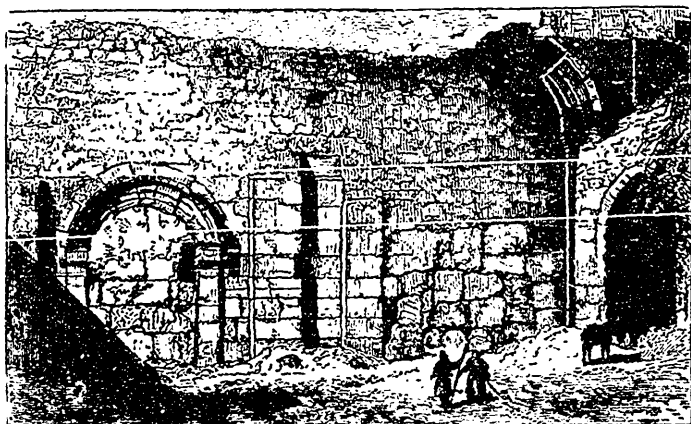


too, is the traditional house of Ananias, where that just man baptized St. Paul. It is now converted into a small church with a vault-like crypt, into which we descended, and on its altar is a picture of the baptismal scene. Near it is the house of Judas mentioned in Acts ix. 11—another underground crypt, twenty-nine steps below the surface, fitted up as a chapel, though why it is thus identified it is hard to conceive.

A feature of peculiar interest in Damascus, is its numerous cafés, generally near, or overhanging, the waters of Barada. They are very primitive, booth-like structures, their chief furniture being low, rush-like stools or cushioned divans, where the natives indolently sip their black coffee or sherbet, and smoke their long "hubble-bubble" water-pipes. They beguile the time by listening to the drone of professional



ANCIENT EAST GATE OF DAMASCUS.

story-tellers or the monotonous thrumming or throbbing of the guitar or cymbals of the native musicians, or to the more musical plash of the fountains, or the stream's low voice. The many-coloured lamps and gay dresses of the men contrast with the tinsel finery of their surroundings. But to its credit be it said that not a single grog-shop disgraces Damascus, such as by the thousand curse London, Paris and New York.

As a surprise for our party, Abdallah had arranged a sort of picnic-lunch in a charming garden beside the swift-rushing Barada, where the afternoon light shimmered through the bright green foliage and multitudes of flowers breathed forth their fragrance on the air. Here several of our muleteers and servants had prepared luncheon for us, including salted nuts, salads, anise-seed cordial, sweetmeats, and other refreshments more grateful to an Oriental than to an Occidental taste.