

What actually happened was this. A sun-browned man in light khaki tunic, short trousers, and bare knees sauntered along, a cigarette drooping from the left-hand corner of his mouth.

"*Saa-eeda, Tommy Effendi,*" said one of the loiterers, making way for him.

"Damned old fool of a moke," said the man in shorts; then bent down and alternately stroked, pushed, and spoke to the donkey. Somehow he persuaded it to rise and start walking. The crowd disentangled itself and its animals from each other, and dispersed. And the man in shorts, his cigarette still dangling from the left-hand corner of his mouth, passed on, as casual and unsurprised as if he had been in Brixton or Birmingham.

Both in appearance and in spirit Damascus had changed much since the days of my captivity. Destitution was yet evident, but far less flagrantly than when I had seen starving babies lying against the walls and crying their hunger. There were no more furtive looks, and many more smiles. The swaggering Germans were supplanted by companionable Tommies, the tyrannous Turkish gendarmes by the headdressed Arab police. In the long, arcaded bazaar the traders had brought out their stocks of carpets, prayer-rugs, silks, and precious stones, hoarded during the war, and were selling them at prices far below those ruling in war-time Cairo or war-time anywhere else. And everywhere the Arabian flag was prominent.

For many a day the talk in the bazaars had been of a new Arabian Empire, as a reward for the exploits of King Hussein's Arabs—exploits that had not only freed Arabia and helped to free Syria, but had involved the

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