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BLACKWOOD'S

Edinburgh



MAGAZINE.

VOL. LXXX.

7662

JULY—DECEMBER, 1856.



WILLIAM BLACKWOOD & SONS, EDINBURGH;

AND

37 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON.

1856.

actually did not hear the familiar knock of Mr Foggo at the outer door.

"And these half profits, papa, I wonder what they will be," said Agnes, glad to take up something tangible in this vague delight.

"Oh, something very considerable," said papa, forgetting his own caution. "I should not wonder if the publisher made a great deal of money by it: *they* know what they're about. Get up and get me my slip-

pers, you little rascals. When Agnes comes into her fortune, what a paradise of toys for Bell and Beau!"

But the door opened, and Mr Foggo came in like a big brown cloud. There was no concealing from him the printed paper—no hiding the overflowings of the family content. So Agnes and Marian hurried off for half an hour's practising, and then put the twins to bed, and gossiped over the fire in the little nursery. What a pleasant night it was!

TRAVELS IN CIRCASSIA.

PART II.

ONE of the most severe trials of patience to which the traveller in a wild country is subjected, is invariably to be found in the impracticability of his guides. Circassia, I regret to say, did not prove a bright exception to this rule.

We had, before starting from Vardam, distinctly explained to Ismail Bey the length of time and the line of country over which we wished our travels to extend. He assured us that our guides should be given explicit directions upon this head; and therefore, when we found ourselves in a remote valley of a province which had never before been entered by a European, it was with no little dismay that we listened to their query, of where we wished to go to next. We had followed them with the blindest confidence over precipitous mountains, through impetuous streams, along narrow rocky valleys, and by dangerous paths, for two days; and had, by dint of extreme exertion and no little peril of our necks, at last almost attained the summit of a lofty range, only to be asked, when we got there, to inform them as to our future destination. The guides insinuated (and their suggestions were strongly supported by L—), that having only reached our present position with much toil and risk, we had better retrace our steps, and not tempt our fate any more upon the wild mountain-sides of Circassia. We held a very different opinion. Having got so far, we voted that it would be

unworthy in the extreme to be daunted by the perils of the road or the vagueness of our destination. We declared that, in spite of the precipices, we had not seen enough of Circassia, and that it was a matter of perfect indifference to us in which direction we went, seeing that on every side it was new and hitherto untrodden ground. It was perfectly clear that our escort had received instructions to lead us to the inaccessible residence of the Bey with whom we were now lodged, and who was a half-brother of Ismail's, under the belief that we should have had enough of journeying by that time, and be glad to return: they had not, therefore, received instructions as to the course to be pursued in the event of our persisting in extending our tour. The main objection seemed to be in the difficulty of procuring us our night's lodging. Ismail Bey had only a certain number of friends in the country, and his influence only extended over a limited district, beyond which it was doubtful whether, as his protegés, we should receive that hospitality which had hitherto been so freely accorded to us.

The province in which his influence, though not paramount, was principally felt, is called Ubooch, and lies between Abkhasia and Shapsugh, the latter forming at present part of the government of Sefer Pasha, who has just headed the Circassian deputation to Constantinople, praying for independence and a protectorate.

The village at which we passed the night of the 17th October, last year, is one of the most remote in this district of Ubooch, and is situated upon the western slope of the range which divides it from Abbasack; we were, in fact, at this point, not above five or six miles from the boundary of this latter province, and consequently the same distance from the headwaters of those streams which flow into the Kuban. We had, however, determined not to attempt to cross this range, which becomes more precipitous and impracticable near its summit; and as we were equally decided against turning back, the only alternative remained of following along its western slopes, until we thought fit to bend our steps towards the coast. This intention we accordingly announced, and declared, moreover, that we should trust to chance for our night's lodging. This weighty matter having been settled, we held some interesting discourse with our host, who, like our last, was a pilgrim, or hadji, and who also professed a decided antipathy for the Naib. He considered that gentleman a great deal too much addicted to forms and ceremonies—a sort of Puseyite, in fact, and consequently an object of aversion in his low-church eyes. He said that he was introducing fanatical customs, which were destroying the simplicity of the Circassian character, and which had for their ultimate aim and object his own self-aggrandisement. He had an infinitely higher respect for Schamyl, but then Schamyl lived two hundred miles off, and he could afford to respect him; the Naib was his nearest neighbour, and constantly threatening his influence in his own country. Moreover, he expressed a very low opinion of the military capacity of the lieutenant of Schamyl, and remarked with a sneer upon the singular custom which prevailed with respect to him in time of war. The Naib, he said, had so great a reputation for prowess in battle, that wherever he was likely to meet the enemy in the field, he was always accompanied by four men, whose business it was to hold him back.

We had reason afterwards to congratulate ourselves upon the liberal

religious sentiments of our host, who despised that narrow-minded injunction of the Prophet, which commands the women to veil their faces. I happened after dinner to stroll into one of the neighbouring rooms, and there found S— surrounded by a bevy of damsels, with whom he had already succeeded in establishing friendly relations. Conversation was of course somewhat limited, as we had no interpreter, and were obliged to convey our sentiments of admiration and respect by the most expressive signs which occurred to us. The young ladies, however, did not depend upon our conversational powers for their amusement. They were quite satisfied with staring at us in amazement, and giggling among themselves, while we found food for contemplation in speculating whether their remarks were likely to be complimentary or not. Gradually, as they found we were quite tame, the group increased; one damsel after another crept in, and squatted upon her heels round the little konak—and one bolder than the rest offered us a quantity of roasted chestnuts, which we skinned and handed to one another with profound civility. At last the group became so noisy that the sounds of merriment reached the ears of the rest of our party, who did not linger over their flesh-pots under such inviting circumstances. Soon the room was crammed full of Englishmen and Circassian girls, the male portion of the native community being collected at the door, and manifesting the most intense interest and amusement in our proceedings. Then, by means of L—, we held a little conversation, but they became shy again under so formal a ceremony as interpretation, and indeed were evidently a little overwhelmed by the rapid increase to our party, and the general attention they were attracting. So we thought it time to create a diversion by the introduction of a few presents, and a great many yards of printed calico were extended before their glistening and admiring eyes. This, we informed them, we should divide equally and impartially. At the same time I inwardly resolved to secure as large a portion as possible for a charming little creature who

had been feeding me with chestnuts, and whose soft lustrous eyes and long jet lashes I had compared deliberately with every other in the room, and had arrived at the conclusion that they were unrivalled. In virtue of this superiority, therefore, it was clear that she was entitled to the largest share; and I was just debating within myself how this was to be managed, when she settled the matter for herself in the most off-hand way, by making a vigorous snatch at the tempting prize, evidently with an idea of appropriating the whole. A beauty on the other side resented so strong a measure, and firmly grasped the other end. Each one now saw that it would become the property of the stoutest arm, and the whole of the party threw themselves into the contest with frantic ardour. Not even in the most excited game of hunt-the-slipper could more scrambling, screaming, pulling, and romping have been displayed. It was utterly hopeless to attempt to interfere; crack went the calico in every direction. First one and then another would flourish a fragment of the crumpled trophy in the air, and then pass it through the window to her mother or some of the old beldames who were looking greedily on, and then plunge into the ring again for more. I had the satisfaction of seeing my little protégé, with flushed face, and eyes that flashed with a fire somewhat at variance with their former deep repose, come out of the strife victorious. I took charge of at least two yards of the precious article for her while she recovered her breath and smoothed her ruffled feathers.

Gradually order was once more restored, and those whose dejected countenances and swimming eyes betrayed the ill-success with which they had come out of the conflict, were presented with some new pieces, of patterns so bright and gaudy that they were more than recompensed. The young ladies of that hamlet will flaunt about, for years to come, in such trousers as never before graced the limbs of fair Circassians, except in the harems of Stamboul. And, doubtless, swains from neighbouring villages will be attracted by their brilliant plumage to pay their devo-

tions to the maidens who captivated the Anglia. Assuredly never can Manchester calico be converted to nobler use than when, cut into the shape of a short tunic, it shall adorn their graceful figures; and the sunflower pattern cannot be more highly honoured than when in the form of loose trousers, tight at the ankle, it shows to advantage the tiny little white foot peering out from beneath.

On the following morning we bade a tender adieu to all these lovely damsels, who were paraded upon the green by our host for that purpose. They formed a most fascinating array. In front stood the two daughters of the Bey, in their richest attire, and perched upon curiously-shaped pattens, which raised the wearers five or six inches above the ground, and which were richly mounted in silver. Behind them a row of handmaidens waited in respectful attendance, the children of serfs belonging to the great man, and the humble companions of his own daughters. He pointed with a dolorous expression to all this valuable property, rendered utterly worthless by the recent firman, which forbids the exportation of slaves, and which he knew perfectly well emanated from the English. Here was an extensive stock in trade thrown upon his hands, and their proprietor found himself deprived of his entire income, for girls have hitherto been the only raw material of Circassia which could be converted into money. The only currency which ever found its way into the country was in exchange for the female part of the population, and now that this source of revenue is cut off, the owners will be compelled to barter them amongst themselves for horses. Girls and horses are almost convertible terms in Circassia, and are valued as nearly as possible alike, though I am bound to say that in any other country the former would fetch a far higher price than the latter. It is very seldom that a Circassian will give two horses for one girl. We laughingly asked some of these young ladies if they would come with us to Stamboul; and their eyes sparkled with delight at the idea, as they unhesitatingly expressed their willingness to

do so. A Circassian young lady anticipates with as much relish the time when she shall arrive at a marketable age, as an English young lady does the prospect of her first London season. But we have prevented the possibility of their forming any more of those brilliant alliances which made the young ladies of Circassia the envy of Turkeydom. The effect is, in fact, very much the same as that which an Act of Parliament would have in this country, forbidding any squire's daughter to marry out of her own parish, thus limiting her choice to the curate, the doctor, and the attorney; and the result, in all probability, will be anything but beneficial to the morality of the community. Hitherto the female portion of society was influenced by a powerful, though perhaps an unworthy motive, to maintain that propriety of conduct, a violation of which would seriously have depreciated their value in the market. Now that restraint (and among a savage people it is difficult to substitute a more efficient one than interest) is withdrawn, in the absence of any moral principle no motive exists to induce them to cherish that virtue which the suppression of slavery appears to them to have deprived of its value.

We were half-tempted to put off our departure for a day, for the purpose of visiting a cave and some ruins which our host described as the wonder of the neighbourhood. It so often happens, however, that the traveller is misled by the extravagant description by savages of the marvels of their country, that we were scarcely disposed to risk the expenditure of our valuable time upon the word of the Bey, though it is possible we may have missed a discovery which may rejoice the heart of some future traveller. It was late before we were *en route* toiling up the steep side of the range, which rose abruptly in rear of our quarters of the previous night. We had replaced our shattered baggage-pony by a fresh animal, and were progressing prosperously, when the other pack-horse tumbled over a precipice. It was fortunately not above fifty feet in height, and his velocity was checked by the brushwood, which cracked under him as

he gently revolved to the bottom, and was brought up on his back in the bed of a stream. The process of hauling him up again to the path caused some delay, and the extreme difficulty of our way rendered our progress necessarily slow. As we attained a higher elevation, the character of the vegetation underwent its usual change, and here and there a pine tree mingled its dark green with the more vivid foliage of the beech. These were already beginning to assume autumnal tints, and at the top of the range to drop their yellow leaves. We estimated our elevation at the highest point at about six thousand feet above the sea-level, and it was no small relief to exchange the upward scramble for the downward rush. The Circassian ponies retain their centre of gravity on these occasions with wonderful instinct, and they are by no means to be supposed to lack sure-footedness because they occasionally tumble over precipices. In no other country that I have ever been in are horses expected to perform such extravagant feats. Indeed, except in Nepal, I have never seen such dangerous roads, and there men carry the passengers, and sheep the merchandise. The wonder in Circassia is, not that the horses fall over the precipices, but that they do it with so much impunity. It is singular also that in a highland country a horse should be as indispensable a possession to a mountaineer as his wife. No Circassian is without one or two horses, and yet, except upon the occasional stony bed of a river, or along the sea-shore, there is not fifty yards of level ground in the country. Even the natives are obliged frequently to dismount, though they fearlessly ride over ledges of slippery rock, over hanging dizzy heights, which make one shudder to think of, past which it requires some nerve even for a man trusting to his own stout legs and careful steps to carry him, and to attempt which on horseback seems little short of insanity. As we descended towards the valley of the Schacho, our guides pointed out to us amongst the bushes the leaves of a plant resembling as nearly as possible the tea plant of China, and from which they assured us the

natives were accustomed to infuse a similar beverage. We never had an opportunity of tasting Circassian tea. The valley of the Schacho was prettily cultivated, and the scenery assumed a somewhat softer tone as we descended from the higher elevation. We stopped to rest in a grove of magnificent trees, where some singular monuments arrested our attention. Large masses of rock, which protruded here and there from the hill-side, had been smoothed by the hand of man, and presented an almost perpendicular plain surface about six feet square. On each side the rock had been shaped into somewhat the form of a buttress, so as to give a sort of finish to the work, and in the centre was a circular aperture about eighteen inches in diameter. Upon looking through this, we perceived an excavation in the solid rock, of about six feet square and four in height. The roof was formed by a single slab of stone, which had apparently been hewn for the purpose, and placed upon the top. The hypothesis which most immediately presented itself to our minds, upon inspecting these singular cavities, was, that they were sarcophagi, although it was difficult to divine the object of the circular aperture in front. We asked the guides their explanation of the mystery, and they said that in former times their country was inhabited by a race of dwarfs, who were served by a race of giants; that one great use to which the dwarfs put the obedient giants, was the construction of durable and substantial habitations, and that the excavations we were inspecting were the result of their labours. The circular apertures were the entrances, and as the little people used to ride on hares, their dimensions were most appropriate. While L—— was delivering this marvellous history with great unction, we were sketching the subject of his discourse. Their whole aspect and position invested them with an air of solemnity and mystery. The gnarled trunks of gigantic oaks rested heavily upon the rude architecture, or twisted their giant roots into the crevices of the sculptured rocks. The dense foliage overhead drooped sometimes over the whole, so as al-

most to conceal it; rank grass and ferns grew in dark moist corners, and mosses and lichens clung to the weather-beaten surface. It was a silent hidden spot, at the bottom of a deep valley, from which no view was visible, seldom visited even by the natives, for the path we were travelling was so little frequented that it was often nearly invisible, and never seen before by a European. We were the first to discover its secrets, and speculate upon their origin; doubtless, for years to come the majestic grove in which lie concealed these monuments of a bygone race will remain untrodden and unknown.

Shortly after leaving this interesting spot, we found ourselves in the valley of the Schacho. We had accomplished the descent from the top of the ridge with immense rapidity, and our host of the previous evening, who had politely accompanied us thus far, here bade us adieu. The crossing of the tumultuous Schacho was the most perilous undertaking of the kind which we had attempted. The horses could barely keep their footing upon the stony slippery bottom, while the rushing stream reached to the holsters. After one or two unsuccessful attempts we found a ford, and, with the exception of the baggage getting drenched, suffered no other inconvenience. We now saw, to our dismay, a range before us quite equal in height to the one we had just traversed. The guides informed us that, if we did not stop where we were for the night, there was a great risk of our failing to accomplish the ascent, and thus being compelled to camp out, as there were no houses until we reached the other side. This was a most disagreeable prospect. At the same time the day was still young; we had four good hours of daylight before us, and we determined to push vigorously on, and risk the chance of a night in the woods. Our start was not auspicious. The path, more narrow than ever, was at one place so unpleasant-looking that some of the party dismounted; among others L——, whose chestnut horse was a proverbial fool at picking his way. I did not think the same precaution ne-

cessary with the clever little beast I bestrode, but the chestnut, though left entirely to himself, slipped his hind foot, lost his balance, and went clean over thirty feet perpendicular, performing a summersault in the air, and landing upon a quantity of sharp rocks. Of course we expected to find that his back was broken—for although the height was not great, there had been nothing whatever to check his fall. To our amazement, however, he got upon his feet, and though he was evidently much bruised, and bled a good deal from the mouth, he managed to scramble through the remainder of that tremendous day's journey, and lived to undergo the horrors of Omer Pasha's campaign. A very few yards after this, and even the Circassians were obliged to dismount. Recent rains had made the path so sticky and muddy that the ponies were soon utterly exhausted, and we plodded up beside them, our progress being much retarded by long jackboots reaching to our thighs, and to which adhered many pounds of pertinacious clay—indeed, during the whole of this day's journey, some of our party scarcely ever mounted their horses at all. We must have ascended, in the course of three hours, about three thousand feet, and as this was the second range we had crossed since the morning, we arrived at the top thoroughly exhausted. But we were amply compensated for our toils, by one of the most magnificent views it was ever my good fortune to behold.

Upon our left rose in majestic grandeur the snowy peaks of the towering Caucasus, and a flood of golden light bordered their irregular outline. Lower down, the glaciers met the dark green of the pine forest; and the contrast was the more striking, because the rays of the declining sun fell only on the glittering snow, while the shades of evening were settling fast upon the sombre woods of the lower mountains. From these gushed boiling torrents, and forced their way through narrow gorges, which expanded at our feet into winding valleys, where the hills had exchanged their dark-green mantle for one in which the many hues of autumn were combined; and

hamlets were embowered amid fruit-trees and orchards; and the streams, like threads of silver, no longer swept seething beneath overhanging rocks, but rippled calmly under the drooping foliage which kissed the water. Farther to the right the country opened still more, and so they meandered to the sea between variegated margins, formed of patches of yellow corn, brown millet, and verdant meadow.

We revelled for some time in this glorious prospect, for our path kept along the ridge of the hill for some distance, and crossed a saddle before it thought of once more descending into the long-wished-for valley, where we expected to find food and lodging for the night. Meantime the sun had set; and as we turned our backs sharply upon the view we had been admiring, and, rounding a shoulder of the mountain, expected to have another and not less interesting panorama at our feet, our surprise and dismay were great when we burst suddenly upon an immense expanse of dense fog, which lay like a white shroud upon the earth, concealing it from us entirely, except where two or three hill-tops still showed their wooded summits. Gradually the mist rose, and one by one they disappeared, as though submerged by some mighty flood. We could scarcely regret the loss of the view as we gazed upon a phenomenon so singular and striking, until at last we were ourselves enveloped in its chill embrace. There was a warning sound in the cold damp gusts that swept over the mountain-side, which was anything but pleasant, as, wearied and jaded, we commenced the arduous descent. Our horses, with drooping heads, followed their plodding masters down dry water-courses and steep slippery banks. A general recklessness seemed to pervade the party, as though life was momentarily becoming less valuable as the chance of passing a rainy night in the woods increased. At length, when the last glimmer of twilight had almost disappeared, the bark of a dog sounded cheerily on our ears, and soon after human voices inspired us with hope. Their owners promptly answered our shouts, and directed us, in a bewil-

dered manner, to the chief man of the village, furnishing us with a guide to his residence, which we reached at last, utterly worn out and exhausted.

Our host was a perfect specimen of a Circassian, who had never travelled beyond his native valley; but though wrapt in amazement at our appearance, he did not allow his feelings of astonishment to get the better of his hospitality. He at once commenced the most active preparations for our comfort; and though he evidently was not so well off as our former host, he seemed determined to make up by activity for his want of means. We ventured, despite L——'s remonstrances to the effect that we should only give offence, to hint our ravenous condition, and to express a wish that the ceremony of the sheep should be dispensed with for once, and that we should be supplied with a turkey, or something less sumptuous, but more rapidly prepared. Our host received this intimation with a somewhat dissatisfied expression of countenance, and left the room without deigning a remark. A few minutes after he returned, and, with a grin of triumph, informed us that, in revenge for the serious reflection we had cast upon his hospitality, he had ordered a bullock, instead of a sheep, to be killed for our benefit. It was already nearly eight o'clock, and we had had nothing to eat since breakfast, and during the interval had been sustaining almost without intermission the most severe exercise. This announcement, then, was received with a murmur of profound despair, and we flung ourselves in our quilts in a state of sullen discontent. It was no consolation to us to know that our wretched horses were as badly off as ourselves; for it is the custom in Circassia never even to take the saddle off a horse for an hour or two after his arrival, much less to feed him. There is always a post like a hat-stand before the house of the great man, to which visitors fasten their ponies, and there they are left to stand until thoroughly cool. Our poor brutes could have found no great difficulty in arriving at this latter state of body, for shortly after our arrival came a most tremendous thunder-storm. The thunder seemed to burst

almost inside the konak, and then went echoing and crashing through the narrow valleys as though it would rend the very mountains. The sluice-gates of heaven seemed opened, and the rain swept in through the chinks and crevices of our miserable abode in spite of our utmost efforts to keep it out. We could not, however, be sufficiently thankful for the shelter we enjoyed, when we remembered how nearly we had been destined to pass the night in the woods, and how deplorable would have been our condition had we done so. As it was, we were only suffering from a heated atmosphere and voracious appetites, being confined in a small room, with a blazing fire, and deprived of our dinner until half-an-hour after midnight. One was almost tempted to believe that Bolingbroke must have been a Circassian traveller, and spoke feelingly when he said—

“Oh, who can hold a fire in his hand
By thinking on the frosty Caucasus;
Or cloy the hungry edge of appetite
By bare imagination of a feast?”

It was late on the following morning before we roused ourselves from the heavy slumbers consequent upon our midnight meal, and we occupied the hour before breakfast in paying our respects to the daughter of our host, a lady-like looking girl, who sat to Mr S—— for her portrait with great satisfaction. Her brother, a stalwart young fellow, who stood near, had not long before been taken prisoner by the Russians. He had, however, managed to shoot the officer on guard, and effected his escape. This was the most unsophisticated family we had met. They had never been out of their native valleys; neither father or daughter had ever before seen any Europeans, and they were evidently genuinely anxious to show us kindness and hospitality. As we parted from them, and one of our party recompensed our host for his entertainment of us by a handsome present, the old man embraced the donor with much fervour, and many professions of eternal friendship and regard. The violent rain of the night before had swelled the mountain torrents, always rapid—greased the narrow paths, always dangerous

—and rendered travelling in Circassia, always difficult, almost hopeless. We made up our minds to walk nearly the whole of our day's journey, and found it difficult to keep our footing upon the slippery path, not broader than a Highland sheep-walk, which led along the edge of a hill some eight or nine hundred feet above the brawling stream at its base. Downwards, however, our steps were now directed, and we at last reached it, after a great deal of trouble with our baggage animals, whose packs were continually tumbling off. Fortunately there was nothing of any value contained in them, or the combined effects of soaking in the rivers and rolling over precipices would have been fatal. We were amply repaid by the beauty of the valley of the Tecumseh, for the difficulty we had experienced in scrambling down to it. The path led through the wood by the river bank, sometimes diving into a glen, and crossing gushing tributaries by rustic wooden bridges; sometimes, descending to the level of the stream, it was shut in by rocks and overhanging trees; at others, where the channel became compressed, and the banks rugged and precipitous, it ascended to a height of a hundred feet, and, rounding the projecting rock, afforded romantic glimpses of roaring cascades and boiling rapids; then through the open smiling valley, where hedges of gigantic box were covered with the wild clematis, and azaleas and rhododendrons mingled their glowing blossoms.

Surely nature has lavished an undue share of her gifts upon the lovely valley of Tecumseh. Never was there such a combination of the sublime and the beautiful. As we followed its course, we seemed to pass from one to the other: we left behind us the snowy peaks, and journeyed onward towards gently-swelling hills; issuing from deep narrow gorges reechoing with the hoarse murmur of flooded torrents, we entered silent, peaceful dells, where tiny rills trickled between moss-grown stones; and passed from forests of grand majestic trees, dark and gloomy, into summer gardens of wild flowers, bright and cheerful; and so on through green

meadows and orchards of fruitful trees, where bunches of purple grapes hung side by side with walnuts or chestnuts, as the tree was covered by the tenacious creeper, and apples and figs presented themselves temptingly to our grasp, and half-ripe medlars suggested the idea of a second visit. There was some little excitement going on in the valley of Tecumseh as we passed down it, for a message had been sent by Omer Pasha, calling upon the inhabitants for a cavalry contingent; and a grand meeting of the young men was appointed to take place, in order that the district of Ubooch might be properly represented in the Turkish army.

Our young men were very full of the anticipated pleasures of campaigning, but I afterwards saw them in Mingrelia, considerably disenchanted. Many of them had lost their horses from starvation, and they were returning in a miserable plight. Meantime they were great gossips, and what between the excitement of being our guides, and of going to the wars, they were extremely communicative to everybody they met. The old hadji told the same story over, of who we were, where we had been, where we were going, &c., for the edification of every passenger; and these roadside chats, though no doubt very full of interest to the parties concerned, were very tiresome to us, whose only object was to push on without losing any unnecessary time. We crossed over a low range a little below nightfall, passing a large and populous village charmingly situated, and looked out for quarters among the numerous konaks with which the valley we had now entered was dotted. For the first time we applied in vain; the family informed us that, the master of the house being away, we could not be allowed admittance. We somewhat questioned the truth of this excuse, but had no alternative but to prosecute our search for some more friendly householder.

At last we reached a village where the inhabitants gladly placed two little cottages at our disposal, and where we were permitted to dine off turkeys instead of sheep. After dinner, a rough-looking Circassian came

into our konak, and informed us that he was anxious to enter into the service of a European. He was a native of Abbasack, and had fought against the Russians; he had also been the pilgrimage to Mecca, and picked up a smattering of Turkish. Altogether, though wild and uncouth in appearance, there was something so amiable and prepossessing in his face, that I at once offered to engage him and his horse at the monthly stipend of thirty shillings. Salary, however, was evidently "no consideration" with my friend Hadji Mustapha, who only desired the novelty of the employment with a European, and thenceforward took me under his patronising care.

Nor would it have been possible to find a more good-humoured, affectionate, and hard-working slave than this faithful creature afterwards proved. Thoroughly unsophisticated, his service was rather that of a devoted friend than a paid domestic. It was refreshing to be waited upon by one utterly ignorant of the ordinary relations subsisting between master and servant—to receive from him good advice when well, and the most unremitting attention when ill. He united in his person the functions of groom, for he took care of five horses; cook upon emergencies; valet after he had been initiated into the mysteries of the toilet, which at first amazed him exceedingly; nurse when, unfortunately, the occasion offered, and tutor and guardian always. He was the only servant I had throughout the Transcaucasian campaign of the Turkish army, and subsequently accompanied me to Constantinople, where I parted from him with regret, and where he astonished the world upon the quay at Tophané by straining me to his bosom. His costume by that time had become a curious mixture of English and Circassian, for he had a great weakness for civilised apparel, and, though thoroughly honest, was a little covetous of his master's goods. It was impossible to resist his insinuating appeal when he admiringly contemplated a pair of thick shooting-boots of mine, and then glanced ruefully at his own worn-out tsuaka or moccasins. In fact, if the truth must be told, Hadji

Mustapha was an incorrigible beggar, and kept himself supplied with clothes very cleverly. His wardrobe gradually expanded during our residence in camp, and I used constantly to see garments transferred from the backs of other servants to his own. He was such a universal favourite, and so ready to do good-natured things, and take any amount of trouble, that he deserved all he got. Poor Hadji! I gave him a character, in which I endeavoured to describe his merits, and recommended him to Misserie's good offices at Constantinople, but I fear he will not again find an English master. There is a difficulty in communicating with him, which will operate as a serious objection. Nor could any bystander have understood the jargon of Turkish, English, and Circassian, which formed a sort of language of our own invention, and by which we held communion.

We had now reached the southeastern frontier of Ubooch. There is a narrow district intervening between this province and Abkhasia called Djikethie, inhabited by a tribe who speak the Asgar language, and who were reported by our guides to have Russian sympathies. They decidedly objected to the idea of our travelling through the interior of this province, and indeed we had had quite enough of clambering over successive ranges; so we bent our steps seaward, and, passing the Russian fort of Mamai, followed the coast to Ardiller. At Soucha, another Russian fort, now dismantled, we found a number of brass guns in a perfectly good state of preservation. The Circassians were revelling in the domain of their old enemies, little dreaming that the day would soon come when the barrier would again be established which should cut them off from intercourse with the whole civilised world. We, too, as we rode along the shingly beach, under shelter of gigantic forest-trees, speculated upon the happy future which seemed now in store for this devoted land—when its resources should be developed, and intercourse with Europe produce its beneficial influence upon the benighted population.

We found practical evidence of the truth of the assertion of our guides as to the alteration which existed in the sentiments of the people among whom we were now journeying, when we arrived at our night's quarters at Ardiller. Some of the villagers came in to inspect us, and, accustomed as they were to Russians, manifested no curiosity, and very little interest in us. One of these, a fine stalwart fellow, with a disagreeable sneer upon his countenance, informed us, without circumlocution, that he was heart and soul a Russian. He said he regretted their departure exceedingly, and hoped soon to see them back again; whereupon one of our Circassian guides, of an impetuous disposition, applied an epithet to the speaker which has its equivalent in civilised, but not in polite society, accompanying the same with a gesture so menacing that we feared for the public peace. As we wished to have some more conversation with our new acquaintance, we persuaded all the Circassians to leave the room. He then said that it was by no means to be wondered at that he should regret the departure of the Russians, as their presence always secured a profitable market for corn and vegetables; for the garrison had orders to buy the produce of the country at exorbitant prices. But this was not the only method resorted to for obtaining the good-will of the people. Our informant assured us that he received a monthly salary of seven rubles, on condition that he maintained friendly relations with the Russians, and exercised his influence in their behalf among the natives.

It was therefore most natural that the people of Ubooch, who voluntarily deprived themselves of these advantages for the sake of freedom, and suffered all the inconveniences resulting from a determined hostility to Russia, should have felt doubly indignant with the base conduct of these Djikethians, who were ready to sell their independence for a wretched pecuniary advantage, and then boasted of their treachery in their very faces. We were amused at the hesitation which this fine gentleman displayed when we in-

formed him that he might retire, and he contemplated the hostile party who were waiting to receive him outside. We felt very little pity for him, and were not surprised to hear the sounds of strife proceed from the yard. It was perfectly dark, and we could only speculate upon what was probably passing. Nor did we think it wise to interfere; but L—— rushed out with his usual impetuous curiosity, and came back with an excited account of an affray. However, quiet was gradually restored, and our Circassians came dropping in after a little, with satisfied countenances, like dogs who lick their lips after feasting on the produce of the chase. It was clear, however, that the locality was by no means congenial to our friends, and they informed us of their intention to return on the following day to Ubooch. To this we made no objection, as we hourly expected the return of the Cyclops to the coast, and had agreed that she was to look in for us at this point. We were, moreover, gainers by the intimate relations which had been maintained between the inhabitants of the village and the garrison of the fort, situated on the coast about a mile and a half distant. There were all sorts of evidences of civilisation apparent about our habitation. It was a large wooden building, containing two rooms, constructed of planks, and with a shingle roof, a most comfortable fire-place, a couple of couches, and various other articles of furniture unknown in Circassia, the whole belonging to an old lady, who overwhelmed us with civility, and entertained us most sumptuously. We were detained at Ardiller for three days, during which time we were dependent entirely upon the hospitality of this exemplary person. It is true that we received a pressing invitation from a neighbouring great man to honour his *konak* with our presence, and we were very much disposed to do so; but we were assured that it would give such mortal offence to our kind hostess, and cast so dire a reflection upon her hospitality in the eyes of the surrounding population, that the move was given up. Meantime we rode

about the country exploring the neighbourhood, and sketching its beauties. The fort, as usual, consisted of four walls, enclosing a number of tall poplars and a great deal of rubbish. All the forts to the north of Souchoum were dismantled by the Russians prior to their evacuation; but Souchoum itself was left untouched, as Prince Michael assured the Russians that, if they damaged the place in any way, the people of the country would rise and cut off their retreat. As the weather was by no means propitious, we congratulated ourselves upon our good quarters, and did not regret the abrupt conclusion of our tour. The Circassians, too, lingered on in spite of their hostile feelings towards the country-people, and seemed disposed to be somewhat intractable when the important duty of recompensing them for their trouble was to be entered upon.

Like thorough savages, they resorted to all sorts of manoeuvres to screw more out of us than they were entitled to. First, they disputed the terms of the agreement collectively; then one of them adopted a conciliatory tone, while the others departed in high dudgeon. Finding he could not coax a present out of us, he too left indignantly, and then one of the others returned with a long face, and still longer story, of his having lost all his wages, and tried to work upon our compassion. When he found this hopeless (like Mr Montague Tigg when Pecksniff refused to lend him the ridiculously small sum of eighteenpence), he swore eternal friendship, in which he was joined by all the others, who now reappeared, after having absented themselves in a fit of disgust for twenty-four hours, and who remained with us until we left the coast, when we parted on the best possible terms.

It was indeed difficult to be angry with these men on the very ground which their gallant countrymen had rendered sacred by many a deed of noble daring; and we were ready to forget that acquisitiveness, which is so often the mark of barbarians, amid scenes with which so much that was heroic was associated. We

could not turn our backs upon Ubooch without regret. Of all the tribes of Circassians who have so long and steadily resisted the Russian arms, none have shown a more indomitable spirit than the inhabitants of this district. Their enterprises have been as bold as the execution of them has been skilful; they have produced warriors whose deeds have rendered both themselves and their tribe famous throughout the mountains; and the name of Hadji Dokum Oku is one which is painfully familiar to Russian ears. Their country has always been a region of terror to the Muscovites, who have never succeeded in penetrating it; and with the exception of a Baron Turnau, an officer who had been taken prisoner, and kept in confinement amongst them for some time, it was, prior to our visit, a complete *terra incognita*. Indeed, as this gentleman was kept a close prisoner, his description of the country was very meagre. The best account of the episodes in which the Uboochians have figured is to be gathered from Russian sources; for though by no means trustworthy, they are more to be relied upon than the fables of the mountaineers. Dr Wagner, who visited Ardiller in 1843, gives some interesting details which he obtained from the officer then in command. Three years before, this tribe, together with some of the Shapsugh warriors, stormed four Russian forts sword in hand. Out of the five hundred soldiers composing the garrisons, only eleven survived, and these were made prisoners. An enormous number of Circassians, however, fell in the assault, and perished in one of the forts, which was ultimately blown up by a Russian soldier. In the following year, the Czar determined to avenge this disaster, and sent a mixed force of about three thousand men to Ardiller, who attempted to penetrate into Ubooch, between that fort and Soucha. They no sooner turned inwards, however, than they were attacked furiously by the Uboochians under Ali Oku, the grandson of the old chief just mentioned, and driven back, after a determined struggle, in which that young chieftain was shot cheering on his men, and his

place taken by the venerable Hadji, who more than avenged the death of his gallant grandson. The Russians admitted to a loss of five hundred men on this occasion, and gave up any further idea of punishing the Uboochians, or entering their country. We passed over the scene of this bloody conflict on our ride from Soucha to Ardiller. There is unfortunately now no great Ubooch warrior. The most dashing young man of the tribe, and a descendant of the Hadji, was, at the period of our visit, only burning for an opportunity of maintaining the credit of the family; and with this view put himself at the head of the cavalry contingent which was supplied by the district to Omer Pasha. Izak Bey was indeed one of the handsomest and most gallant young fellows I ever saw; he was in the thickest of the fight on the eventful day of the Ingour, and we lay together under the same cloak by the bivouac-fire that night on the bloody battle-field. Poor fellow, he succumbed under the hardships of the retreat, and died of typhus fever at Choloni the day before I left the army.

In the course of my journeys upon the Circassian coast, I had now visited some eight or nine of these abandoned Russian forts, and always with sensations very different from those which usually accompany the contemplation of scenes of ruin and desolation. Here the sight of dismantled walls, and tottering towers, and heaps of rubbish, gave rise, not to feelings of melancholy, but of satisfaction and of triumph;—of satisfaction that a noble and free-hearted people should be relieved of the presence of foreign invaders; and of triumph, that this result had been due entirely to our navy. It was pleasant, then, to see Circassians cultivating gardens which formerly supplied their enemies with vegetables, and building their cottages within gunshot of those loop-holed walls, then so harmless; and melancholy is it now to think that Russian cannon will soon again fill up the empty embrasures, and Russian soldiers reconstruct and reoccupy the ruined and deserted barracks; that the gardens will again be abandoned by their rightful owners, and their cottages destroyed. The effect

of any clause in the late treaty preventing the reconstruction of these forts, is more important than people in this country have been disposed to allow. It has been contended that the Circassians had no claim to our sympathies on the score of co-operation, and that therefore any stipulation in their favour was uncalled for. In the first place, it is easy to show that they co-operated with us whenever they were asked, and could do so; and, in the second, it is not because the Circassians deserve their independence that we should endeavour to secure it for them, any more than it was the purity of the Sultan's government which induced us to undertake a war which had for its object "the integrity and independence of his empire." We acted in this from self-interested motives, and we have only neglected to stipulate against the reconstruction of the Circassian forts, because we did not see that our interest demanded it; or if perchance we did, France did not, and we were not in a position to insist upon it. The future will show that her policy in this was as shortsighted as was ours in concurring in it. The whole question of Eastern aggression by Russia hinges upon the existence of this line of forts. Without them, Russia can never hope to subdue Circassia, any more than she could have taken Kars if she had left one gate open. The success of the Russian war in the Caucasus depends upon the efficacy of the blockade; that can only be secured by the reconstruction of these forts. When these are rebuilt, and Circassia will be again thrown upon its own limited resources, the latter will at last be exhausted, the besieged country will capitulate, and the only barrier to Russian aggression in the East will thus be swept away. So long as a strip of independent country remains to separate Russia from her Transcaucasian provinces, their value is not only depreciated, but the difficulty of extending her frontier in that direction is increased, as her armies are in danger of being cut off, and reinforcements can only be brought up with risk.

Thus at this moment she hesitates to annex those provinces of Ghilan

and Mazenderan to the south of the Caspian, which have been mortgaged to her by Persia. If, therefore, Russia intends to relinquish her Eastern policy, she need not care for the subjugation of Circassia, as the country itself is too impracticable to be of any intrinsic value; but if, as will undoubtedly be the case, Russia recommences her war with Circassia and the reconstruction of these forts, then we may infer that she has not relinquished that policy, but that she intends again to threaten Turkey when a convenient season offers—not this time upon the banks of the Danube, but on those of the Araxes. It is supposed that the rectification of the Bessarabian frontier will secure us against a repetition of the siege of Silistria. The non-reconstruction of the Circassian forts was the only guarantee we could have had against the recurrence of the siege of Kars. It is a pity that the work was left half done. But this is not all. If these forts are rebuilt, that clause of the treaty which announces that the coasts of the Black Sea are for the future opened to the commercial enterprise of all nations will be remarkably restricted. The coast from Anaklea to Anapa will be hermetically sealed against the enterprise of all nations. The Russian troops, posted at short intervals along it, will no more allow a bale of Manchester calicoes to be carried into the country, than they would have allowed a bag of biscuits to be taken into Kars. They will, at all events, bring their blockade within the terms of that clause of the treaty which says, “A blockade, in order to be binding, must be effective.” Thus, unless Russia relinquishes her cherished policy in Asia, and admits the independence of Circassia—a most improbable event—the resources of that country will remain undeveloped,—its mineral wealth will never be explored,—its magnificent forests, teeming with valuable timber, will never ring with the sound of the axe; and the box-trees, unequalled in the world, will decay where they stand. The small patches of cultivation in the fertile valleys will never be enlarged beyond what is necessary for a scanty population. The

grapes will wither upon the vine-stems, and the fruit which loads the trees rot where it falls. And yet the nation does not exist who would appreciate more thoroughly the advantages of a free and unrestricted commerce. Whenever the opportunity has offered, they have manifested a spirit of mercantile enterprise which only proves how anxious they are for intercourse with other nations, and how speedily civilisation would exercise over them its benign influences; but, like ourselves, they are ready to sacrifice their internal prosperity to their liberty, and would rather be annihilated as a nation, savage but free, than purchase that degraded civilisation which Russia offers them, at the price of their independence.

With respect to the absence of any co-operation on the part of the Circassians, that is easily accounted for with regard to the eastern part of the range. There are two reasons which doubtless operated with Schamyl: one was, that his assistance was never asked; and another, that he had no army—and it is universally admitted that it is impossible for a general to carry on a campaign in an enemy's country without one. Nevertheless our statesmen expected this of Schamyl; and of all the other chieftains in the range; the fact being that Circassians are guerillas without either land-transport or commissariat corps, or artillery, or infantry, or anything, in fact, but ponies, and are indomitable upon their own mountaintops. If, therefore, we had expected their co-operation, we should have asked them to do something in their own country—block up the Russian passes, for instance—and had we sent them a few regular soldiers and some money, we should have had their co-operation most cordially offered. As it was, when we asked the Naib to attack the Russians, he did, and got well beaten in Karachai; and when we asked the people of Ubooch to raise a contingent, they did, and their irregular horse accompanied Omer Pasha on the campaign, until all the horses died of starvation, as they were allowed neither pay nor rations, and were forbidden to plunder, and the men returned on foot to their

own valleys, to praise the generosity of the Allies, and, after losing their property, to hear from Constanti-nople that they did nothing to deserve sympathy, and that the forts are all to be rebuilt, which are to exclude them for ever from intercourse with the rest of their species.

At last, just when we had given up the Cyclops, and had determined upon riding down the coast to Sou-choum, we observed the line of smoke upon the distant horizon, and soon after were actively engaged in the process of embarkation, leaving our Circassians collected in a group upon the beach, shouting "Oagmaff," or farewell.

It would have been interesting, could we have spared the time, to have visited the church of Pitzounda, celebrated as the oldest Christian church in the Caucasus, and situated upon a remarkable promontory, which we steamed past the morning after leaving Ardiller. It is almost exactly similar to that of Souksou, but upon the scale of a cathedral instead of a church. It has been described at length in the elaborate work of Mons. Dubois de Montpereux, whose extensive researches into the history and antiquities of the Caucasian province are a most valuable source of reference. Founded by the Emperor Justinian about the middle of the sixth century, it embraced within its patriarchate nearly all the Caucasian countries. The invasions of the neighbouring Circassians, however, forced the bishops to abandon it, and its importance declined, until under Muscovite auspices there appeared some prospect of its old position being assigned to it. As in former times it was the repository of many valuable documents, which have since been removed to the monastery of Ghelathi, and from which a history of the Caucasian provinces was compiled by a Georgian chronicler, and translated by Klaproth, it may not be uninteresting, in conclusion, to glance cursorily at the history of this part of the coast of Circassia and Abkhasia, as gathered from that record and the pages of Montpereux.

It is satisfactory to find that, according to these traditions, no obscurity hangs over the early portion of

the history of these countries. They carry us boldly back to the Flood, and decide that Togarmah, who, it will be remembered, was a great-grandson of Noah, after the confusion of tongues consequent on the building of the Tower of Babel, established himself in Armenia, but whose possessions extended to the banks of the Kuban. He divided his territory between his eight sons, and Abkhasia was included in the portion of the eighth, Egros. These princes owed allegiance to Nimrod, then, in the language of the chronicle, "the first king among the inhabitants of the earth." At the instigation of the elder brother they revolted, and the mighty hunter fell by his hand. This prince, whose name was Hhaos, then became king over his brothers, and his rule was paramount in Caucasia and Armenia.

It is precisely at this epoch that the Argonautic expedition is placed by the Greeks, the reputed origin of those colonies which sprung up along the eastern shores of the Black Sea, in the country then called Colchis, and which includes Mingrelia and the greater part of Abkhasia. In the subsequent wars between the Persians and Georgians, these colonies took part with the latter, who, according to the chronicle, were only ultimately conquered by the first Artaxerxes. This veracious history then proceeds to describe the invasion of Georgia by the armies of Alexander the Great. After subduing the country, the conqueror is said to have left as its governor a Macedonian named Ason, who united, under his rule in Georgia, the province of Abkhasia. The tyranny of this man, however, roused the spirit of an enterprising young Georgian, who traced his descent to Ouplos, the grandson of the great-grandson of Noah, by name Pharnavaz, and who, in conjunction with a certain Koudji, lord of Abkhasia, conspired to overthrow the Greek oppressor. They collected a large army in Abkhasia, crossed the Ingour, as better men have done since, in the face of the enemy, and utterly routing Ason, Pharnavaz became king of Georgia, giving his sister in marriage to his faithful

aly, Koudji, prince of Abkhasia, who thenceforward owned his suzerainty. The Greek colonies at the mouths of the Ingour, Kodor, Rhion, and other places upon the coast, and who had sided with Ason, managed, however, still to preserve their independence, although surrounded by a hostile population. Such was the condition of Abkhasia about two hundred and forty years before the Christian era, and so it remained until included within the limits of the vast empire of Mithridates.

To those who know the country, the march of this monarch, after his defeat by Pompey, from the Ingour to Anapa, seems an achievement worthy of his great reputation. The glory of the ancient Greek colonies had now departed, and the far-famed shores of Colchis and lovely valleys of Abkhasia became a Roman province under the rule of a governor appointed by Pompey. Not long after, it was incorporated into the kingdom of Bosphorus, under Polemon I., who had married a granddaughter of Mithridates. During the reign of Polemon II., or about forty years after Christ, the apostles Simon and Andrew arrived, according to the Georgian chronicle, in Abkhasia and Mingrelia, to publish those truths which have never since been altogether extinguished. The Emperors of Rome continued to arrogate to themselves the right of naming the rulers of these provinces, which were, nevertheless, practically independent. When, however, war broke out between the Persians and the people of the Caucasus, Justinian was obliged to send his armies to the assistance of the latter, for the Persians meditated the conquest of Mingrelia and Gouriel, then united into one province, from which they could threaten Constantinople itself. The Abkhasians took this opportunity of withdrawing themselves from their allegiance to the neighbouring province, which had assumed the right of naming their kings. They succeeded in this attempt, and appointed two kings of their own. Justinian determined to punish them for such contumacious conduct, and sent a picked force to Souchoum Kaleh. The Ab-

khasians took refuge in a strong castle which crowned a hill overlooking a steep gorge which issues from the mountains a little to the right of Souksou, and which still partially exists under the name of Anakopi. Had we known, when we saw it in the distance, what interesting associations have attached to it, we might have attempted to visit it. The Abkhasians, however, notwithstanding the strength of the place, did not hold out against the military tact of the Roman general, and the castle was taken and burned; but this spot owes its chief celebrity throughout the country to the still older tradition which attaches to it; for here, it is said, are laid the bones of Simon the Canaanite.

The result of the war between Justinian and Khosroes was to place more decidedly than ever the Transcaucasian provinces under the suzerainty of the Byzantine Empire.

Abkhasia, as well as the other provinces, felt this influence, and between the fifth and tenth centuries made considerable progress in civilisation. The greater part of those churches and forts, the ruins of which add so much to the picturesque character of the scenery, date from this period. Hitherto the princes of Abkhasia, though owning allegiance to the Greek Emperors, were independent of the neighbouring provinces. Towards the close of the tenth century, however, the crowns of Georgia and Abkhasia became united in the family of the Bagrats. Its history is, therefore, identical with that of Georgia until 1442, when the reigning king (Alexander) died, leaving his kingdom divided between his three sons. Abkhasia and the rest of the seaboard provinces fell to the share of one of these, but his successors failed to preserve the allegiance of several of the principal families, who, finding their influence almost as great as that of their sovereign, successively threw off his yoke, so that very soon the kings ceased to exist, and their former territory was divided amongst themselves by the most influential families, whose authority is to this day recognised by Russia in the different provinces which resulted from this separation. Meantime these

petty principalities became once more the theatre of war between Persia and the empire of which Constantinople was the capital, now no longer Christian. Abkhasia with its neighbours was placed finally under the suzerainty of the Porte; and, in 1578, Souchoum Kaleh and Poti at the mouth of the Rhion were built and garrisoned by Turkish troops. For the next two hundred years Abkhasia was a Turkish province, but about the middle of the last century the Abkhasians revolted, and the Turks abandoned Souchoum Kaleh, still, however, retaining the suzerainty. Keliche Bey, the Prince of Abkhasia, then living at Souchoum Kaleh, soon after, by refusing to give up a Turkish refugee, brought matters to a crisis, and called in the protection of Russia, at the same time professing himself a Christian convert. From that moment Russia never relinquished the hold which she was thus enabled to secure; and at the close of that war with Turkey which terminated in the treaty of Yassy, she acquired Abkhasia, together with the neighbouring provinces to the south. Shortly afterwards Russian troops were quartered at Souchoum Kaleh and other forts on the coast, and the princes of Abkhasia became Muscovite vassals. Their subjects, however, were by no means disposed to concur in this transfer of allegiance, and the Mahometan portion of the population have steadily refused to recognise the sovereignty of their new masters. The Christians, indeed, remain docile subjects of their Prince. They remember with abhorrence the barbarities of their Turkish rulers, and even exaggerate those atrocities which unfortunately but too often characterised their dominion. The population of the north and interior, on the other hand, have conceived an inveterate hatred to the Russians, enhanced no doubt by the perpetual struggle with them in which they have been engaged, while they have forgotten the oppression of their former masters, from whom they doubtless suffered less than their Christian compatriots; and regarding them only as co-religionists, they hailed with joy the arrival of a Turkish Pasha, shortly after the evacuation of Sou-

choum Kaleh, as an earnest of that change from the Christian to the Mahometan rule which they so ardently desire. The consequence was, that when the Turkish army arrived at Souchoum Kaleh, Prince Michael found himself compelled to receive them with the utmost friendship and cordiality, for he was as unable to change the sympathies of the greater portion of his own subjects as he was to prevent the landing of Omer Pasha and his forces. Like the Uboochians, they too contributed their quota to the Turkish army, but, like them, they will gain nothing by the war in return for their co-operation. Had a condition prohibiting Russia from rebuilding the forts on the eastern coast of the Black Sea been inserted, that alone would have sufficed to secure their independence. For although she might have reserved to herself the right of garrisoning troops in the interior of Abkhasia, that attempt would have been found perfectly impracticable, except in the low country, where, as has already been shown, the population is not so strongly opposed to her rule. The evacuation of Souchoum Kaleh by Russian troops, and the residence there of foreign consuls, would have opened up the whole of the Mahometan part of the country to the commercial enterprise of the world. So far from that being the case, in consequence of those hostilities which must inevitably be resumed between the Mahometan Abkhasians and Russians, as soon as Souchoum Kaleh is regarrisoned, the country will revert to the condition in which it was before the war, and which is precisely similar to that of Ubooch. The chances of their ultimate civilisation are more remote than ever; they will be cut off again from intercourse with humanity. Their villages and fields will be burnt and destroyed as of old by rapacious soldiery, and war, incessant war, will be their only occupation, until at last, determined never to submit, they will become exterminated as a race, savage, but free to the end.

Such is the prospect of the Abkhasian mountaineers, and it is melancholy to think that the unhappy

fate to which these brave men are now doomed, might have been averted by a stipulation forbidding the reoccupation of that town which, after having been taken from Russia and permanently garrisoned by Turkish troops for more than a year, might surely have been regarded as a very legitimate conquest. In addition to this, the establishment of Abkhasian independence would have been attended with far less difficulty than that of any province of Circassia. It had a Prince whose right was universally acknowledged, and whose close alliance with the Princess Dadianie of Mingrelia, his only neighbour, would have secured for both a peaceful frontier. Surrounded on all other sides by Circassians, nothing was to be feared from the depredations of the more lawless of his subjects upon any Russian province ; and it is therefore difficult to conceive how any inconvenience could have arisen from such a measure, while its advantages are apparent.

The population of the province is not above 50,000, and is yearly diminishing, owing partly to the constant war-

fare, and partly to the exportation of slaves. This latter traffic is carried on surreptitiously in spite of the Russian occupation of the seaboard. In fact, that blockade which prevents the ingress of civilised merchants and travellers, protects a traffic which owes its existence to the ignorant and degraded state of the population among whom it is carried on ; and firmans issued at Constantinople to forbid it will be utterly useless, so long as the light of civilisation is never allowed to shine into the dark mountains of the Caucasus.

In a word, the result of this war with respect to Abkhasia and Circassia has been to exclude the benighted populations of those countries from all chance of civilisation more completely than ever—to extinguish in their breasts any hope of their ultimate independence—to render inevitable the continuance of that traffic by which the women are now made the slaves of Turks, until that period arrives when the whole country is subdued, and both men and women will become the slaves of Russians.

METAMORPHOSES : A TALE.

PART III.

CHAPTER I.—RETROSPECT.

THE cat was let out of the bag in the last chapter, so we need not waste our time and energy in running after it. You learned, in a casual sentence, that Victor and Adrienne were about to meet ; and your quick sagacity at once divined that the fugitives had been recaptured. I scorn to vex a reader by keeping him in suspense over the details when he already foresees the denouement ; and I will at once hurry to that crisis in my story which the meeting of the prisoners with their judge necessarily brought about. Only while they are being marched back to the Cheval Blanc the opportunity may be seized of briefly sketching that part of Adrienne's story which must be known before her interview with Victor can be rightly appreciated.

We left her greatly indignant. His letter, so offensive in its tone, and rendered doubly offensive by the circumstances under which she read it, gave her anger an excuse, and for two or three weeks her thoughts were not kindly. But as the weeks passed, her anger abated. She heard him so frequently abused by her family that the naturally rebellious girl began secretly to take his part. Added to this, her conscience now began to tell her plainly that she had not been blameless : she acknowledged the fact that she had encouraged him, and was gratified by his homage. She remembered that the thought of his loving another had been very painful to her. Besides, what was more natural than that he should love her ? Was there