

presented itself to our view, with its huge hunched mountain in the background and its steep promontory. Two steamers lay at anchor; a swarm of rowing-boats made for the *Saturno*; it was like a regatta, a rowing match; the water spurted up round the blunt bows of these motley-painted boats with their broad benches and large half-decks fore and aft, and narrow oars balanced with weights in the handles. Their crews climbed up to the gangway and then were on board in a moment.

Last of all appeared the shipping agent and advised me to wait till next morning—after dusk no one may go ashore. But I did not listen, and taking a handbag had myself rowed to the customs pavilion. Here I fell into the hands of a party of Turks in uniform who gesticulated, talked one another down, regarded my passport as highly unsatisfactory, and at last sent for a police officer who treated me much as if I had come from a pest-smitten port. In Jaggatai Turkish I related the varying fortunes which had brought me to Trebizond against my will, mentioned my acquaintance with Tewfik Pasha and the great Osman Pasha—Allah bless his soul!—and several other illustrious pashas, and declared that I occasionally dined at the table of Abdul Hamid in Yildiz Kiosk. Their faces grew longer and longer, but nothing impressed them more than my intimate acquaintance with Temir Bash, Charles XII., and that was not the first time his name had saved me in the East. I obtained permission to pass the night on shore, after my handbag had been searched even to the tooth-brush, and two romances by Daudet and Coppée and a map of Persia were seized for examination by the censor.

A little later I sat talking with the French consul, the amiable M. Colomb, who advised me not to fetch my baggage from the steamer before an answer to my last telegram had arrived from Constantinople, for the customs officials were dreadful and laid hands on everything suspicious, and thought everything suspicious which they did not understand. He also advised me not to travel to Erzerum without an escort, for the road was too unsafe, and two Capuchin fathers had quite recently been robbed on their return from that town.