Michael Strogoff,

THE COURIER OF THE CZAR.

By Jules Verne.

CHAPTER I.

· Sire, a fresh despatch."

" Whence ?" c. From Tomsk." "Is the wire cut beyond that city?"

"Yes, sire, since yesterday." "Telegraph hourly to Tomsk, General, and let me be kept du courant of all that occurs." "Sire, it shall be done," answered General Kissoff.

These words were exchanged about two hours after midnight, at the moment when the fete given at the New Palace was at the

height of its splendour. During the whole evening the bands of the Preobrajensky and Paulowsky regiments had played without cessation polkas, mazurkas, schottisches, and waltzes from among the choicest of their repertories. Innumerable couples of dancers whirled through the magnificent saloons of the palace, which stood at a few paces only from the "old house of stones" in former days the scene of so many terrible dramas, and the echoes of whose walls were musicians.

The grand-chamberlain of the court was, besides, well seconded in his arduous and delicate duties. The grand-dukes and their sides-de-camp, the chamberlains-in-waiting and other officers of the palace, presided personally in the arrangement of the dances. The grand-duchesses, covered with diamonds, costumes, set the example to the wives of the signal for the "polonaise" resounded through the saloons, and the guests of all ranks took part in that measured promenade, which on occasions of this kind has all the importance of a national dance, the mingled costumes, the sweeping robes adorned with lace, and scene of dazzling and indescribable splendor, lighted by hundreds of lusters multiplied teafold by reflection in the numerous mirrors adorning the walls. The grand saloon, the finest of all those contained in the New Palace, formed to this procession of exalted personages and splendidly-dressed women a frame worthy of the magnificence they displayed. The rich the touch of time, appeared as if glittering curtains and doors, falling in gorgeous folds, assumed rich and varied hues, broken by the shadows of the heavy masses of damask.

Through the panes of the vast semi-circular bay-windows the light with which the ing his thoughts, whereas his interlocutor saloons were filled shone forth with the brilliancy of a confiagration, vividly illuminating the gloom in which for some hours the palace had been shrouded. The attention of those of the guests not taking part in the dancing was attracted by the contrast. Resting in the recesses of the windows, they could discern, standing out dimly in the darkness, the vague outlines of the countless towers, domes, and spires which adorn the ancient city. Below the sculptured balconies were visible numerous sentrics pacing silently up and down, their rifles carried horizontally on the shoulder, and the spikes of their helmets glittering like flames in the glare of light issuing from the palace. The steps, also, of the patrol could le heard beating time on the stones beneath with even more regularity the feet of the dancers one the floor of the saloon. From time to time the watchword was passed from post to post mingling with the strain of the orchestra, Still further penetrated into scured the rays of light which proceeded from the windows of the New Palace. These were boats descending the course of a river whose light of a few lamps, washed the lower por-

tion of the terraces. The principal personage who has been mentioned, the giver of the fete, and to whom tone of respect with which sovereigns alone of an officer of Chasseurs of the Guard. This was not affectation on his part, but the custom of a man who cared little for dress, his contrasting strongly with the gorgeous costumes of Georgians, Cossacks, and Circassians—a

This personage of lofty stature, affable demeanor, and physiognomy calm, though bearing traces of anxiety, moved from group to group, seldom speaking, and appearing to pay but little attention either to the merriment of the exalted dignitaries or members of the diplomatic corps who represented at the Russian Court the principal Governments of Europe. Two or three of these astute politicians-physiognomists by virtue of their pro- | tion of their readers. fession-failed not to detect on the counterance of their host symptoms of disquietude, the source of which eluded their penetration; but mone ventured to interrogate him on the sub-

It was evidently the intention of the officer no way cast a shade over the festivities; and, as he was one of those few personages whom almost the population of a world in itself was to obey, the gaiety of the dall was not for a moment checked. Nevertheless, General Kisseff waited until the officer to whom he had just communicated the dispatch forwarded from Tomsk should give him permission to withdraw; but the latter still remained silent. He had taken the telegram, he had read it carefully, and his visage became even more clouded than before. Involuntarily he sought the hilt of his sword, and then passed his hand for an instant before his eyes, as, though, dazzled by the brilliancy of the light he wished to shade them, the better to see into

the recesses of his own mind. "We are, then," he continued, after having drawn General Kissoffaside toward a window, since yesterday without intelligence from the

Grand Duke?" "Without any, sire; and it is to be feared that shortly despatches will no longer cross the Siberian frontier."

But have not the troops of the provinces of Amoor and Irkutsk, as those also of the Trans-Balkan territory, received orders to march immediately upon Irkutsk?"

"The orders were transmitted by the last telegram we were able to send beyond Lake

"And the governments of Yeneseisk, Omask Semi-polatinsk, and Tobolsk-are we still in livels in the same calling might have rendirect communication with them as before the

insurrection?" " Yes, sire; our dispatches have reached and the Irtisk and the Obi."

"The traitor, Ivan Ogareff, are there no

tidings of him?"
"None," replied General Kissoff. "The head of the police cannot state whether or not he has crossed the frontier."

"Let a description of him be immediately "thing in the air. dispatched to Nijni, Novgorod, Perm, Ekater-enburg, Kasimov, Tioumen, Ishino, Omsk, Elansk, Kabyvan, Tomsk, and to all the telegraph stations with which communication is yet open."

"Your Majesty's orders shall be instantly carried out," replied General Kissoff. "You will observe the strictest silence as to

this." The General, having made a sign of respectful assent, bowing low, mingled for a short this eminently French phrase. time with the crowd, and finally left the "I have telegraphed already

apartments without his departure being remarked. The officer remained absorbed in thought

for a few minutes, when, recovering himself, he went among the various groups formed in different parts of the saloon, his countenance resuming that calm aspect which had for an instant been disturbed.

Neverthelss, the important occurrence which had occasioned these rapidly exchanged words was not so unknown as the and she likes to be quickly and well informed officer of Chasseurs of the Guard and General Kissoff had possibly supposed. It was not spoken of officially, it is true, nor even offi- had appeared to overshadow the sovereign's ciously, since tongues were not free; but a few exalted personages had been informed, more or less exactly, of the events which had taken this night awakened by the gay strains of the place beyond the frontier. At any rate, that which was not slightly known, that which was not matter of conversation even between members of the corps diplomatique, two guests, distinguished by no uniform, no decoration, at this reception in the New Palace, discussed in a low voice, with apparently very

correct information. By what means, by the exercise of what the ladies-in-waiting in their most exquisite | acuteness had these two ordinary mortals ascertained that which so many persons of the military and civil dignitaries of the ancient highest rank and importance scarcely city of white stone." When, therefore, the even suspected? It is impossible to say. Had they the gifts of foreknowledge and foresight? Did they possess a supplementary sense, which enabled them to see beyond that limited borizon which bounds all human gaze? Had they obtained a peculiar power of divining the most secret events? Was it uniforms covered with orders, presented a owing to the habits now become a second nature, of living on information and by information, that their mental constitution had

thus become really transformed? Of these two ordinary men the one was English, the other French; both were tall and thin, but the latter was sallow, as are the southern Provencals, while the former was ruddy like a Lancashire gentleman. The ceiling, with its gliding already softened by Anglo-Norman, formal, cold, grave, parsimonious of gestures and words, appearing only with stars. The embroidered drapery of the to speak or gesticulate under the influence of tone. a spring operating at regular intervals. The Gaul, on the contrary, lively and petulant, expressed himself with life, eyes, hands, all at once, having twenty different ways of explain-

> seemed to have only one, immutably stereotyped on his brain. The strong contrast they presented would at once have struck the most superficial observer; but a physiognomist, regarding them more closely, would have defined their particular characteristics by saying that if the Frenchman was "all eyes" the Englishman

> was "all cars." In fact, the visual apparatus of the ore had been singularly perfected by practice. The sensibility of its retina must have been as instantaneous as that of those conjurors who recognize a card merely by a rapid movement in cutting the pack, or by the arrangement only of marks invisible to others. The Frenchman, indeed, possessed in the highest degree

what may be called "the memory of the eye." The Englishman, on the contrary, appeared especially organized to listen and to hear. When his aural apparatus had been once and occasionally the notes of a trumpet, struck by the sound of a voice he could not forget it, and after ten, or even twenty years he would have recog down in front of the facades dark masses ob- sand. His ears, to be sure, had not the power of moving as freely as those of animals who are provided with large auditory Mans: but, since scientific men know that the man waters, faintly illumined by the twinkling ears possess, in fact, a very limited power of movement, we should not be far wrong in affirming that those of the said Englishman became erect, and turned in all directions while endeavoring to gather in the sounds, in General Kissoff has been speaking, in that a manuar only apparent to the naturalist. It must be observed that this perfection of sight are usually addressed, were the simple uniform | and hearing was of wonderful assistance to these two men in their vocation, for the Englishmen acted as correspondent for the Daily Iclestoph, and the Frenchman as excrespondent of the . . . , of what newspaper amid which he moved, encircled by his escort or of what newspapers, he did not say; and when asked, he replied in a jocular mannor brilliant band, splendidly clad in the glittering that he corresponded with "his cousin uniforms of the Caucasus.

Madeleine." This Frenchman, however, beneath his coreless surface, was wonderfully shrewd and sagacious. Even while speaking st random, perhaps the better to hide his desire to learn, he never forgot himself. His loquacity even helped him to conceal his the younger guests or the graver remarks of thoughts, and he was, perhaps, even more disoreet than his confrere of the Daily Telegraph Both were present at this fele given at the New Palace on the 15th of July in their character of reporters, and for the greater edifica-

It is needless to say that these two men were devoted to their mission in the worldthat they delighted to throw themselves in the track of the most unexpected intelligence that nothing territled or discouraged them from succeeding-that they possessed the imof chasseurs that his own anxieties should in perturbable sang frailland the genuine intrepidity of men of their calling. Enthusiastic jackeys in this steeplechase, this hunt after information, they leaped hedges, crossed rivers, sprang over fences, with the ardor of pure-blooded racers, who will run "a good first" or die !

Their journals did not restrict them with regard to money-the surest, the most rapid, the most perfect element of information known to this day. It must also be added, to their honor, that neither the one nor the other ever looked over or listened at the walls of private life, and that they only exercised their vocation when political or social interests were at stake. In a word, they made what has been for some years called "the great

political and military reports." It will be seen, in following them, that they had generally an independent mode of viewing events, and, above all, their consequences each having his own way of observing and appreciating. The object to be obtained being of adequate value, they never failed to expend

the money required. The French correspondent was named Aloide Jolivet. Harry Blount was the name ot the Englishman. They had just met for the first time at this fete in the New Palace, of which they had been ordered to give an account in their papers. The dissimilarity of their characters, added to a certain amount of jealousy, which generally exists between dered them but little sympathetic. However, they did not avoid one another, but endeavoured rather to exchange with each other them, and we are assured at the present mo-ment that the Tartars have not advanced be-men, after all, hunting on the same grounds,

to meet and converse together.

This evening they were both on the look

out; they felt, in fact, that there was some-"Even should it be only a wild goose

chase," said Alcide Jolivet to himself, "it may be worth powder and shot." The two correspondents were therefore led

to chat together during the ball, a few minutes. after the departure of General Kissoff, and they began by cautiously sounding each other.

"Really, my dear sir, this little fetc is charming!" said Alcide Jolivet pleasantly, thinking himself obliged to begin the conversation with

"I have telegraphed already, 'splendid!' replied Harry Blount calmly, employing the word specially devoted to expressing admiration by all subjects of the United Kingdom. "Nevertheless," added Alcide Jolivet, "I felt compelled to remark to my cousin-

"Your cousin?" repeated Harry Blount, in a tone of surprise, interrupting his brother of the

"Yes," returned Alice Jolivet, "my cousin Madeleine......It is with her I correspond does my cousin...... I therefore remarked

brow. "To me it seemed radiant," replied Harry Blount, who perhaps wished to conceal his

real opinion on this topic. "And naturally you made it 'radiant' in

in the columns of the Daily Telegraph. " Exactly." "Do you remember, Mr. Blount, what occured at Zakret in 1812?"

"I remember it as well as if I had been there, sir," replied the English correspondent. "Then," continued Alcide Jolivet, "you know that, in the middle of the fete given in his honor, it was announced to the Emperor Alexander that Napoleon had just crossed the Niemen with the vanguard of the French army. Nevertheless the Emperor did not leave the tete, and notwithstanding the gravity the intelligence, which might cost his empire, he did not allow himself to show

more uneasiness!-"Than our host exhibited when General Kissoff informed him that the telegraphic wires had just been cut between the frontier and the government of Irkutsk.

"Oh? you are aware of that?" "I am !" "As regards myself, it would be difficult to avoid knowing it, since my last telegram reached Udinsk," observed Aicide Jolivet,

with some satisfaction. "And mine only as far as Kaosnojarsk." answered Harry Blount, in a no less satisfied

"Then you know also that orders have been sent to the troops of Nikolaevsk?" " I do, sir: and at the same time a telegram was sent to the Cossacks of the government of

Tobolsk to concentrate their forces? "Nothing can be more true Mr. Blount I was equally well acquainted with the measures, and you may be sure that my dear cousin shall know something of them to-

"Exactly as the readers of the Baily Te. graph shall know it also, M. Jolivet."

"Well, when one sees all that is going on

"And when one hears all that is being said

"An interesting campaign to follow, Mr. Blount."

"I shall follow it, M. Jolivet." "When it is possible that we shall find ourselves on ground less safe, perhaps, than the

floor of this ballroom " Less safe, certainly, but-"But much less slippery," added Alcide Jolivet, holding up his companion, just as the

latter, drawing back, was about to lose his equilibrium. Thereupon the correspondents separated. eased enough to know that the one has

stolen a march on the other. At that moment the doors of the rooms adjoining the great reception saloon were thrown open, disclosing to view several immense tables beautifully laid out, and greaning under a profusion of valuable china and gold plate. On the central table, reserved for the princes, princesses, and members of the corps diplomatique, glittered an epergae of inertimable price, brought from London and around this chef-d'auvre, of chased gold were reflected, under the light of the lusters, a thouand pieces of the most beautiful service which the manufactories of Sevres had ever produced.

The guests of the New Palace immediately began to stream toward the supper-rooms. At that moment General Kissoff, who had

just re-entered, quickly approached the officer of chasseurs. "Well?" asked the latter abruptly, as he had done the former time.

"Telegrams pass Tomsk no longer, sire." · A courier this moment!"

The officer left the hall and entered a large

ante-chamber adjoining.
It was a cabinet with plain oak furniture, and situated in an angle of the New Palace. -Several pictures, among others some by Morace Vernet, hung on the wall.

The officer hastily opened a window, as if ke felt the want of air, and stepped out on a balcony to breathe the pure atmosphere of a lovely July night.

Beneath his eyes, bathod in moonlight, lay a dortified inclosure, from which rose two cathedrals, three palaces, and an arsenal Around this inclosure could be seen the distinet towns: Kitai-Gorod, Belvi-Gorod, Zemlianai-Gorod, European, Tartar or Chinese quarters of great extent, commanded by towers, helfreys, minarets, and the cupolas of three hundred churches, with green domes, surmonated by the silver cross. A little winding river here and there reflected the rays of the moon. All this together formed a curious aposaic of variously colored houses set in an immense frame of ten leagues in cir-

cum ference. This river was the Moskowa; the town Moscow, the fortified inclosure the Kremlin, and the officer of Chasseurs of the Guard, who, with folded arms and thoughtful brow, was listening dreamily to the sounds floating from the New Palace over the the old Mussovite city, was the Czar.

CHAPTER II.

THE Czar had not so suddenly left the ballroom of the New Palace, when the fete he was giving to the civil and military authorities and principal people of Moscow was at the height of its brilliancy, without ample cause; for he had just received information that serious events were taking place beyond the frontiers of the Ural. It had become evident that a formidable rebellion threatened to wrest the Siberian provinces from the Russian

Asiatic Russia, or Siberia, covers a superficial area of 1,790,208 square miles, and contains nearly two millions of inhabitants. Extending from the Ural mountains, which separate it from Russia in Europe, to the shores of the Pacific Ocean, it is bounded on the south by Turkestan and the Chinese Emin the same preserve. That which one | pire; on the north by the Arctic Ocean, from

missed might be advantageously secured the Sea of Cara to Behring's Straits. It is by the other, and it was to their interest divided into several governments or protomeet and converse together.

This evening they were both on the look. Omsk, and Yakutsk; centains two districts, Okhotsk, and Kamschatka; and possesses two countries, now under the Muscovite dominion-that of the Kirghiz and that of the Tshowktshes. This immense extent of step-pes, which includes more than one hundred and ten degrees from west to east, is a land to which both criminals are transported and political offenders are banished.

Two governor-generals represent the supreme authority of the Czar over this vast country. One resided at Irkutsk, the capital of Western Siberia. The River Ychonna, a tributary of the Yenisei, separates the two Siberias.

No rail yet furrows these wide plains, some of which are in reality extremely tertile. No iron ways lead from these precious mines which make the Siberian soil far richer below than above its surface. The traveler journeys in Summer in a kibick or telga; in Winter in a sledge.

An electric telegraph, with a single wire more than eight thousand versts in length, sione affords communication between the western and eastern frontiers of Siberia. On issuing from the Ural, it passes through Ekaterenburg. Kasinov, Tionmen, Ishim, Omsk, Elamsk, Kalyvan, Tomsk, Krasnoiarsk, Nijni-Udinsk, Irkutsk, Verkne-Nert-ckink, Strelink, Albazine, Elagowstenks, Badde, Orlomskaya, Alexandrewskoe, and Nikolaewsk; and six roublest and nineteen copecks are paid for every word sent from one end to the other. From Irkutsk there is a branch to Kiatka, on the Mongolian frontier; and from thence, for thirty copecks a word, the post conveys the dispatches to Pekin in a fortnight.

It was the wire, extending from Ekaterenburg to Nikolaevsk, which had been cut, first beyond Tomsk, and then between Tomsk and Kalywan.

This was the reason why the Czar, to the communication made to him for the second time by General Kissoff, had only answered by

the words, "A courier this moment!" The Czar had remained motionless at the window for a few moments, when the door was again opened. The chief of police ap-

peared on the threshold. "Enter, General," said the Czar, briefly and tell me all you know of Ivan Ogareff." "He is an extremely dangerous man, sire,"

replied the chief of police. "He ranked as Colonel, did he not?"

"Yes, sire." " Was he an intelligent officer?"

"Very intelligent; but a man whose spirit it was impossible to subdue, and possessing an ambition which stopped at nothing. He soon became involved in secret intrigues, and it was then that he was degraded from his rank. by his Highzess the Grand Duke, and exiled

"How long age was that?" "Two years since. Pardoned after six

months of exile by your Majesty's favor, he returned to Russia. "And since that time has he not revisited Siberia?"

"Yes, sire; but he voluntarily returned there," replied the chief of police, adding, and slightly lowering his voice. "There was a time, sire, when none returned from Siberia. "Well, while I live, Siberia is and shall be

a country whence man can return." The Czar had the right to utter these words with some pride, for often, by his clemency, he had shown that Russian justice knew how to pardon.

The head of the police did not reply to this observation, but it was evident that he did not approve of such half measures. According to his idea a man who had once passed the Ural Mountains in charge of policemen. ought never again to cross them. Now, it was not thue under the new reign, and the chief of police sincerely deplored it. What! No banishment for life for other crimes than those against social order! What! political exiles returning from Tobolsk, from Yakutsk, accustomed to the despotic sentences of the ukase which formerly never pardoned, could not understand this mode of governing. But he was silent, waiting until the Czar should

interrogate him further. The questions were not long in coming. "Did not Ivan Ogareff," asked the Czar

return to Russia a second time, after that ourney through the Siberian provinces, the object of which remains unknown?" "He did." "And have the police lost trace of him

"No, sire; for an offender only becomes

really dangerous from the day he has coceived his pardon." The Czar frowned. Perhaps the chief of

police feared that he had gone rather too for, though the stubborness of his ideas was at least equal to the boundless devotion he felt for his master. But the Czar, disd aining to reply to these indirect reproaches cast on his interior policy, continued his series of questions.

"Where was Ivan Ogareff last heard of?"

"In the province of Perm."

"In what town?" " AtiPerm itself."

" What was he doing?"

"He appeared unoccupied, and there was nothing suspicious in his conduct." "Then he was not under the surveillance of the scoret police?"

" No. sire."

"When did he leave Ferm?"

"About the month of Blarch."

"To go---? "Where, is unknown."

"And since that time, it is not known what ns become of him?"

"No, sire; it is not known." "Well then, I myself know," answered the Czar. "I have received anonymous communications which did not pass through the police department; and, in the face of events now taking place beyond the frontier, Ishave every reason to believe that they are correct."

"Do you meso, sire," cried the chief of police, "that Ivar Ogareff has a hand in this Tartar rebellion?"

"Indeed I do; and I will now tell you something which you are ignorant of. After leaving Perm, Ivan Ogareff crossed the Ural Mountains, entered Siberia, and penetrated the Kirghiz steppes, and there endeavored, not without success, to foment rebellion among their nomadic population. He then went so far south as free Turkestan; there, in the provinces of Bokhara, Khokusud, and Koondooz, he found chiefs willing to pour their Tartar hordes into Siberia, and execute a general rising in Asiatic Russia. The storm has been silently gathering, but it has at last burst like a thunder-clap, and now all means of communication between Eastern and Western Siberia have been stopped. Moreover, Ivan Ogareff, thirsting for vengeance, aims at the life or my brother."

The Czar had become excited whilst speaking, and now paced up and down with hurried steps. The chief of police said nothing, but he thought to himself that, during the time when the Emperor of Russia never par-

*The verst contains 1165 yards.

† The rouble (silver) is worth 3s. 2d. The copeck (copper) rather more than a furthing.

doned an exile, schemes such as those of Ivan Ogareff could never have been realized.

A few moments passed, during which he was silent, then approaching the Czar, who had thrown himself into an arm-chair. "Your Majesty," said, he, "has of course given orders that this rebellion may be sup-

pressed as soon as possible?"
"Yes," answered the Czar. "The last telegram which was able to reach Niji-Udinsk would set in motion the troops in the governments of Yeniselsk, Irkutsk, Yakutsk, as well from Perm and Nijni-Novgorod, and the Cossacks from the frontier, are advancing by forced marches toward the Ural Mountains; but, unfortunately, some weeks must pass be-fore they can attack the Tartars."

"And your Majesty's brother, his Highness, the Grand Duke, is now isolated in the government of Irkutsk, and is no longer in direct communication with Moscow!" "That is so."

"But by the last dispatches he must know what measures have been taken by your Majesty, and what help he may expect from

the governments nearest to that of Irkutsk!" "He knows that," answered the Czar; "but what he does not know is, that Ivan Ogareif, as well as being a rebel, is also playing the part of a traitor, and that in him he has a personal and bitter enemy. It is to the Grand Duke that Ivan Ogaress owes his first disgrace; and what is more serious is, that this man is not known to him. Ivan Ogareff's plan, therefore, is to go to Irkutsk, and under an assumed name, offer his services to the Grand Duke. Then, after gaining his confidence when the Tartars have invested Irkutsk, he will betray the town, and with it my brother, whose life is directly threatened. This is what I have learned from my secret intelligence; this is this is what he must know!"

"Well, sire, an intelligent, courageous courier---

"I mementarily expect one." "And it is to be hoped he will be expeditious," added the Chief of Police, "for allow me to add, sire, that Siberia is a favorable land for rebellions."

"Do you mean to say, General, that the exiles would make common cause with the rebels?" exclaimed the Czar, indignant at the insinuation.

"Excuse me, your Majesty," stammered the the Chief of Police, for that was really the idea suggested to him by his uneasy and sus-

"I believe in their patriotism," returned the Czar. "There are other offenders besides political

n Siberia," said the Chief of Police. "The criminals? Oh, General, I gave those up to you! They are the vilest, I grant, of the human race. They belong to no country. But the insurrection, or rather the rebellion, is not to oppose the Emperor; it is raised against Russia, against the country which the exiles have not lost all hopes of again seeing—and which they will see again. No, a Russian would never unite with a Tartar to weaken, were it only for an hour, the Musco-

The Czar was right in trusting the patriotism of those whom his policy kept, for a time, at a distance. Clemency, which was the foundation of his justice, when he could himself direct its effects, modifications he had adopted with regard to applications for the formerly terrible ukases, warranted the be lief that he was not mistaken. But even without this powerful element of success in regard to the Tartar rebellion, circumstances were not the less very serious; for it was to be feared that a large part of the Kirghiz population would join the rebels.

The Kirghiz are divided into three hordes, the greater, the lesser and the middle, and number nearly four hundred thousand "tents," or two million souls. Of the different tribes some are independent and others recognize either the sovereignty of Russia or that of the Khans of Khiva, Khokhand, and Bokhara, the most formidable chiefs of Turkestan. The middle horde, the richest, is also the largest, and its encampments occupy all the space between the rivers Sara Son, Irtish, and upper Ishiur, Lake Saisang, and Lake Aksakal. The greater horde, occupying the countries situated to the east of the middle one, extends as far as the governments of Omsk and Tobolsk. Therefore if the Kirghiz population should rise, it was the rebellion of Asiatic Russia, and the first thing would be the separation of

Siberia, to the east of the Yenisei. If it is true that these Kirghis, mere novices in the art of war, are rather nocturnal, thieves and plunderers of caravans than regular soldiers. As M. Leochine says. "a firm front or a square of good infantry could repel ten times the number of Kirghiz; and a single

carnon might destroy a frightful number." That may be; but to do this it is necessary for the square of good infantry to reach the rebellious country, and the cannon to leave the arsenas of the Russian provinces, perhaps two or three thousand versts distant. Now, except by the direct route from Ekaterenburg to firsutsk the often marshy steppes are not easily practicable, and some weeks must certainly pass before the Russian troops could be in position to subdue the Tartan hordes.

Omsk is the center of that military organization of Western Siberia which is intended to overawe the Kirghiz population. Here are the bounds, more than once infringed by the barf-subdued nomads, and there was every reason to believe that Omsk was already in danger. The line of military stations—that is to say, those Cossack posts which are arranged in echelon from@msk to Sewipolatiusk -mast have been broken in several places. Now, it was to be feared that the "Grand Sultans" who govern the Kirghiz districts would either voluntarily accept, or involuntarily submit to the dominion of Tartars, Mussulmen like themselves, and that to the hate caused by the slavery was not united the hate due to the antagonism of the Greek and Mussulman religions. For some time, indeed, the Tartars of Turkestan, and principally those from the khanats of Bokhara, Khiva, Khokhand, and Kondooz, endeavored, by employing both force and persuasion, to subdue | built for the performance of feats of strength. the Kirghiz bordes to the Muscovite dominion.

A few words only with respect to these Tartars.

The Tartars belong more especially to two distinct races, the Caucasian and Mongolian. The Caucasian race which, as Abel de Remusat says, " is regarded in Europe as the type of beauty in our species, because all the the influence of a quicker circulation. His nations in this part of the world have sprung | eyes of a deep blue looked with a clear, frank, from it," unites under the same denomination the Turks and the natives of Persia.

The purely Mongolian race comprises the Mongols, Manchoux, and Thibetans.

The Tartars who now threatened the Russian Empire belonged to the Caucasian race, and occupied Turkestan. This immense country is divided into different states, governed by Khans, and hence called Khanats. The principal khanats are those of Bokhara, Khokhand, Koondoz, &c.

At this period, the most important and the most formidable khanat was that at Bokhara. Russia had already been several times at war against the Muscovite dominion. The present chief, Feofar Khan followed the steps of his predecessors.

The khanat of Bokhara extends from the north to south, between the thirty-seventh and forty-first parallels, and from east to west between the sixty-first and sixty-sixth degrees of longitude; that is, over a space of nearly ten thousand square leagues. This state has a population of two million

five hundred thousand inhabitants, an army of ments of Yeniselsk, Irkutsk, Yakutsk, as well sixty thousand men, trebled in time of war, as those in the provinces of the Amoor and and thirty thousand horsemen. It is a rich Lake Baikal. At the same time the regiments country, with various animal, vegetable, and mineral productions, and has been increased by the accession of the territories of Bolka Aukoi, and Meimaneb. It possesses nineteen large towns. Bokhara surrounded by a wall measuring more than eight English miles, and flanked with towers, a glorious city, made illustrious by Aricenua and other learned men of the tenth century, is regarded as the center of Mussulman science, and ranks among the most celebrated cities of Central Asia. Samarcand, which contains the tomb of Tamerlane and the famous palace where the blue stone is kept on which each new khan must seat himself on his accession, is defended by a very strong citadel. Korschi, with its triple cordon, situated in an oasis, surrounded by a marsh peopled with tortoises and lizards, is almost impregnable. Ischardjori is defended by a population of nearly twenty thousand souls. In short, Katta-Kourgan, Noutata, Dijizab, Paikande, Karakoul, Khonzar, etc. form a collection of towns of an almost impregnable character. Protected by its mountains, and isolated by its steppes, the khana of Bokhara is a most formidable state; and Russia would need a large force to subdue it. The fierce and ambitious Fcofar now gor-

erned this corner of Tartary. Relying on the other khans-principally those of Khokhan what the Grand Duke does not know; and and Koondooz, cruel and rapacious warriors. all ready to join an enterprise so dear to Tartar instincts—aided by the chief who ruled all the hordes of Central Asia, he had placed himself at the head of the rebellion of which Ivan Ogareff was the instigator. This traitor, impelled by insane ambition as much as by hate. had ordered the movement so as to intercept the route to Siberia. Mad indeed he was, if he hoped to attack the Muscovite Empire. Acting under his suggestion, the Emir-which is the title taken by the khans of Bokharahad poured his hordes over the Russian frentier. He invaded the government of Semipo! atinsk, and the Cossacks, who were only in small force there, had been obliged to refire before him. He had advanced farther than Lake Balkhash, gaining over the Kirghin population in his way. Pillaging, ravaging, enrolling those who submitted, taking prisoners those who resisted, he marched from entown to another, followed by those impediments of Oriental sovereignity which may be called his household, his wives and his slaves -all with the cool audacity of a modera Ghengis-Khan. It was impossible to ascertain where he now was; how far his soldiers had marched before the news of the rebellion reached Moscow; or to what part of Siberia the Russian troops had been forced to retire. All communication was interrupted. Had the wires between Kalyvan and Tomsk been car by Tartar scouts, or had the Emir himself arrived in the Yeniseisk provinces? Was all the lower part of Western Siberia in a ferment? Had the rebellion already spread to the eastern regions? No one could say. The only agent which fears neither cold or heat, which can neither be stopped by the rigors of Winter nor the heat of Summer, and which flies with the rapidity of lightning—the electric current-was prevented from traversing the steppes, and it was no longer possible to warn the Grand Duke, shut up in Irkutsk. of the danger threatening him from the treason of Ivan Ogareff.

A courier only could supply the place of the interrupted current. It would take this man some time to traverse the five thousand two hundred versts between Moscow and Irkutsk. To pass the ranks of the rebels and invaders he must display almost superhuman courage and intelligence. But with a clear head and

a firm heart much can be done. " Shall I be able to find this head and heart" thought the Uzar.

CHAPTER III.

The door of the imperial cabinet was again opened, and General Kissoff was announced.

"The courier?" inquired the Czar, eagerly. "He is here, sire," replied General Kissofi

"Have you found a fitting man?" "I will answer for him to your Mniesty."

"Has be been in the service of the l'alace?"

"Yes, sire."

"You know him?" "Personally, and at various times he has fulfilled difficult missions with success. "Abroad?"

"In Siberia itself." "Where does he come from?" "From Omsk. He is a iberian." "Has he coolness, intelligence and cour-

"Yes, sire; he has all too qualities neces-

sary to succeed, even where others might possibly tail.'

"What is his age?"

"Thirty." "Is he strong and vigorous?" "Sire, he can bear cold, hunger, thir st, fat-

igue, to the very last extremities. He must have a frame of iron."

"Sire he has."

"And a heart?" "A heart of gold." "His name?"

"Michael Strogoft." "Is he ready to set out." "He awaits your Majesty's orders in the

guard-room." "Let him come in," said the Czar. In a few minutes Michael Strogoff, the courier, entered the imperial library. The Czar fixed a penetrating look upon him

without uttering a word, while Michael stood perfectly motionless. Michael Strogoff was a tall, vigorous, broad shouldered deep-chested man. His powerful head possessed the fine features of the Caucasian race. His well knit frame seemed It would have been a difficult task to move such a man against his will, for when his feet were once planted on the ground, it was as if they had taken root. As he doffed his Muscovite cap, locks of thick curly hair fell over his broad massive forehead. When his ordinarily pale face became at all flushed, it arose solely from a more rapid action of the heart, under

The slightly contracted eyebrows indicated lofty heroisn -" the hero's cool courage," according to the definition of the physiologist. He possessed a fine nose, with large nostrils; and a well-shaped mouth, with the slightly projecting lips which denote a generous and

noble heart. Michael Strogoff had the temperament of the man of action, who does not bite his nails or scratch his head in doubt and indecision. Sparing of gestures as of words, he always stood motionless like a soldier before his superior; but when he moved, his step showed a with its chief, who, for their own interest, had firmness, a freedom of movement, which supported the independence of the Kirghiz proved the confidence and vivacity of his mind.