

EPILOGUE

A DAMASCUS POSTSCRIPT; AND SOME WORDS ON THE
KNIGHTS OF ARABY, A CRUSADER IN SHORTS, A VERY
NOBLE LADYE AND SOME HAPPY ENDINGS

OF ALL the cities in the Near and Middle East Damascus is at once the most ancient, the most unchanged by time, the most unreservedly Oriental, and the most elusive.

Constantinople is Byzantium—cum Mohammedan lust for power—cum Ottoman domination—cum Levantine materialism—cum European exploitation and Bourse transactions, in a setting of natural and architectural magnificence; a city that expresses itself variously and inharmoniously by a blendless chorus from an unmixable mixture of creeds and races; a charming, feminine city with a wayward soul; a cruel, unstable city of gamblers; a city of pleasant, vine-trellised alleyways, delightful waterways, fear-haunted prisons and extravagant rogueries; to my mind the most intriguing city in the world.

Cairo is a compound of sphinx-and-pyramid antiquity, modern opulence, degenerate Arab touts, Arab Babudom, reserved and Simla-like officialdom, the cosmopolitan gaiety of four great hotels, sordid and curious vice, sand-fringed suburbs, traffic in tourists and fake scarabs, and the compelling, changeless charm of the Nile.