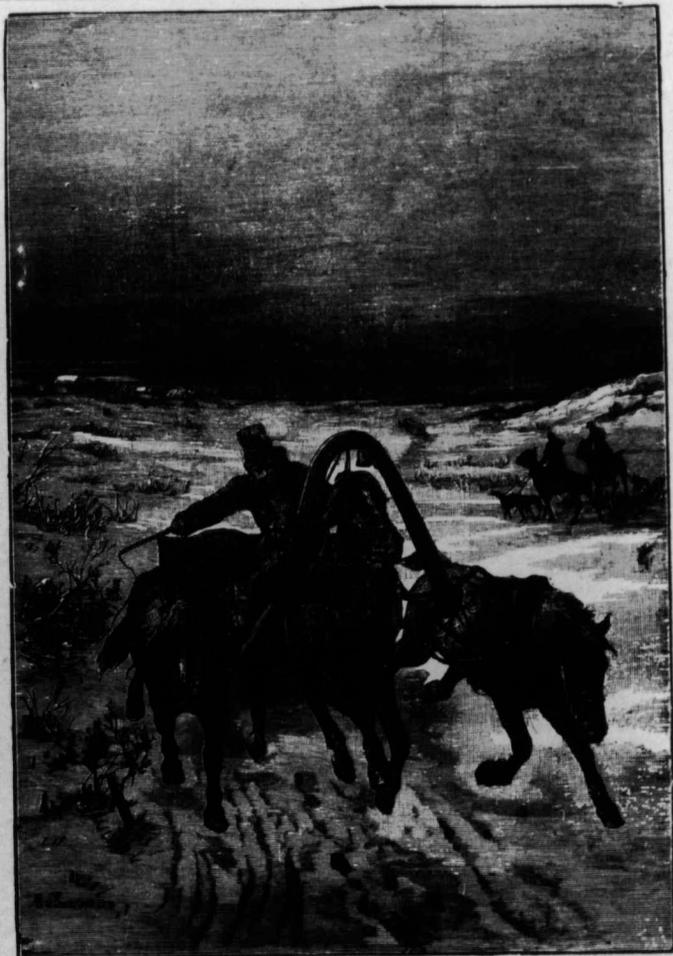


HAPPY DAYS

THE STEPPES.

In the southern portion of the Russian empire stretch vast plains of sterile aspect and unbroken monotony, called the Steppes. Covering a very great area, they are so bare as to be absolutely treeless; the only vegetation they support being a low, straggling shrub, of which we see a very good example in the left corner of the picture. For a great part of the year the Steppes present an unbroken expanse of snow-covered and hard-frozen wastes—as dismal and desolate a piece of country as can be found anywhere in Europe. These conditions naturally render travelling very difficult. It is all done in sleighs, drawn by three, and sometimes more, horses, and the distances covered in a single day are often incredible.

But distance and cold are by no means the traveller's worst enemies. Good warm furs and strong, swift horses render these comparatively harmless. The greatest danger takes the unwelcome form of large, roving packs



CROSSING THE STEPPES, RUSSIA.

of hungry wolves, which, though afraid to approach a settlement unless under the influence of extreme hunger, will not hesitate to attack a lonely traveller—where

the proportion will probably be fifty to one. The picture is a typical scene of the Steppes; with the dull and threatening sky, the scanty vegetation, and the village in the background; while in the foreground a sleigh, with the peculiar mode of harnessing the horses, setting out, with a vigorous driver, for some far-distant village, and possibly to meet his worst enemy. May he have a prosperous and safe journey.

GRAND SYMPATHY.

A little girl went to her Sabbath-school, and when she came home her mother asked her what she had done at school, and in her simplicity she said:

“Oh, dear mother, I am afraid I have done nothing; for you know there was Mary Curtis, whose brother was buried this week, and she cried so that I took her hands

in mine, and kissed her, but it took all the lesson out of my head; and poor Sarah Miles, who is always behind with her lessons, had them this morning