

Teheran July 23d, 1891.

Dear Em:-

I have not yet written you and John a good square letter about my trip since I left Paris. When I reached Marseilles, the heat, the picturesque sails and shipping, the brilliant awning of the cafés and an occasional turbaned head bobbing about among the others on the quays, all told me that in my long journey from a cow ranch in the extreme West I was nearing the borders of the East. The voyage across the Mediterranean was as different from an Atlantic trip as possible. Only three or four passengers, the sea very calm; we only floated across the sea to Athens. Indeed the sea was so calm and the boat so slow it seemed as if some power of nature rather than steam floated us by the classic islands of Corsica Sardinia and Sicily. We saw, but at such a distance that it only looked like a purple cloud resting on the water, Capri, Garibaldi's home. Mamie was as usual better than anybody else ^{the} in world, and George was very kind. I spent a hot Sunday afternoon on the ~~XXXX~~ Acropolis and was delighted with myself to find that I had the taste to so keenly enjoy the beauties of the Parthenian. The dull gold color that time and weather have given to a good deal of the marble rather adds to it. I do not understand how Rusken can say that a Gothic cathedral equals its simple majestic beauty. I left Athens late one afternoon and in the morning found myself in the Dardenelles. If you can imagine the barren desert you went through going to Santa Barbara years ago with a stream of the blue

Mediterranean water about a mile ~~wide~~ and a half ^{through} broad, running [^] it with every few miles a Medieval fortress or castle built ^{by} the Genoese or Turks on one side, and the sight of ~~an~~ ancient Troy on the other, you can form a very good idea of it. As we started up the Bosphoros, from the Mosques and minarets of Constantinople, Seraglio, Point is on the right, and despite its interest and beauty, one still looks at it with a dull feeling of horror as the place where darker and more crimes have been committed than any other spot on earth. These straits are narrower than the Dardenelles; the banks lined with harems and palaces and the hills rolling back from its banks timbered with olives. The water clear, only nine miles long. We were soon out in the Black Sea and kept in sight of its south shore for five days; Mountainous and in the main splendidly wooded. The towns usually at the foot of some old castle, built when Genoa was the mistress of this part of the world, had the appearance of old towns on the Italian lakes with the added charm of the Mosques and the Minarets. If you go ashore at one of these little places in the evenings you can easily imagine yourself in some old foreign corner of the Apennines. At Kerasoon I went ashore before day ~~light~~ break, with an Englishman traveling with us, to see a famous Mosque, we were both thinking how much like Italy the place was when, in the uncertain light of breaking day, the illusion was dispelled by a long caravan of thirty two camels filing silently down the quiet street. It reminded us both of stories of our childhood. Trebezonde is built upon a steep high promontory and the hills near it. It is half surrounded by the sea, the houses with pink and blue walls and the streets about as good as ~~these~~

those of an old Italian town, some densely shaded with fine high trees. The plaza ~~is~~^{is} a fine square with rough but solid stone paving and full of trees and flowers, ancient, curious and slender bridges, span the deep ravines that separate the different parts of the town; the ravines themselves, lined with tremendously high old ivy-grown walls of granite and full of trees and flowers in their depths. The bazaars and streets have a gay appearance, caravans, fezs, different colored turbans, dervish-veiled women, Armenians and Greeks moving about in them. From any of the many summits you see acres of red-tiled roofs with trees, here and there a Minaret shooting up above them and always a view of the sea. On the highest point is a fine old castle built I believe by the Genosese and with a wall running from it that half encircles the town; a clear blue sky and a very hot sun shining down upon it all. It is the starting point of the great caravan route to the east.

"The Frosty Caucasus" was the hottest place I was ever in tho' parts very beautiful. Tiflis, the capital, surrounded with barren hills, the houses mostly of one story built of mud colored brick, a turbid river running through its centre and a fourth class European quarters, is nevertheless interesting from its mixture of races and as shown how Russia administers a conquered Asiatic people. Baku is a still wilder town. I was received at the Persian Ports of the Caspian with great ceremony, a battalion of soldiers drawn up on the wharf with a half dozen staff officers, covered with decorations, in front. Some fellow blew a horn as I walked ashore on the arm of ~~the~~ Minister Merza Alli Ackbar Khan (read this to John and Mother). At Resht, a few miles up the river the governor of

the province sent me a present of several plates of candy and a lamb, with word that he would receive me in the morning; so preceding many horses, Gheelams, guards etc. I was ushered through the outer wall into his highness presence. He was short and fat with a Turkish mustache and sat down Turkish fashion and hollowed for his water pipe. I could not help smiling in his face as the words of the old song Kafusalaam the rose in my mind: "In olden days there lived a Turk a horrid beast within the East, etc." We talked about America, we had sherbert then tea then candy and unripe walnuts then another kind of drink, he hit the pipe again, I rose, bowed and walked through a court beautifully tiled and full of strange flowers. His runners dressed in red with white stockings ran alongside my carriage for some distance. The next day we started inland on horse back through the most beautiful country I have ever seen. The famous forests of Chilan! The hills and mountains were so densely and completely covered with trees that it looked at a distance as if a heavy green velvet mantle had been thrown over them. In the little clearings in the valleys they grew the freshest and greenest rice grass, and with the thatched roofs of the silk farms seen through trees, many of which were new to us, we had views that pleased us more than the loveliest parts of Devonshire. That night we missed the Government ~~tax~~ post house, so tired out we made our beds in the court of an old tumbled down building. As I gradually went off to sleep the bells of a passing caravan and the strange cries of an Asiatic forest were mingled with thoughts of home.

The third day we passed through ^{immense} ~~immense~~ gorges of the Sofia Road, huge boulders and cliffs of Alpine grandure and Asiatic barrenness under a terrific sun. The next day we reached Kasvin one of the old capitals. From our window we ~~can~~ ^{could} see the dome of a famous mosque, it looks in the mid day sun like a gigantic turquoise and its facade a high immense surface of many colored tiles. The Governors garden here is many times the size of Lafayette Square, full of trees and flowers Kiosks and palaces. The inside of the dome of one struck us as being very beautiful; it was light blue with figures traced in white all through it, so finely done that it looked like lace. Directly under the dome was a large reservoir inlaid with blue tiles into which abundant water gushed from a dozen fountains. Dined there. Before dinner, sherbert, tea, water pipes, water ice, walnuts, pistache eau de vie. During ^{dinner} sad monotonous music, the wail of humanity, like most eastern music; old residents here say you get fond of it. From Kasbin to Tehrran is a long weary desert ~~stretch~~ with a few Kurdish nomads wandering over the trackless ^{wastes} ~~waters~~. We went into their camps once or twice for buttermilk which, in some mysterious way, they manage to keep cool in this intense heat. At ~~Kasbin~~ Teherran I was received with all the pomp and ceremony possible and a day appointed for a meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs. He sat solemn and silent at the end of a large hall; with a huge head and features, a great black beard dyed, red in place with henna and high persian bonnet, he looked like the Chinese Gods that I have seen in many a "Frisco" Josh house.

But tho' at a distance his face had all the fierceness of a tartar idol, As I got nearer I saw that it was really strong and kind. He gave me a hearty welcom and with the exception of being startled when he roared for his water pipe, I enjoyed the interview, and left impressed with his manliness and character.