

CHAPTER III

TREBIZOND

THE *Saturno* was really a miserable cargo vessel from Triest, an old halting camel compared to the splendid Russian boats from Odessa. But I blessed this vessel which, puffing and panting, carried me to freedom, to the Turks, to the land of the Turkish dogs where, in these days, singular as it may sound, there was greater security than among the Russians. The boat had reached Batum in the morning, but prepared to return immediately, when it was found that no business could be done. It only stayed two hours, just at the time when I needed help. Now it was returning to Trebizond to load up and was to remain there two days, so that I had more than enough time to set my affairs in order.

At six o'clock we took dinner in the stern saloon, three of us, the captain, myself, and an old Turkish gentleman. The sea was quiet, the moon shone cheerfully among light clouds and spread a bright track over the surface of the Black Sea. On either side of the wake was seen a whole school of porpoises, which made gentle and elegant somersaults above the surface of the water or followed the vessel for hours in hopes of food. One could plainly discern the dark back of the porpoise through the clear water when he came up from below to roll over on the top and let his back shine like metal in the moonlight. The air was soft, not the faintest breeze rippled the waters. We were close to the land, and the mountains showed a bluish-grey outline under the moon;