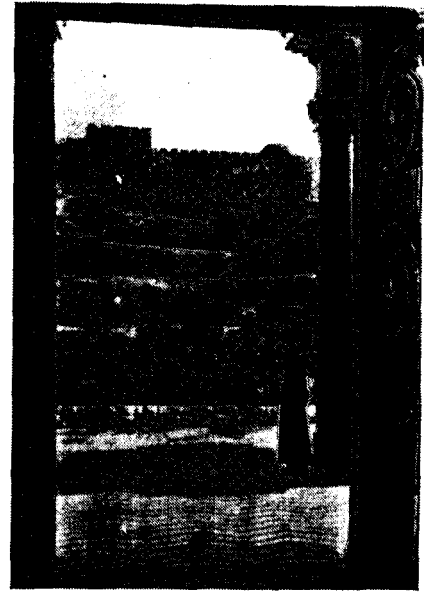


Jerusalem

by

MARGARET B. MACKELLAR

Looking from
the doorway,
United
Nations
Church to
the Golden
Gate.



THE plane left London Airport at midnight, stopping only at Rome, where a very adequately prepared meal, in readiness for all passengers, was partaken. An hour later we were again on our way and eventually in the early hours, the dawn made its appearance in its radiant dress. Soon an outline of the scenery below became visible, until eventually the earth could be observed in its various colourings, vivid green patches of neat and well-kept land—now and again stretches of very blue sea, which appeared to be ending in an edging of white lace where it reached the shores or land. Island, endowed in some parts with thickly populated trees and stretches of mountainous country, peculiarly bare in appearance. One was thankful for the absence of clouds and conscious of the goodness of the Supreme Being, who had made the earth in its many forms, all of which showed individual beauty and character.

On arrival at Mafrak, the scene was not unlike that which we remembered reading of in our early scripture lessons, for here in the midst of the desert were two or three tents. Arabs in their native dress were collected together forming small groups, whilst others passed to and fro. The Arab Legion Cavalry appeared to greet their chief, who had arrived in the same plane. They were striking and dignified and their tunics were both colourful and impressive. Our thoughts returned to Buckingham Palace and we could fully appreciate the thrill and pleasure, experienced in the same way by visitors to Britain. The heat was intense and flies were in great abundance. Within an hour we were on our way to Amman, which was fifty miles further on. The driver of the car was a Christian Arab, and in broken English he assured us of his guidance for anything which we might need. On the way we passed many of the older Arabs—their dress appeared unchanged and attractive, but most

of all, their faces, well-lined, showed character, with eyes which appeared to light up completely when they smiled.

Amman was rather a busy town and we were immediately surrounded by children and adults, attempting to sell their wares. Sad little faces—too many children appeared to be blind, others with obvious mature cataracts and the greater number with streaming conjunctivitis and ulcers. Lepers, too, were begging. The many bazaars were open—the scene was a mixture of gay colours and extreme poverty. The next part of our journey was most interesting—the car reminded us of an old Ford—it appeared to sing in a “broken voice” all the way, except when it would backfire at intervals and give a peculiar jump, when the ten tightly packed Arabs in the back would suddenly heave forward and commence to shout in a language which, thankfully, only they themselves could understand.

As we passed on, in the distance the stately trees, which marked the ever-sacred river Jordan, came into sight, and the land in comparison with the bareness of Jericho was flower-laden; on every side the branches from both shrub and tree gave the scene a background of restful greenery. Jordan's swift-rolling stream creates a deep impression, which even time cannot lessen—the river loved, praised and blessed by both God and Man.

Trans-Jordan, through which we passed, appeared bare in the distance; we could catch a glimpse of the Dead Sea, which lies 1,308 feet below the level of the Mediterranean. The vast expanse of still water, which remains at all times unruffled, has a silencing effect on the traveller. On either side, the sea is hemmed in by two great barren mountain ranges, the “Chain of Judea” and the “Table

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