of Damascus. One of these was the Bedouin Sheikh 'Miguel, or as they call it, Mijuel, for many years the chief guide and head escort of travellers to Palmyra. Interest in him centres in the fact that, Bedouin as he is, he won the heart and hand of an English lady of position and wealth. It seems that in his palmy days, as a handsome, daring, chivalrous young chieftain, this lady, whom he was escorting on her journey, fell grievously ill, and Mijuel nursed her through her illness with such kindness, courtesy and success, that she fell in love with him and married him. For a considerable time they lived together in an elaborately decorated house in Damascus. She has now been dead for some years, and the sheikh has married again, this time one of his own country-women, a great contrast, doubtless, to his English wife.

We called on the old man, and were received, of course, with great courtesy and hospitality. He is a tall, spare man, with strongly-marked keen Arab face, and nothing, at least, to a casual observer, to mark him out as ever having been prepossessing enough to have won the affections of an English woman. I tried hard to get his photograph, but the old man was evidently afraid of our cameras, and remarked that it was not necessary.

The other notable was a man of entirely different type—an example of the keen and crafty Damascene business man. He is well known to travellers, as a dealer in antiquities, and indeed the name by which he commonly goes in the city is Abou Antika, the Father of Antiques. He is an old man, short, stout, rubicund of face and very irascible in temper. We went through his establishment with the doctor, who knew well how to bring out his peculiarities. Such an establishment it was—room after room bare, dusty and dirty, with floor and tables piled with an indescribable profusion and confusion of articles of every description, some of priceless rarity and value, others of comparatively little worth. But such a mixture—fine old armour, swords and guns richly damascened and inlaid, exquisite bits of china and rare old tiles, bits of noble statuary from Palmyra, quaint lamps from the old mosques, hammered brass trays of delicate design and finish, a thousand things to tempt the purse and delight the eye of a lover of the antique and the curious. Old Abou Antika with his red, cross face and wheezy breath, moved with us among his treasures. "Now," said the doctor to us, "I'll tease him a bit." Then to him, "How much are these, Abou Antika?"