would be possible to do so. After thinking for a little while, he replied that as we must necessarily be at the port of Mashhad-i-Sar by nightfall on the following day to be in time for the steamer, which was to leave early on Thursday morning, the only practicable plan was that he should, if possible, secure the services of a competent guide and two stout Mázandaráni ponies to convey me to the shrine and back to Bārfurūsh, and thence on, after a short rest, to Mashhad-i-Sar, whither he himself would proceed direct with the baggage. “All depends,” he concluded, “on my success in finding a guide. If I can find one, I will wake you betimes in the morning, for you must start early; if not, you must perforce relinquish the project.”

Next morning (Wednesday, 26th September) Háji Šafar awoke me at about 7 with the welcome intelligence that he had found a shopkeeper of Bārfurūsh, who owned two ponies, and was well acquainted with the road to Sheyḳh Ta'barsi, whither, for a consideration, he was willing to guide me. While I was drinking my morning tea the aforesaid guide, an honest-looking, burly fellow, appeared in person.

“Well,” he said, “I hear you want to visit Ta'barsi; what for is no concern of mine, though why a Fīrzanj should desire to go there baffles my understanding. However, I am ready to take you, if you will give me a suitable present for my trouble. But we must start at once, for it is two good parasangs there over the worst of ground, and you must, as I understand, get to Mashhad-i-Sar this evening, so that you should be back here at least two or three hours before sunset. If you don’t like fatigue and hard work you had better give up the idea. What do you say? Will you go or not?”

“Of course I will go,” I replied; “for what else did I seek you out?”

“Well said!” replied my guide, patting me on the shoulder; “then let us be off without delay.”

In a few minutes we were in the saddle, and moving rapidly along the high-road to Sāri on our sturdy, wiry little Mázandaráni ponies. “Whither away?” cried some of my guide’s acquaintance as we clattered out of the town. “Sheyḳh,” he replied laconically; whereat expressions of surprise and curiosity, which we did not stop to answer, would burst from our interrogators. Soon we left the high-road, and, striking across a broad, grassy common, entered trackless swamps and forests, in which my guide, well as he knew the country, was sometimes at fault; for the water lay deep on the rice-fields, and only the peasants whom we occasionally met could tell us whether or no a particular passage was possible. After crossing the swampy rice-fields, we came to thickets and woods, intersected by the narrowest and mudiest of paths, and overgrown with branches, through which we forced our arduous way. Thence, after fording a river with steep mud banks, we entered on pleasant open downs, and, traversing several small coppices, arrived about 10.30 a.m. at the lonely shrine of Sheyḳh Ahmad ibn Abī Ṭālib-i-Ta'barsi (so stands the name of the buried saint on a tablet inscribed with the form of words used for his “visitaton” which hangs suspended from the railings surrounding his tomb), rendered immemorial by the gallantry of the Bábí insurgents, who for nine months (October 1848 to July 1849) held it against overwhelming numbers of regulars and volunteers.

Sheyḳh Ta'barsi is a place of little natural strength; and of the elaborate fortifications, said by the Muslīm historians to have been constructed by the Bábís, no trace remains. It consists at present of a flat, grassy enclosure surrounded by a hedge, and containing, besides the buildings of the shrine and another building at the gateway (opposite to which, but outside the enclosure, stands the house of the mutawalli, or custodian of the shrine), nothing but two or three orange-trees and a few rude graves covered with flat stones, the last resting-places, perhaps, of some of the Bábí defenders. The building at the gateway is two storeys high, is traversed by the passage giving access to
the enclosure, and is roofed with tiles. The buildings of the shrine, which stand at the farther end of the enclosure, are rather more elaborate. Their greatest length (about twenty paces) lies east and west; their breadth is about ten paces; and, besides the covered portico at the entrance, they contain two rooms scantily lighted by wooden gratings over the doors. The tomb of the Sheykh, from whom the place takes its name, stands surrounded by wooden railings in the centre of the inner room, to which access is obtained either by a door communicating with the outer chamber, or by a door opening externally into the enclosure.

My guide, believing, no doubt, that I was at heart a Bābī, came to visit the graves of the martyrs of my religion, considerably withdrew to the mutawalli’s house and left me to my own devices for about three-quarters of an hour. I was still engaged in making rough plans and sketches of the place, however, when he returned to remind me that we could not afford to delay much longer. So, not very willingly, yet greatly comforted at having successfully accomplished this final pilgrimage, I mounted, and we rode back by the way we had come to Bārfurūsh, where we arrived about 3 p.m. “You are a Ḥājī now,” said my guide laughingly, as we drew near the town, “and you ought to reward me liberally for this day’s work; for I tell you that there are hundreds of Bābīs who come here to visit Sheykh Ṭābarsī and can find no one to guide them thither, and these would almost give their ears to go wherever you have gone and see what you have seen.” So when we alighted at a caravansaray near his house I gave him a sum of money with which he appeared well content, and he, in return, set tea before me, and then came and sat with me a while, telling me, with some amusement, of the wonderings and speculations which my visit to Sheykh Ṭābarsī had provoked amongst the townsfolk. “Some

1 These will be found in my translation of the New History, published by the Cambridge University Press.
worn clothes, and further entrusted to him my revolver, which he was to give to one of my friends in Teheran as a keepsake, together with several letters. This done, I retired to rest and slept soundly.

Next morning (Thursday, 27th September) Haji Safar woke me early, telling me that the steamer was in sight. This proved to be a false alarm, and when I went to the Russian agents (who had an office in the caravanserai) they declined to give me my ticket until the steamer actually appeared. These two agents either were, or feigned to be, excessively stupid; they affected not to understand either Persian or French, and refused to take payment for the ticket in anything but Russian money, so that it was fortunate that I had in Teheran provided myself with a certain quantity of roubles notes. Finally the steamer hove in sight, the ticket was bought for twenty-five roubles, and I hastened down to the shore of the estuary, where several large clumsy boats were preparing to put off to her.

It was with genuine regret that I turned for a moment before stepping into the boat to bid farewell to Persia (which, notwithstanding all her faults, I had come to love very dearly) and the faithful and efficient Haji Safar. He had served me well, and to his intelligence and enterprise I owed much. He was not perfect —what man is?—but if ever it be my lot to visit these lands again, I would wish no better than to secure the services of him, or one like him. I slipped into his hands a bag of money which I had reserved for a parting present, and with a few brief words of farewell, stepped into the boat, which at once cast off from the shore, and, hoisting a sail, stood out towards the Russian steamer. The sea grew rougher as we left the shelter of the estuary, but with the sail we advanced quickly, and about 8.15 a.m. I climbed on board the Emperor Alexander, and, for the first time for many months, felt myself, with a sudden sense of loneliness, a stranger in the midst of strangers.

The only passengers who embarked besides myself were two or three Persians bound for Mashhad, and with these I conversed fitfully (knowing not when next I might find chance of speech in an intelligible tongue) till we entered the vessel, when they took up their station forward as deck passengers, and I descended to the cabin. At 9 the steamer had turned about (for Mashhad-i-Sar is the end of this line) and was running eastwards for Bandar-i-Gaz, the port of Astarabad.

About 10.30 a bell announced breakfast, and I again descended to the cabin. I was the only cabin passenger, and on entering the saloon I was surprised to see two tables laid. At one were seated the officers of the vessel (three or four in number), busily engaged in the consumption of sardines, caviare, cheese, roasted potatoes, and the like, which they were washing down with nips of vodka, a strong spirit, resembling the Persian arak. The other table was laid with plates, but the places were vacant. Wondering whether the officers were too proud to sit down at the same table with the passengers, I stood hesitating, observing which, one of the officers called out to me in English, asking me whether I felt sick. I indignantly repudiated the imputation, whereupon he bade me join them at their “Zakuski.” So I sat down with them; and, after doing justice to the caviare and cheese, we moved on to the other table and had a substantial déjeuner. At 6.30 in the evening we had another similar meal, also preceded by Zakuski.

At 4 p.m. we reached Bandar-i-Gaz, the port of Astarabad, and anchored close to the shore, by a wooden barge serving as a pier, in full view of the little island of Ashurada. This now belongs to the Russians (who first occupied it on the pretext of checking the Turcoman pirates who formerly infested this corner of the Caspian, and then declined to give it back to the Persians), and around it several Russian war-ships were anchored. Some of their officers came on board our steamer, and later in the evening rockets were sent up from them in honour, as I suppose, of the Russian Ambassador, who, so far
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as I could learn (for everyone was very reticent and uncompanionable), was in the neighbourhood.

I went to sleep that night with the sweet scent of the forests of Māzandarān in my nostrils (for the wind was off the shore); but when I went on deck next morning (Friday, 28th September) not a tree was in sight, but only a long line of yellow sand-dunes, which marked the inhospitable Turcoman coast, whence in bygone days, ere the Russians stepped in and put a stop to their marauding, the Turcoman pirates issued forth to harry the fertile Persian lands, and bear back with them, to hateful bondage, hosts of unfortunate captives destined for sale in the slave-markets of Samarkand and Bukhārā. At about mid-day we anchored off Chekishlar, where a number of Russian officers, two ladies, and a child, came on board to breakfast on the steamer. Immediately after breakfast we again stood out to sea.

That evening an official of the Russian police (who, I suppose, had come on board at Chekishlar) came up to me with one of the officers of the boat and demanded my passport, which, he said, would be returned to me at the Custom-House at Baku. I was very loth to part with it, but there was no help for it; and, inwardly chafing, I surrendered to him the precious document.

Early next morning (Saturday, 29th September) I awoke to find the vessel steaming along between a double row of sand-dunes towards Uzün-Ada ("Long-Island"), the point whence the Russian railway to Bukhārā and Samarkand takes its departure. Passing the narrows, we anchored alongside the quay about 8.30 a.m. Being without my passport (which had probably been taken from me expressly to prevent me from leaving the steamer) I could not, even if I would, have gone on shore. But indeed there was little to tempt me, for a more unattractive spot I have seldom seen. It seemed to consist almost entirely of railway-stations, barracks, police-stations, and custom-houses, set in wastes of sand, infinite and immeasurable, and the Turcoman seemed to bear but a small proportion to the Russian inhabitants.

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A number of passengers came on board here, all of whom, save one lady and three children, were Russian officers. The deck, too, was crowded with soldiers, who, after dinner, at a sign from their officer, burst out into a song with a chorus like the howling of wolves, which, I supposed, was intended for a national anthem. On retiring to my cabin I found to my disgust that my berth had been appropriated by a Russian officer, who had ejected my possessions and now lay there snoring hideously. I was angered at his discourtesy, but deemed it wiser to make no remonstrance. From my short experience of Russian travelling I should suppose that their military men make a point of occupying places already taken in preference to such as are vacant—at any rate, when the occupant is a civilian and a foreigner.

I awoke about 6.30 a.m. on the following morning (Sunday, 30th September) to find myself at Baku (or Bādkūbē, as it is called by the Persians). Somehow or other I escaped the ordeal of the Custom-House; for, intending at first to breakfast on board, I did not disembark with the other passengers, and when afterwards, changing my mind, I went on shore, about 9.30 a.m., the pier was free of excisemen, and I had nothing to do but step into a cab and drive to the station, stopping on the way at a Persian money-changer's to convert the remainder of my Persian money into rouble notes.

The train did not start till 2.37 p.m., so I had some time to wait at the station, where I had lunch. The porters were inefficient and uncivil, the train crowded, and the scenery monotonous in the extreme, so that my long railway journey began under rather depressing auspices. Still there was a certain novelty in finding myself once more in a train, and after a while I was cheered by the entrance into my compartment of two Musulmans of the Caucasus. With these I entered into conversation in Turkish, for which I presently substituted Persian on finding that one of them was familiar with that language. But I had hardly spoken ten words when a Russian officer, who sat next me on the right, and
with whom I had had a slight altercation in French about one of my portmanteaux, which he alleged to be insecurely balanced in the rack, leaned forward with an appearance of interest, and then addressed me in perfectly idiomatic Persian. I discovered that he had been born in Persia (near Bursíjed, I think), and had learned Persian almost as his native language. To both of us, I think, but to myself certainly, it was a pleasure to speak it, and we became quite friendly.

I had intended to stay a day at Tiflis, where we arrived at 8.15 next morning (Monday, 1st October), but the friendly officer told me that the steamers for Odessa left Batoum on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and that, after cities more truly Oriental in character, Tiflis would offer but little attraction to me, so I determined to continue my journey without halt, in order to catch the morrow’s boat. I had some difficulty in getting my ticket and finding my train, as no one seemed to talk anything but Russian, but at last I succeeded, though only after a waste of time which prevented me from making more than the most unsubstantial and desultory breakfast. This, however, was of little consequence, for I never knew any railway on which there were such frequent and prolonged stoppages for refreshment, or any refreshment-rooms so well provided and so well managed. The fact that there is only one train a day each way no doubt makes it easier to have all these savoury dishes and steaming samovars (tea-urns) ready for passengers on their arrival, but at no railway station in Europe have I seen food at once so cheap, so good, and so well served as in the stations of the Trans-Caucasian line.

The scenery on leaving Tiflis was fine, and at one point we caught a glimpse of splendid snow-capped mountains to the north; but on the whole I was disappointed, for the line lies so much in narrow valleys which bar the outlook that little is to be seen of the great Caucasian range. What could be seen of the country from the train was pretty rather than grand, and I was not sorry to reach Batoum at about 11.15 p.m., where I put up at the Hôtel de France, and, for the first time since leaving Tehran eleven days previously, enjoyed the luxury of sleeping between sheets.

As the steamer for Odessa was not to leave Batoum till 3.30 p.m. on the following day (Tuesday, 2nd October), I had all the morning to look about me, but the town presented few features of interest, and the only thing that aroused my wonder was the completely European character assumed by a place which had only ceased to be Turkish twelve years before. I was very glad to embark on the steamer, which actually started about 4 p.m. Dinner was at 6, and afterwards I stayed on deck till after 11, when we arrived at Sukhoun-Kala.

Next evening (Wednesday, 3rd October) we reached Novorassayask about 5 p.m., and lay there till late at night. There were several war-vessels in the fine harbour, which continued throughout the evening to send up rockets and flash the electric light from point to point.

Early on the morning of Thursday, 4th October, we reached Kerch, where, amongst other passengers, a very loquacious American came on board. He had been spending some time amongst the Russians, whom he did not much like or admire, though, as he told me, he believed them to be the coming nation.

Friday, 5th October.—Reached Yalta about 5 a.m., and lay there till 8. It is a very beautiful place, and I was told that the drive thence to Sebastopol along the coast traverses scenery so fair that it has been called "the Earthly Paradise." At 1.30 p.m. we reached Sebastopol, where the American left the steamer. The harbour struck me as very fine, but I, ignorant of things military, should never have guessed that the place would be a position of such remarkable strength.

On the following morning (Saturday, 6th October) we reached Odessa before 7 a.m. There was no Customs' examination, as we came from a Russian port, and I drove straight to the Hôtel d'Europe, thinking that my troubles were over, and that from
this point onwards all would be plain sailing. Here, however, I was greatly out of my reckoning, as will shortly appear; for while I was visiting an English ship-owner, to whom I had a letter of introduction, he enquired whether I had had my passport 

*visé* for departure from Russia. I replied that I had not, as I was unaware that it was necessary. "Then," said he, "you had best get it done at once if you wish to leave this evening; give it to me, and I will send a man with it to your hotel that your landlord may see to it." I did so, and sat chatting there for another quarter of an hour, when we were interrupted by a telephonic message informing me that my presence was necessary.

The landlord met me at the hotel door. "I am afraid you will not be able to get your visa to-day," said he, "for it is past noon, and if the police grant it, it will only be as an act of grace. Your only chance is to take a cab, drive direct to the police-station, and request the prefect as a favour to visa your passport, explaining to him that you have just arrived and wish to start to-night."

Fruitless errand, to seek such grace from the Russian police! Whether I offended them by omitting to remove my hat on entering the office I know not; probably this had something to do with it, for a man cried out at me in anger through a pigeon-hole, and was only quieted when I uncovered my head. Then it was some time before I could find anyone who spoke anything but Russian; but at last I was shown into an inner room where two men sat at a table, one portly, irascible, and clad in uniform; the other thin, white-haired, smooth-shaven, and sinister of countenance. I presented my passport, and explained in French the reasons which had prevented me from coming sooner, adding that I should feel deeply obliged if they would grant me the visa. The wizen-faced man answered in a high peevish voice in very bad French that I must come to-morrow.

"I cannot come to-morrow," I replied, "for I must leave to-night."
apprehending my departure, should telegraph to the frontier stations not to let me pass.

“Well,” said I, “the practical point is this, would you advise me to take this evening’s train or not?”

“I hardly like to advise you,” replied my friend, “but if I were in your place I should go and risk it.”

“In that case,” I rejoined, after a moment’s reflection, “I will go.”

I had some difficulty with the hotel-keeper ere he would consent to my departure, but at length, to my great relief, I found myself, with a ticket for Berlin in my pocket, ensconced in a compartment of the 7.40 p.m. train for the West. A pleasant and kindly Austrian who was returning to Vienna, and who would therefore bear me company as far as Oswiecim, was my fellow-traveller. He spoke English well, and gave me much seasonable help both at the Russian and the Austrian frontiers.

It was an anxious moment for me when, about 9 a.m. on the following day (Sunday, 7th October), the train steamed into the Russian frontier station of Woloczyska, and we were bidden to alight for the inspection of passports. A peremptory official collected these and disappeared with them into an office, while we waited anxiously outside. Presently he appeared with a handful of them and began to call out the names of the possessors, each of whom, as his name was called, stepped forward and claimed his passport. I waited anxiously, for mine was not there. The official retired to his office and again emerged with another sheaf of papers, and still I waited in vain, till all but one or two of the passports had been returned to their owners. “Haven’t you got your passport yet?” enquired the kindly Austrian. “The train is just going to start.” “I don’t know what has become of it,” I answered despairingly, making sure that my detention had been resolved upon. Thereupon he stepped forward and addressed the official, who in reply produced two or three passports, amongst which I recognised my own. I was very near trying to snatch it out of his hand, but luckily I restrained myself. “That is mine,” I exclaimed. The Austrian translated what I had said to the official, who, after staring at me for a moment, threw the precious document to me. “He was surprised,” said the Austrian, “to see so vast a collection of strange visas and inscriptions on the papers of a young man like you.”

So much time had been consumed thus that I had to forgo all hope of breakfast, and thought myself fortunate in finding a few moments to change my Russian into Austrian money. Then I re-entered the train, and indescribable was my satisfaction when we steamed out of the station and left Russia behind us. The people, I doubt not, are honest and kindly folk, but the system of police supervision and constant restraint which prevails is, to an Englishman unused to such interference, well-nigh intolerable. I had suffered more annoyance during the few days of my passage through Russian territory than during all the rest of my journey.

Not yet, however, were my troubles over. Five minutes after leaving Woloczyska the train pulls up at the Austrian frontier station of Podwołoczyska for the Austrian Customs’ examination. As it began to slacken speed, my Austrian friend asked me whether I anticipated any trouble there. I answered in the negative.

“What, for instance,” said he, “have you in that wooden box?”

The box in question contained a handsome silver coffee-service of Persian workmanship, which a Persian gentleman, to whom I was under great obligations, had asked me to convey for him to one of his friends in England. I told my Austrian fellow-traveller this, whereupon he exclaimed:

“A silver coffee-service! You will have trouble enough with it, or I am much mistaken. Why, do you not know that the Custom-House regulations in Austria as to the importation of silver are most stringent? You will be lucky if they do not confiscate it and melt it down.”
I was greatly disquieted at this information, for I felt myself bound in honour to convey the silver entrusted to me safely to its destination; and I asked my companion what I had best do.

"Well," he said, "you must declare it at once on your arrival, and demand to have it sealed up for transmission to the Prussian frontier station of Oswiecim. I will give you what help I can."

I had another bad time at Podwoloczycka, but at length, thanks to the good offices of my fellow-traveller, the box containing the silver was sealed up with leaden seals and registered through to Oswiecim. All my luggage was subjected to an exhaustive examination, and everything of which the use was not perfectly apparent (such as my medicine chest and the Wolseley valise), was placed in the contraband parcel, for which I had to pay a considerable additional sum for registration. All this took time, and here, too, I had to abandon all idea of breakfast. By the time we reached Lemberg, at about 2 p.m., I was extremely hungry, having had practically nothing to eat since leaving Odessa on the previous evening; and I was glad to secure a luncheon-basket, the contents of which I had plenty of time to consume ere we reached the next station, where it was removed.

My original intention was to stay the night at Cracow, as I found that I should gain nothing by pushing on to Oswiecim, but now, seeing that the bundle containing the silver entrusted to my care must go through to the frontier, and anticipating further troubles at the Prussian Custom-House, I changed my plan, and, on arriving at Cracow, alighted from the train, re-claimed that portion of my luggage registered from Odessa, and re-registered it to Oswiecim, the Prussian frontier station and the point where the Vienna and Berlin lines diverge. I had just time to effect this ere the train started again.

At 11.30 on the night of this miserable day the train stopped at Oswiecim, and I emerged into the black wet night, the cheerlessness of which was revealed rather than mitigated by a few feeble oil lamps. With some difficulty I found a porter (for the place seemed wrapped in slumber), who, making me leave all my luggage in a locked room to await the Customs' examination on the morrow, and suffering me to retain only my greatcoat, led me through a perfect sea of mud to the miserable hotel opposite the station. There was a light in one of the windows, but, though we knocked vigorously for some time, no one came. At last the door was opened, on a chain, by a most ill-looking fellow, clad in a night-shirt and trousers, with a beard of two days' growth on his ugly chin. So little did I like his looks that I did not press for admission, which he on his part showed no inclination to grant me. So I returned to the empty waiting-room of the station, with its dimly-lighted, beery, smoke-laden atmosphere, thinking that after all I should not be much worse off sleeping on the wooden bench which ran round the walls, than in some of the Turkish stables and Mázandarání hovels to which I had become inured in the course of my travels.

I do not think that the porter who accompanied me spoke German very fluently, and, as I could hardly speak it at all, communication was difficult. Tired out, wet, and discouraged, I was anxious to throw myself on the bench and forget my troubles in sleep. Yet still the porter stood by me, striving, as I supposed, to express his regret at my being compelled to pass so uncomfortable a night. So I roused myself, and, as well as I could, told him that it was really of no consequence, since I had passed many a good night in quarters no more luxurious. "This will do very well till the morning," I concluded, as I again threw myself down on the bench, thinking of that favourite aphorism of the Persians under such circumstances as those in which I found myself, "Akhir yak shab-ast, na hazár" ("After all, it is for one night, not a thousand").

"It might do very well," explained the porter, "if you could stop here, but you cannot. We are going to shut up the station."

I again sprang to my feet. "I can't spend the night walking
about in the rain,” I remonstrated, “and you see that the hotel
will not admit me. Where am I to go?”

“Ay, that’s just the question,” retorted he.

We again emerged on to the platform, and my porter took
conducted with some other station officials; but from the way they
shook their heads and shrugged their shoulders I inferred that
my chances of being allowed to remain there were but small.
Finally, a gendarme with a gun and bayonet appeared, and I was
invited to follow him, which I did apathetically, without the
least idea as to whither we were bound.

Tramping after my guide through dark muddy lanes, I pre-
sently found myself at the door of a house, where the gendarme
bade me wait a minute while he entered. Presently, after
much wrangling in Polish, he again emerged, and beckoned to
me to follow him. We passed through an outer bedroom where
several persons were sleeping, and entered a smaller inner room
containing two beds, occupied by the owner of the house and
his son. Between the former and my guide a further altercation
ensued, and it seemed as though here also I was to find no rest.
At last the owner of the house got out of bed, led me to a sort
of window looking into an adjacent room which I had not
hitherto noticed, and, pointing to a mass of human beings
(vagrants, I suppose) sleeping huddled together on the floor,
remarked that it was “pretty full in there.”

I stepped back in consternation. “Well,” continued he, “will
you stay?”

“I must stay somewhere,” I replied; “I am not allowed to
stop in the railway station, I can’t get into the hotel, and you can
hardly expect me to spend the night out doors in the rain.”

“Well, you can sleep on that bench,” said he, pointing to one
which stood by the wall. I signified assent, and, as the gendarme
prepared to depart, I offered him a small silver coin which looked
like a sixpence. The effect was most happy. It had never occurred
to me that these people would suppose me to be absolutely
impecunious, but I fancy that this was the case, and that I did
not sufficiently realise how shabby my appearance was in the
old travel-stained clothes which I wore. At all events, the pro-
duction of this little piece of silver acted like magic. My host,
after asking the gendarme to let him look at it, turned to me
with a marked increase of courtesy, and asked me whether I
would like a bolster laid on the bench and some blankets where-
with to cover myself. I replied that I should, and ventured to
suggest that if he had any bread in the house I should be glad
of some, as I was ravenously hungry. “Cheese?” he enquired.
I eagerly assented, and further asked for water, instead of which
he brought me milk. I made a hearty meal, while his little son,
who had been awakened by the noise, sat up and began to
question me in bad French, which, as it appeared, he was learning
at school.

Altogether I fared much better than I had expected, and, had
it not been that my socks and boots were wet through, I should
have been sufficiently comfortable. In the morning they gave
me breakfast, made me inscribe my name in a book kept for that
purpose, were delighted to find that I had a passport, and thank-
fully received the few shillings I gave them. Then the porter of
the previous night returned to conduct me to the railway
station, and I bade farewell to my entertainers, not knowing to
this day whether or no I had passed that night under the sheltering
roof of a Polish casual-ward.

By reaching the station an hour before the departure of the
train (which started from Cracow, where I had intended to spend
the previous night), I hoped to get my luggage cleared at the
Custom-House, and the silver plate sealed up again for trans-
mission through Germany in good time. Here again I was
foiled, however, for I found that the Custom-House officers
did not put in appearance till the arrival of the train. When they
did come they were intelligent and courteous enough, but very
rigorous in their examination of my luggage. About my opium-
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pipe, the nature of which (greatly to their credit, I thought) they at once recognised, they were especially curious. Then they must see the silver coffee-service, at the beauty of which they uttered guttural ejaculations of admiration. But when it came to the question of sealing it up again for transmission to the Dutch frontier, they declared that there was not sufficient time before the departure of the train, and that I should have to wait till the next, which did not start till the afternoon or evening.

I was so heartily sick of Oswiecim, and so eager to get to the end of my journey, that I could not face the prospect of further delay, especially as I had every reason to expect that I should have another similar experience at the Dutch frontier; so I enquired whether it would not be possible to have the package forwarded after me to England. They replied that it would, and introduced to me an honest-looking man, named Arnold Haber, who, they said, was an agent for the transmission of goods. To him, therefore, I confided the care of my precious but troublesome little box, which duly reached me some days after my return to Cambridge, with a heavy charge for duty from the Dover Custom-House.

It was with unalloyed satisfaction that I took my seat in the train, and, about 10 a.m., left Oswiecim behind me. At 2 p.m. I reached Breslau, where I had just time for a hasty meal, and at 10 p.m. I was at Berlin, just in time to see the Flushing night-mail, which I had hoped to catch, steam out of the station. So here I had to spend the night at a homely comfortable hotel, called the Berliner Hof, the luxuries of which a remembrance of my last night's discomfort enabled me to appreciate to the full.

Next morning (Tuesday, 9th October) I left Berlin at 7.45 a.m. for Flushing, and twenty-four hours later, without further adventure, landed once more in England. By half-past nine on the morning of that day (Wednesday, 10th October) I was at King's Cross, debating in my mind whether I should go straight to the North, or whether I ought first to visit Cambridge (where

term had just begun) to report my arrival, and request a week's leave to visit my home. This indecision, however, was of brief duration, for my eagerness to see my home again would brook no delay, and increased nearness did but beget greater impatience. There are, I suppose, few pleasures in this world comparable to the return to a home one loves after a long absence abroad; and the realisation of this pleasure I could not bring myself to postpone for a moment longer than necessary.

Thus ended a journey to which, though fraught with fatigues and discomforts, and not wholly free from occasional vexations, I look back with almost unmixed satisfaction. For such fatigues and discomforts (and they were far fewer than might reasonably have been expected) I was amply compensated by an enlarged knowledge and experience, and a rich store of pleasant memories, which would have been cheaply purchased even at a higher price. For without toil and fatigue can nothing be accomplished, even as an Arab poet has said:—

"Wa man ṭalahib l-ʿulūd min ṣāḥabār kaddūb
Aṭṭaʿal l-ṣumra fi ṭalahib l-ṣuḥūl."

"And he who hopes to scale the heights without enduring pain,
And toil and strife, but wastes his life in idle quest and vain."