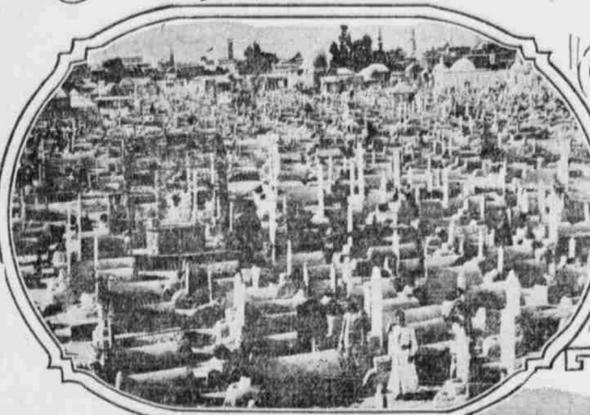


The Mother City of the World

A glimpse of Damascus



THE CEMETERY OF THE MAIDEN AT DAMASCUS



ONE OF THE BUSIEST BAZARS

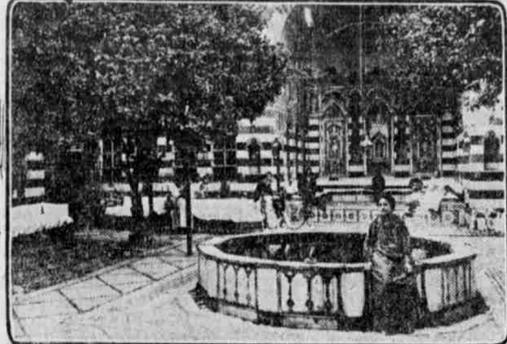


DAMASCUS AND THE COURT OF THE GREAT MOSQUE



"G O BACK," wrote the late Mark Twain, "as far as you will into the vague past, there is always a Damascus. To her years are only moments, decades only fitting trifles of time; she measures time not by days, months, and years, but by the empires she has seen rise and prosper and then crumble into ruin. She is a type of immortality."

Indeed Damascus is the oldest of cities and for that reason is often referred to as the mother city of the world. When Abraham crossed the desert from Haran, four thousand years ago, Damascus was already standing on the banks of the Abana, in Syria, and no one knows how long it stood there before that



COURTYARD AND GUEST CHAMBER OF A JEWISH HOME IN DAMASCUS

time, for its origin is lost in mists of antiquity. "Babylon is a heap in the desert and Tyre a ruin on the shore," but Damascus still remains. Rome has been called the Eternal City, but Damascus is twice as old as Rome. Its history runs back to the beginning of the world and bids fair to go on to its end.

It has lived through all these long centuries and no historian has yet had the opportunity to write its decline and fall. This is remarkable when it is remembered that not less than twelve times it has been pillaged and burned, yet it has always arisen with new beauty from its ashes. It has been ruled by Syrians, Persians, Greeks, Romans and Turks and it has lived and flourished under them all.

Damascus is now and has always been a rich and prosperous city. It was so in Bible times. Isaiah writes of the "riches of Damascus" and the traveler today may see long trains of camels laden with all kinds of merchandise, leaving Damascus going down to Egypt or out to Beirut, where they are shipped to other shores. Its bazars are the most famous in the world. These bazars are a series of shops for the sale of articles and in some cases for the manufacture of them. Each bazar is devoted to a particular class of goods. They are famous for their treasures of silk, carpets, saddles, silver and gold ornaments, slippers, sword blades, rare woods and almost everything required in the general life of the east. People of many races, men and women in all picturesque costumes, strings of camels,

donkeys, with cradle saddles, Arabian horses, dig through the streets. Then Damascus is destined to play an important part in the history of the east. It is the center of a network of railroads. It already boasts of three railroad stations and when the Bagdad line has advanced to the Euphrates, as it is expected to do early this year, Damascus will be in railroad communication with Constantinople and Europe, as well as with Palestine, Arabia and eventually Persia. Then Damascus was the first city in the Bible lands to have electric trams and electric light.

It is certainly one of the most beautiful cities in its situation. Imagine a magnificent plain, well watered, and fertile in the midst of a desert, covering an area of more than 30 miles in circumference, surrounded on nearly all sides by high hills—imagine this vast plain in a high state of cultivation, one vast garden, of fruit trees of almost every species, fields of grain, nearly every variety of flowers and the ever present murmur of running waters. Situated about the middle of this plain and buried in this forest of grass, grain and trees and sparkling streams, a city of 150,000 people, with its hundreds of white minarets, gilded domes and crowned bazars, that is Damascus, beautiful indeed for situation.

It undoubtedly owes its beauty, vitality and wealth to the River Abana, which rises in the Lebanon some twenty miles away. Before it reaches Damascus it is divided into six artificial channels, through the heart of the city. Pipes are led from it to every part, so that every mosque

and house and court has its fountain and everywhere you go amid groves or gardens or public resorts or retired nooks, you may see and hear the murmur of the swiftly flowing and sparkling streams and this abundance of clear, cold water is one of the charms of the city. This is the river of which Nanman spoke with such pride, when he said: "Are not the Abana and Parpar rivers of Damascus better than all the waters of Israel?" and he was right so far as beauty and usefulness are concerned.

Damascus is mentioned many times in the Bible, both in the Old and the New Testament. In the latter it comes before us in connection with the conversion of St. Paul. Tradition has localized every event connected with the apostle. Outside, on the Damascus road, five miles from the city, is pointed out the place where St. Paul had the vision which so changed the course of his life. There is the gate still standing where he entered the Roman road into the city. This street is today the most principal, being about a mile long, beginning at one end of the city and running right across it from east to west. Damascus is a city of mosques, baths and fountains. Climb on to the roof of any dwelling and you are in a sea of tall minarets, while all around you are rows of what looks like saucers turned upside down. These are the Arab baths. There are 250 mosques in the city, the most important being the great Mosque, great in size and great reputation. The ground upon which it stands has a great history. On this spot stood the church which was erected by Constantine, dedicated to John the Baptist. Then, when the city fell into the hands of the Turks, they converted it into a mosque, obliterating everything that had a trace of Christianity. They closed the door by which the Christians entered and closed up other buildings in front of it.

Some few years ago, however, the Great Mosque, to the whole regret of the civilized world, was burned down in a single day. Strange to say, the old door escaped the fire and no one was more surprised than the moslems to read over its portal these words from the Psalms: "Thy kingdom O Christ is a kingdom of all ages and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations."

The mosque was rebuilt, but the moslems, being superstitious, feared to tamper with the old door and its sacred inscription and so left it and it can be seen to this day, a reminder that Mohammedan rule has not always been supreme in the Mother City of the World.

Midshipmen Now and Then

Something more than a hundred years ago the midshipman was, indeed, the "midshipmite" that he was popularly called, for he was but a mite of a lad, usually receiving his appointment before he reached his teens. Admirals Farragut and Porter were midshipmen, afloat and in pitched battles, at twelve years of age, and Goldborough was appointed when only seven years old. Nowadays, however, the midshipman is quite a different person. He cannot enter the naval academy under fifteen, and is therefore, when on a regular cruising ship, after completing his four years' academic course, usually a well-developed man, physically mature and athletic, and with a trained mind. He is far better equipped mentally than the lieutenants and many of the captains of even seventy years ago.

The old-time middies were mere school boys. All the warships of any size carried in their regular complements a schoolmaster, whose duty it was to give the lads as liberal an education as possible in the odd periods between strictly professional duties. This rating of schoolmaster was abolished, in fact, only about twenty years ago; but after the establishment of the naval academy, in 1841, these officials devoted their en-

ergies to the sailor apprentices only, the enlisted boys of the fore-castle. Even these now obtain their education on shore.

There is a tradition that the three brass buttons the midshipman wears on the sleeve of his full dress coat during his four years at Annapolis originated a century or more ago, when their presence was needed to discourage the youngsters from brushing their noses with their sleeves. This is probably a base slander, modern research indicating that the buttons are relics of the days when there was a cuff-flap on the sleeve.

At all events, the extreme youth of the midshipmite used to be his most conspicuous characteristic. Instead of the full-sized regulation officer's sword that he now carries, he wore a little straight-bladed dirk about a foot long. He was to a large extent a messenger for carrying orders about the ship, but he also took charge of boats and commanded men, despite his youth. He was frequently placed in charge of a prize captured in war, taking her into port, and not infrequently suppressing mutinies among the prisoners on board. Farragut was a prize-master at the age of twelve, and got his prize safely in. The title "midshipman" is an an-

cient one. He is above the seamen and the petty officers forward, and below the commissioned officers in the wardroom aft—hence "midshipman." There was formerly a higher grade called passed midshipman, but this was abolished before the Civil war. Then, about forty years ago, the grade was restored, but called midshipman, the former midshipman being designated as a cadet-midshipman. In 1882 the title of the latter was changed to naval cadet, which it still remains, and the midshipmen were merged with the ensigns. Accordingly, the time-honored title of midshipman no longer exists officially in the United States navy.

While officially a naval cadet, that young officer is still regarded, and often referred to verbally, as a midshipman, for he is the same creature as of old, as far as his duties go. But by the side of his earlier prototype the twentieth century "midship" is a savant. Trigonometry was about as high up in mathematics as the old-timer ever went. The twentieth century lad goes far beyond. He goes through analytical geometry of three

In One Ton of Coal.
From one ton of ordinary gas coal may be produced 1,500 pounds of coke, 20 gallons of ammonia water and 140 pounds of coal tar. By distillation the coal tar will yield 69.6 pounds of pitch, 17 pounds of creosote, 14 pounds of heavy oils, 9.5 pounds of naphtha yellow, 6.3 pounds of naphthalene, 4.75 pounds naphthol, 2.25 pounds alizarin, 2.4 pounds solvent naphtha, 1.5 pounds phenol, 1.2

dimensions, differential and integral calculus, applied mechanics.

Gunnery a hundred years ago was little more than loading, aiming and firing at short ranges. It now involves metallurgy, theory of the combustion of powder gases, stress and strain, mechanical engineering, manufacture and preservation of complex explosives, and other abstruse subjects. In all of which the midshipman of the present day must be proficient.

Midshipmen were conspicuous in all our early wars, notably those with the Barbary States, with the West Indian pirates and with the British in 1812. They were equally conspicuous during our conflicts with the Spanish and Filipinos. Midshipmen, naval cadets, had charge of the extremely hazardous picket duty in the Santiago blockade, close under the Spanish batteries, and often under musketry fire from shore. Cadet Powell ran his open launch right into the harbor of Santiago, after the Merrimac, remained all night under the menacing guns of the inner batteries, and steamed out again under their fire in the morning.

pounds aurine, 1.1 pounds benzine, 1.1 pounds aniline, 0.77 of a pound toluidine, 0.46 of a pound anthracite and 0.9 of a pound toluene. From the latter is obtained the substance known as saccharin, which is 230 times as sweet as the best cane sugar, one part of it giving a very sweet taste to 1,000 parts of water.

If a ton of coal be used in this way there is a bigger profit in it than if it be sold for burning in a range.

Grandma's Colic

By JOHN PHILIP ORTH

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Grandma Burbanks had a little grandson, six years old, and that little grandson and 5 cents' worth of raw peanuts brought about a case of the colic, a thunder-storm, a misunderstanding, a case of love and a very happy marriage. When all was over the old lady thought she had done very well for a woman of her age.

It was the grandson that bought the raw peanuts and brought them home to divide them with grandma. She couldn't have eaten a peck, for there were not that many to begin on, but at eight o'clock in the evening, as she was tucked away in her bed, the pains began. Mr. and Mrs. Burbanks were away for the night; Harry, the son, twenty-three years old, was in town and not expected out until the midnight train; the grandson was asleep, and the house was in charge of Miss Dorothy, aged nineteen.

There are various remedies for colic. There are hot drinks, mustard plasters and whisky with pepper in it, and it may be cured in ten minutes or everything may be found useless. After Miss Dorothy had worked away for half an hour she decided that the doctor must be sent for.

"Is that Dr. Holmes?" she asked when she telephoned in to the village, three miles away.

"The doctor is out and not expected back until after midnight," was the reply.

Dr. Winchell was tried. He was also out. The druggist thought he could put up something for that colic, but he had no boy to send. Grandma groined out with every breath that that breath was the last she expected to draw in this world. The girl must

collie dog after a swim, and mumbled:

"Call yourself a doctor and yet run the risks of such an exposure! Soothe throat, cold in the head and backache to pay for this. Say, Doc, it would serve you blank right if some of the people inside fired a charge of bird-shot at you and drove you off. Lands, but how it does pour!"

Miss Dorothy had heard the man call himself a doctor, and her thoughts leaped to poor old grandma. She knew the doctors she had telephoned for, and this was neither of them. The case demanded a little boldness on her part, however, and she advanced a step or two and asked:

"Did I understand you to say you were a doctor?"

After a jump aside and an exclamation of "Good Lord!" the man replied:

"I can't make out who you are, but I am a doctor, driven to shelter by the storm. If I trespass I am ready to go."

"No, no. I had started to the village after medicine for my grandmother when the storm drove me back. She is suffering with the colic, and I should call this an act of Providence if we could only get into the house."

"Locked out, eh? I am a new doctor just about to set up practice in the village, and I have a bag of remedies with me. Let's see what sort of a burglar I am. Perhaps one of my keys will open the door."

One of them did, and as soon as he could throw off some of his outer garments he was at the bedside of his patient. Grandma was having a hard time of it. Indeed, it was hours before she was easier, and the two worked over her now and then, and now and then had opportunity to talk. A doctor with his first patient, and a girl with a grandmother suffering from so many raw peanuts, don't have to stand on ice-cold formality.

When Harry reached the house from the midnight train he almost made up his mind that they were quite chummy. He didn't do any criticizing, however. He loved his grandmother, was happy her life had been saved, and he wasn't the kind of brother to offer his advice simply because he had a sister. The only thing he did say was after breakfast, and that was partly to himself:

"The ways of Providence are past finding out. Those peanuts and that thunderstorm may bring me a brother-in-law."

"You need some one to get you home earlier," was the reply; and matters rested there.

Grandma heard all about the storm and the providential appearance of Dr. Burnett, and when he called the next afternoon to see if she had fully recovered she was very grateful. Mr. and Mrs. Burbanks were in the room with the patient and doctor, but that did not prevent the old lady from saying to her son:

"James, I thought surely my time had come, and there was only one thing that I worried about. You know what I have often said to you?"

"I don't recall it at this minute," was the reply.

"Why, that we ought to have a doctor in the family. We can't get one through Harry, but we can through Dorothy. I wish you would have a talk with her today."

Just what the son and his wife thought, and just how the blushing girl got out of the room without falling over the rugs is not recorded, but this much the historian knows—the doctor bent forward at just the right instant to feel grandma's pulse and to warn her that at her age a person shouldn't swallow too many wooden toothpicks nor eat too many raw turnips just before going to bed. He didn't look over-red nor over-pale when he left the house, half an hour later.

Dr. Burnett became popular in the village. In driving out that way he always had time to make a call at the Burbanks' mansion, and after a bit it rather looked as if Miss Dorothy expected him about once in so often, but it was months and months before grandmother's mind was put at rest. After saying that she expected the next attack of colic to carry her off she said:

"That is, unless we have a doctor in the family."

"He—he asked me today if the family would take him in!" was the whispered reply from behind her chair.

"And you said the family would—and we will—and oh, dear me, I almost wish I had the colic again and was hearing the angels strumming on their harps!"

Echoes From the Woods.

"Woodman," said the man who quotes poetry but lamely, "withhold the ax with which you are about to lay low this sturdy oak, thereby preserving a valuable asset to posterity and sparing yourself greater fatigue than the object striven for justifies." "I see," replied the woodman; "you are a man of scientific ideas and seek to employ the energy of conservation to the conservation of energy."

Power of Two Words.

"I will," is a projectile that hits the mark; a power that moves mountains.—Henry Wood.



Grandma Was Having a Hard Time of It.