

Michael Strogoff,

OR, THE COURIER OF THE CZAR.

By Jules Verne.

CHAPTER XI.—CONTINUED.

Walking along, Alcide Jolivet chattered away as usual, with his invariable good humor. "Fauch, Mr. Korpanoff," said he to Michael, "you have indeed got us out of a bad scrape."

As to Michael, he retained his tarantass, which was not much the worse for its journey across the Urals; and he had only to harness three good horses to it to take him swiftly over the road to Irkutsk. As far as Tioumen, and even up to Novo-Zaimsko, this road has slight inclines, which gentle undulations are the first signs of the Ural Mountains.

Had I been present at her birth I might have known," replied Blount curtly. "The country they were then crossing was almost a desert. The weather was fine, the sky partly cloudy, the temperature more supportable."

perhaps more than the postmaster could provide for, at least in a short space of time. Half an hour after the berlin was left far behind, looking on the horizon of the steppe. It was eight o'clock in the evening when the two carriages arrived at the posthouse in Ichim.

CHAPTER XIII. NADIA, with the clear perception of a right-minded woman, guessed that some secret motive directed all Michael Strogoff's actions; that he, for a reason unknown to her, did not belong to herself; that he had not the power of doing what he desired; and that in this instance especially he had heroically sacrificed to duty even his resentment at the gross injury he had received.

Nadia therefore asked no explanation from Michael. Had not the hand which she had extended to him already replied to all that he might have been able to tell her? Michael remained silent all the evening. The postmaster not being able to supply them with fresh horses until the next morning, a whole night must be passed at the house.