

Asia. At a distance of scarcely a day's journey north-east of Erzerum one can ride in an hour's time from one source to another of three brooks, one of which flows to the Chorok, the second to the Euphrates, and the third to the Araxes, or, in other words, to the Black Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the Caspian. Erzerum is therefore situated on the very crown of a tableland which drains to three different seas, and as the natural water channels run down to them, so also do the great routes and the strategic lines, which under certain military combinations command Asia Minor and the roads to the Persian Gulf. Erzerum also lies near the Russian frontier and Kars, and one may be sure that all preparations have been made to strengthen the town and connect it with Kars by a protected line of communication. Also one of the Russian consul-general's three secretaries is actually a military attaché.

Of the source of the western Euphrates M. Srabyan reported the following legend current in Erzerum. When the Emperor Heraclius succeeded in recovering the cross from the hands of the Persians, the accompanying escort was attacked by enemies and forced to give battle in this neighbourhood. In order to save the cross a hole was first dug in the top of a mountain. Then the encounter took place, the enemy was defeated, and the victors went to dig up the cross. A large spring burst out of the ground where it lay. This spring, which was called from that time *Khachapaïd* or "Wooden Cross," is considered holy, and is resorted to by pilgrims from all the district. The Turks call the mountain *Giaur-dagh* or the "mountain of unbelievers."

Of Erzerum the same may be said as of Trebizond, that is, that of late its commerce has suffered severely through the construction of the Caucasian railway. Both vilayets, Erzerum and Trebizond, which are crossed by the ancient trade-route from Tabriz, formerly drew a yearly revenue of 500,000 Turkish pounds from the transit trade, but this gain has now sunk to 100,000 pounds. For merchandise in transit no other dues are exacted except for sealing up; the income derived by the two provinces consists only of the money left behind by the caravans for