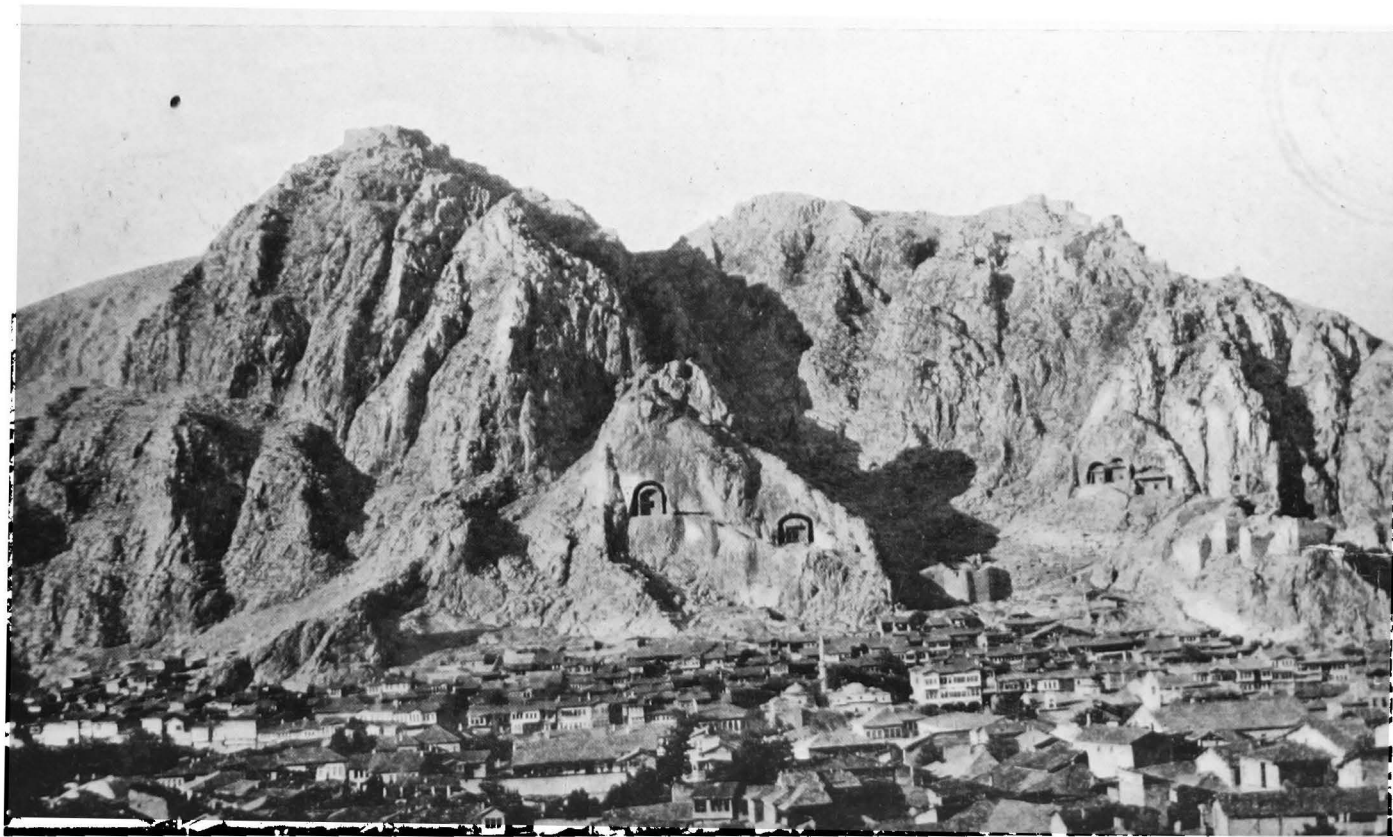


Across Asia Minor on Foot



Western Precipices, and "Tombs of the Kings," Amasia. Castle on skyline (right).

Across
Asia Minor on Foot

BY

W. J. CHILDS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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P R E F A C E.

THE journey described in this volume extended altogether to about 1300 miles on foot, and occupied five months; and the days spent in actual travel upon the road were fifty-four.

Asia Minor has been traversed from end to end, and sea to sea, by many Europeans in the past; American missionaries, too, not only men, but unattended women, go freely about the country as a matter of course, and often cover long distances. There must be, indeed, many worse regions for journeying in than Turkey-in-Asia.

But all these travellers have gone by *araba* or ridden on horseback, and, when possible, have been glad enough to use train, and bicycle, and even motor-car. None of them, I think, has ever attempted to go in the peasant manner, to follow road or track afoot, to sleep in the poorest *khans* or wherever shelter could be found, and to mix by day and night with the varied and doubtful pedestrian company of an Eastern highway.

To see something of Asia Minor in this more intimate fashion, accompanied only by a Turk, was the purpose of the journey now to be described. Only in the quality of adventure did realisation fall short of what might have been expected. Brigandage and robbery, fighting between troops and deserters, murder and forcible abductions—affairs of this kind took place before and behind me, but I missed them.

ever, sometimes by days, sometimes only by hours, and moved always, it seemed, in the peaceful intervals between storms.

For this reason no bloodshedding, no hair-breadth escapes will be found in the narrative; instead is a record of lesser excitements, of wayside sights and incidents, and allusions to such scenes of legends, traditions, and historical events as my road brought me to in a land crowded with ancient memories.

To the sustained enjoyment and satisfaction that the journey afforded me, nearly every one I met contributed. No unknown traveller ever had greater good-fortune in this respect, no traveller of note greater opportunities for seeing and learning. Americans of the Missions, Consuls of my own country, and, I may add—for I travelled in days before the war—German officials and missionaries, all received me with exceeding kindness and hospitality. To them all I offer my thanks.

Nor did I receive less from the native inhabitants, from whom, perhaps, much less might have been expected. Turks, Circassians, Greeks, Armenians, and Lazis—all except the disappointed few whose commercial instincts had prompted them to recognise me as a Cræsus in disguise—showed nothing but courtesy and goodwill.

Of the treatment I received from Turkish officials as a class let these facts speak. It was the time of the Italian war; vilayets, in which I spent months, were under martial law; and Italian subjects were being expelled. Yet I went free and almost unquestioned, a mysterious foreigner wandering about the country, visiting disturbed districts where the authorities were then encountering armed resistance, disappearing for a week, and reappearing a hundred miles away, photographing, taking notes, and always examining roads and bridges. To the patriotic official eye, one would think there hardly could have been a more fitting, inquisitive alien figure, hardly a more

likely enemy agent. And yet, except once at the outset of the journey, no official or *zaptieh*, though I saw many, ever caused me more than a few minutes' delay, and then always apologised handsomely for doing so.

Of course a sufficient reason existed for all this politeness and goodwill and confidence—and that was nothing less than the repute of the English name. The fact of being English was ever the most universal and respected recommendation I could possess. Turk and Greek and Armenian might hate each other to the death, but each regarded England as the friend of his race. I do not think that anywhere, even in the most remote villages, I ever met a peasant to whom the name "*Ingleez*" was unfamiliar, or did not stand for a more or less friendly figure, vague and uncertain no doubt, but carrying definite prestige.

"Nothing will ever be well with this country till the English take it," was the remark made, not long since, by a dervish sheikh in Anatolia to an American visitor. Although this opinion must not be thought to indicate any general similar desire of the Moslem population, it illustrates well enough how the English were regarded, and how an inquiring English traveller came to be received with friendly confidence even in time of war.

It may be wondered why so few photographs of Aleppo, and none of Alexandretta and district, are included in the book. I took many, on films purchased in the wonderful bazaars of Aleppo; and though by outward date the films were not over age, yet each gave a blank on being developed.

I cannot conclude without acknowledging the help I found throughout the journey in 'Murray's Handbook for Travellers in Asia Minor.' No one who has not had occasion to study 'Murray's' closely can have any idea of how diverse and accurate is the information it contains upon a country where exact information is exceedingly difficult to obtain. Within the

limits of my experience I found no error in this invaluable book.

With one exception, the photographs which follow were taken by myself. For that one, the view of Kaisariyeh and Mount Argaeus, facing page 198, I have to thank Dr Alden Hoover of the American Hospital at Talas.

W. J. C.

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