

we saw! Poor little Jewish children, from the age of five to thirteen mostly, working on all sorts of brass and copper work—trays, vases, lamps, incense-burners, etc., etc.—hammering brass into copper, silver into brass, tracing out all sorts of intricate patterns, bending over the fine work so closely that we did not feel surprised on hearing how often these children go blind. A Jewish lady told us how poorly they were paid, and stated that their monthly wage was a shilling for the little ones.

The next day, being Sunday, we went to see the coronation of a Patriarch. We found the place packed—to get inside the church was impossible; so a gentleman who knew my companion, seeing us, offered us seats near the pathway the Patriarch must pass, and then we had the honour of sitting in the crimson velvet seats supplied for all the big wigs; but, alas! it was only for a short time, as the crush became so dangerous that we had to take refuge against the side of a house, standing on the seats there. At last, however, a cheer from the crowd warned us that the Patriarch was coming, and a wild waving of swords and frantic cheers again assured us this was so; and the next moment we saw the poor old man being almost carried along in the crowd. They seemed to lose all self-control, and just to get near him seemed enough. The excitement was terrible, and one could only wonder that nothing serious really happened.

The procession was very gorgeous, the mitre and robes of the Patriarch a marvel of jewels and embroidery, and the attendant Bishops very numerous and also beautifully robed. Then all the Consuls and Vice-Consuls in full uniform, attended by brilliantly-clad "Kavasses," made a picture in themselves. We were much amused by the Russian Vice-Consul (who was staying at the same hotel as ourselves), who had his cocked hat knocked off in the crowd, forgetting his dignity so far as to get furious, and vigorously use his elbows among the offenders. Perhaps one of the prettiest sights in the crowd was the group of Syrian ladies on the balconies surrounding the church garden. Their pretty silk cloaks, lace mantillas (like the Spanish ladies wear), and the flowers in their hair, reminding one of the casements in "Old Madrid." The decorations were all Turkish style, the crescent and star being everywhere.

After the ceremony we were most kindly invited to visit the house of a prominent Damascus official; so, escorted by a very brilliantly-clad "kavass," we passed through the grand bazaar, with its huge waggon-roof, through many quaint and curious by-ways, until at last, turning into a cobbled way that looked like the entrance to stables, we found ourselves under an archway, with a small, low door in the wall to the left. The "kavass" knocking, the door was promptly opened by another gorgeously-clad person, who salaamed low, bade us enter, and preceded us across a huge courtyard, marble-flagged, as usual, fine plants growing around, and a big fountain splashing away in the centre. After the heat, bustle, and excitement we had gone through, this seemed like a glimpse of Eden—the coolness and peace was so delightful.

We were shown into a lovely little room (the

house being on three sides of the courtyard), where a small flight of pure white marble steps led us on to a raised portion of the room, where luxurious chairs and divans made us no longer wonder at the indolence of this race. Sinking into one of these, we had time to gaze around and admire at our leisure the priceless embroideries, rich carpets, costly furniture, and, perhaps what took my fancy most of all, a magnificent old Moorish lamp in beautiful brass work, and, in spite of it being Sunday, I coveted my neighbour's goods badly; and was only brought to my normal self again by the sight and sound of a dear little fountain splashing away at the bottom of the steps, to whose sweet music I sipped a cup of delicious coffee, and allowed my dazed and bewildered brain to rest, content to gaze at the sweet tones of colour on the walls and little dome roof of this enchanting place.

One of the daughters of the house entering, we were taken to see several other rooms, all equally artistic, and then, bidding them a reluctant good-bye, we turned our steps hotelwards.

The next day saw us away again, searching for the famous house of a millionaire Jew, who built his place at great cost, resided there a short time, then left it for sight-seers to admire.

The exterior was very fine—a two-storied house with the woodwork of the eaves carved to represent a frilled curtain, and, at regular intervals underneath, pictures of Eastern scenes were painted. The doors were all beautifully carved. On entering, we found room after room of dazzling white marble, beautifully carved, many lovely paintings, and in several of the rooms wonderful marble fountains, most beautifully inlaid with silver, mother-of-pearl, etc. My imagination, always too much for me, simply ran riot, as I pictured what might have been.

Reluctantly we turned away to visit the grand Mosque, to admire again there the wonderful marble and inlaid work on the Shrine of the Prophet in the centre of the building, the equally beautiful pulpit and columns, and the rugs, which in a mosque are always such a feature; we were shown the thirty presented by the German Emperor on his visit there some years ago, and scarcely knew which to admire most, they were all so beautiful.

Our next trip was to the Emperor Saladin's tomb, where the old man in charge showed us many old weapons and coins found in the vault some years ago (valuable antiques for sale at a fabulous price), when it was found necessary to repair the tomb, owing to its bad condition, and we were highly amused by the sight of a little Japanese pin bowl in the usual little wicker case, such as we buy in England for a penny, being declared a valuable antique by this old man. Evidently some wicked stranger had placed it among the little curios as a joke.

Much more there was of great interest in Damascus, but our leave was up, and we had to leave the rest for a future visit to return to our work among the sick and suffering. F. H. D.

We shall look forward to more letters from F.H.D., touching on her interesting holidays in the East.

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