

ble. Seated on a mule, she contemplated with her eyes the country which the caravan traversed; sent forth at times a strong, admiring exclamation, ate with a good appetite, and slept soundly at each station. The Turks, who passed, stopped a moment before the great red lady with the calm eyes, habited always in light clothing, and regarded her with consideration. During the intervals of the journey she wrought at a marvellous piece of tapestry commenced at Tauris, and, inspired by the remembrance of the Persian stuffs, covered with birds and brilliant flowers.

II.

WHEN they approached Khinis they found the ground covered with snow. The winter had already burst over those high plateaux which, for six months, experience the cold of Siberia. It was necessary to hasten lest they should encounter a bad time in the mountains between Erzeroum and Trebizonde. The daily march was lengthened. They set out in the morning before the dawn, rested an hour at midday, and then marched till nightfall. The cold became very keen. A white carpet covered the plains, the mountains, and the frozen waters. Long stalactites were suspended from the cascades like to the crystal hair of a Naiad surprised by the winter. The vertical rocks, black in the midst of that immense whiteness, presented the appearance of funeral monuments. The crows perched on their summit, flapped their wings, and pursued with their hoarse cries those who feared not to trouble with their presence the silent mysteries of an Armenian winter.

The travellers, contracting the contagion of the sadness of surrounding nature, conversation became rare, and in the caravan one scarcely heard anything save the noise of the sword scabbard striking at equal times against the stirrup. Miss Blandemere alone preserved her serene and haughty gayety. She was charming under her Astrakan bonnet, with her hair falling in long curls upon the black fur of her pelisse. She rallied Tikraïne-Effendi about the discreet enthusiasm with which his country inspired him. You are no patriot said she to him. Why don't all you other Armenians come and establish yourselves in the subterranean huts of these villages in the middle of your national snows. One should have courage with his opinions.

About three in the afternoon the snow fell more thickly. They were traversing gorges, absolute desert,—the stopping place yet