

up the broken stone into heaps of the requisite size they sometimes formed the centre of the heap with earth when the Russian overseer was not at hand to observe this imposition.

Once we met a large number of either prisoners or conscripts, some in chains, guarded by a company of Russian soldiers. On our left rose an extinct volcano of remarkable dome-like shape, crowned with snow and encircled by a number of lesser pinnacles, and on our right as we approached Erivan lay the splendid peak called Alagos (13,400 ft.), covered with snow. But these mountains were dwarfed by Mount Ararat (17,212 ft.), which lay immediately in front of us upon the farther side of the river Araxes; and soon we saw the city of Erivan lying below us in the dusk, down in the broad flat valley of the river, which lay stretched out, green and shining with the abundant moisture of irrigation as far as the base of the great volcano. The scene formed a remarkable contrast to the country through which we had passed since Lake Gotchka. Never was beheld a more magnificent scene. Afterwards we tired of the sight of Ararat day after day. Never was atmosphere so clear yet so full of colour. On one side the eye could pierce for full one hundred miles into Asia Minor, and on the other equally far into Persia, while behind and around us lay the fairest lands in Armenia. The bare earth took on it a tinge of crimson and mauve, while all the little depressions were filled with clear purple shadows, and wherever