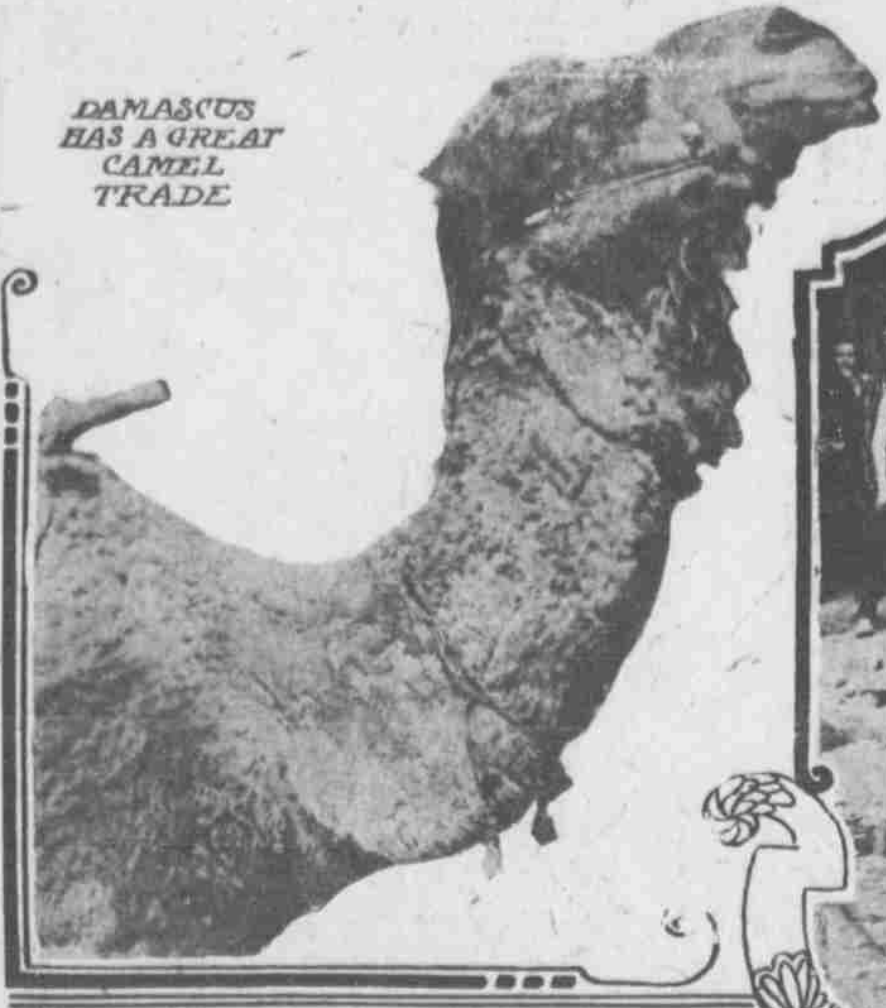


Queer Features of Trading in the Bazars of Damascus



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DAMASCUS—(Special Correspondence of The Bee)—Come with me for a walk through the bazars of this, the oldest of all the world's cities. They are more oriental than those of Tunis or Cairo and more quaint than those of Constantinople. Take the street called Straight, up which St. Paul came to meet Ananias. It is a vaulted tunnel lighted only by a roof, which rises to a height of about 100 feet. Suppose you could cover lower Broadway at the top of its third story windows, and in place of doors and windows of plate glass have the walls made up of cave-like stores opening out on the roadway. Let each store have a floor about as high as a chair, and let it be filled with the most gorgeous goods of the orient. Let each have its turbaned or fez-capped, long-gowned merchant sitting on the floor at the front, with workmen similarly dressed laboring away in the rear, and you have some of the outlines of the picture. The bazars of Damascus are made up of many such vaulted streets so roofed that only a dim light comes in through the little windows high up overhead. The shops are mere holes in the walls, but they are packed full of goods, and they are making all sorts of wares. The walls between the shops are little more than partitions of boards, and there is hardly a business establishment which the typical bull of the china shop could turn round in without losing his hide. The customers bargain standing out in the roadway, or sitting on the floors of the stores and hanging their heels in the street.

THE BAZAARS ARE CAVE-LIKE STORES

them, and, I have been told by my guide that if I wish to keep my head on I had best turn my eyes in another direction.

The Louse Market.

There is one Damascus bazar in which I walk carefully, and as far as possible keep in midstreet. It is called the louse market, and you may know why when I tell you it is devoted to second-hand clothes. The bazar is just back of the citadel and not far from Straight street. It is filled with customers and dealers from morning until evening, and auctioneers walk back and forth through it, each carrying a garment which he holds up, asking for bids. He praises his wares, and tells the crowd that the things will be sold for a song.

Fanatical Booksellers.

I spent a short time in the booksellers' bazar, but my guide, Shamma, dragged me away, fearing that we might be insulted and mobbed. The dealers are such rigid Mohammedans that they do not wish to even sell to the Christians. The shops are near the gate of the Great Mosque, and among their wares are many copies of the Koran, the Mohammedan Bible. I picked up one and asked the merchant the price. He scowled and angrily exclaimed: "Put it down! That book is not for you. Put it down! Put it down! We do not sell our holy book to the Christians!"

Thereupon, as I saw he was growing angry, I dropped it, saying:

"We Christians are glad to give or sell our Bibles to anyone, and as for your Korans, I can buy them by the ton in New York or London." The Moslems here are noted for their hatred of Christians, and one of the bloodiest massacres of modern times occurred in Damascus about fifty years ago. The people are no better today, and they are almost as ignorant as they were then. The chief books sold are religious. There are also some story books and copies of the "Ar-

The Great Mohammedan Stomach.

During our trip through the bazars we find the Mohammedan stomach everywhere in evidence. These people like good food, and they eat, it seems to me, from morning till night. Peddlers carrying candy, lemonade and cakes march through the streets crying their wares; bread men sit on the sidewalks, and there are shops which sell nothing but pretzels. The most common bread is a flat, round cake as thick as the buckwheats which we use for breakfast, and a foot or more in diameter. These cakes are white or brown in color. They are so pliable that they can be doubled up without breaking. They are often used to pick the meats out of a stew. The orientals do not use forks for eating, and they claim that their own hands are much cleaner. They have a saying that "everyone knows whether he has washed his own hands, but no one knows who washed the forks." Another kind of bread is like a gigantic shoe sole without the heel, and another is a round biscuit about an inch thick.

But here comes a man selling candy. Take a bite of it and your mouth will flow water like the



riders which feed this city and make fertile its plains. Damascus is noted for its sweetmeats, and its candies are shipped far and wide over the world. The sweets are sold in the bazars, some of the merchants having large shops. There is one dear old turbaned sheik who has a cell in the candy bazar, where you can buy nuts and fruits fit for the queen of the fairies. His sugared almonds are the joy of the tourist, and his Turkish delight, a soft, sweet, transparent paste, with pistachios and other small nuts scattered through it, is a dish for the gods.

Begging for Custom.

Stop a moment and listen to the cries of the peddlers. Shamma will interpret them for us. Here is a man selling bread from the oven. He yells: "Ya rezak," or, "God send me a customer," and follows by showing a cake and saying: "All this for 2 cents." Another coming behind cries out, in Arabic: "Buy my bread and the good God will nourish you," and a third says: "My cakes are food for the swallows and the delight of tender and delicate girls." Here comes a lemonade man. He has a big glass jar slung to his back with a neck so shaped that he can tilt its contents into a cup. He has two brazen bowls which he holds in his hands and rattles as he shouts: "Drink and refresh thy heart." Another ped-

dler has ice cream, the coolness of which he cries forth in the words: "Balak ananak," or, "Take care of your teeth," meaning it is so cold that it will make your teeth ache. Fruit is sold the same way, and also cooked meats of various kinds. There is one kind of salad which the men cry out is so tender that if an old woman eats it she will find herself young in the morning.

Some such wares are bought by the charitable and given to beggars. This is so of the bread and meat, and also of drinks. Some even buy bread for the dogs, hoping thereby to acquire merit and thus pave their road to the Mohammedan heaven.

Making our way through the crowds we reach a region of cook shops, restaurants and cafes not far from where the butcher shops are. The latter sell most kinds of meat, including camel, beef, mutton and lamb. The mutton is fine. The sheep are of the fat-tail variety, and when skinned and dressed for the market their tails are left on. They hang down over their backs in great lumps of fat, looking like a loaf of fresh dough ready for baking. Sometimes they have the form of a heart four or five inches thick and eight inches wide. Such a tail will weigh fifteen pounds. Upon a live sheep it hangs down at the rear like a woolly apron, and when raised looks like a miniature sail, showing an expanse of bare white skin beneath.

The Grain Bazar.

Another interesting part of business Damascus is composed of long streets of cave-like vaults floored with cement and divided up into compartments piled high with grain, beans or flour. This is the grain bazar. One of the compartments may hold 100 bushels of wheat and another a like quantity of barley, oats or lentils. There are bins filled with Indian corn and bins of caraway seeds. The grain lies on the floor and is scooped up and measured to order. Camels come in bringing great bags of wheat and go out carrying other grains to various parts of the city. The country about Damascus, which can be irrigated, is exceedingly rich and it produces large crops. A great deal of grain is brought from the plains beyond the Jordan and on the east of the Sea of Galilee, known as the Hauran, and this grain is shipped from

Damascus to other parts of Syria and across the Mediterranean to Europe.

The Wholesale Establishments.

Indeed, the trade of Damascus is extensive. The city makes wares of various kinds which are shipped all over the world. It is noted for its beautiful brass and silver ware, its inlaid woodwork and its oriental rugs. It has an extensive caravan trade with Persia and other parts of Turkey and long lines of camels are always bringing in and carrying out goods. There are some great buildings of khans devoted to wholesaling and warehousing. I visited one of these. It was shaped much like a mosque, being lighted by nine great domes, the tops of which were at least 100 feet above the dirt floor. The domes were upheld by stone pillars. The floor covered almost an acre, and it was packed with merchandise. In one part of it were bags of wheat piled high toward the roof. In another were hundreds of boxes of dates, and in others barrels and crates of fruit and hundreds of bales of oriental rugs laid one upon the other. Some of the bales were enormous, one equalling a load for a two-horse wagon. I was told that they came from Bagdad, and were left there for storage. There were a number of these khans in Damascus at the time of Christ, and there are several now in use. The space in them is rented out to merchants, the owners doing a general warehousing business.

In the Silver Bazar.

But come, let us go to the silver bazar. This, like the warehouse establishment, is under one roof. It is composed of scores of silversmith shops and booths scattered over a large room of more than an acre. Each merchant has his own little quarter. He sits behind a desk or counter, in which are his wares, and has a rude old-fashioned safe at the rear. At the right and left, or, still further back, are his mechanics, men who are working in silver and gold, making all sorts of jewelry. Each has a little anvil before him and a miniature furnace with a blow pipe, by which he melts and shapes the metal to the desired form. The workmen wear gowns and fez caps and the pounding can be heard everywhere. I asked some of the merchants to show us their wares; they bring out heavy chains of silver and gold, rings set with diamonds and pearls, and some magnificent pigeon-blood rubies. There are millions of dollars' worth of jewelry under this roof.

The customers are both men and women, the former in gowns and turbans and the latter in great black sheets with veils over their faces. We stop and watch the buying and selling. There is a woman looking at a bracelet of gold. The jeweler weighs it on rude little scales and then adds the cost of the labor. Nevertheless, the woman is not satisfied with the price; she calls him a thief and demands that he do not rob her children of bread. It may be an hour before the bargain is made.

What to Buy in Damascus.

I am frequently asked what one can buy in these oriental cities which is worth while taking home. Damascus is a good shopping place for the tourist; it is somewhat off the line of travel and one can pick up oriental things comparatively cheap. I have bought several rugs which have come here by caravan from Bokhara, and two of them are at least a hundred years old. I will not give the prices except to say that they are much below those at which they could be bought in New York, and the merchant has agreed to pay the duties upon them and to deliver them to my house in Washington.

Among the many other things sold are silk shawls for the head, such as are used by the Bedouins, and table covers of red or black woolen cloth embroidered with silk. The shawls may be bought at from \$3 to \$8 apiece and the tablecloths cost from \$5 to \$15.

A great many Americans take home brassware from Damascus, and not a few purchase swords inlaid with silver, and the Damascus blades for which the city has been noted for ages. Some of these swords are imitations imported from Solingen, Germany, and other oriental wares come from Manchester, and are made for this trade. Indeed, one must keep his eye open if he would buy genuine curios in any part of the world.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

College Women Make Good Mothers

As to the kind of wife the college girl makes there is some very interesting data. Dr. Mary Robert Smith of California made such a study for the Association of Collegiate Alumnae and her conclusions doubtless hold good today.

Dr. Smith took about 300 college graduates who had married and compared them with approximately the same number of non-college relatives and friends who had also married. Thus she obtained very interesting and important figures as to the health of the college women, the number of their children and so forth as compared with women of a similar class who had not gone to college.

College women may not marry as generally as non-college women, but when they do they seem to make more than ordinarily good wives and mothers. Owing to the later marriage they do not have quite as many children as the others, but in proportion to the number of years they have been married they have more.

While it is true that the college woman does not have many children, this applies equally to the class from which she springs. The very fact that her parents sent her to college shows that she comes of ambitious, far-sighted folk, anxious to give their children every opportunity—a class not likely under present conditions to have many children.

The college women who were studied showed 1.65 children apiece. The non-college women had 1.5 apiece. The first class bore its share of children in nine and a half years of married life; the second in

eleven and a half.

If the childless women in the two groups are subtracted the number of children to each woman comes to almost identically the same in the college and non-college groups.

There are two extremely interesting facts in connection with the marriage of college women. First, their children seem to be a little healthier than the children of other women from the same families and class. Secondly, for some reason that cannot be explained, they bear a distinctly greater number of male children.

It is possible, of course, that the figures which make it appear that college women are more apt to have sons than daughters are accidental, but they are so distinct and decided that there may possibly be some reason not understood as yet for so peculiar a circumstance.

Of all children, born 52 per cent are male. Dr. Smith found that among the relatives and friends of the middle class the percentage of male children was less than 48. Among the college women over 55 per cent of the children were boys. Whether health or age or some unknown factors contributed to this result no one, of course, can say. And it may be, though it does not seem, accidental.

The college woman who marries, then, has about as many children as her less highly educated companions. Moreover, the higher the education the greater the number of children. Among the honor students studied there were slightly more children

than among the rank and file. This is not unnatural. The higher a woman's intelligence the greater one would expect to find her appreciation of the meaning of life and the keener her desire to live it fully.

One thing is certain—co-education does not lessen a man's desire to marry a college woman. The college women married, for the most part, college men. Studying the husbands of these women, Dr. Smith found that three-quarters of the men graduated from co-educational institutions had married women also from such colleges, and nearly all of them (90 per cent) had married women who had studied at the same college. So, in spite of all one hears to the contrary, the classroom does seem to be more or less a hunting ground for the little god.

One more fact is interesting as showing that the women the colleges send out make good wives. The health of the women who had small incomes was better, distinctly, than that of their non-college sisters who had similar difficulty in making ends meet.

Either the general health of college women is better, or they are better managers. Which deals another deadly blow to the idea that because a woman can decline Greek she cannot make a soup.

It would seem that from a worldly point of view the college woman "marries well." She does not make brilliant marriages, financially, because she turns to professional men who are not likely ever to become millionaires, but the wolf is not apt to prowl very close to her door. She has a slightly better income than her sisters who marry business men,