

# Where Robed And Turbaned People Reside

**They Ride the Desert in Modern Motor Cars in the New Syria — But Much That is Old and Historic Remains.**

The ancient city of Hama, which many experts believe to be the oldest settlement in the world, has lost some of its Arabian Nights glamour with its modernization under French influence. France, of course, holds the mandate over the Republic of Syria, which was one of the new-old nations to emerge from the world war, and the French have done much to westernize this former capital of Caliphs.

Despite the newly erected apartment houses and the many American and French automobiles that scurry through the old streets, however, much remains to remind the visitor of the long pageant of history which has moved over Damascus and the other storied cities of Syria, Assyria, Babylonians, Crusaders, Saracens and Turks have all left their marks here.

Under the Turkish regime Syria was blocked to the world commerce which had flowed across her for millenniums but the recent development of the automobile transport over the deserts, the laying of pipe lines into the oil fields of the neighboring Iraq, the revival of business and the promotion of the magnificent ruins of a dozen civilizations that dot the countryside as tourist attractions, have done much to regain a place in the sun for her.

Land of Shrewd Traders

Syrians have always been known as shrewd traders, and they are losing no opportunity to remake their glorious past. They are eager to adapt an European or American methods which they think will hasten their growth as a prosperous and independent nation, but there is considerable resentment over certain phases of the control exercised by France under the mandate.

Automobiles have become increasingly important and popular to the commercial life of modern Syria, and American machines have been found to meet the requirements of the terrain and climate more successfully than other cars. To give French small cars an advantage the holders of the mandate have imposed stringent regulations against American automobiles.

The duties are placed on a weight basis to give the lighter French machines a chance, but the Syrians have found that only the sturdier American cars can stand the punishment of bad roads, mountain tracks and desert routes.

Consequently the only effect of the tariff has been to compel the luckless Syrians to pay double the former price of automobiles. The tariff has aroused a storm of discontent, only slightly less violent than the resentment caused by the manner in which the French wrangled the Syrian gold reserves into French banks.

Concrete evidence of the dissatisfaction with French rule lies in "The Street Called Straight" in Damascus, where St. Paul is reputed to have lived. Walls along the narrow street still carry marks of bullets fired in the bloody uprising of the Druses several years ago, when part of Damascus was burned. The uprising was suppressed and the French held on the country tightened as a result.

Many Tongues and Costumes

Dozens of races and religions have a foothold in Syria, a fact which undoubtedly adds to the picturesqueness, but does not promote the unity desirable for a completely independent country.

Crossing the border from Turkey, where Mustapha Kemal's dictatorial rules extend even to matters of dress, the first thing the traveler notices is the wide variety of costumes, particularly of headdresses. There is, of course, the fez, frequently modified to a sort of skull cap. There are turbans of various sizes and shapes, and there are assorted versions of the ancient, peaked Phrygian hat. Foreigners, of course, go in for sun helmets.

Most picturesque, however, are the Bedouins, in their robes and flowing headwrappings. In Syria, these wild tribesmen have an exceedingly bad reputation as petty thieves. Indeed, in many villages, if they are found within the walls after sunset, they are immediately locked up for the night.

It is invariably startling to see the men of such colorful and exotic costumes whizzing about the streets of the ancient cities, or bowling along the country roads in American automobiles. But whizz and bowl they do—in fact, automobiling might safely be called the favorite outdoor sport of the Syrians. As they practice it, is one of the noisiest pastimes imaginable.

Each car with any pretensions to swank is equipped with not one, but a multiplicity of horns. The befezzed and beturbaned drivers blow them constantly, taking great pride in working out new and nerve-racking rhythms.

A Motoring Custom

There is another Syrian automobiling custom that the foreigner finds a little trying. If you rent a car for yourself and there happens to be a spare seat or so, the father, brothers, sisters or other relations of your chauffeur, more likely than not, will pile into the machine with you. The driver and his family cannot be made to understand that such company is undesirable. The extra seats are not being used, therefore, what possible objection can there be to using them? In Syria one is never very far from the past and no visitor should miss seeing the great ruined cities of Baalbek, and Palmyra, as well as Tyre, Sidon, Aleppo, Swaifet, Antioch and Damascus.

Thirty-five miles northwest of Damascus lies Baalbek, "City of the Sun God," containing some of the most imposing ruins in the world. Its founding is lost in the mists of time; some of the still extant masonry is attributed to the Phoenicians; the Roman Emperor Augustus raised it to the dignity of a colony; his successor Trajan journeyed there to consult a famous oracle. Arabs sacked it in 748 A.D., and Tomerlane pillaged it in 1400. The great earthquake of 1759 wrought still further devastation upon its gigantic temples—yet the ruins are still breath-taking.

Six of the fifty-eight Corinthian columns of the Temple of the Sun, each seventy-eight feet high and more than seven feet in diameter, with elaborate Corinthian capitals, are still standing. The temple of Jupiter, even in ruin, is scarcely less impressive. Parts of the temple dedicated to Venus-Astarte also remain, and there are traces of a Christian basilica of a later date.

Scattered about are enormous megaliths—great masses of stone so weighty that modern machinery would have difficulty moving them. How they were brought to Baalbek is an unsolved riddle of the antiquarians.

The Ruins of Palmyra

To the northeast of Damascus, 150 miles away on the edge of the Arabian desert, lie the even more impressive ruins of Palmyra, which legend says King Solomon founded. An insignificant village now, it once boasted more than a million inhabitants, and was powerful enough to defy Rome herself. It was in Palmyra that the warrior-queen Zenobia ruled, and it was there that the Emperor Aurelian finally besieged and captured her, to take her a prisoner to Italy.

Another great Temple of the Sun is in Palmyra, and a mile-long colonnade, originally of 1,500 huge Corinthian columns, still stands.

Near Jezeen, which is famous for its knives with handles of goat and ram horns, is another stronghold—as romantic, if not as ancient as Zenobia's. It is that of Syria's Robin Hood Fakreddin, who rebelled in the sixteenth century.

High on a mountainside, he built himself a refuge about a great natural cave. He erected ways about the ledge in front of it, and spanned a deep ravine with a drawbridge. Out of the mountain he and his followers hollowed great chambers for storing grain, fodder, and ammunition. The place

## DEPRESSION ENDS IN 1935, PARIS SEREES PREDICTS

PARIS, Dec. 30—Happy days for the United States during 1935 were forecast today in the crystal of Mme. Valentine Frays, the eminent French seeress.

End of the depression, rise of the dollar and brilliant diplomacy that will overcome danger of war with Japan and among the main events predicted for the United States.

There also are in the crystal murders, floods, transport accidents and the possible voluntary retirement of President Roosevelt as having done all he could for the country. But this last, she said, was vague, and probably would not happen in 1935.

"The sign of Mars will dominate the world," Mrs. Frays told the United Press after emerging from her study of the globe which she vows tells her of the future. "It will be a violent year, particularly for Europe, but much of this violence will be transformed into vigorous, masterful diplomacy."

"The menace of war will hang over Europe and there will be skirmishes in the far east, involving the Russians and the Chinese, but actual war will not break out during the coming 12 months."

Mrs. Frays, after being reminded that she is credited with having predicted such events as the double assassination at Marseilles, the dethronement of King Alfonso of Spain, and the depression, went on to explain the evil influence of Mars.

"In love as well as in politics," she said, "Mars will dominate. In the United States, or example, there will be many sensational marriages in which passions rather than affections will be the motivating force. There will be more murders than usual because of jealousy. Sweethearts and married couples must be careful or they will be torn asunder."

"Crime of materialistic sort will increase in many parts of the world, but in the United States I believe

### Has 275 Descendants

CARDSTON, Alta., Jan. 2—Mrs. Catharine Pilling, widow of the first man in Canada to use water from natural streams for irrigation, counts seven living children, 60 grandchildren, 130 great-grandchildren and 73 great-great-grandchildren, as she nears her 97th birthday. Doral Pilling, of Calgary, who gained fame for Canada in javelin throwing at the 1932 Olympic Games, is a great-grandson.

### AGAIN SEEKS DIVORCE

Los Angeles, Jan. 4—For the second time Lupe Velez, fiery Mexican screen actress, filed suit for divorce today against Johnny Weissmuller, the film "Tarzan," charging cruelty. Her suit is almost identical with the one she filed last July and later had dismissed. She charged Weissmuller during the last six months had continued his asserted practice of cursing and swearing at her and throwing furniture around.

was impregnable to the artillery of the day, and for years Fakreddin defied the Turks and all their armies.

It was treachery which finally brought about his downfall. A traitor revealed the hidden source of the stream that supplied the fortress with water. The Turks poured blood into the spring, and stained the water, flowing into Fakreddin's cave, warned him that the game was up. With Oriental fatalism, he seated himself on a rock near the end of the drawbridge. When the Turks came they found him alone in the darkness, smoking. He smiled and politely offered the invaders coffee. They accepted as politely. After it was drunk, they led him away to Constantinople, and there strangled him to death.

When his beautiful daughter learned of his capture, she mounted a white charger and galloped it over the waterfall that plunges from the village of Jezeen into the valley 200 feet below.

It is perhaps symbolic of Syria's blend of ancient and modern that the famous knives, made in the village where such romantic events occurred long ago, have blades of steel forged from the broken springs of automobiles.

Mars will give the police strength and they will wipe out gangsters in great numbers."

She foresaw disastrous inundations in America during March and April. She was also pessimistic about airplane, railway and steamship accidents.

"The United States will be the first country to regain normality," said Mme. Frays. "France will follow next, but more slowly. The rest of Europe will lag although making some headway."

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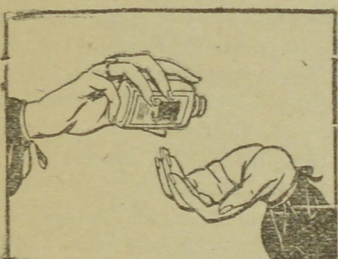
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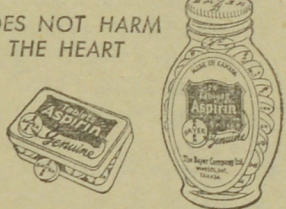
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