THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

WEDNESDAY, 30TH JULY, 1879.

They now had a safe and effective rait, one

"You will not be afraid, Nadia ?" asked Mi-

"No, brother," answered the young girl.

"I?" cried Nicholas. " I realize at last one

At this spot the bank, declining gradually

was favorable for the launching of the kibitka

The horse drew it as far as the brink of the

waters, and the apparatus floated on the sur-

face of the stream. As for Serko, he bravely

The three passengers upon the body of the kibitka had taken off their clothes as a pre-

caution, but thanks to the bottles, the water

Michael Strogoff held the reins of the horse.

and according as he was directed by Nicholas.

it had passed the quays of Krasnoiarsk. It

declined toward the north, and soon it became

The passage of the Yenisei would have

been made without great difficulty, even on

this imperfect apparatus, if the current had

But, very unhappily, several whirlpools

Strogoff to turn it from it, was irresistably

The strong current acting upon the large

exposed surface bore the clumsy raft in its

own direction, and all the streugth of Nicholas

and Michael Strogoff could not avail to even

guide their course, much less oppose the swift

Nadia, too, lent the aid of her slight

There the danger became very great. The

kibitka did not advauceany longer toward the

eastern bank, it did not clear the shore any

longer, it turned with an extreme rapidity

toward the centre of the eddy, like a horse-

man on the track of a circus. Its speed was very great. The horse could scarcely hold

his head above the water, and was in danger

of being dragged into the whirlpool. Serko

had been compelled to find a place of support

In a few moments they would be over-

whelmed by the angry waters! Michael Strogoff realized what was passing.

He felt himself dragged along a circular line

which kept narrowing by little and little, and

from which he could not come out any more.

His eyes would have wished to see the peril.

in order better to escape it. They could no

Nadia was also silent. Her hands, grasp-

ing the rack of the kibitka, sustained her

against the jolting movement of the appara-

tus, which inclined more and more toward the

As for Nicholas, did he not comprehend the

gravity of the situation! Was he cool and

disdainful of the danger, courageous or in-

different ? Was life without value in his eyes,

and, according to the saying of the Orientals,

"an hotel of five days," which willing or un-willing, must be quitted on the sixth. In any

case, his smiling face did not betray him for

The kibitka, then, remained struggling in

the whirlpool, and the horse was at the end of

strength, but still they were rapidly drawn in-to the hungry maw of the whirlpool.

did not reach even the iron bolts.

tered little.

current.

on the kibitka.

longer see any danger.

centre of the depression.

an instant.

Yenisei.

been regular right along.

drawn into one of these funnels.

" And you, friend ?"

This work was soon accomplished.



THE COURIER OF THE CZAR.

Ry Jules Verne.

PART II. . .

CHAPTER VI .- CONTINUED. "There remain to me still a few roubles and my eyes! I can look after you, Michael, and lead you to where you could not go alone?" "And how shall we gol"

"On feot." "And how shall we live?"

"By begging."

" Let us set out, Nadia."

"Come, Michael."

The two young folks did not give themselves any longer the name of bro ther and sister. In their common misery they telt themselves more closely united to each other. Both left the house, after having taken an hour's repose. Nadia, in passing along the streets of the town, had procured some morsels of "tchornekhleb," a sort of bread, made of barley, and a little of that mixt ure of water and honey, known in Russia by the mane of These had cost her no thing, for she " meod." had commenced her professiona of beggar. This bread and hydro-mel, bad as it was, appeased the hunger and thirst of Michael Strogoff. Nadia had kept for him the greater portion of the scanty food. I le ate the morsels of bread which his comprision 'handed to him one after another. He drank from the gourd which his companio a raiset to his

lips. "Do you eat, Nadia ?" he asked her several times.

"Yes, Michael," answered always the young girl, who contented herself, with the leavings of her companion.

Michael and Nadia quitted Semilowskoe and retook the wearyin; ; read for Irkutsk. The young girl energetic ally resisted the fatigne. If Mi hael had seen her, perhaps he would not have had the courage to go any fur-ther. But Nadis did n at complain, and Michael Stroguff not hearing even a sigh, walked with a speed which he could not restrain. And why? (lould he-still hope to outstrip the Tartars? He was on foot, with-out money; he was blind, and if Nadia, his only guide, should full him, he would only have to lie down by the road side, and there miserably perish! But then, if, by the strength of energy, he should reach Krasnoiarsk, all was, perhaps, not lost, since the governor, to whom he wouldnmake himself known, would not hesitste to give him the means of gaining Inkutek.

Michael Strogo a, therefore, went along. speaking little, ab sorbed in his own thoughts. He kept hold of Madia's hand. Both were in constant communication with each other. It seemed to them that they had no longer need of words to exchange their thoughts. From time to time, Muchael Strogoff-said :

"Speak to me, Nadia."

"What is the good, Michael; we are thinking together I" replied the young girl, and she spoke in such a tone that her voice did not disclose any futigue. But sometimes, as if her heart had ceased to beat for an instant, her legs bent, her step bocame slower, her arm stretched out, she remained -s little behind. Michael Strogoff would then stop, and would am going to tell you. I am coming from Kolyfix his eyes on the poor girl, as though he wan! would try to perceive her through the dark "From Kolyvan ?" said Michael Strogoff shadow which he carried with him. His "Well then, it is there that I met you. You heart was full ; sustaining still more his companion, he advanced on his journey.

However, in the midst of these miseries, without truce, a happy circumstance occurred, which was to lessen the fatigues of both of them.

They had left Semilowskoe about two hours, when Michael Strogoff stopped.

"Is the road deserted ?" he asked.

carr (age on foot; I will run if it be necessary, and will not delay you one hour." ""Brother," cried Nadia, "I do not wish it

I do not wish it! Sir, my brother is blind "Blind !" said the young man in a voice moved with emotion.

"The Tartars have burned out his eyes!" answered Nadia, stretching out her hands as

"Burned your eyes? Ohl pour dear man! I am going to Krasnoiarak." Well now, why do you not mount with your sister into the kibitka? In sitting a little closer, we shall hold each other up. Besides, my dog will not refuse to go on foot. Only I do not go fast, in order to spare my horse." "Friend, what do they call you?" asked

Michael Strogoff. "I am called Nicholas Pigassof."

"It is a name that I shall never forget," answered Michael Strogoff.

"Well then, mount, my good blind man. Your sister shall be near you, at the back of chael the car, I m front to conduct. There is some sible. good birch bark and some barley straw on the bottom. It's like a nest. Come, Serko, give

us room !" The dog jumped off without much asking. It was an animal of the Siberian breed, with a gray hide, medium size, with a good large

very attached to his master. Michael Strogoff and Nadia, in an instant were installed in the kibitka. Michael Strogoff had stretched out his hands as though to Ivan Ogareff, of the injury he has done our

search those of Nicholas Pigassof. "Is it my hands you wish to press ?" said! I held him-" Nicholas. Here they are, my good man! Shake them as much as you like'?'

The kibitka was soon in motion. The horse, which Nicholas never struck, ambled along. If Michael Strogoff did not gain much in rapidity, at least new fatigues would be spared to Nadia. And, such was the exhaustion of the young girl that, rocked by the monotonous motion of the kibitka, she seen fell inte a sleep resembling an etter prostration. Michael Strogeff and Nicholas made a bed for her on the birch leaves as well as they were able. The compassionate young man was much moved, and if a tear did not escape the eyes of Michael Strogoff in truth, it was be-

cause the red-hot iron had burned them dry !

"She is pretty," said Nicholas. "Yes," answered Michael Strogoff.

"These darlings would be strong, for they are courageous, but they are really only weak. Do you come a great distance ? "From a great distance."

" Poor young folks! It must have hurt you much when they burned your eyes!" "Very much," said Michael Strogoff, turn-

ing as though he could see Nicholas. " Did you not cry ?"

"Yes? "I also should have cried. To think that one can never see again those they love' Anyhow, they see you. That is perhaps some consolation !"

"Yes, perhaps!"

"Tell me, friend" demanded Michael Strogoff, "have you never seen me anywhere before to day ?"

"You, my good man? No, never."

"It is because the sound of your voice is not unknown to me."

"Do.you see?" said Nicholas, smiling. "He knows the sound of my voice! Perhaps you ask methis to learn whence I come. Oh! I

"From Kolyvan?" said Michael Strogoff were at the telegraph office?

"That may be," answered Nicholas. "I lived there. I was employed as message clerk."

"And you remained at your post to the last moment ?"

"Ehil it is especially at that moment one ought to be there!" "It was the day when the Englishman and

have not a kopeck to offer thee, but if you of felling anything, that one? sked to listen to rigged out, rattled along the handsome wide will cake my sister near you, I will follow the him. One day Michfiel Strop off asked him what walks that skirted those magnificent houses kind of weather it was.

"Pretty-fine, vy F Jod man," he answered "but these are the last days of summer. The autumn is short in Siberis, and soon we shall have the first colds of winter. Perhaps the Tartars are thinking of going into winter quarters during the bad season?"

Michael S', rogoff shook his head with an air of doubt. "You do not believe it, my good man," said

Nicholas. "Do you think they will march on Irku'sk ?"

"I fear it," answered Michael Strogoff.

"Y'ss; you are right. They have with them a bad man, who will not allow them to cool down on the road. You have spoken of Iva D'Ogarea ?"

"- Yes."

* Do you know, it is not a good thing to betray one's country ?" "No; it'is not a good thing," answered Mi-

chael Strogeff. who wished to remain impas-" My good men," contigued Nicholas, "I see you are not sufficiently indignant when

spoken to concerning Ivan Ogareff! Every Russian heart chould leap when that name is pronounced !"

"Delieve me, friend, I hate him more than and caressing head, and which appeared to be you can ever hate him;" said Michael Strogof.

"That is not possible," replied Nichclas; "no, that is not possible. When I think of sacred Russia, I am seized with anger, and if

" If you held him, friend ?"

" I believe I would kill him."

"As forme, I am sure of it," tranquilly answered Michael Strogoff.

CHAFTER VII

Ox the evening of the 25th of August, the kibitka errived in sight of Krasnolarsk. The journey from Tomsk had taken eight days. If it had not been accomplished more rapidly, iu spite of what Michael Strogoff was able to do, it was because Nicholas slept little. Hence, the impossibility of increasing the speed of the horse, which, in other bands, would have finished the journey in sixty hours.

Very fortunately, there was no longer any question of the Tartars. No scout had appeared on the route followed by the kibitks. That appeared somewhat inexplicable, for it must have been some grave circumstance that could prevent the troops of the Emir from marching at once u on Irkutsk.

And that circumstance had in reality occurred. A new Russian corps, assembled in all baste in the government of Yenisei, bad marched on Tomsk to attempt its recapture. But, too weak against the now concentrated troops of the emir, it had been obliged to retreat. Feofar-Khan, including his own soldiers and those of the khanats of Khokhand and Koundouze, had under his orders over two hundred and fifty thousand men, against whom the Russian government could not as yet oppose sufficient force.

The battle of Tomsk took place on the 22d of August, of which battle of course Michael Strogoff had not heard-but this explained why the advance-guard of the Emir had not as yet appeared at Krasnolarsk, by the 24th. However, if Michael Strogoff could not know the last events that had happened after this departure, he knew at least this : that if he should be several days in advance of the Tartars, he could hope to reach before them the town of Irkutsk, which was still distant

some eight hundred and fifty versts. Besides, at Krasnoiarsk, the population of which is about twelve thousand souls, he felt sure that the means of transportation would not fail bim. Since Nicholas Pigassof had to stop at that town, it would be necessary to replace him with a guide, and to change the kibitka for a more rapid vehicle. Michael Strogoff, after having addressed himself to the

of wood-palatial in their grandeur !" Not one elegant Siberian lady, dressed in

the lalest fashions from France, was taking a walk in that splendid park, cut out in a lorest of birch-trees, which stretches as far as the steep banks of the Yenisei. The big bell o' the cathedral was mute, the chimes of t de many churches were silent, and yet it is very rare that a Russian town is not filled with the sound of its bells. But here was complete desertion ! There was not a living soal in the town !"

. The last telegram sent by the cabinet of the czar, before the wires were cut, had commanded the governor, the garrison, and the inhabitants, to abandon Krasnoiavsk, to carry away with them every object of value, or which could be of any use to the Tartars, and to seek refuge in Irkutsk. The same orders had been sent to the inhabitants of all the towns of the province. The Muscovite government wished to make a desert for the invaders. These peremptory orders no one for a moment thought of questioning. They were at once carried out, and this was the rea-

son that not a living soul remained in Krasmoiarsk. Michael Strogoff, Nadie, and Nicholas,

passed in silence through the streets of the town. A strunge feeling came over them. They produced the only sound that was heard in that dead city. Michael Strogoff did not allow any signs of discouragement to appear, nevertheless, he felt keenly his bad luck at being deceived once more in his hopes. "Good God!" cried Nicholas, "I shall

never obtain my appointments in this desert !" " Friend," said Nadia, " You must continue

with us the journey to Irkntsk." "I must, in truth," answered Nicholas.

The wires will be still in operation between Oudinsk and Irkutsk, and there-

" Shall we start, good father ?"

"Let us wait until to-morrow," answered Michael Strogoff.

"You are right," answered Nicholas. "We have to cross the Yenesei, and it is necessary to see there-" To see there !" murmured Nadia, as she

thought of her blind companion. Nicholas had understood her, and turning

to Michael Strogoff. " Pardon, good father," said he. . Alas! night and day is all one for you !"

"Do not reproach yourself, friend," answered Michael Strogoff, as he passed his hand before his eyes. "With you for guide, I can still act. Take then, a few hours' rest. Let Nadia also repose. To-morrow we shall have

daylight!" Michael Strogoff, Nadia and Nicholas, had not to search long for a place in which to rest. The first house of which they tried the door was empty, as were all the rest. They found nothing there but a heap of leaves. For want of something better, the horse had to be content with this meagre food. As for the provisions of the kibitks, they were not exhausted, and each one took his share. Then, after having knelt before a modest picture of the Panaghia that was banging on the wall, and which the last flame of a lamp still swer, that the passage of the river seemed to lit up, Nicholas and the young girl fell asleep,

while Michael Strogoff remained awake, his anxiety driving away all sleep. The next day, the 26 of August, before day break, the kibitka was traversing the park of birch trees to reach the banks of the Yenisei. Michael Strogoff was greatly pre-occupied. How could they cross the river, if, as was pro-

poorer people, entirely empty. Nicholas visited cne, Nadia another, and bable, every bark and ferry-boat had been destroved in order to retard the march of the Michael Strogoff himself entered here and Tartars. He knew well the Yenisei, having crossed there and sought to discover some object that over it several times. He knew that its might be useful to him. breadth is considerable, that the rapids are violent in the double bed which it has scooped out between the islands. Under or-

Nicholas and the young girl, each on their part, had vainly ferreted in these cabins, and they were about to abandon their search when dinary circumstances, by means of those ferrythey heard themselves called. "Nicholas! Nadial" cried a strong voice boats, specially established for travelers, the passage of the Yeuisei requires three hours, from within a cabin.

Nichols sand Nidia, holding on by the last, of the kibitks, between the wheels, were inbirch-tr ses of the cliff perched themselves. tended to insure the floating of the body, far ove , the river. The Yonisei, at this which would be thus transformed into a raft. place, is at least a verst and a half across and forms two arms of unequal importance, w lich the waters follow with rapidity. that would carry them over the river. True, its unwieldy shape would prevent setween these arms nestled several islands, them from guiding it in a desired direction, planeed with alders, willows and poplars, but they must do the best they could. which resemble so many green vessels anchored in the river. Beyoud rose in succes chael Strogoff. sion the high hills on the eastern bank, crowned "with forests whose "tops were empurpled with the morning light. Up and down the river, the Yenisei seeme

methings.

of my dreams; to navigate in a carriage !" "Come," said Michael Strogoff, "let us set to flee. Ah, if the fugitives could only fly with the

out. God is with us, and we shall cross in speed of these rushing waters! But not a single craft, neither on the left safety !

bank nor on the right bank, nor along the shores of the island. All had been taken away or destroyed by order. Most certainly, if the Tartars should not bring from the south the materiais necessary for the forming of a bridge of boats, their march upon Irkutsk | plunged in to swim it. would be arrested for some time by this barrier of the Yenisei.

If the fugitives should not succeed in finding some means of crossing the swollen and rapid current, their former efforts were useless.

he guided the horse slantingly, for he did not And yet there seemed no hope; no means wish to fatigue it in struggling against the that human ingenuity or foresight could decurrent. As long as the kibitka followed the vise had been left untried. stream, all went well ; and after a few minutes

They were lost!

In a few hours at the most, the clattering hoofs of their enemies' horses would be heard beside them, they would be dragged back as evident that it would only gain the other bank captives, and condemned to added insult and a long way below the city. But that matpunishment because of their great struggle for freedom.

Had the almost boundless resources of Michael Strogotf been exhausted ?

Nichael Strogoff stood buried in deep flection. At length he looked up with almost a con-

were distinguished on the surface of the tumultuous waters, and soon the kibitks, in fident light in his sightless eyes: spite of all the strength employed by Michael

"Remember then," said Michael Strogoff, there is higher up, at the last houses of Krasnoiarsk, a little port of embarkation. It is there where the ferry-boats are stationed. Friend, let us go up the river again and see if some bark may not have been forgotten on the shore." Nicholas hastened forward in the direction

indicated. Nadia had taken Michael Strogoff

by the hand and guided him at a rapid step.

A bark, or a simple cance large enough to car-

ry the kibitks, or, if that could not be had one

only large enough to carry the travelers and

Twenty minutes afterward, all the three had

reached the little port of embarkation, and the

last houses here lower to the level of the

river. It was a sort of village situated below

Krasnoiarsk. But there was no means of em-

barkation on the beach, not a boat in the

boathouse, not even anything with which a

Every boat or raft had been carried away

The river was yet as impossible of passage

Michael Strogoff had interrogated Nicholas,

and the latter had made this discouraging an-

"We shall cross," replied Michael Strogoff. And they continued their search.

They rummaged the few houses that were

built on the high lank, and which were aban-

doned like all those of Krasnoiarsk. One had

nothing to do but push the doors to obtain an

entrance. They were mere cabins of the

raft for three persons could be constructed.

to them as the great oc-an itself.

be absolutely impracticable.

or destroyed.

Michael Strogoff would attempt the passage!

"Without a soul on it," replied Nadia "Do you not hear some noise behind?" 4 Truly."

" If these are the Tartars, wo must hide our selves. Blook well."

"Listen, Michael !" replied Nadia ascending the mad which diverged some paces to the right.

Michael Strogoff stopped an instant alone, stretching his ears to listen.

Nadia returned almost immediately and said :

"It's a-vehicle. A young man is leading i8.

" He is clone ?"

" Aloue."

Michael Strogoff hesitated for a moment. Ought he to hide? Or ought he, on the contrary, try the chance of finding a place in this vehicle, if not for himself, at least for her? the kibitks ate in company with the faithful For himself, he would be content to rest his Serko. The kibitka was provisioned for at hand on it, and would push when needed, for least twenty persons, and Nicholas had generhis legs were far from failing him, but he felt ously placed the reserved food at the disposal that Nadia, dragged on foot since the passage of the Obi, namely, for more than eight days, was at the end of her strength.

He waited. The vehicle arrived soon at the turn of the road.

It was a very dilapidated vehicle, able to hold at least three persons, what is called in that country a kibitka.

The kibitka is usually drawn by three horses, but this one was drawn only by one horse, with long hair and a long tail, but its Mongolian blood affirmed strength and COUIAGO.

A young man conducted it, having near him a dog. Nadia at once saw that this young man was

a Russian. He had a sweet and phlegmatic appearance which inspired confidence.

Moreover, he did not appear to be in the least hurry. He walked with a quiet step. on its regular speed. in order not to overdrive his horse, and, to see It was thus they p him one could never have believed that he was following a route which the Tartars Marunsk, the town of the same name, Bogomight cut off at any moment.

Nadia, holding the hand of Michael Strogoff, stood on one side.

The kibitks stopped, and the driver looked at the young girl, at the same time smiling "And where are you going in this fashion ?"

he asked her, as he looked pleasantly round. At the sound of this voice, Michael Stro-

goff said to himself that he had heard it somewhere; and without doubt it was sufficient to cause him to recognize the driver of the river would perhaps arrest the Turtars. kibitka, for his face at once became serene.

"Well, now, where are you going?" remore directly to Michael Strogoff.

"We are going to Irkutsk," answered the latter. "Oh! my good man, do you not know then

that there are many, many versts between this and Irkuttk ?"

"I know it."

"And you are going on foot?" "On foot."

"As for yon, it's all right! but the Miss !" "She is my sister," said Michael Strogoff, who thought it more prudent to give this name again to Nadia.

lieve me she will never be able to reach Irk- | or on the plain; if some hut arose on the sollutak (* sit)

Frenchman, roubles in their hands, dispute the turn at your wicket, and when the Englishman telegraphed the first verses of the Bible ?"

"That my good man, but I do not remember it?" "What! you do not remember it?"

"I never read the despatches which I transmit. My duty being to forget them the shortest way is to be ignorant of them." This answer was characteristic of Nicholas

Pigafuof. However, the kibitka kept on its easy course

which Michael Strogoff would have liked to render more rapid, But Nicholas and his horse were accustomed to a gait from which neither the one nor the other could depart. The horse walked for three hours, and then rested for one, and this day and night. During the halts, the horse pastured, the travelers of

of his two guests, whom he believed to be brother and sister. After one day of repose, Nadia had recovered

part of her strength. Nicholas took all the care of her he could. The journey was being made under supportable circumstances, slowly without doubt, but regularly. It often fortunately happened during the night, Ni cholas, while conducting, fell asleep, and snored with a conviction that bore witness of the calm of his conscience. Perhaps then, on looking well, one could have seen the hand of Michael Strogoff socking the reins of the horse and making him take a faster step, to the great astonishment of Serko, who nevertheless said nothing i Then, this trot changed immediately into the old amble, from the moment Nicholas awoke, but the

kibitka had not the less gained several versts It was thus they passed the river Ichim,

the towns of 1chim, Kuskoe, the river towskoe, and lastly the Tchoula, a little water course which separates Western from Eastern Siberia. The route sometimes crossed immense lands, which left a vast field before the sight, sometimes under thick and interminable forests of fir, from which they thought they would never come forth.

All was a desert. The towns were almost entirely abandoned. The peasants had fled across the Yenisei, thinking that this wide

On the 22nd of August the kibitka reached the town of Atchinsk, which was three hunpeated the young man, addressing himself dred and eighty versis from Tomak. A hundred and twenty versts still separated it from Krasnoiarsk. No incident had marked this journey. During the six days they had been together, Nicholas, Michkel Strogoff and Nadia had remained just the same, the one in his unalterable calculates, the other two anxious, and looking forward to the moment when their companion would separate from them.

Michael Strogoff, it may be said, saw the country traversed by the eyes of Nicholas and the young girl. In turns, each painted to him the scenes through which the kibitka was "Yes, your sister, my good man! But be- passing. He knew when he was in the forest tary steppe, if some Siberian appeared on the "Friend," replied Michael Strogoff, as he horizon. Nicholas was never exhausted. 'He

governor of the town, and after having established his identity and his quality as courier of the Czar-a thing which would be easy of accomplishment-did not doubt he would be enabled to reach Irkutsk with the bank to the other? shortest delay. He would then have nothing to do but thank his brave Nicholas, and set out immediately with Nadia, for he did not intend to leave her until he had restored her

to the arms of her father. However, if Nicholas had resolved to stop at Krasnolarsk, it was, as he said, " on condition that he could find employment there." view. In reality, this model servant, after having

held to the last minute his post at Kolyvan, was seeking to again place himself at the disposition of the administration.

"Why should I touch appointments which I have not merited?" he repeated. Besides, in case his services are not required at Kras-noiarsk, which had to be kept always in telegraphic communication with Irkutsk, he proposed to go either to the post of Oudinsk. or as far as the capital of Siberia. Then, in goff. that case, he would continue his journey with

the brother and sister, and in whom would they find a more sure guide, a more devoted friend?

The kibitka was only half a verst from Krasnoiarsk, one could see on the right and left the numerous wooden crosses which are erected along the road at the approaches to the town. It was seven o'clock at night. The kibitka had stopped.

"Where are we, sister?" asked Michael Strogoff.

"A little over a half verst from the first houses," answered Nadia.

"Has the town then gone to sleep? No noise strikes upon my ear.

"And I do not see any light shining in the darkness, or any smoke rising in the air, added Nadia.

"What a queer town !" said Nicholas. "They do not make any noise here, and they go to bed in good time !"

Michael Strogoff's mind was troubled with a presentment of every augury. He had not "A little patience, good father," said told Nudia that he had concentrated his Nicholas. "All this will disappear. Well, finding the means of securely accomplishing pel the fog The high hills of the right bank his journey. But Nadia had divined his thought, although she did not understand away! All flies away! The good rays of the why her companion was in such a hurry to sun have condensed the expanse of mist. reach Irkutsk, now that he had not the im- Ah! how beautiful it is, my poor blind man, perial letter.

One day she even pressed him on this matter.

"I have sworn to go to Irkutsk," was his only reply.

But to accomplish his mission, it was still necessary he should find some rapid means of posite bank, as far as your eye can reach. A locomotion.

"Well, my triend," said he to Nicholas, why do we not go forward?"

"Because I am afraid of waking the inbabitants of the town with the noise of my conveyance !"

And with a light lash from his whip, he stirred up his horse. Serko gave a few barks, and the kibitka descended at a little trot the bill leading into Krasnoiarsk.

Ten minutes afterwards it entered the prin cipal street.

Krasuniarsk was deserted! There was not any longer an Athenian in this" Athens in the North," as it is called by Mme. de Bourboulon. drew near, "the Tartars have robbed us, and I loved to talk, and such was his pleasant way Not one of those equipages, so splendidly his deep disappointment.

and it is only with the greatest exertion that these ferry-boats gain its right bank. Now, in the absence of every means of transport, how could the kibitks be crossed from the one

"I shall cross it, though!" repeated Michael Strogoff. The day began to dawn when the kibitks strived on the left bank at the termination of one of the principal avenues of the park. At this spot the banks a hundred feet high, overlook the course of the Yenisei. | of them !" Hence, the vast extent of it is presented to the

".Do you see any ferry-boat?" asked michael Strogoff, while eagerly stretching his eyes from one side to the other, no doubt by a mechanical habit, as if he himself could

see. "Wo have as yet scarcely daylight. brother," answered Nadia. "The fog is still thick on the river, and we cannot, as yet, well distinguish the waters." "But I hear their roar," replied Michael Sro-

"Yes," assented Nicholas, "we can hear their roar judged. Soon we shall see the waters and the rocks that make all this growling."

And, in fact, there came from the lower beds of this mist a deafening roar of currents and counter-currents rushing against each other. The waters, very high at this season of the year, ran with the violence of a torrent. All the three listened, waiting till the cur-

tain of the mist should rise. The sun rose quickly above the horizon,

and its first rays were not long in dispelling these vapors. "Well, then ?" asked Michael Strogoff.

"The mists begin to roll away, brother, daylight has already penetrated them."

"You did not see as yet the level of the river, sister ?"

" Not as yet."

"Look sharply for a boat or raft on the river, as quickly as the fog disappears," said Michael Strogoff.

hopes on Krasnolarsk, where he counted on now, here comes the wind! It begins to disalready show their rows of trees. All goes and what a misfortune for you not to be able

to contemplate such a sight !" "Do you see a boat?" asked Michael Strogoff .

"I do not see any," answered Nicholas. "Look well, friend, along this and the opboat, a raft, a bark cance !"

"No," said Niubolas, "I see nothing." "Look again, Nadia," said Michael Strogoff

to the young girl. "Your eyes are sharp; search the shore up and down, look into every bay and indentation. We must find a boat or raft of some description !"

Nadia shaded hereyes with her hand, as if to concentrate her vision, and searched the river long and earnestly. But not a sign of either boat or raft!

"No, brother," she at length said sadly, "I see nothing." Michael Strogoff made no reply, but he could not restrain a single sigh that expressed

Both regained the bank and perceived chael Strogoff on the threshold of a door.

"Come I" he cried to them. Nicholas and Nadia went at once toward him, and entered the cabin after him.

"What is this ?" asked Michael Strogoff. touching with his hand divers objects stowed away at the bottom of a cellar.

"These are leather bottles," responded Nicholas, "and my word, there are halt a dozen

"Yes, they are full of koumyss, and how thanksgiving to Heaven. opportunely have you discovered them to reembarkation the kibitks had traversed the new our provisions!" great arm of the river, and had safely reached

The "koumyss" is a drink made of mare's or camel's milk, a strengthening drink, even inebriating, and Nicholas could but congratulate himself for the find.

the bank, and an hour's rest was given to the coursgeous animal. Then, the island having It is a favorite beverage in this portion of the world, and you can scarcoly find a peasant so poer, or a cabin so barren, as to be of its magnificent birch trees, the kibitks without a greater or less supply of "koumyss," stored in its leathern bottles.

Michael Strogoff, however, had determined that these buttes should serve a more important purpose than that of merely relieving the slight and transient sufferings of hunger or thirst. Indeed, so great was their anxiety at being unfortunately stopped in their journey, that not one of the party, not even the frail young girl, Nadia, would have known they were either hungry or thirsty if these bottles of koumyss had not reminded them. Michael Strogoff's quick wit and ready ability to turn all things to his advantage was not slow in discovering a use for these stout, capacious, air-tight hottles of leather. He had determined that those bottles

should safely ferry them over the river !

"An impossible scheme!" The reader will "What, will Michael Strogoff exclaim. diminish his vast proportions, like the genii in the Arabian Nights, and creep into the bottle, be safely corked up, and float across ?" Truly there seemed no more practicable way of crossing the river, than by means so insufficient as a few leathern bottles.

One person might succeed. Michael Strogoff himself, or the stout Nicholas-but the frail Nadia, and the clumsy kibitks, for the latter must also be carried over, together with the horse, or they would be unable to continue their journey even after reaching the other side of the river. "Pat one of them aside," said Michael

Strogoff to him, " but empty all the rest." "In a moment, good father."

"Behold what will heip us to cross the Yenisei !" "And the raft?"

"The kibitka itself shall be that, as it is light enough to float. Besides, we shall sustain it, as well as the horse, with these leathern bottles."

"Well thought of, good father !" cried Nicholas, " and, by God's assistance, we shall know how to easily find again the route to fifteen versts towards the southeast, came to Irkutsk beyond the river." and retook the long high road across the "To work," said Nicholas, who began to steppe.

empty the bottles and carry them to the kibitka.

One bottle, full of koumyss, was reserved, is even considered as the best portion of the whole journey. There is less jolting for the travelers, there are vast shades to protect and the others, closed up with care, after having been previously filled with air, were emthem from the burning sun, and sometimes ployed as a floating apparatus. Two of these forests of pines or cedars which cover a space bottles, attached to the flanks of the horse, were destined to sustain it on the surface of of a hundred versts. It is no longer the imthe river. Two others, fastened to the shafts | mense steppe whose circular line is Llended

his efforts. Suddenly, Michael Stroyoff, relieving himself of those garments which might be in his way, threw himself into the water ; then, seizing with a vigorous hand the bridle of the frightened horse, he gave it such a push as fortunately to throw it outside the line of attraction, and being caught up at once by the rapid current, the kibitka made for the opposite bank with a new speed.

Nadia, with clasped hands, uttered a silent

Only two bours after having left the port of

the shore of an island at more than six versis

There the horse dragged the kibitka on to

been traversed in all its breadth under cover

came to the border of the little arm of the

This passage was made more easily. No

whirlpool broke the course of the stream in

this second hed, but the current was there so

rapid that the kibitka only reached the right

bank some five versts down the river.

It had diverged, altogether, eleven versts.

territory, over which as yet no bridge has been

thrown, are serious obstacles for easy commu-

nication. All had been more or less unlucky

for Michael Strogoff. On the Irtych, the bark

which carried him and Nadia had been at-

tacked by the Tartars. On the Obi, after his

horse had been struck by a ball, he had only

escaped by a miracle the horsemen who pur-

sued him. In short, this passage of the Yenisei had been the least unfortunate.

"It would not have been so amusing,"

cried Nicholas, rubbing his hands, when he

had landed on the right bank of the river, " if

"That which had been only difficult for us,"

answered Michael Strogoff, " will perhaps be

CHAPTER VIII.

MICHAEL Strogoff could at length believe

that the route was free as far as Irkutsk. He

had out-stripped the Tartars, and when the

soldiers of the Emir should arrive at Kraspoi-

arsk, they would only find an abandoned town

there, and no means of immediate communi-

cation between the two banks of the Yenisei.

Hence, a delay of some days, until a bridge of

boats, difficult to construct, should open a

For the first time since the unlucky meeting

with Ivan Ogareff at Omsk, the courier of the

czar felt himself less uneasy, and could hope

that no new obstacle would arise to the ac-

The kibitks, afer having proceeded about

The road is good, and that portion of it

which lies between Krasnoiarsk and Irkutsk

complishment of his plans.

it had not been so difficult!"

impossible for the Tartars |"

passage to them.

These great watercourses of the Siberian

"Hurrah !" cried Nicholas.

below its point of departure.