

Agha is brave and resolute. The Chief of Mekkio, at the frontier of Persia, had taken from him, last spring, a troupe, with the shepherd, under the pretext that the sheep had fattened on the pasturages of the Khadarli which appertained to the Persian Kurds. The Agha said nothing at first, but about five days ago he departed dressed as a Turk, with a troop of four or five men only, fell suddenly on the people of Mekkio, broke many of their heads, and delivered his shepherd. He passed yesterday in this village returning with him.

Tikraïne discovered soon that the Chief of the Abdurrahmanli was, without doubt, the adroit marksman whom they had encountered four days ago. He imparted his observations to Stewart. Bah! said the Lieutenant, if they attack us we will defend ourselves. These Kurds are good marksmen, but they take a good half hour between each shot.

As to Miss Blandemere, the prospect which alarmed so much the Armenian did not affright her. The remembrance of the Kurdish cavalier was oftentimes present with her, and she was by no means averse to seeing him again. Besides he was not a vulgar brigand, and she had reason to think he would not do much harm to the caravan in which she travelled. She passed the night tranquilly, while her cousin was more unquiet than he wished to confess, not on his own account, but that of the women he had under his protection. Next day, before departing, he demanded of the *Mouktar* an escort of soldiers. He knew what value to place on the valour of these official protectors, but the size of the caravan would be too great for the Kurdish tribe to dare to bar the way.

For two days nothing occurred to justify the fears of Tikraïne-Effendi. The travellers encountered frequently long files of mules carrying merchandize in charge of their drivers, who seemed to travel in security. To the right and left were numerous groups of villages, inhabited by a miserable population, one half Armenian, the other Turkish. The poverty seemed inexplicable in the midst of a country of fertile pasturage and rich wheat lands. Tikraïne felt keenly the contrast. It was the first time he had travelled through Armenia, his paternal country. Born and brought up at Constantinople, he had come by the Caucasus to Tauris, where he made part of the International Commission, in which General Blandemere represented England. My unhappy country, said he, has been the battleground of the East since the commencement of