

The great thing is to get away safely from Batum. I have telegraphed to the Swedish Minister in Constantinople, and am already vouched for in Trebizond."

In my inmost soul I saw before me no end of troubles with Turkish customs officers, who just at that time must be very particular with vessels from disturbed Russia, but I kept a bold face and answered quietly, "Geographical exploration," when the captain asked me the object of my journey.

"That is unnecessary," he declared; "much better collect stamps as I do."

"Then I can accommodate you with some Persian stamps I bought from a Greek in Batum; will you look at them?"

"Certainly." He chose out those that he did not possess, and asked if he could buy them.

"No; but you may have them as a present in remembrance of me." In five minutes we were friends for life, the captain of the *Saturno* and I; a first-class deck cabin was assigned to me, 6 roubles were paid for the ticket—I saved 494 roubles and ten days in time; two Turks, whose passports were not in order, were taken ashore, and the steamer glided out of the harbour, leaving a white and light-green wake behind it. With a feeling of freedom and satisfaction I saw the façades, minarets, and churches of Batum sink below the horizon, and before us, to the south-west, the coast of Asia Minor stretching out to an endless distance.