

Persia. Many an old grey caravan leader has travelled along this road innumerable times to Trebizond on the blue sea and to Tabriz in Iran the blessed; how many times he does not know himself, but he is familiar with every village, every *khan*, every turn in the road, and he always knows how far he will have marched by evening or morning. He takes his simple food with him in a *kurshin* or double bag, and the public serais are cheap. The whole journey costs a mere trifle, and the dromedaries feed themselves on thistles and grass among the hillocks. He is sad at leaving his beloved Azerbaijan, with his heart in his mouth he traverses the long way through unruly Kurds and insecure borderlands; but afterwards, as he approaches Erzerum, he plucks up courage again and rejoices when he has behind him the Kop-dagh and the other passes, and descends along an excellently made road to the rich and brilliant Trebizond, so warm and kindly in winter, so cool and fresh in summer. And each and all of these hundreds and thousands of caravan men, who year after year wander to and fro along the great highway, has a history before or behind him, his life is a romance, perhaps very monotonous, perhaps also very eventful and strange as that of Haji Baba.

At eight o'clock supper is over, and the *kavekhaneh* of the hotel is filled with satisfied, happy, and noisy guests. They sit down on sofas and chairs round small four-cornered tables and play cards or tric-trac; they smoke cigarettes and narghilehs, and their merry groups appear like shadows through a dense cloud of tobacco smoke; no drinks are seen except perhaps a cup of coffee. A minute is enough for me in the Turkish café; I prefer my own balcony, and to see the lighted windows and the flaming lamps on the parapets of the minarets flickering in the darkness, and hear again high-pitched noises from a caravan which is already beginning its nightly wanderings in order to reach its camp before sunrise, and I like to listen to the roaring water of the Chorok. But when one is roused in the middle of the night, eight o'clock is late, and I creep off willingly to bed.

Next morning I am awakened at two o'clock, when the