

strike was in progress there also. The Colonel suggested that we could ride from Batum to Artvin and Kars and on along the frontier to Erivan, but some Georgians most emphatically opposed this plan, for we might be quite certain that we should be plundered by robbers, who in this unsettled time were more active than usual. There was no danger to our lives, but where should I be without my instrument-case and cash-box? To come back a pillaged ragamuffin to Batum would be romantic and exciting, but I had no time for rash experiments.

I made up my mind in a hurry to turn my back by some means or other on this unfriendly coast, make for Trebizond, and take the route through Erzerum, Bayazid, Khoi, and Tabriz to Teheran. Even this road was unsafe, but secure compared to the Caucasus; the journey would take three weeks longer than by the road through Erivan, but I should have an opportunity of seeing Turkish Armenia, the mountains of Asia Minor, and the majestic Ararat.

What I had to do, then, was to sail to Trebizond with some proper passports. I had made no preparations in Constantinople for this route—I had no need, for I never thought of entering Asiatic Turkey. Fortunately, the Swedish Minister, Baron Ramel, had introduced me to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Tewfik Pasha, and the Grand Vizier, Ferid Pasha, who therefore knew me and were aware that I was not dangerous to the Crescent and the Sublime Porte.

I hastened to the steamboat office in Poti to inquire when the next boat would sail for Batum. The agent had no notion; he no longer received telegrams, and believed that traffic was stopped in consequence of the strikes. While we were talking an employé announced that the steamer *Alexei* had just entered the harbour. We hurried down. The captain, a jolly sea-dog, reported disturbances in Odessa and other towns. He was going to lie at anchor during the night so as to enter the harbour of Batum by daylight, and after I had sent all my baggage on board I had plenty of leisure to dine for the last time with my two Russian fellow-travellers, who intended to try