We went to call on the Shaikh's wife after dinner, and had an experience, for we saw real beauty—not the kind that depends for its charm on some combination or accident of light and expression, but beauty absolute in itself and satisfying. She was draped in black so that only her face showed—oval, delicately pointed at the chin, with eyebrows gently and regularly curved over her great eyes. The features were perfect; she was not dark-skinned, but very pale; and very shy, so that she would hardly speak; and in the dim room, in her black gown, with her quiet way and queenly loveliness, she might have been Proserpine imprisoned in the realms of night.

There was a prisoner in the room, as a matter of fact; but she, as is the contradictory way of things, did not look like one, and sat on the ground hung round with every conceivable bead and jewel. She was an Armenian bought by Shaikh Habib at the time of the massacres, and evidently happy in her master's home, where she had been brought up, and presented with a husband and with all the trinkets that adorned her. There are many of these Armenians among the tribes of Northern Syria and Iraq, and they do not seem to be unkindly treated; but I remember one such among the Shammar who had not lost her sorrow through all these years, and would sit and weep day after day in her husband's tent (for she had been married to quite a well-to-do man among them); and when we stayed there she begged us for news of her people, of whom she had heard no word since the forced separation on the Nisibin road in her childhood.