

covers everything in the carriage. A trunk is secured on the box, with my name painted in black letters on its cover of sailcloth; the name becomes more and more indistinct, and at last disappears altogether. Sometimes all the surroundings are enveloped in an impenetrable cloud of dust, and one sits gasping for breath.

Two telegraph lines run along the road. One, with two wires supported on posts of cast iron, is the Indo-European, which crosses Persia and Caucasia; the other, one wire on wooden posts, is Russian, but it conveys no messages now, for yesterday a strike broke out in the post and telegraph department. We meet a *chetvorka*, or four-in-hand, with wild Tatars, and a *troika* with people of the same race. The traffic is brisk: waggons driven by Russians, now carrying passengers, now goods—mostly *kishmish* or small sweet raisins from Persia,—*telegas* and *tarantasses*, small parties of men on horseback, but none on foot, for they would not be safe at this time. In the Tatar village Cheshme-bazar, where some Armenians also dwell, there is a guardhouse where my *strashniki* (gendarmes) are changed.

A little farther on we meet a *telega* drawn by two horses, and containing two Russian *chinovniks*. They pull up and make signs to us to follow their example, and then ask us to take their horses in exchange for two of ours, which they say will be to the advantage of both parties. But when I have thrown a glance at their tired jades, I understand the dodge, call out "Haida!" to my brown and shaggy-bearded Tatar *yemshchik*, and leave the Russians staring blankly in the dust. The country becomes more diversified and hilly, to the left are low mountains, and the dust is now of a red colour. My driver is a great curiosity; he sits rolling cigarettes with the greatest unconcern while the four horses, harnessed abreast, stretch out their legs along the route; when he occasionally puts his hand to the splashboard where the reins lie, I know very well that a tremendous jolt is coming.

In flying course we dash through a brook, its pebbly bed shut in between hills. The sky is dull, one shower falls after another, the Tatar village Allenjai-chai is behind