bosomed in a magnificent circle of volcanie

mountains. It has no other outlet but the

Angara, which, after having passed Irkutsk,

throws itself into the Yenisei, a little above the town of Yeniseisk. As regards the

mountains which encircle it, they form a

branch of the Toungouzes, and spring from

It is about four hundred miles in length

by about sixty miles in breadth, and is on the

Aiready, at this time, the colds of winter

made themselves felt. Thus it happens in

this land, which is subject to peculiar cli-

matric conditions, autumn no sooner ap-

From November to May the lake is tra-

versed upon the ice. Nature then forms a

great level, firm highway, such as man can not

pears than it is absorbed in an early winter.

route of trade between Russia and China.

the vast system or the Altai Mountains.

" bt. Mary's Bells.

O bells that crown St. Mary's shrine. Bright draped and decked with summer Ring out your homilies divine,
Like messengers from Eden's bowers.
Girt by the saints whose names ye bear,
Bekold the great Archangel stand,
And Her, the Queen our souls revere,
The centre of the shining band,

Within the tower silent long, Within the tower silent long,
Mel-dious monitors, ring out!
And send your ummons, swift and strong,
To hearts that trust, and minds that doubt;
To all, by error long endayed,
Who read with careless vision dim,
The text upon the lintels grave
"One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism."

Aronse betimes with warning calls,
The heritors of fleeting breath,
To study no hese sacred walls,
The mysteries of life and death:
Lead pilgrims to the holy place,
With hope the failting breat inspire,
Of waning faith and withered grace,
Re-kindled at the Altar's fire.

O may your sweet and solemn toll.
From callous hearts a hearing win,
And sound the tresin of the soul,
In homes of vice and haunt of sin;
Ring out land drown the sounds of strife,
The harmonies of heaven unfold;
Ring ou land lead to higher life,
The followers of fame and gold.

Saint Mary's bells! your name imparts,
Faith, hope and joy! O! bring them down,
To peaceful homes, and patient hearts,
Who bear the cross to win the crown;
And bring our prelate's memory blest,
To other men and rther times,
When he amid his flock shall rest,
Beyond the sound of cartely actions. Beyond the sound of earthly chimes.

Ring out "God speed" across the sea, To those that wave the parting hand, And greet with welcome melody. The wanderer from distant lands. "Good She, herd" call! our ways behold, Above the "everlasting hills," Till scattered flocks within the fold, Are gathered by St. Mary's bells.

## Michael Strogoff,

THE COURIER OF THE CZAR.

By Jules Verne.

PART II. CHAPTER VIII .- CONTINUED.

Still it was necessary to continue to follow this route until it should be manifestly impossible to do so, without fulling into the hands of the invaders. There was therefore, no change of route, although traces of ruin and devastation accumulated as they passed through each village. All those little towns whose names tell us that they have been founded by Polish exiles, had been given up to all the horrors of pillage and fire. The blood of the victims had not, as yet completely dried up. They could not learn any-

about these sad events, for there was not a living soul there to tell them. That very day, towards four o'clock in the afternoon Nicholas descried on the horizon the high behries of the churches of Nijm-Oudinsk. They were crowned with thick

thing of the circumstances that had brought

columns of vapor which could not be clouds. Nicholas and Nadia looked, and communicated to Michael Strogoff the result of their observations. They must decide their course of action at once. It the town had been abandoned, they could pass through it without any risk, but it, by a movement that they could not explain, the Tartars already occupied it,

they must turn it at any price.
"Let us advance prudently," said Michael Strogoff, "but let us advance."

Another verst was made.

"Those are not clouds, it is smoke!" cried "Brother, they are burning the Nadya. town !"

And indeed, it was only too visible. Bright winds of flame mounted thicker and thicker cipitated itself and rider into the morass. into the sky. Besides, there were no fugitives It was probable that the incendiaries had found the city abandoned, and had set it on | perished in that fall ! fire. But were the Tartars doing this, or were the Russians the authors of it, in obedience to the orders of the Grand Duke? Had the government of the Czar wished that from Krasnoiarsk, from the Yenisei, not a town, not a village should offer refuge to the soldiers of the Emir ? But what most concerned Michael Strogoff, was as to whether he should stop here, or continue his journey.

He was undecided. Nevertheless, after having well thought over it, he considered that whatever might be the fatigues of a jour- testation! He walked with a rapid ney across the steppe, he must not risk the chance of falling a second time into the hands of the Tartars. He was about to propose to Nicholas to leave the route, and, in case of necessity, only to regain it after having turned Nijui-Oudiusk. when the sound of a gun was heard on the right. A ball hissed, and the horse in the kibitka, struck in the head, tell dead.

At the same instant a dozen horsemen threw them on the road, and the kibitka was surrounded. Michael Strogoff, Nadia and Nicholas, without having had time to recover themselves, were prisoners, and being led rapidly towards Nijni-Oudiusk.

Michael Strogoff, in this sudden attack, had lost none of his sang froid. Not having been able to see his enemies, he had not dreamed of defending himself. Had be had the use of his eyes, he would not have attempted it He would have only caused the massacre of the three. But if he could not see, he could hear what they said, and understand it.

And, indeed, by their language he recognized, that these soldiers were Tartars, and by their conversation that they were preceding the main army of the invaders.

Here are a few of the things he learnt, both from their discourse at the moment before him, and from some items of conversa-

tion which he afterwards picked up. These soldiers were not directly under the orders of the emir, who was still detained beyond the Yenisci. They were a portion of a shird column, more especially composed of Tartars from the khanats of Khokhand and

Koundouze, with which the army of Feofar had shortly to form a junction in the neighborbood of Irkuisk.

It was by the advice of Ivan Ogareff, and in order to insure the success of the myssion in | selves alone on the road. the provinces in the cast, that this column, after having crossed the frontier of the go vernment of Semipalatinsk, and passed to the south of Lake Balkhach, had skirted the base of the Artal Mountains. Pillaging and ravaging under the leadership of an officer of the Khan of Koundouze, it had gained the high watercourse of the Yenisei. There, foreseeing what had been done at Krasnoiarsk by order of the czar, and in order to facilitate the passage over the river for the troops of the emir, this officer had thrown across the current a bridge of boats, which would allow to Irkutsk. Afterwards this third column. marched down the valley of the Yenisei, and the eyes of Nadia rejoined that route on the heights or Alsaleverk. From there, from that little town, there was that terrible accumulation of ruins, affecting circumstances. which is the special mark of Tartars wars. Nijni-Oudinsk had just suffered the common | road side. Nadie, standing up, was waiting for

thousand had already left it, in order to go to Before long they were to be joined by the

emir's troops. Such was the situation at this date—a most grave situation for that part of Eastern Stberia, completely isolated, and for the defenders,

relatively, few, of its capital.

Those are the things of which Michael Strogoff was informed: arrival before Irktusk of a third column of Tartars, early junction of the Emir and Ivan Ogereff with the main body of their forces. Consequently, the investment of Irkutsk and the sucrender which must follow would only be an affair of time, perhaps of a time very short.

One can understand what thoughts must have besieged Michael Strogoff! Who could be astonished if, in this situation, he had at last lost all courage, all hope? He was nothing of the kind, and his lips murmured no other words than these:

" I shall arrive!" In a half hour after the attack of the Tartar norsemen Michael Strogoff, Nicholas, and Nadia entered Nijni-Oudinsk. The faithful dog had followed them, but at a distance. They could not stay in the city, which was in flames, and which the last marauders were just quitting.

The prisoners were then thrown upon horses and led quickly away. Nicholas, resigned as ever, Nadia not at all shaken in her faith in Michael Strogoff; Michael Strogoff indifferent in appearance, but ready to seize Strogoff, and they once more set out on their upon every occasion of escaping.

The Tartars had soon perceived that one of their prisoners was blind, and their natura barbarity led them to make a jest of their misfortune. They marched quickly. The horse of Michael Strogoff, having no other guide in the detachment. On this accountinjuries, brutalities, quickly crushed the heart of Nadia and filled Nicholas with indignation. But what could they do? They did not speak the same language as these Tartars, and their intervention was mercilessly rejected.

And even soon, these soldiers, by a refinement of cruelty, had the idea of changing the horse on which Michael Strogofi was mounted for another that was blind. When brought about this change was this reflection by one of the horsemen, which had been heard by Michael Stropoff:

"But, perhaps, after all, this Russian can

This took place at sixty versts from Ninji-Oudinsk, between the towns of Tatan and Chibartinskoe. They had then placed Michael Strogoff on this horse, at the same time ironically placing the reins in his hands; then, by thrashing it with the whip, and by blows from stones, while making it wild with shouts, they sent it forward at a gallop.

As the animal could not be kept in a right line by its rider, blind like itself, at one time it would strike against a tree, at another it would be thrown out of the route, hence collisions, and even falls, which might have been fatal.

Michael Strogoff did not protest. Not a complaint was heard from him. If his horse fell he waited until they came to raise it; and indeed, they would make it raise, and the cruel game was continued

Nicholas, at the sight of such treatment, could not contain himself. He wished to run to the protection of his companion. They stonged him and treated him like a brute. At length this game would have been pro-

longed for a long time, without doubt, and to the great amusement of the Tartars, it a more serious accident had not put a stop to it. At a certain moment, on the 10th day of September, the blind horse ran away and made direct for a quagmire, thirty or forty teet

drep, and which skirted the road for some distanca. Nicholas wished to run after it! They withflames shot up above the smoke, and whirl- held him. The horse, not being guided, pre Nadia and Nichol is gave a fearful cryl They

felt that their unhappy companion must have When they went to his relief, Michael Strogoff, having been able to throw himself out of

the saddle, had received no wound, but the poor horse had both his legs broken and was no longer fit for use. They left it to die there, without even putting it out of its misery, and Michael

Strogoff, attached to the saddle of a Tartar, was compelled on foot to follow the detachment. And not even yet a complaint; not any proscarcely drawn by the cord with which be

was tied He was always "the man of iron." of whom General Kissoff had spoken to the Czar 1 The next day, 11th of September, the detachment passed through the town of Chibar-

linskoe. At that time an accident occurred which

was to have very serious consequence. The night had come. The Tartar horsemen, having had a halt, were more or less drunk. They were about to continue their

journ v. Natia, who up to that time, as though by a

miracle, had been respected by those soldiers, was insulted by one of them. Michael Strogoff had been able to see

neither the insult nor the insulting person, but Nicholas had seen for him. Then, quietly, without having reflected, without perhaps having any consciousness of his action, Nucholas made straight for the soldier, and, before the latter could make any

the pommei of his saddle, he discharged it full at his breast. The officer, who had command of the derachment ran up immediately at the sound of the pis ol.

movement to stop him, spatching a pistol from

The borsemen were about to cut Nicholas in pieces, but, at a sign from the officer, they | Nadia ?" bound him tast with cords, then slung him across a horse, and the detachment set off at

a gallop. The cord which tied Michael Strogoff. gnawed by bim, broke at an unexpected dash of the horse, and its rider, half drunk, carried away in a quick run, did not even perceive it.

Michael Strogoff and Nadia found them-

## CHAPTER IX.

MICHAEL STROGGEF and Nadia were once more tree, as they had been during the journey from Perm to the banks of the Irtych, bu how changed were the circumstances of the journey. Then, a comfortable vehicle, teams often renewed, well-provided post-houses, secured for them a quick journey. Now, they were on foot, with an impossibility of procuring for themselves any means of locomotion, without resources, not knowing even how to Feofar to retake on the right bank the route procure the least wants of life, and they had still to make four hundred versts! And, morehaving turned the foot of the mountain, had over, Michael Strogoff now only saw through

As to the friend whom chance had given them, they had just lost him under the most Michael Strogoff had thrown himself by the

weary march.

take up their first positions before Irkutsk. It was ten o'clock at night. For the last three hours and a half the sun had disappeared below the horizon. There was not a house, not a hut in sight. The last Tartars were lost in | give me!" the distance. Michael Strogoff and Nadia were indeed alone.

"What do they want to do with our friend?" cried the young girl. "Poor Nicholas! Our meeting will be fatal to him!"

Michael Strogoff did not answer her. "Michael," continued Nadia, "do you not know that he has defended you when you were the sport of the Tartars, that he has risked his life for me ?"

Michael Strogoff still continued silent. Immovable, his head resting on his bands, what were his thoughts! Well, if he did not answer her, did he even hear Nadia speaking

to him?

Yes! he heard her, for, when the young girl added: "To what place shall I lead you Michael?"

"To Irkutsk!" he answered. " By the high-road?"

"Yes, Nadia." Michael Strogoff still remained the man who had sworn to attain his end, cost what it might. To follow the high-road, was to go there by the shortest route. If the advance-guard of the troops of Feofar-Khan should appear, it would then be time to throw them-

selves on some by-road. Nadia took again the hand of Michael journey.

Next morning, 12th September, twenty versts farther, at the town of Toulounovsko, both halted for a short time. The town was burnt down, and was deserted. During all the night, Nadia had sought to but his blind rider, and going by chance, discover the dead body of Nicholas, stepped very often aside, and caused disorder thinking that it might have been abandoned on the road, but it was in vain that she searched the ruins, and looked among the dead. So far, Nicholas appeared to have been spared. But were they not reserving him for some cruel death, when he should arrive at the camp of Irkutsk?

Nadia worn out with hunger, from which her companion also suffered dreadfully, was happy enough to find in one of the houses of the town a certain quantity of dried meat and "soukharis,' piece of bread, which, dried by evaporation, preserved indefinitely their nutritive qualities. Michael Strogoff and Nadia loaded themselves with as much as they could carry. Their nourishment was thus secured for several days, and, as regards water, that could not fail them in a country furrowed by a thousand little tributaries of the Angara.

And they continued their journey. Michael Strogoff walked along with a firm step, and never stackened except for his companion. Nadia, not wishing to remain behind, forced herself to march on. Happily, her companion could not see to what a miserable state fatigue had reduced her.

However, Michael Strogoff felt it. " You are at the end of your strength, poor

child," he said to her sometimes. " No." she answered.

"When you cannot walk ang farther, I will carry you, Nadia." " Yes, Michael." During that day, they had to pass the little

stream of the Oka, but it was fordable, and that passage offered no difficulty. The sky was cloudy, the temperature supportable. They had reason to fear, however, that the weather would change to

rain, and that would increase their misery. There were even a few showers, but they did not last. Thus they kept going on, hand in hand, speaking little, Nadia ever and anon looking

before and behind them. They had halted twice each day. They reposed six hours at night. In some cabins, Nadia again found a little of that mutton, so plentitul in that country that it only costs two kopecks the round. But, contrary to what Michael Strogoff had

perhaps hoped, there was not any longer a single beast of burden in the country. Every horse, every camel had been either killed or taken away. It was, therefore, on foot they must cross the never-ending steppe. Traces of the third Tartar column, which

was marching on Irkutsk, were not wanting. Here was a dead horse, there an abandoned wagon. The bodies of unfortunate Siberians marked out the road, especially at the entrance to the different villages. Nadia, con-quering her repugnance, looked well at all the corpses!

In short the danger was not in front, it was behind them. The advance guard of the principal army of the emir, which was led by Ivan Ogareff, might make its appearance from one moment to the other. The boats torwarded from the lower Yenesei, must have arrived at Krasnoiarsk and been at once used for crossing the river. The road was then free for the invaders. No Russian corps could bar it between Krasnoiarsk and Lake Baikal. Michael Strogoff was thus expecting the arrival of Tartar scouts.

Likewise, at each halt, Nadia climbed some eminence and looked attentively toward the west, but no whirlwind of dust as yet signaled the appearance of a troop of horse. the march would be continued, and when Michael Strogoff felt that he was dragging along poor Nadia, he would walk with a less rapid pace. They spoke little, and only of Nicholas. The young girl kept repeating all that their companion of a few days had done for them.

In answering her, Michael Strogoff sought to give Nadia some hope, of which one could not have found any trace in him, for he knew well that the unfortunate man would not esсяр**е** death.

One day, Michael Strogoff said to the roung

"You never speak to me of my mother,

me pleasure!"

"His mother!" Nadia had not winhed to do so. Why should she renow all his grief? Was not the old Siberian dead? Had not her son given the last kiss to that corpse as it lay stretched on the plateau of Tomsk? "Speak to me of her, N dia," said, however, Michael Strogoff. "Speak! You will give

And then Nadia did what she had never done up to that time. Then she recounted to him all that kad passed between Marfa and herself, from their meeting at Om-k, where they had seen each other for the first time She told how an unexplainable instinct drew her towards the old Siberian without previously knowing her, what attention she had shown her, and what encouragement she had received from her. At that time Michael Strogoff was no more for her than Nicholas

Korpanoff. "What I ought always to have been!" answered Michael Strogoff, whose face became

Then, a little later, he added:

"I have tailed to keep my oath, Nadic. I had sworn not to see my mother?" "But you did not try to see her, Michael!" answered Nadia. "Chance alone brought you into her presence !"

"I had sworn, whatever might happen, not to disclose myself!" "Michael, Michael! At the sight of the

fate, and the Tartars, to the number of fifty the word from him to again continue their lash raised over Marfa, could you resist?

thousand had stready left it, in order to go to weary march.

No! There is no oath which can hinder a

son from succoring his mother!".
"I have broken my oath. Nadia," answered Michael Strogoff. "May God, my father, for-

"Michael," said the young girl, "I have a question to ask you. Do not answer me, if you believe that you ought not. Concerning yourself, nothing would wound me."

"Speak, Nadia." "Why, now that the letter of the czar has been taken from you, are you in such a hurry

to reach Irkutsk?' Michael Strogoff clasped more firmly the hand of his companion, but he did not an-

"Did you know the contents of that letter before leaving Moscow?" continued Nadia.

"No, I did not." " Must I think, Michael, that the desire of restoring me safely to my father alone draws you to Irkutsk?"

"No, Nadia," answered gravely Michael Strogost. "I should deceive you, were I to allow you to believe that such is the case. I go there because my duty bids me! As for conducting you to Irkutsk, are you not now rather leading me? Is it not by means of your eyes that I see? Is it not your hand which guides me? Have you not rendered me a hundred-fold the services which I was at first able to render to you? I do not know if fate will cease to crush us, but the day on which you will thank me for having restored you to the hands of your father, on that day I shall thank you for having conducted

me to Irkutsk?" "Poor Michael!" answered Nadia, with great emotion. "Do not speak thus! This is not the answer I ask from you. Michael. why, at present, are you so anxious to arrive at Irkutsk?"

"Because I must be there before Ivan Ogareff!" cried Michael Strogoff.

" Even yet?" "Even yet, and I shall be there!"

And in pronouncing these words, Michael Strogoff did not speak only through batred of the traitor. But Nadia understood that her companion had not told her all, and that he

could not tell her everything.

On the 15th of September, three days later, both reached the town of Kouitounskoe, which is sixty versts from Toulounovskoe. The young girl could walk no longer without great pain. Her swollen feet could with difficulty support her. But she resisted she strove against fatigue, and her only thought was this :

" Since he cannot see me, I shall go on un-

"Besides, there was no obstacle on this portion of the route, nor even any danger since the departure of the Tartars. Only great fatigue.

And thus they walked on for three days. It could be seen that the third column of invaders was gaining rapidly eastward. They could see this from the ruins which they left behind, from the embers that had ceased to burn, from the already decomposed bodies that were lying on the ground.

Westward nothing could be seen; the advance-guard of the emir did not make its appearance. Michael Strogoff, to explain this delay, formed the most unlikely suppositions. Did the Russians, in sufficient force, directly menace Tomsk or Krasnoiarsk? Would the third column, isolated from the other two, risk being cut off? If so, it would be easy for he grand duke to defend Irkutsk, and to gains time would be the means for repelling the in-

Michael Strogoff allowed himself at times to entertain these hopes, but soon he understood how chimerical they were, and he now only depended on himself, as if the safety of the grand duke were placed in his bands alone. Sixty versts separated Kouitounskoe from Kimilteiskoe, a little town situated a short distance from the Dinka, a tributary of the Angara. Michael Strogoff could not reflect

without apprehension on the obstacle which this somewhat important stream placed to his journey. Without any question it would be impossible to find any rafts or boats, and he remembered it was difficult to ford from having crossed it in happier times. But this stream once crossed, no river broke the road to not remain exposed on the steppe, and that Irkutsk, which was two hundred and thirty hole, in which Nicholas had been buried miles from that place.

slowly along. Whatever may have been the nature of her moral energy, physical strength was about to fail. Michael Strogoff

snew it only too well. Had he not been blind, without doubt

Nadia would have said to him: "Go, Michael, leave me in some hut Reach Irkutsk! Accomplish your mission See my father! Tell him where I am! Tell him I am waiting for him, and together you will know well where to find me! Set out at once! I have no fear! I will hide myself to her. from the Tartars! I will preserve myself for him, for you! Go, Michael! I cannot go any farther!"

Several times Nadia was obliged to stop. Michael Strogoff then took her in his arms, and for the moment, not having to think of Nadia's fatigue, while carrying her he marched more quickly and with his untiring

pace. On the 18th of September at ten o'clock at night, both reached at length Kimilteiskoe. From the top of hil! Nadia perceived a line a little less dark on the horizon. It was the

Dinka. Some flashes of lightning were reflected in the earth, "the wolves of the steppe shall not its waters, flashes without thunder, which at | devour him !"

times lit up the distant country. Nadia conducted her companion through the ruined town. The ashes left from the ing: different fires were now cold. It must have

been five or six days since the last Tartars had passed through Having come to the last houses of the town, Nadia allowed herself to fall on a stone seat. " Do we halt now?" Michael Strogoff asked

"Night has come, Michael," answered Na "Do you wish to rest a few hours?" dia. "I would have liked to pass the Dinka," answered Michael Strogoff. "I could have wished to place it between us and the ad-

her.

drag yourself any further, my poor Nadia. "Come Michael," answered Nadia, who seized the hand of her companion and drew him along.

vance-guard of the enemy. But you cannot

It was at a distance of two or three versts from there that the Dinka cut the road to Irkutsk. The young girl wished to make that last effort which her companion asked from her. They marched along the road, which was lit up by flashes of lightning. They were then traversing a desert without boundaries, in the middle of which the little river lost itself. Not a tree, not a hillock, rose on this vast plain, which was a continuation of the great Siberian steppe. Not a breath of wind stirred the air, whose calmness caused the least sound to be heard at a very great distance.

Suddenly Michael Strogoff and Nabia stopped, as if their feet had stepped into some crevice in the ground.

A dog's bark was heard across the steppe. "Do you hear?" said Nadia. Then came a lamentable cry, a cry of despair, like the last appeal of a human being who is about to die.

"Nicholas! Nicholas!" cried the young girl, urged on by some evil forehoding. Michael Strogoff, who listened, hung down his head.

"Come, Michael, come," said Nadia. And she, who just before could scarcely drag herself along, suddenly recovered her strength under the sway of violent excite-

"Have we left the road?" said Michael Strogoff, feeling that he was treading no longer the dusty road, but the open grass field.

"Yes! it is necessary!" answered Nadia. It is from over there, on the right, that the

cry came !" Some minutes, afterwards, the two were

only half a verst from the river.

A second bark was heard, and, although more feeble, it was certainly nearer.

Nadia stopped. "Yes!" said Michael, "it is Serko who is barking—he has followed his master."

" Nicholas !" cried the young girl. Her call remained unauswered. Only some birds of prey rose up and disappeared amid

the high clouds of heaven. Michael Strogoff listened. Nadia looked at the plain, lit up with flashes of lightning in

rapid succession, but she saw nothing.

And yet a voice came again, which this time murmured in a plaintive tone "Michael !"

Then a dog, all bleeding, came bounding up to Nadia. It was Serko. Nicholas could not be far away! He alone could murmur that name Michael! Where was he? Nadia had not even the strength to call

out to him. Michael Strogoff, lying down on the ground, searched with his hand.

Suddenly Serko gave a fresh bark, and rushed toward a gigantic bird which was clawing the ground.

It was a vulture. When Serko precipitated himself upon it, it rose up; but, returning to the charge, it struck the dog! He again renewed the attack. But he received a blow on the head from that terrible beak, and, this time, Serko fell back dead on the ground. At the same time a cry of horror escaped

from Nadia. "There! there!" said she. A head rose just above the ground! It would

upon the steppe. Nadia fell on her knees near that head. Nicholas buried up to the neck, according to the atrocious customs of the Tartars, had heen abandoned on the steppe to there die of the mouth of the River Angara, and eights hunger and thirst, and, perhaps torn into versts from the mouth of the Angara to Irkursk pieces by the fangs of wolves or the beaks of birds of prey. A most horrible punishment for the victim thus imprisoned in the earth, foot. who presses the earth without being able to cast it off, having his arms tied and fast-ned | perseverance, were yet unimpaired. But his to his body like those of a corpse in a coffin! The victim, living in this clay mold, and privations he had undergone, and was no which he is unable to break, can do nothing longer capable of resisting the fatigues that but implore death, which is too slow in

It was there the Tartars had interred their prisoner for three days. For three days Nicholas had been waiting for succor, which

had come at last too late. The vultures had perceived that head exposed to the sun's rays, and for some hours, the dog defended his master against these ferocious birds.

Michael Strogoff dug the earth with his claso knife to release from it that imprisoned body.

The eyes of Nicholas, closed until then, once more opened themselves. He recognized Michael and Nadia. Then! "Adieu, friends," he murmured, "I am nappy to have seen you once more! Pray for

And these words were the last.

Michael Strogoff continued to dig the soil. which being strongly trodden down, had the bardness of a rock, and at length he succeeded in drawing from it the fortunate man. He listened if his heart still

beat! It beat no more! He wished then to bury it, that it might alive, he enlarged and deepened in such a They required no less than three days to manner as to be able to lay bim there when each Kimilteiskoe. Nadia began to creep dead! The faithful Serko was placed near his master!

At that moment a great noise was heard on the road about a half verst away.

Michael Strogoff listened. By the noise, he knew at once that a detachment of cavalry was advancing towards

" Nadial Nadial' said he, in a low voice. At his voice, Nadia, who had remained in prayer, rose up. "You see them! You see them!" he said

"The Tartars!" she murmured. It was, indeed, the advance guard of the emir, which was defiling quickly on the road

to Irkutsk. They shall not prevent me from interring him." said Michael Strogoff. And he continued his work. Soon, Nicholas' body, wish his hands joined on his breast, was haid in the tomb. Michael

Strogoff and Nadia, kneeling down, prayed

the last time for that poor being, good and inoffensive, who through devotedness to them had lost his life.
"And now," said Michael, throwing back

Then, his hand stretched in menace towards the troop of horsemen which was pass-

"Og our journey, Nadis!" said he. Michael Strogoff could no longer follow the high road, now occupied by the Tartars. He must throw himself across the steppe, and turn Irkutsk. In doing this they would not have to cross the Dinka, and thus would be

relieved from one great auxiery. Nadia could no longer drag herself along, but she could see for him. He took her in his arms, and struck into the southwest of the province.

There remained for them to travel more

than two hundred versts. How could it be done? How could food be found on the jour-By what superhumon energy would they succeed in passing the first slopes of the Sayansk mountains? Neither Nadia nor he

could tell. And yet, twelve days after, the 2nd o 63tober, as six o'clock in the evening, an are mense sheet of water rolled at the feet of Michael Strogoff.

CHAPTER X.

LAKE BAIKAL IS SITUATED at a beight of sev-

It was Lake Buikal.

enteen hundred feet above the level of the sea. Its length is about nine bundred versts, its breadth about a hundred. Its depth is unknown. Madame de Bourboulon tells us that the sailors say that it wishes to be called " Mrs. Sea." If one calls it. Mr. Lake," it at once is in a rage. Auyhow, according to a Russian legend, a Russian'is mever drowned there.

more than three dandred rivers, is em-

hope to equal, and free from toll and charges for repairs and renewal. It would be no trifling matter to be overtaken by the severe cold of winter. No one who has not experienced it car imagine the intensity of Russian cold. The sentiuels on duty are compelled to constantly keep in motion to prevent freezing to death. The instant a man left the house his moustache became frozen into a solid block of ice. and if his nose were exposed for a minute or so, it turned blue and then white; whire as

with the bare hand, you might as well have taken hold of red hot iron.

The party of fugitives gathered upon the shores of Lake Baikal were ill provided against cold so intense. Hence it behooved them to make as little delay as possible in

to touching anything in the shape of metal

reaching their destination. The first days of October had come. The sun now sank below the horizon at five o'clock, and the long nights allowed the temperature to fall to zero in the thermometers. The first snow, which was to remain until summer, already whitened the neighboring heights of Baikal. During the Siberian winter, this interior sea, with its ice several feet thick, is dotted with trains of couriers and caravans.

The Baikal is subject to violent storms. Its seas, short like all Mediterranean waters, are much dreaded by the skiffs, rafts, steamboats, etc., which plow it during summer.

It was at the southwest point of the lake that Michael Strogoff had just arrived, carrying Nadia whose whole life, so to speak, was con-centrated in her eyes. What could they both have struck against their feet had it not been expect in this wild part of the province, but for the intense brightness that the heavens cast | to die there of want and destitution? And, yet, how many still remained to be made of those six thousand versts that the courier of the Czar should attain his end? Only sixty versts along the shore of the lake as tar as in all, a hundred a forty verses, say a three days journey for a strong and vigorous man even on

His courage and energy, his fortitude and physical body had suffered from the hardships once would have been scarcely felt. Besides, his sightless eves-there, indeed

was Michael Strogoff's powers crippled. If he could still retain his physical strength he would only be as a powerful machine. depending upon others to guide it aright. Such was the man who had a journey of a

hundred and forty versts before him-a

three days' journey for a strong, vigorous man, Was it possible for Michael Strogoff still to be that man? Heaven without doubt, did not wish to subject him to this trial. The fatality which had hung over him seemed to wish to spare him for an instant. That extremity of Baikal, that portion of the steppe which he

believed a desert, which is so at all times, was Some fifty people found themselves assembled at the corner which forms the south-

west point of the lake. Nadia first perceived this group when Michael Strogoff, carrying her in his arms. came out from the delile of the mountains. "Stop!" she cried. "The Tarturs! the

it was nothing else than a detachment of Tartars, sent to scour the shores of Lake Barkal, in which case fight would be cut off for

The young girl feared for an instant that

both. But Nadia was soon reassured on this head. "They are Russians!" she cried. And, after this last effort, her eyelids closed,

Michael Strogoff. But they had been perceived, and some of those Russians, running up to them, led the blind man and his young girl to the border of a little beach to which was moored a raft. The raft was about to depart.

These Russians were fugitives of various

and her head fell down on the breast of

conditions whom a common interest had gathered together on this point of the Baikal. Driven back by the Tartar scouts, they sought to take refuge in Irkutsk, and not being able to reach that place by land, since the juvaders had taken up position on both

banks of the Augara, they hoped to gain it by descending the river which runs through the Many such scenes were witnessed during

this terrible internal war. Whole families were driven forth from comfortable homes, to wander as best they could toward distant places of refuge.

How many failed to reach their destination How many laid down by the roadside to perish closing their eyes in dreams of soon reaching that earthly refuge, to open them in another world, and find themselves safe in a heavenly refuge where no cruel foe could molest or make them afraid!

The fugitives had their raft fully prepared for the voyage, and had Michael Strogoff been even a few hours later he would have found the place deserted. Now he was welcomed, and bidden to go

upon the raft at once, as its slow motion rendered it advisable to lose no time in setting out. Their project made the heart of Michael Strogoff leap with joy. He could not play his last chance. But he had the strength to discemble, wishing to preserve more strictly than

ever his incognito. Tue plan of the fugitives were very simple. A current of the Baikal skirts the higher shore of the lake as far as the mouth of the Angara. It is this current which they counted upon making use of to early reach the outlet of the Barkal. From this point to Irkutsk, the rapid waters of the rivers would draw them along at a speed of ten or twelve versts the hour. In a day and a half, they ought to be in

sight of the town. Every means for embarking was wanting at that place.

They had to supply this want. A raft, or rather a float of wood, like those which generally float on the Siberian rivers, had been con-

A torest of pine, which towered along the shore, had furnished the floating material. The trauks, lashed together with willow brauches, formed a platform on which a hundred persons would have easily found room.

This immense basic of fresh water, fed by (To be continued.):