

base of the Hermon range, and probably no tourist ever sees it, except as we did, accidentally. Its appearance offered no welcome as we rode up in the stormy twilight—sky, and village, and rocky background all alike, grey and desolate, the stony monotony unrelieved by tree or shrub.

Our own damp and dragged condition may have contributed to these gloomy impressions; luckily it did not repel the good priest, who received us at his door with as much gracious cordiality as if we had been long-looked-for friends; nor was the warmth of his welcome in any way affected by the lack of English on his part and of Arabic on ours. His bright smile and warm hand-clasp, and the gentle friendliness in his soft, dark eyes, needed no interpreter, as, leading us across a small chamber to the principal room, he placed it at our disposal with a gesture as kindly as it was graceful.

Abdallah at once proceeded to take entire command of the house and household with his usual air of knowing much more about their resources than did the inmates themselves; and the flowery courtesy with which his commands were issued, produced its usual effect in very willing service. A fire was lighted on the floor in the corner of the anteroom, and though there was no chimney—the fuel consisted of corn stalks, of which we burned the entire supply—part of the smoke found its way out of the open door and we braved the rest for the sake of the cheerful blaze.*

The shadowy background of the little room was filled with as many of the villagers as could crowd into it; they stood silent and motionless, watching us intently; no doubt it was a rare opportunity. As soon as possible I started on a tour of inspection, though a hasty glance around the principal room had already reassured me; the simplicity I had admired in the morning was evidently the rule; there were not even any wicker stools here.

A ledge near the top of the wall held the clerical library, some half-dozen books, and a pile of rugs occupied a lower recess;

* The good priest was married, as are most of those of the Greek Church, and his wife and mother and handsome children were the soul of hospitality. The old lady fairly adopted us as her own for the time, rubbed and chafed our hands to restore warmth, and, as St. Paul says of the people of Melita, "showed no little kindness" to the wayworn travellers. The priest expressed, through our interpreter, his regret that his house was not better fitted to receive such honourable company, and wished us safe return to our own country. I told him that in our party were four preachers of the Gospel, who were trying to serve God and do good in our own land, and that we wished him great success in his work. He, in response, prayed that God would grant our wish.—Ed.