

of these imposing arcades, where business is already in full swing; and sometimes the narrow passages are so completely blocked by mule caravans that we have to pull up and wait patiently till a gap opens in the crowd.

Now our wheels roll between endless rows of tiresome grey mud houses and walls, against which the quick regular tinkle of the bells awakes a short abrupt echo; and we often meet small caravans carrying goods to the bazaars from the villages and gardens in the outskirts of the town.

We have passed the blue façade of Gök-meshid, the echo in the bazaar arcades has died away, and I have left the last straggling buildings behind with a feeling of relief, glad that we cannot any longer drive over the arms and legs of children and the mules which get in our way. We are soon among rounded hills, and Tabriz disappears behind a rise in the ground and in the drizzle. Down a steep hill we come to a valley, which we then follow up to the village Halatpushan, surrounded by poplars and fields. The country then assumes more of a plateau character, the soil is sandy, small weathered ridges rise beside the road and slabs of clay-slate and sandstone, and we find ourselves in a great, broad, longitudinal valley between low mountains. Our horses trot at a good pace over the open flats, then across deep ravines, and again, as for instance at Basminj, over a three-arched bridge of stone and brick across a small brook. Meagre steppe shrubs, brown and red, wither by the side of the road, along which tramp small local caravans; the long trains of the humped animals of Eastern lands are absent, and one misses them. All the more common are the caravans of asses, which succeed one another in long lines to the town, hundreds of asses carrying sacks filled with hay, straw, and grain. Tabriz abounds in asses, small wretched creatures, which form a very characteristic feature in its yellow streets, and are so different from the tall, handsome, and well-groomed riding asses from Bagdad, which often fetch a high price.

By a river with a bridge in four arches stands Seidabad, where we arrive after a drive of three and a quarter hours, to rest a while and change horses. My driver is in a bad humour, and insists that it is impossible