

kitchen or whether he sleeps in the narrow corridor, we know not; he is always at hand, always making tea, which we are always drinking. He is an ideal porter-valet-cook combination. Let me present to you also Joseph, our interpreter. He was found in Tiflis; he speaks French admirably, and of Oriental tongues, Russian, Persian, Turki, Armenian, a little Arabic, and, if there be a surviving dialect of it, Chaldean, for by race Joseph is a Chaldean; he lived until recently in Persia; he was educated by a French missionary; has journeyed as far as Kashgar with French travellers, and promises to go there,—yea, even beyond Kashgar—with us. He is a rather weak little man, honest, I believe, and well informed—altogether a superior representative of that disappointing class, Asiatic Christians. He called me “Excellence” until he discovered that my purse and manner made no special response. Joseph is travelling second-class, but he is a neat person and does n’t look rumpled in the mornings. He forages at the well-appointed railway restaurants which are a precious fruit of Russian civilisation. We go forward to the dining-car; yes—there is a dining-car in Turkestan! In it are plenteous vegetable soups, cucumbers *ad infinitum*, good meats, cold drinks. The service is slow, but clean enough. Here you meet the Russian officials and their wives going to distant duty in the queer places which now bear the Czar’s yoke and enjoy the Czar’s peace. Here, too, you may meet, on this particular journey, three charming young French gentlemen, who are going as far as Samarcand, thence returning, and up the Volga—thence across Siberia. Two of them are