

across our bows brought the Kaiserli and my dreams to a sudden and humiliating full stop. The authorities at Constantinople had omitted to telegraph our departure, and we were condemned to a night's delay in consequence. I cannot say I was surprised at this. Are we not in Turkey? As, moreover, I do not think our presence in Asia 12 hours sooner or later will have any appreciable influence on the result of the campaign, I accepted my fate in silence. Not so the Captain. This was the last straw, and I had for one long hour to listen to a terrible tale of official shortcomings. Our worthy skipper was, however, very particular that I should not consider his strictures as applied to the Turks as a nation. Gentle, brave, abstemious, and enduring—this was the character he gave the Turkish people after 32 years' experience of them. Perhaps the less I say of our first day at sea the better. Fact and fiction have described the Circassian under various influences; I leave the world to imagine him victimized by sea-sickness. Our glory of the day before had departed. It would be difficult to say which were the most effectually tied up, the patriots or their banners, while as to our gallant chief, a feather would have floored him. But night had a little excitement in store for us. The Captain was just complaining of being sent without an escort, and explaining to us how easy it would be for a fast vessel, temporarily fitted out as a war cruiser, to cut across from Sebastopol and cut us off, when a cry of "Sail ahead!" brought us all hurriedly on deck. On our port bow two dark masses loomed in the distance. We signaled vigorously, but apparently to no purpose, for, after hovering about for a few minutes, one of the vessels bore down on us at full speed. I think if it had been possible we should all have run away at that moment, but fortunately it was not so, and, after coming within hailing distance, the Turks, who had given us such a fright, wore off and disappeared in the night. We had not been run into, but had our captain lost his head we might have been; and why? Because the Turkish Admiralty, after working for the last two months at a code of night signals, have not yet succeeded in drawing one up. It is needless to note to what disasters such culpable negligence may lead should the Russians manage to get a few fast cruisers fitted out at Sebastopol or Odessa. The Turks may of course retain the complete command of the Black Sea till the end of the campaign; but torpedoes are like women—they will probably deceive you when you least suspect them.

But now for a word about our fellow-passengers. The Pasha is an athletic-looking man, verging on middle age. Red-bearded and hard-featured, one might take him for a Scot were it not for his costume. Among his suite, all of whom are soldierly-looking fellows, there are three or four members of influential Circassian families who until quite lately have been serving in the Imperial Guard at St. Petersburg. Their evidence is valuable on many points. It appears from what they have told me that the danger of a rising in the Caucasus was in no way ignored by the Russian authorities in laying out their plan of campaign—that many, indeed, owned to serious misgivings on the subject; but that, at the same time, a general opinion prevailed that the Turkish Government had neither the money nor the brains necessary to organize a successful revolution. Far be it from me to say that the War Office at Stamboul is playing into the hands of the Russians; but the authorities there are certainly doing their best to justify Muscovite predictions on the subject. It will scarcely be believed that, after every obstacle had been put in the way of Mehmed Pasha's departure, he was at length packed off with only 500 rifles, old pattern! When, too, it is remembered that the Circassian chiefs will, in the first place, have great difficulty in persuading their fellow-countrymen that Turkey will not, when making peace for herself, leave them in the lurch, this niggardliness in the matter of arms appears the more extraordinary. Of their brethren remaining in the Russian Army, those on board speak with pity rather than anger; they seem also convinced that the first victory gained over the Russians will insure the desertion of every Circassian in the Muscovite ranks. But if this Caucasian expedition is to be a success it must be taken in hand in a very different way. The Turkish Government must look upon the move as of vital importance and act accordingly. Those well acquainted with the country and the people look upon the occupation of Soukougoum-Kaleh as both hazardous and useless. Tiflis must be the objective point in all movements from this side, and it is not from Soukougoum-Kaleh, but over the highlands of Georgia, that Tiflis can be reached. To this end the country between Batoum and Ardahan must be held at all risks. This ground once fairly dominated by the Russians, anything in the Caucasus would necessarily be limited, and could only be considered as of secondary importance in weighing the chances of the campaign. It is but fair to say that individually the Sultan seems to have interested himself greatly in this expedition. He had no less than five interviews with Mehmed Pasha on the subject, and personally gave express orders that 5,000 rifles were to be placed at the Prince's disposal. But, unfortunately, in Turkey, though a Sultan proposes a Pasha disposes, and in this case the result will, I fear, be far more serious than the authorities at the Seraskeriat imagine. In addition to the Pasha's immediate suite, we have between 300 and 400 Circassian horsemen on board. They certainly do not come up to my idea of what cavalry ought to be, regular or irregular; no two men are dressed or armed alike, and few of their animals can stand over 14 hands. But the men are withal a workmanlike if ragged-looking lot, and perhaps for the work for which they are destined, their ponies are more suitable than larger and better-looking mounts.

But whatever may be the appearance of these irregulars, their keenness in the work before them is strikingly apparent—the more so, perhaps, as it is shown in strong relief against the depressed appearance of the Turkish officers on board, on their way to join their regiments in the front. These latter will, I have no doubt, do their duty when the danger arrives; but I feel very certain that they have no faith in the Mussulman's promised Heaven.

EN ROUTE FOR THE CAUCASUS.

AN OVERCROWDED STEAMER—THE CAPTAIN'S CRY OF DISTRESS—THE DANGER OF SAILING IN THE BLACK SEA—CIRCASSIANS ON THEIR WAY TO THE FRONT.

From our Special Correspondent.

OFF TREBIZOND, Sunday, June 3, 1877.

Measurement had evidently been considered superfluous in the allotment of troops to the steam-ship Kaiserli, even the presence of a staff officer had apparently been looked upon as equally unnecessary. In tailed the crowd, Circassians, negroes, and Bashi-Bazouks from every part of the empire. Boats, deck-house, bridge, every corner available or otherwise was rapidly crowded, and I have no doubt, if I could only manage to get there, that I should find the engine-room and coal-bunkers had been invaded also. But the fact remains, they are all on board, and all appear satisfied. Tommy Atkins might not consider space to squat at the heels of a vicious-looking pony liberal accommodation, but here I have only heard one man complain—a Circassian—who vowed that he had no room to pray. I generously gave him up my cabin, but I meanly watched the pious patriot. Our Captain is an Italian, whose resigned look under decidedly trying circumstances convinced me that 32 years spent in the Turkish service had to some extent impressed upon him the virtue of patience. Having had a good deal to do in my time with the transport of troops, I was curious to know how many men and horses they had managed to stow on board. Presently I met him, and in a sufficiently ridiculous position. He was adroitly creeping under the girths of one horse while I was attempting to scramble over the back of another. "God knows how many," he replied with a sickly smile to my question; "neither I nor anybody else ever will know." "Difficult work for the sailors," I added, by way of consolation. "Sailors!" he exclaimed, as he disappeared, "I have not got any sailors, and if anything goes wrong we shall all go to the bottom." I sincerely hope nothing will go wrong, as our commander hopes nothing will go wrong. At length we got under weigh, cheer after cheer greeting our progress as we threaded our way through the crowds of shipping in the Golden Horn. Ghazee Mehmed Pasha, the son of Schamyl, stood on the bridge, and justly proud may he have felt. Brave flags, on which a nation's history was written, floated over his head, while grouped around him were a number of grey-haired Circassian warriors, men who had fought under his father and whose pride and courage 20 years of exile had failed to bend. Watching the Prince and this brave gathering, knowing, too, the desperate mission on which they are bound, I almost made myself believe that chivalry was not quite a thing of the past. Where my imagination might have carried me I cannot say, for suddenly the boom of three cannon shots