

Tabriz, M. Mornard, a Belgian, who hospitably invites me to remain as his guest for a couple of days. Before many minutes had passed my Swedish letters had been brought from the post office, and I had reading to last me till three o'clock in the morning.

Tabriz stands at a height of 4430 feet above sea-level, at the northern foot of the volcanic mountain Sehend-kuh, which lifts its crown 11,798 feet into the air, and is one of a trio of mighty volcanoes, the others being Ararat and Savelan, with its 15,787 feet, all three from immemorial times witnesses of the bloody strifes and political revolutions which took place in Azerbaijan, the most northerly province of Persia. In ancient times Azerbaijan was the part of Media which after Alexander's campaign was called Atropatene, and which in the course of ages, like every square inch of hither Asia, passed from one ruling house to another; which formed a part of great Armenia, and was obedient to the sceptre of the Sassanids; which in the seventh century was conquered by the Arabs, and in 1256 was incorporated into the Mongol dominion in Iran by Hulagu Khan, to form, about the year 1400, part of the powerful Timur's kingdom. But ever since Azerbaijan has become a province of the Persia of to-day, its position between Russian and Turkish territory has been very precarious, and the activity which the Russians have at the present day exhibited in this part of Persia enables us to foresee the fate which awaits Azerbaijan in no very distant future.

The geographical position of the province has been fateful in its political history; inserted like a wedge between different states and races, it has been a bone of contention between them. But also, thanks to its position, Azerbaijan has been in commercial affairs an important link between the East and West, and innumerable caravans have in the course of ages carried wares and produce backwards and forwards on the long roads between Europe and Iran. It is only necessary to make a flying visit to the large vaulted bazaars which cross the central parts of Tabriz like catacombs, and where even now there is a brisk exchange of goods, to gain an idea of the former importance of Tabriz as a commercial town before it was overshadowed by the