

kept by a young Frenchwoman married to a decent Greek named Polikandrioti, I heard the well-known sound of camel bells under my window—a caravan was starting for its first night encampment on the long road to the land of the lion and the sun. Then lamps were lighted round the minaret balconies, the muezzin called out his melancholy high-pitched “*La illaha il Allah*” in the peaceful evening of Ramazan, and life and movement increased in the streets; it was pleasant to see honest, industrious, and loyal men, open shops and inns, where Mohammedans gathered for the evening meal after a cannon-shot had announced that the day’s fast was ended, and that the sun had sunk.

It was late at night when the lamps were extinguished and life ceased in Trebizond, and over the slumbering town the lofty crest of Kolat-dagh kept watch, while the river Muchka poured its turbid water into the Mavri Thalassa, the Black Sea. I finished a letter to my home, and experienced a delightful feeling of freedom, which was wanting on the Caucasian coast. Round about me whispered memories of nights in the far-off centuries; of the Argonauts’ legendary voyage, and of the enterprising Greeks’ fight on the shore; of the Roman, Chaldean, and Byzantine periods, of thrones and crowns overturned and rolled in the dust; of the days of the Comneni, the glory of which was eclipsed by the crusaders, but revived again in Trebizond, only to sink for ever when the victorious crescent, 450 years ago, raised its horn above the horizon of Trebizond. The sound of a bell in the night recalled me to the passing moment within the bounds of the famous town. I had for two weeks sought in vain a starting-point from the Caucasian coast; and now at last I had set my foot firmly on the margin of the continent. In my mind I saw before me the winding road to India, heard the cart-wheels groan over the Armenian mountains and the bells ring monotonously in time with the camels’ steps through the land of the Medes and Persians. My goal was Nushki, the extreme tentacle of the English railway in Baluchistan, and to reach it I must travel 2300 miles overland. From Trebizond one can drive all the way to Teheran, a trifle of about 810 miles, but from Teheran I