

In the five provinces inhabited by Kurds—Erzerum, Van, Bitlis, Diarbekr, and Harpud—a system of irregular cavalry was organized thirteen years ago, a kind of Kurdish militia, which is called Hamidieh, after its founder, the Sultan. I was told that this innovation had no other result than that the Kurds, who before lived as bandits at their own risk, now can continue their depredations with impunity under the protection of the imperial title. They were six bandits of this kind whom Nazim Pasha gave me as escort. At times many of the Turks themselves grew weary of the rule of Hamid and longed for something else, even if it were Russian supremacy. In Asia Minor, no less than elsewhere, he fanned the fire of hatred against himself, the old tyrant in Yildiz Kiosk. But now he is removed, and has plenty of time to repent of his sins, and no one seems to miss his rule, though many admire his diplomatic acuteness and cunning.

In the evening the Russian Consul-General gave an excellent and animated dinner, after which we sat joking and smoking round the samovar, and midnight was past before we returned to M. Srabyan's house. At two o'clock a cannon-shot announced the last meal before sunrise, and it was still dark when I heard the two drivers come to fetch the baggage. Now I had two waggons and a drosky; the roads become worse the farther one drives into the continent, and every waggon was drawn by a team of three, and also my drosky. The distance from Trebizond, or Trabsun, as the name is pronounced here, to Erzerum is reckoned at 194 miles, and from this town to Bayazid at 155. For the three vehicles I had to pay 30 lira or pounds (£27:12s.), provided that I was taken to Bayazid in five days, that is, at the rate of 31 miles a day, otherwise I was to pay only 27 lira. Driving with heavy baggage through Armenia is therefore very dear, especially as the escort, drivers, and managers of khans expect liberal backshish.

After a last breakfast with the hospitable M. Srabyan I took my seat in his carriage, for he insisted on accompanying me for a part of the way, while the kavass of the consulate rode in my drosky to see that my photographic