

some 8000 men of various arms, but mostly garrison artillery.

According to M. Srabyan some dozens of gipsy families of Christian faith are to be found in the territory of Erzerum. They lead a wandering life, but are distinguished from other nomad tribes in the country by their religion and language. The latter is an Armenian dialect mixed with a number of Sanscrit and Parthian words. According to tradition these gipsies came originally from Egypt.

Like Trebizond, Erzerum is of great antiquity. Before the Seljuk conquests Ardsin was a town situated on the right bank of the uppermost course of the western Euphrates; it was destroyed first by an earthquake, and then entirely by the Seljuks. On the site of Ardsin now stands only a village, Kara-ars (Karars or Kars), "black earth," or "land of woe." The name Erzerum or Erzurum is said to be a contraction of Ersen-el-Rum, "the Roman land." Garin Khalakh is its Armenian name. In the fifth century Theodosius II., Anatholius, erected a stronghold on this important spot, at the end of the tenth century the town was flourishing, and in the year 1201 was taken by the Seljuks, only to fall, forty years later, into the hands of the Mongols, and in the year 1517 into the possession of the Turks. In 1829 Erzerum was captured by the Russians, but was restored to the Turks by the peace of Adrianople. Again in 1878 the Russians took possession of Erzerum, but evacuated it once more after the peace of San Stefano. Even to the present day Russia keeps a watchful eye over this district, and the Russian consul-general is regarded as the most influential man; Russia has also secured a concession for a railway from Sinope to Bitlis on the Van lake near the Persian frontier, but under existing political conditions naturally makes no use of it, for this line would, to a great extent, eclipse the Trans-Caucasian railway.

A glance at the map alone is sufficient to convince us of the important strategical position of Erzerum. Certainly this high plateau (6600 feet), with its cold winter and warm summer and its niggard soil, is little suited for cultivation, but from Erzerum high roads radiate to all parts of Western