



From "Through Asia."

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and languages in the Chicago crucible.

The style and interest of the narrative are, it is true, very unequal. But even this may be the result of an unconscious art mirroring the vast disparities of situation and circumstance through which the traveller passed. Sometimes the story moves along as slowly as the tarantass or Tartar cart which carries the author, and seems to make one feel the dull monotony of the unchanging plain. Then it will whirl along at the rate the author glissaded down the mountain side. There is a delightful Defoe-like objectivity about the writer, which makes you feel the snowstorm or the sand-spout or

the ineffable mystery of the moonlight on the ocean of ice; and even when the author is self-conscious, as in confessions of home-sickness or of delight at public honour done him, it is the half-awkward self-consciousness of a child. The kindly soul of the man, who was very tender to the Kirghiz children and to his cattle, but who could be stern when sternness was needed, reveals itself very pleasantly and unobtrusively. The climax of excitement in the narrative is reached at the deadly battle with thirst in the sand-dunes, which the reader follows with an interest almost as breathless as the gasp of the dying men. The spirit of the Norseman is conspicuous, not