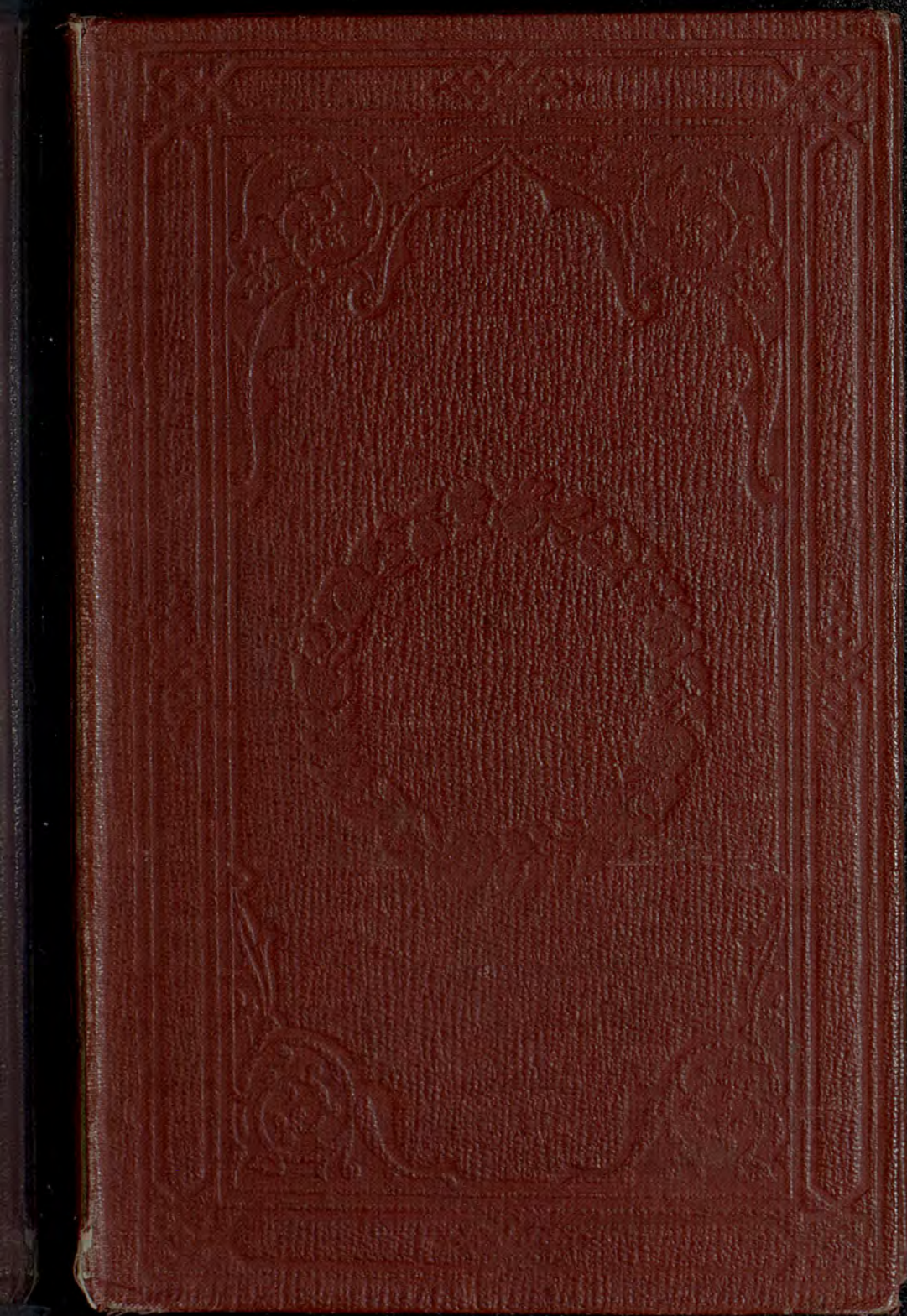




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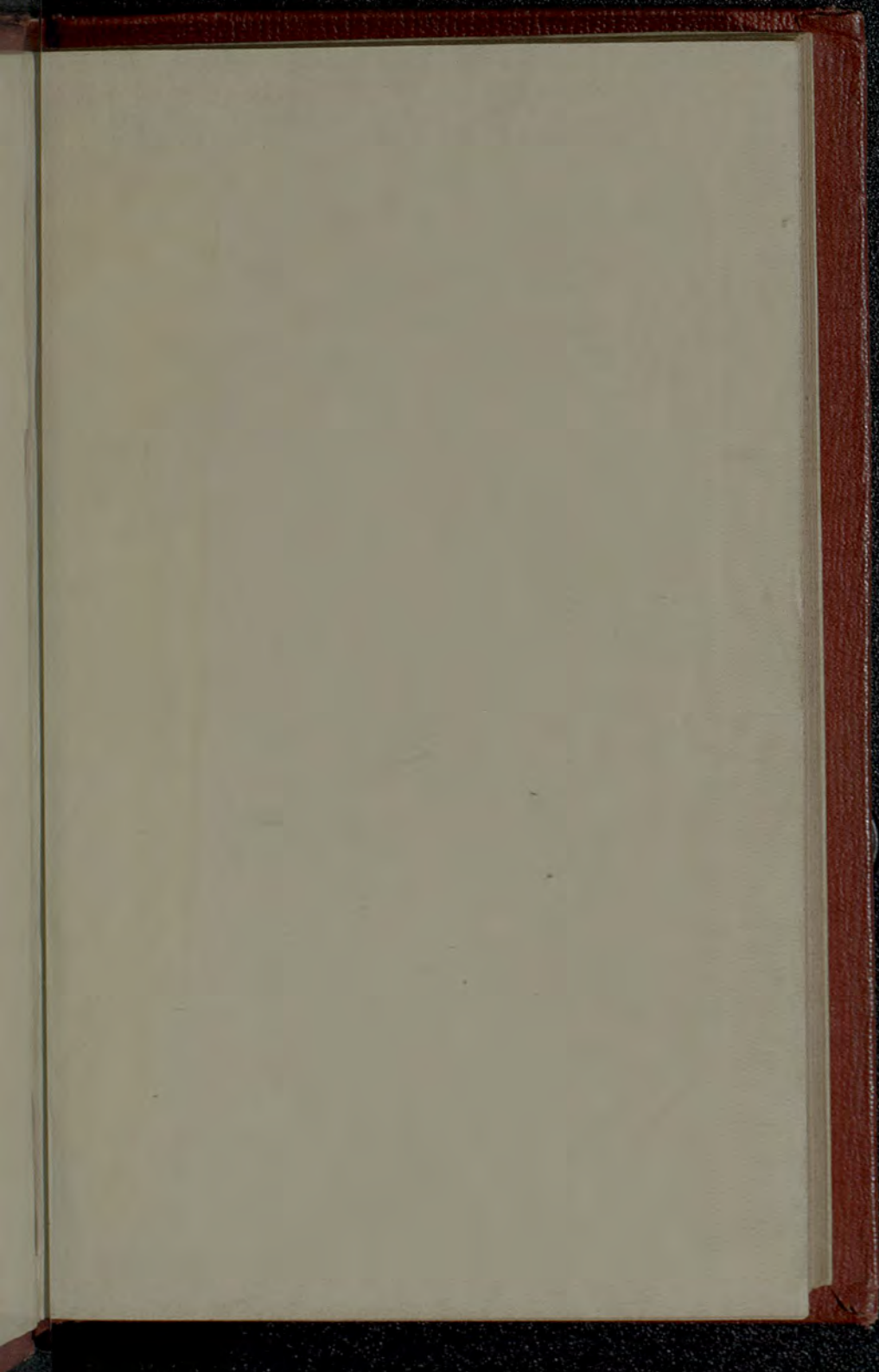


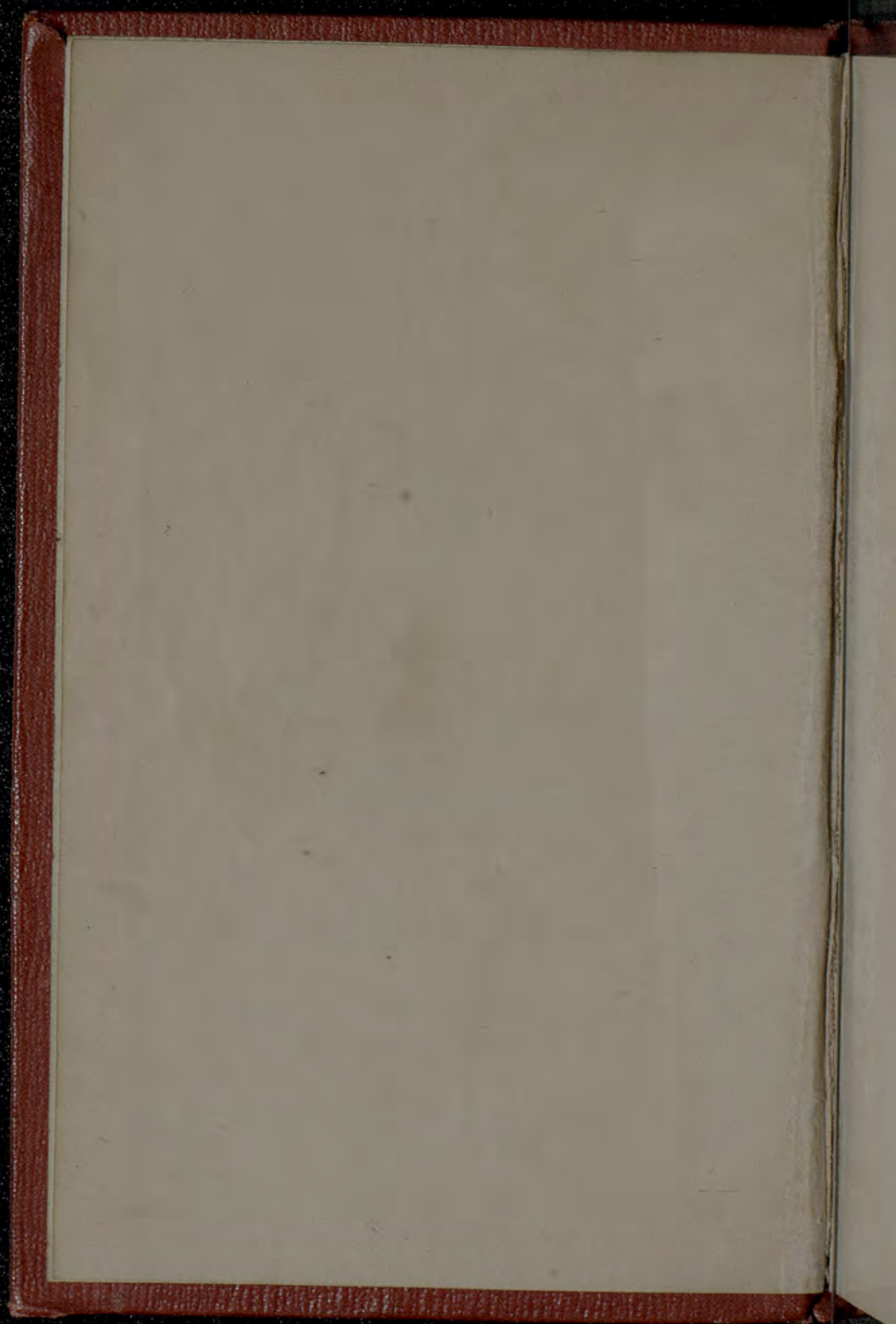
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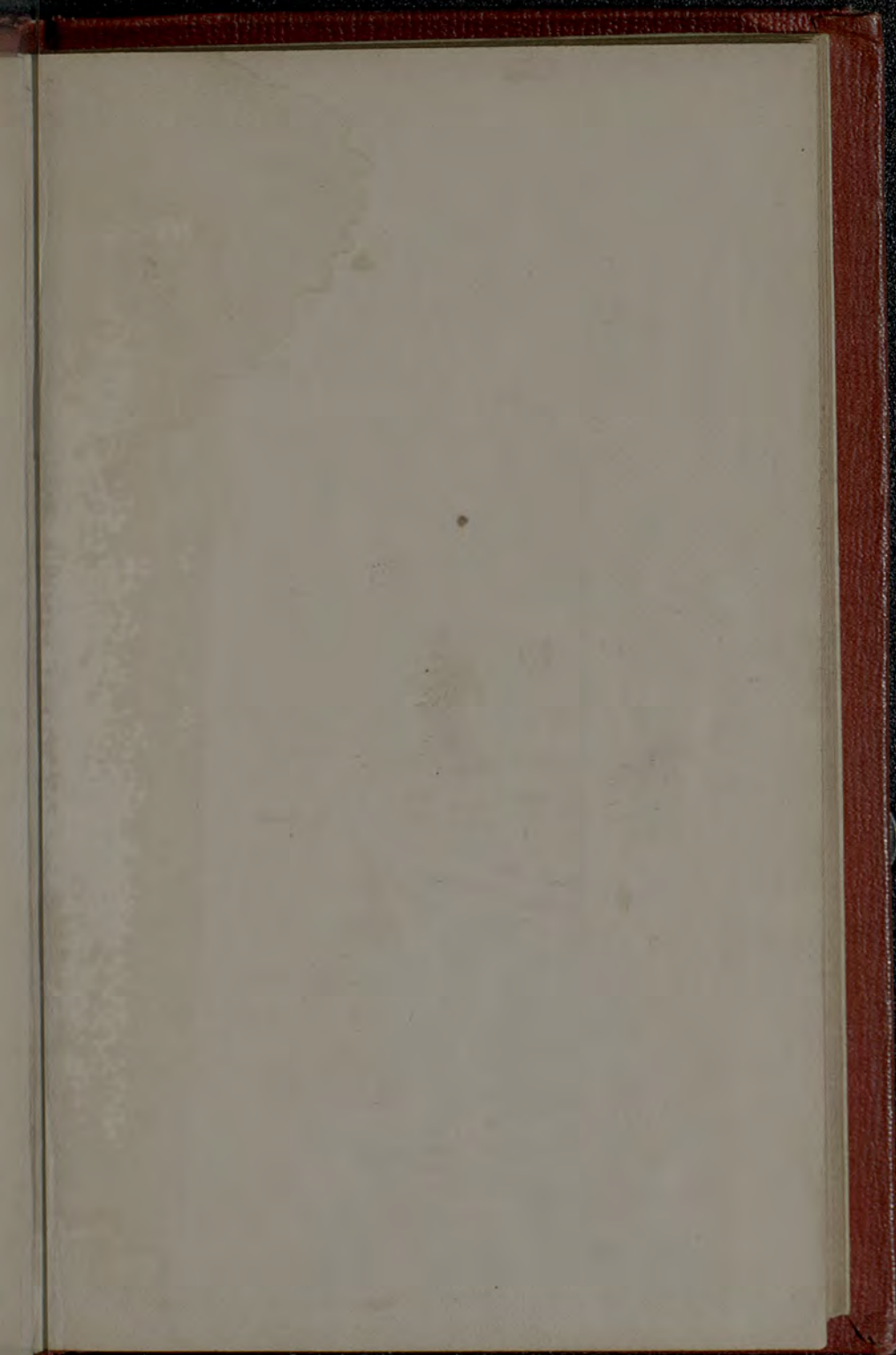
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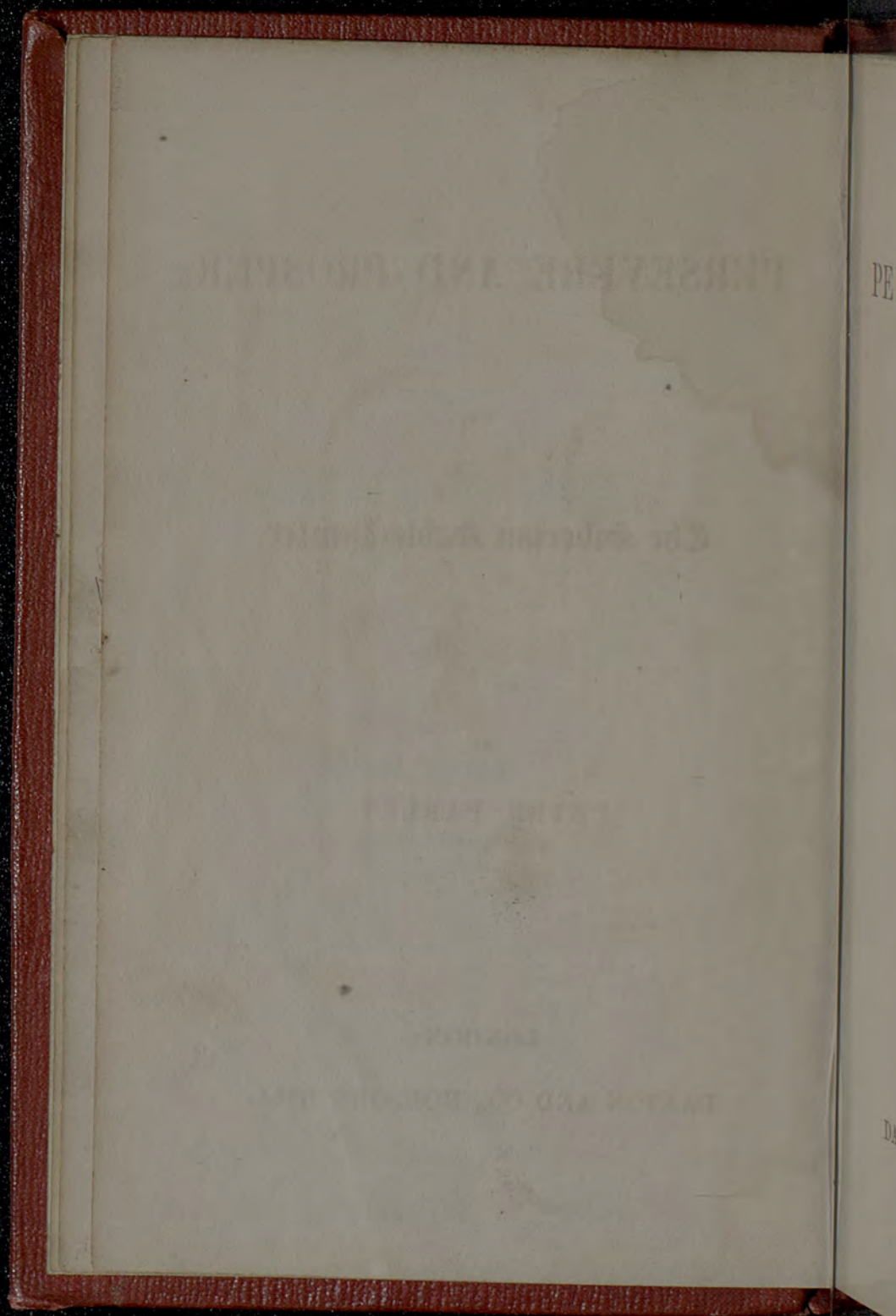
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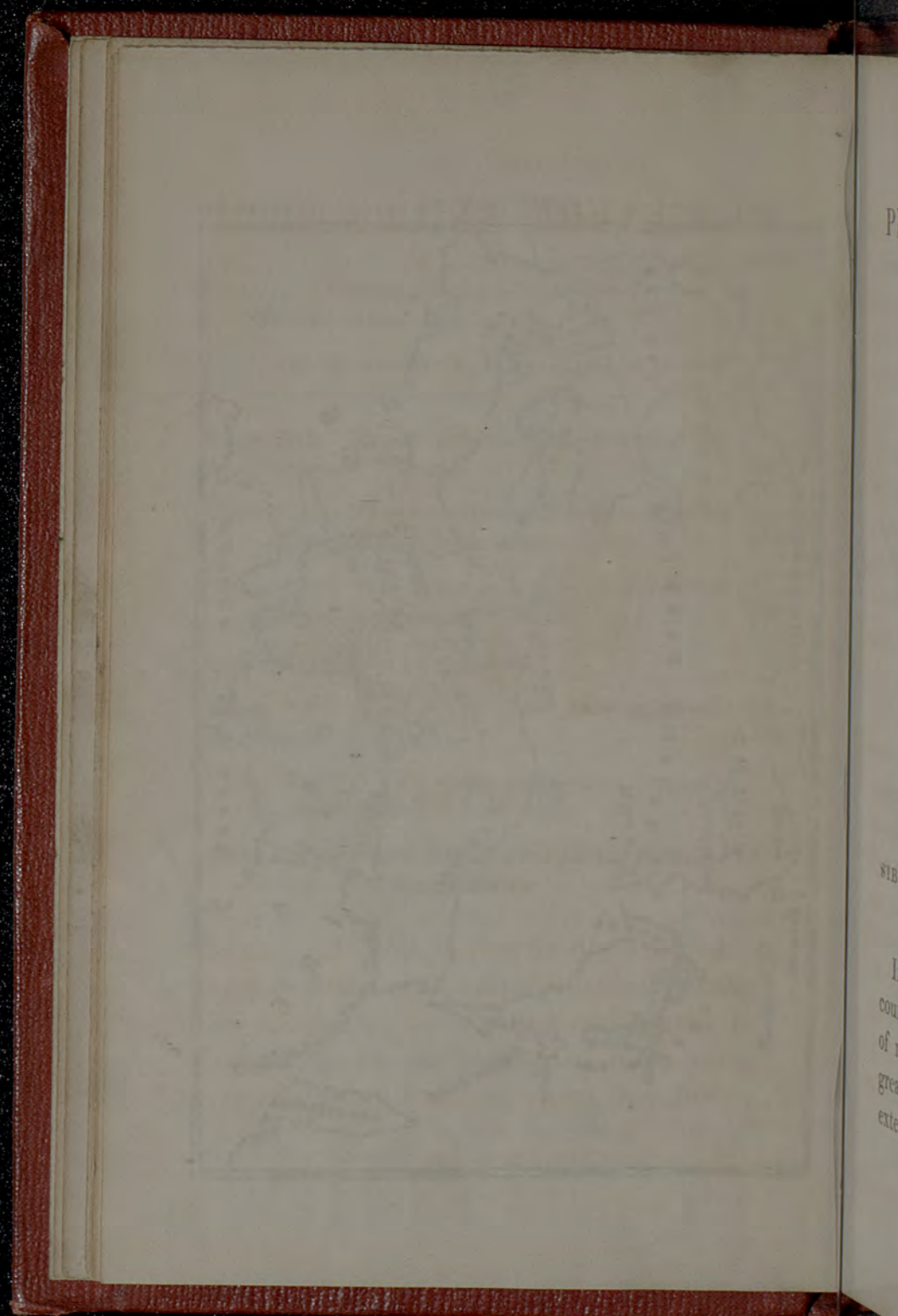
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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAP. I. Siberia—Struggle of the Poles for Freedom	1
CHAP. II. A Parent's Counsel—Pride—Necessity of Exertion—Touch of Romance	13
CHAP. III. Plain of Baraba—Ostiacks—Dwaff Khizan—The Mines—Tomsk	24
CHAP. IV. The Mines—The Cave of Diamonds .	37
CHAP. V. Dull Times—Expedition to the Arctic Sea —Elephants' Teeth—Brandy	45
CHAP. VI. Meeting with Tunguses—Great Feast— —The Travellers proceed	52
CHAP. VII. A Dissertation upon going on Foot— Adventure with Wolves	62
CHAP. VIII. Respectability of Bears—Yakutsk in sight	70
CHAP. IX. Arrival at Yakutsk—Letter from Home —Departure—Adventure	78

	PAGE
CHAP. X. A weary Journey—Tunguses—Wolves— The first Sables killed	88
CHAP. XI. Successful Hunting—Alexis in Trouble —A Stranger introduced	97
CHAP. XII. The Nobleman's Story—Return of the Hunters to Yakutsk	106
CHAP. XIII. News from Home—New Plan—Okotsk —Kamtschatka—Japan—China	111
CHAP. XIV. The Vessel sets Sail—Countries and Seas passed—Tales of the Tartars	123
CHAP. XV. A Secret discovered	133
CHAP. XVI. Corea—Loo Choo, Formosa—Psai- manazar	138
CHAP. XVII. Talk about India—The Voyage— St. Petersburg—Old Linsk again	149
CHAP. XVIII. Linsk's Story—Pultova and Kathinka in Prison—A Happy Ending	159





PERSEVERE AND PROSPER



CHAPTER I.

SIBERIA—STRUGGLE OF THE POLES FOR FREEDOM.

IN the northern part of Asia, there is a vast country called Siberia. It is nearly destitute of mountains, and consists principally of a great plain, stretching out to an immense extent, and being in many parts almost as

level as the sea. In some places it is barren and bare, but in others it is covered with forests. Sometimes these are of pine, cedar, hemlock, and other evergreens, and grow so thickly as to make it difficult to pass between the trees.

Several great rivers cross this country, the chief of which are the Irtysh and Obi, the Yenisei, and the Lena. These are almost as large as the great rivers of America. They flow from south to north, and empty themselves into a boisterous sea called the Arctic Ocean.

Siberia is a cold and desolate region, where the summer is short, and where winter reigns about two thirds of the year. There are few towns or cities, especially in the north, and thus large portions of the country are both uncultivated and uninhabited. There are vast tracts given up to solitude, or visited only by wolves, bears, and other savage animals, or occasionally crossed by wandering parties of Tartars, who are the chief inhabitants of the country, and who are almost as wild as the Indians of America.

This great country, which is more extensive than the whole of Europe, and about three times as large as the entire territory of the United States, belongs to Russia. It is under the government of the emperor of that country, who, you know, reigns over a larger portion of the earth than any other ruler.



It would seem that it could be no great advantage to hold possession of such a cold and dreary land as Siberia; but it produces a good deal of gold, silver, and copper, and the southern portions, having a rich soil, yield vast quantities of grain. Some of the Tartar tribes are fond of rearing horses and

cattle, and so abundant are these creatures in certain places, that a horse sells for ten shillings, and an ox for five shillings. Oatmeal is sold for two-pence half-penny a bushel, and a man may live on fifty shillings a year. But though articles seem so very cheap, it must be remembered that a man must labour for about two-pence a day; so that, after all, he has to work pretty hard for a good living.

But what I have been saying relates to the southern part of Siberia, where the climate is milder and the soil rich; as you go northward, the cold increases, and vegetation diminishes. At last you come to a country where there are few people, and where, as I have said before, the whole region seems to be given up to savage animals. In the loneliness of the forests here, the wolf and the bear roam at their pleasure, being the sovereigns of the country. Yet it is in these very regions that a great source of wealth is found—for here are various animals which yield the most beautiful furs

The most celebrated and valuable are pro-

duced by a species of weasel, called the sable—one skin of which has been known to sell for thirty pounds. Beside the sable, the black fox, whose skin often sells for six pounds, martens of two or three kinds, and other animals, are found, which produce valuable furs; and it is to be considered that it is the very coldness of the country which renders the furs so excellent. Creatures living here have need of very warm jackets, and according to the wisdom and benevolence which we find everywhere in creation, they are provided with them. Considering that the animals in the north of Siberia live among regions of snow and frost, where summer comes only for a few weeks in the year, and winter holds almost perpetual sway, nature gives the sable, the marten, and the fox, and even the wolf and the bear, such nice warm clothes, that kings and queens envy them, and hunters are sent two thousand miles to procure these luxuries. Thus it is that nature watches over the wild animals: but my readers must remember that when I speak of nature, in this manner, I

mean that kind providence of God which takes care of us all, and permits not even a sparrow to fall unnoticed to the ground.

By what I have said you will see that Siberia, after all, yields a great deal of wealth, and the emperor of Russia therefore holds on to it with a greedy grasp. But it is not for its productions alone that he holds it; for the emperor has many subjects—about fifty millions in Europe and Asia—and as he is a hard master, some of them are pretty often rebellious; and to punish them, he sends them to Siberia. This is a kind of prison,—though a large one—where those are banished who have incurred the displeasure or dislike of the emperor. So numerous are these exiles, that Tobolsk, one of the largest towns, which lies in the western part of the country, is to a great extent peopled by them and their descendants. It is about some of these exiles that I am going to tell you a story in the following pages.

A few years since, a Pole, by the name of Ludovicus Pultova, a native of Warsaw, was banished to Siberia, by Nicholas, the present

emperor of Russia. His offence was, that he had engaged in the struggle of 1830 to liberate Poland, his native country, from the tyranny exercised over it by its Russian masters. The Poles had hoped for aid in their efforts from other nations; but in this they were disappointed, and they were overwhelmed by the powerful armies of the emperor. Thousands of them fled to other lands, to escape the fate that awaited them at home; others were shot, or shut up in dungeons; and others, amounting to many hundreds, were sent to Siberia.

The wife of Pultova was dead, but he had a son and daughter, the first about eighteen years of age, and the other sixteen, at the time of his banishment. It was no small part of his misery that they were not permitted to accompany him in his exile. After a year, however, they contrived to leave Warsaw, where they had lived, and, passing through many dangers and trials, they at last reached their father at Tobolsk.

This city contains about 16,000 people, nearly all the houses are of wood: the

city consists of a fort and citadel, with numerous dwellings around them, on a hill, and another portion on the low ground, bordering on the river Obi. The people, as I have said before, are chiefly exiles, or their descendants; and as it has been said that tyranny never banishes fools, so the society embraces many persons of talent and merit. Some of them, indeed, have been celebrated for their genius, and numbers of them are of high rank and character. But what must a city of exiles be?—composed of people who have been separated from their native land—from their homes, their relatives—from all they hold most dear—and that, too, with little hope of return or restoration to their former enjoyments? Most of them, also, are stripped of their property, and if they possessed wealth and independence before, they come here to drag out a life of poverty, perhaps of destitution.

Such was in fact the condition of Pultova. He was, in Warsaw, a merchant of great wealth and respectability. When his countrymen rose in their resistance, he received a

military commission, and distinguished himself alike by his wisdom and bravery. In the fierce battles that raged around the walls of the city before its fall, he seemed almost too reckless of life, and in several instances hewed



his way, at the head of his followers, into the very bosom of the Russian camp. He became an object of admiration to his countrymen, and of equal hatred to the Russians. When Warsaw fell, his punishment was propor-

tioned to the magnitude of his offence. He was entirely stripped of his estates, and perpetual banishment was his sentence.

It is not easy to conceive of a situation more deplorable than his, at Tobolsk. The friends that he had there, like himself, were generally oppressed with poverty. Some shunned him, for fear of drawing down the vengeance of the government; for the chief officer of the citadel was of course a spy, who kept a vigilant watch over the people: and there are few persons, reduced to servitude and poverty, who do not learn to cower beneath the suspicious eye of authority.

What could Pultova do? Here was no scope for his mercantile talents, even if he had possessed a capital to begin with. His principles would not allow him to join the bands of men, who, driven to desperation by their hard fate, took to the highway, and plundered those whom they could master. Nor could he, like too many of his fellow-sufferers, drown his senses in drunkenness. Could he go to the mines, and in deep pits, away from the light of heaven, work for three

or four half-pence a day, and that too in companionship with convicts and criminals of the lowest and most debased character? Could he go forth to the fields and labour for his maintenance where the wages of a man trained to toil, were hardly sufficient for subsistence?



These were the questions which the poor exile had occasion to revolve in his mind; and after his son and daughter joined him, and the few dollars he had brought with him were nearly exhausted, it became necessary that he should decide upon some course of action. Nor were these considerations those

which alone occupied his mind. He had also to reflect upon the degradation of his country—the ruin of those hopes of liberty which had been indulged—the wreck of his personal fortunes—and the exchange, in his own case, of independence for poverty.

It requires a stout heart to bear up against such misfortunes, and at the same time to support the heavy burden which is added, in that bitter sense of wrong and injustice, which comes again and again, under such circumstances, to ask for revenge or retribution. But Pultova was not only a man of energy in the field—he was something better—a man of that moral courage which enabled him to contend against weakness of heart in the hour of trouble. In the next chapter, I shall make you understand his feelings and character by telling you how he spoke to his children, a few weeks after their arrival.

CHAPTER II.

A PARENT'S COUNSEL—PRIDE—NECESSITY
OF EXERTION—TOUCH OF ROMANCE.

"MY dear Alexis," said Pultova, "you complain of want of books, that you may pursue your studies and occupy your mind: how can we get books in Siberia, especially without money? You are uneasy for want of something to do—some amusement or occupation;—think, my boy, how many of our countrymen are at this very hour in dungeons, their limbs galled by chains, and not only denied books and amusement, but friends, the pure air, nay the very light of heaven! Think how many a noble Polish heart is now beating and fluttering, like a caged eagle, against the gratings that confine it; how many a hero, who seemed destined

to fill the world with the fame of his glorious deeds, is now in solitude, desolate, emaciated, buried from the world, and lost to all existence, save that he still feels, suffers, despairs—and all this without a friend who may share his sorrow! How long and weary is a single day to you, Alexis; think how tedious the hours—the months—the years, to the prisoner in the prolonged night of the dungeon!”

“Dear father,” said Alexis, “this is dreadful—but how can it help our condition? It only shows us that there is deeper sorrow than ours.”

“Yes, Alexis; and from this contrast we may derive consolation. Whether it be rational or not, still, by contemplating these deeper sorrows of our fellow-men, and especially of our fellow-countrymen, we may alleviate our own. But let me suggest another subject for contemplation: what are we to do for food, Alexis? My money is entirely gone except five dollars, and this sum will last for only a few weeks.”

“Why, father, I can do something, surely.”

"Well, what can you do?"

"I do not know—I cannot say; I never thought of it before. Cannot you borrow some money?"

"No; and if I could, I would not. No, no, Alexis, our circumstances have changed. It is the will of God. We are now poor, and we must toil for a subsistence. It is a grievous change certainly—but it is no disgrace. We are indeed worse off than the common labourer, for our muscles are not so strong as his; but we must give them strength by exercise. We have pride and long habit to contend with; but these we must conquer. It is weakness, it is folly, to yield to circumstances. If the ship leaks, we must take to the boat. Heaven may prosper our efforts, and bring us, after days of trial, to a safe harbour. But my greatest anxiety is for poor Kathinka."

"Fear not for me," said the lovely girl, rushing to her father and kneeling before him—"fear not for me!"

"Kathinka, I did not know you were in the room."

"Nor was I till this moment ; but the door was ajar, and I have heard all. Dear father—dear Alexis—fear not for me. I will be no burden—I will aid you rather."

"My noble child!" said the old man, as he placed his arms around the kneeling girl,



and while his tears fell fast upon her brow, "you are indeed worthy of your mother, who, with all the softness of a woman, had the energy of a hero. In early life, while contending with difficulties in my business, she was ever my helper and supporter. In every day of darkness, she was my guiding-star. She has indeed bequeathed her spirit to me in you, Kathinka."

“My dear father, this is indeed most kind, and I will endeavour to make good the opinion you entertain of me. See! I have already begun my work. Do you observe this collar? I have foreseen difficulties, and I have wrought this that I may sell it and get money by it.”

“Indeed!” said Pultova, “you are a brave girl;—and who put this into your head?”

“I do not know—I thought of it myself, I believe.”

“And who do you think will buy this collar, here at Tobolsk? Who can pay money for such finery?”

“I intend to sell it to the governor’s lady. She at least has money, for I saw her at the chapel a few days since, and she was gaily dressed. I do not doubt she will pay me for the collar.”

At these words a bright flush came to the old man’s cheek, and his eye kindled with the fire of pride. The thought in his mind was—“And can I condescend to live upon the money that comes from the wife of the

governor, the officer, the tool of the emperor, my oppressor? And shall my daughter, a descendant of Poniatowsky, be a slave to these cringing minions of power?" But he spoke not the thought aloud. A better and wiser feeling came over him, and kissing his daughter's cheek, he went to his room, leaving his children together.

A long and serious conversation ensued between them, the result of which was a mutual determination to seek some employment, by which they could obtain the means of support for their parent and themselves.

After this, a few days had elapsed, when Alexis came home with an animated countenance, and finding his sister, told her of a scheme he had formed for himself, which was to join a party of fur hunters, who were about to set out for the north-eastern regions of Siberia. Kathinka listened attentively, and, after some reflection, replied,—“Alexis, I approve of your scheme. If our father assents to it, you must certainly go.”

“It seems to me that you are very ready to

part with me!" said Alexis, with a little dissatisfaction.

"Nay, nay," said the girl; "do not be playing the boy, for it is time that you were a man. Think not, dear Alexis, that I shall not miss you; think not that I shall feel no anxiety for my only brother, my only companion, and, save our good parent, the only friend I have in Siberia."

Alexis smiled, though the tear was in his eye. He said nothing, but, clasping Kathinka's hand tenderly, he went to consult with his father. It is sufficient to say, that the old man's consent was obtained, and in a few days, the young hunter, by the active efforts of his sister, was equipped for the expedition. The evening before he was to set out, he had a long interview with Kathinka, who encouraged him to procure the finest sable skins, saying that she had a scheme of her own for disposing of them to advantage.

"And what is this scheme of yours?" said Alexis.

"I do not like to tell you, for you will say it is all a girl's romance."

"But you must tell me."

"Indeed—I *must*? Well, if I *must*, I will. Do you remember the princess Lodoiska, that was for some time in concealment at our house during the siege of Warsaw?"

"Yes, I remember her well. But why was she there, and what became of her? And did father know that she was there? or was it only you and our mother and myself that saw her?"

"Too many questions at once, Alexis! I will tell you all I know. The princess was accidentally captured by father's troop in one of its excursions to a neighbouring village. She had fled from Warsaw a few days before, when the insurrection first broke out, and she had not yet found the means of going to St. Petersburg. Father must have known who she was, though he affected not to know. He kept the secret to himself and his family, fearing, perhaps, that some harm would come to the lady if she were discovered. It was while she was at our house that our blessed mother died.

"Father, you know, was at that time en-

gaged with the Russians without the walls. One day I came into our mother's room and found the princess, who had been reading to her, sitting by her bedside. Her countenance



was bright and calm. I never saw her look so beautiful. 'Sweet lady,' said she, taking the hand of the princess, 'I see how this strife will end. Poor Poland is destined to fall—and many a noble heart must fall with her. I know not that my gallant husband may

survive; but if he do, he will be an exile and an outcast. For him I have few fears, for I know that he has a spirit that cannot be crushed or broken. But, princess, forgive if a mother's heart, in the shadow of death, sinks at the thought of leaving children, and especially this dear girl, in such circumstances !'

"The princess wept, but answered not for some time. At last she said,—'I feel your appeal, dear friend, and I will answer it. Your husband has put my life in peril, by bringing me here; but he did it in the way of duty, and in ignorance of my name and character. He has at least given me safety, and I owe him thanks. I owe you, also, a debt of gratitude, and it shall be repaid to your child. You know my power with the emperor is small, for I have been a friend to Poland, and my heart has dwelt but too fondly on one of Poland's noblest sons, and this has almost brought me into disgrace at court. But fear not. If Kathinka should ever need a friend, let her apply to Lodoiska.'

"Such were the exact words of the prin-

cess. Our mother soon after died, and in a few days I contrived the lady's escape, which was happily effected, by the aid of the Polish chief, to whom the princess had alluded in speaking to my mother. Father never spoke to me on the subject. He must have known it, and approved of it, but perhaps he wished not to take an active part in the matter."

"This is interesting," said Alexis, "but what has it to do with the sable skins?"

"A great deal—the princess will enable us to dispose of them."

"But who is to take them to her?"

"You—you, perhaps—or perhaps I."

"You! This is indeed a girl's romance. However, there can be no harm in getting sable skins, for they bring the best price."

After much further conversation between the brother and sister, they parted for the night; and the next day, with a father's blessing and a sister's tenderest farewell, the young hunter set out on his arduous adventures.

CHAPTER III.

PLAIN OF BARABA—OSTIACKS—DWAFF
KHIZAN—THE MINES—TOMSK.

It is the character of young people to engage in new enterprises with ardour : it was so with Alexis, in his fur-hunting expedition. For a time, indeed, after parting with his father and sister, his heart was heavy, and tears more than once dimmed his eyes. He expected to be absent for a year at least, and who could tell what might befall him or them, during that space of time? Such thoughts came again and again into his mind, and as fancy is apt to conjure up fears for those we love, he pictured to himself many possible evils that might beset his relations at Tobolsk.

But these images gradually faded away, and the young hunter began to be occupied

with the scenes around him, and with the conversation of his companions. These consisted of two young men of nearly his own age, and their father, a rough old man, but an experienced and skilful hunter. They were all equipped with rifles, and each had a



long knife like a dagger in his belt. Their design was to travel on foot to the eastward, a distance of nearly two thousand miles, and then proceed northward into the cold and woody regions which border the banks of the great river Lena, as it approaches the Arctic Ocean.

Hitherto Alexis had seen little of Siberia; his curiosity was therefore alive, and he noticed attentively everything he met. Soon after leaving Tobolsk, the party entered upon the vast plain of Baraba, which spreads out to an extent of several hundred miles. It is almost as level as the sea, with slight swells resembling waves. Such plains are called *steppes* in Siberia, and they are like the



prairies of the western part of the United States, being generally destitute of trees, except low willows, and large portions having a marshy soil. Upon this plain, the travellers met with no towns, but occasionally they fell in with miserable villages of people, with huts of the rudest construction half sunk in the mud. They also sometimes encountered small bands of people, called Ostiacks.

These seemed to be a roving tribe, and in a state of barbarism. The old hunter of the party, whose name was Linsk, seemed to be well acquainted with the habits of these people; and as the four hunters were trudging along, he gave the following account of them, taking care to say something of himself in the course of his story :



“The Ostiacks are one of the most numerous of the tribes of Tartars that inhabit Siberia. They spread over the country to the north of Tobolsk, along the banks of the Obi, and the various streams that flow into

it. They do not like to dig the soil, so they live on fish, and by hunting wild animals. Some of them eat so much fish, that they smell like whale oil. I have been in their tents often, and they smell as strong as a cask of herrings.

“You must know that I have been a hunter for twenty-five years, and I have made several expeditions into the north country, where the Ostiacks chiefly dwell. It is a cold and desolate region; no trees except pines and willows grow there; there is no grass, and very few shrubs. Still, it was once a good country for furs; but the animals are nearly gone now, and I do not wonder at it, for these Ostiacks are such heathens! They are not Christians, but believe in little wooden images, which they will place on their tables, and lay around them snuff, willow bark, fish oil, and other things which they deem valuable: having done this, they call upon these images, which are their gods, to make them lucky in fishing and hunting. If the gods do not send them good luck, then these foolish people give them a banging.

They cuff their heads, and knock them off the tables, and switch them as if they were so many naughty school-boys.

“Now, for my part, I wonder that fish, or sables, or bears, or any other creatures that are useful, will stay in a country where such stupid people live. You must know that the Ostiacks have a great dread of bears, so that when they take the oath of allegiance to the



Russian government, they say, to make it very strong,—‘We hope we may be devoured by bears, if we do not keep this oath!’

“Beside all this, the Ostiacks, as you see by those whom we have met, are small short people, not more than five feet high. A great many of the women are fat, and such little round dumplings I never beheld! The hair of these people is of a reddish colour,

and floats down their shoulders. Their faces are flat, and altogether they look like animals, rather than human creatures. Their houses are made of poles, set up in a circle, and thatched with bark. In winter, the windows are covered with expanded bladders. The fire is made on one side of the room, and the



smoke circulates above, finding its way out as it can. Generally, there is but one room in a hut, and all the family are tumbled into it at night.

But there is one thing I have to say in praise of these Ostiacks. They understand fishing and hunting. In chasing the bears, they show courage and skill, and in taking the sable so as not to break his skin, they display true talent. I once knew an old

Ostiack that was nearly equal to myself in hunting. He could see the track of an ermine, marten, or sable, upon the snow-crust, when nobody else could; he would follow one of these creatures for a whole day, pretending he could see the foot-prints; but



I believe the old fellow could smell like a dog. What beautiful sables and gray foxes he caught! He once got two sable skins which were sent to St. Petersburg, and sold for sixty pounds. The emperor bought them himself, and sent the old fellow a knife ornamented with a silver plate, and the word "Nicholas" engraved upon it.

This the emperor said was to encourage the hunter to get fine furs. But the old man died soon after, and the people said it was from mere pride, because the emperor had paid him so much honour. He never hunted any more, but strutted about, brandishing his knife in the air, and saying, 'Behold! this is what Nicholas, the Czar of all the Russias, has sent to Dwaff Khizan, the greatest hunter of Siberia!'"

Alexis listened with interest to this account of the Ostiacks by old Linsk: but his heart really palpitated when the hunter told of the rich sable furs sent to St. Petersburg by Dwaff Khizan, and which not only brought a great price, but won the favour of the emperor. He immediately remembered the injunction of his sister Kathinka, to be particular and get rich sable furs; and he also remembered that she had spoken of sending them to the princess Lodoiska. "After all my thinking that the girl was romantic and conceited, to fancy that she could send furs to a princess, and attract her attention, now that we are poor exiles in Siberia, perhaps she is right,

and has more sense than I have. At all events, I will exert myself to procure some sable furs finer than were ever seen before. We are going to the coldest portions of Siberia, and there it is said are the most splendid furs in the world. It will be a great



thing to please Kathinka, and to relieve my father from poverty; beside, I should like to beat old Linsk, vain and boastful as he is!"

With this ambitious conclusion, Alexis stepped more quickly and proudly over the level road, and, without thinking of it, had soon advanced considerably before his party. Coming to a place where the road divided,

he took that which led to the right, as it seemed the best. He had not gone far, however, before he heard the loud call of Linsk. Stopping till the party came up, Alexis found that he had taken the wrong path. "That road," said Linsk, "leads to the great town of Tomsk; a place which has ten thousand people in it, and I may add that one half of them are drunkards. This is the more wonderful, for the people have enough to do, because the country in that quarter abounds in valuable mines. All around Tomsk there are salt lakes, and the waters are so impregnated with minerals, that the bottoms of the pools have a coat as white as snow.

"To the south of Tomsk, a great many miles, are some mountains, called the Altai range. In these mountains, there are mines of gold and silver, and of platina, a metal more costly than silver. The mines are wrought by exiles; and, master Alexis, some of your countrymen are there, as they ought to be. You ought to thank the clemency and mercy of the emperor, for not sending you and your father there!"

“Stop! stop! old man!” said Alexis; “say no more of that! say no more of that! My father ought to be sent to the mines! For what? For risking his life to save his country? For giving his wealth to Poland? For shedding his blood for the liberty of his country? Is patriotism then a crime? Shame on the emperor who makes it so!”



“Tut, tut, tut, tut!” said Linsk, with an air of authority; “why, you talk rebellion as if you had drunk it in with your mother’s milk. What are we all coming to, when youngsters talk such pestilent stuff about liberty and patriotism? Why, what have we to do with liberty and patriotism? Let us take care to obey the emperor, and his officers, and those

who are in authority, and do our duty to each other: that is all we have to do. But never mind, boy; I did not intend to hurt your feelings: so do not think any more of what I said about your father and the mines. I believe he is an honest and noble gentleman, though I am sorry he is so much misled. Liberty and patriotism—indeed! Bah! When I hear about liberty and patriotism, I always look well to my pockets, for they sound to my ear very much like roguery and mischief. Liberty and patriotism, forsooth! as if we common men were like wild animals, and, as soon as we are of age, had a right to set up for ourselves! No! no! we are Christians, and it is our duty to honour and obey the emperor; we are his subjects, and he may do as he pleases with us—God bless him.”

“I suppose it would be glory enough,” said Alexis, having recovered his good humour, “to have our heads cut off, provided it was done by command of the emperor!”

“Certainly,” said Linsk, not discovering the irony; and here the conversation took another turn.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MINES—THE CAVE OF DIAMONDS.

"You were speaking of the mines," said Alexis. "Do they produce great quantities of the precious metals—gold, silver, and platina?"

"Yes," said the old hunter, in reply. "The mines produce the value of more than ten millions of dollars a year. Not only do they yield gold, and silver, and platina, but a great deal of copper. Besides these, many precious stones are found, such as the topaz, beryl, onyx, garnets, diamonds, and green crystals as beautiful as emeralds. All these mines and all the minerals belong to the Czar, and they are wrought by his serfs and slaves, and by such exiles as are very bad and troublesome!"

"Those who talk about liberty and patriotism, I suppose," said Alexis.

"Yes," said Linsk, snappishly.

"Well," said Alexis, "I should like to go to that country, where there are such rich minerals and precious stones. I think I could pick up enough to make myself rich."

"And get your head taken off besides," said Linsk. "Let me tell you, my young master, the metals and minerals belong to the emperor, and it is stealing for any one to take them, and whoever does so is sure to get punished. I know a story about that—"

"Tell it, I beg of you!" said Alexis: so the hunter proceeded as follows to tell the story of

THE CAVE OF DIAMONDS.

"There was once a young nobleman of Russia who was exiled to Siberia for some offence to the Czar. This happened in the time of Paul, near forty years ago. Well, when he came to Tobolsk, he was very poor, so he considered how he might get money and become rich. He heard of the mines in the mountains, and thither he went. He was careful, however, not to let anybody know his plan. He went at first to the Kolyvan

mountains, but, as there were a great many people at work there, he was afraid of being detected in his scheme; so he proceeded farther east, until he came to a tall mountain called the Schlangenberg, which is the loftiest of the Altai range.

“When he had got up to the very top of



the mountain, being weary, he laid himself down to get some rest, and here he fell asleep. While in this state, a man, in the dress of a Tartar, seemed to stand before him, and, making a low bow in the Eastern fashion, said, ‘What wouldst thou, son of a noble house?’ To this the young Russian replied—‘Wealth—give me wealth: with this I can purchase my liberty and return to Moscow,

and live again in happiness. Give me riches: with these I could buy the very soul of the emperor, for all he desires is money.'

"When the young man said this, the figure smiled on one side of his face, and frowned on the other; but he answered blandly,—'Your wish shall be granted: follow me!' Upon this, the Russian arose and followed the mysterious stranger. They descended to the foot of the mountain, and entered a cave which was formed by nature in the rocks. It seemed at first a dark and gloomy place, with grizzly images around, and a fearful roar as of mighty waterfalls, tumbling amid the gashes and ravines of the mountain; but as they advanced farther, the scene gradually changed. The darkness disappeared, and at last they came to a vast chamber, which seemed glittering with thousands of lamps. The room appeared indeed like a forest turned to crystal, the branches above uniting and forming a lofty roof, in the gothic form. Nothing could exceed the splendor of the scene. The floor was strewn with precious stones of every hue, and diamonds of immense size and beauty glistened

around. As the adventurer trod among them, they clashed against his feet as if he was marching amid heaps of pebbles. Around there were thousands of lofty columns, of a pearly transparency, which seemed to send forth an illumination like that of the moon; and these were studded with garnets, and emeralds, and rubies.

“The Russian was delighted—nay, entranced. He walked along for more than an hour, and still the vast room seemed to expand and grow more gorgeous as he proceeded. The diamonds were larger, and the light more lovely, and by-and-by there came to his ear a sound of music. It was faint, but delicious; and our hero looked around for the cause of it. At last he saw what seemed a river, and on going to the edge of it, he discovered that it was a stream of precious stones, where garnets, and beryls, and diamonds, and emeralds, and rubies, flowed like drops of water, in one gushing, flashing current; and as they swept along, a sort of gentle but entrancing melody stole out from them, and seemed to melt the heart with its gentle tones.

“‘This is indeed most lovely—most enchanting!’ said the youth to himself. ‘Well and truly has my guide performed his promise.’ Saying this, he looked around for his guide, but he had disappeared. The young man waited for a time, but the wizard did not return. At last he began to feel weary, and looked about for a place to lie down; but no such place appeared. The floor of the mighty hall was covered with precious stones, but they were so pointed and sharp, that they would have cut his flesh, if he had attempted to lie upon them. Pretty soon, hunger was added to the young man’s wants. But how could he satisfy it? There were emeralds, and rubies, and sapphires, and diamonds, but neither meat nor bread. At last he turned round, and began to search for the way out of the grotto, first filling his pockets with the richest and rarest gems he could find. But the more he sought for the passage, the more remote he seemed to be from it. He, however, continued to wander on, but all in vain. In a short time he became frantic; he threw up his hands, and tore his hair, and ran fiercely from place to place, making the lofty

arches ring with his frightful screams. 'Take your gold, take your jewels!' said he, 'and give me rest, give me bread.' 'Give me rest, give me bread,' said a fearful echo, sounding through the vaults of the cavern, and startling the ear of the bewildered youth. Repeating his cry, by night and by day, he continued to run wildly from place to place; and though forty years have rolled away since



he entered the enchanted cave, it is said he is still there, and is still unable to obtain rest or appease his hunger!"

"Is that all?" said Alexis, as the hunter paused in his narration. "Yes," said Linsk; "and let it warn you and all others not to go into the mountain, to steal the gems and the gold that belong to the emperor."

"The story is a good one," said Alexis; "and no doubt it has been used to frighten people from interfering with the emperor's mines; but it is an allegory, which bears a deeper meaning to my mind. It teaches us that riches cannot bring rest or health, and that a person surrounded with gold and gems may still be a most wretched being. Those very gems, indeed, may be the cause of his distress, when they have been obtained by crime, or avarice, or other unlawful means."



CHAPTER V.

DULL TIMES—EXPEDITION TO THE ARCTIC
SEA—ELEPHANTS' TEETH—BRANDY.

FOR several days, the adventurers continued their journey, without encountering anything worthy of being recorded. It is true that an hour seldom passed in which thoughts, feelings, or incidents did not occur to Alexis, of some interest; and if we could transfer them to our pages with the same vividness that they touched his mind and heart, it would be well to put them down. Yet, at best, the pen can give but a poor idea of what is going on in the brain and bosom of a lively and sanguine youth, separated from home and going forth to hunt sables in the wilds of Siberia.

In about three weeks after their departure, the travellers reached Yeniseisk, a considerable place, situated on the river Yenisei. The town is built chiefly of wood, the houses

being low. Leaving this place, they proceeded in a north-easterly direction, usually travelling about twenty-five miles a day.

It was now the month of September, and already the weather began to grow severe, and the snow to fall. The country also became more and more desolate, and the inhabitants were more scattered. They met with no villages, and frequently travelled a whole day without seeing a single human habitation. There were extensive marshy plains, upon which a few groups of stunted willows were to be seen; but this was almost the only vegetation that the soil produced.

The journey was not only uninteresting and depressing, but it was, in some respects, laborious and severe. Old Linsk, however, kept up the spirits of the party by his incessant prattle; and, as he had seen a good deal of life and possessed a retentive memory, he not only enlivened his companions, but he communicated a large amount of useful information. It is true that all his opinions were not just or wise, but among some chaff, there was a good deal of wheat.

After crossing the river Yenisei, and leav-

ing the town of Yeniseisk, he had a good deal to say about them both, particularly the former. "I once went down that river," said he, "entered the Arctic Ocean, passed into the sea of Obi, and up the river Obi to Tobolsk. The whole distance was more than twenty-five hundred miles, and we were gone six months.

"The purpose of our trip was to get elephants' teeth, which are found on the banks of the rivers, and along the shores of the Arctic sea. There are no elephants living in these regions now, nor are there any in all Siberia; the country is so cold that these creatures cannot dwell there. It appears that Siberia must have had a warmer climate once than it has now, for not only do we find elephants' bones, but those of the buffalo, and other animals, which can only subsist in warm countries. It was interesting to see the bones of buffaloes and elephants along the shore of the ocean; but teeth were scarce; for, cold and desolate as the country is, many people had been there before us, and gathered up most of them. We made out pretty well, however; for we entered the forests as winter approached, and shot some

bears, and sables, and ermines ; and what we lacked in elephants' teeth, we made up in furs. Besides what we gained in the way of trade, I got a good deal of information and enjoyed myself very well, my plan being to make the best of everything.

"Along the banks of the Yenisei, the inhabitants are Ostiacks, and are chiefly fishermen, and a sad set they are. I do not know how it happens, but it seems to me that those who live on fish have the most thirsty throats of any persons in the world. All the people were addicted to drinking brandy, and never did I see so much drunkenness. It is bad enough all over Siberia : the people here believe in Evil Spirits, but unfortunately they do not reckon brandy as one of them. The man that invented brandy has done more mischief to the human race than it is possible to conceive ; and those who contrive to sell it and diffuse it among mankind are only aiding in brutifying the human species. But it is a thrifty trade, and many rich men are engaged in it : they flourish in this world ; and so did the rich man we read of in Scripture, but he did not fare very well in another world. I cannot say how it is,

but I have always thought that Dives was a brandy dealer, and that was the reason he was so tormented."

"This is very strange," said Alexis, "for you drink brandy yourself, Linsk."

"That is all true," was the reply. "I cannot help it. I have got into the habit of it, and I cannot get out of it. It is one of the worst parts of the story, that when brandy has got its clutches upon you, you cannot pull them off. It is with brandy as it is said to be with the Evil Spirit—when you have once made a bargain with him, you must go through with it. So it is with the Ostiacks; they whip their wooden gods because they do not send them good luck in hunting and fishing; but they should whip their own backs, for if they fail in anything, it is generally because they get drunk, and are incapable of using their skill and strength to advantage. They know that brandy is at the bottom of all the mischief, but still they drink, and lay all the ill luck to the gods that they do not like to charge upon themselves.

"To the north of the Ostiacks are the Samoides, who live along the shore of the

Arctic Ocean the whole extent of Siberia. They are few in number, for the country is so cold and barren, that it is impossible they should greatly increase. They are very short, and I believe are the smallest people in the



world. They eat a great deal of fish, and, what is very odd, they seem to like it best when it is a little tainted. They have many reindeer, and in the autumn hunt white foxes, with the skins of which they buy brandy.

“The country inhabited by the Samoides is the most cold and dreary that can be

imagined. The snow lasts for nine months of the year; the storms are almost incessant a great part of the time, and in winter, the cold is so intense as to freeze brandy, though, I must tell you, the people contrive to thaw it again. But the most wonderful thing is this: the sun sets in November, and does not rise again till the next May; so the night



is six months long! The moon, however, shines a great part of the time, and it is never dark during that period. The northern lights, sometimes called Aurora Borealis, are very brilliant, and it is easy to read by them. The Samoides, however, have no books; they spend most of their time in winter in sitting in their huts.

CHAPTER VI.

MEETING WITH TUNGUSES—GREAT FEAST
—THE TRAVELLERS PROCEED.

THE travellers soon after came in sight of some huts belonging to the Tunguses, a very singular race of people, who inhabit the middle portions of Siberia. They resemble the Ostiacks, like them living in houses built of poles set in a circle. They have no towns nor villages, but they wander from place to place, living entirely by hunting and fishing, in which they display wonderful skill and perseverance. In summer, they dwell on the banks of the rivers, and in winter retire to the wooded regions, where they pursue the sable, ermine, marten, and black fox. They have no fire-arms, but are adroit in the use of the bow and arrow. In the spring, they carry or send their furs to Yakoutsk, a considerable town on the Olekminsk river, and the great fur-market of Siberia.

In a short time, our adventurers came to the group of huts which they had before descried, and Linsk, who knew the habits of the people, did not hesitate at once to go up to one of them and prepare to enter it through a hole about three feet high, that served as a door. He was met at the entrance by a man of about fifty years of age, and dressed in a short coat made of a wolf-skin, and a pair of flannel trousers that looked as much like a petticoat as anything else. He gazed at the four hunters for a moment with some distrust, but then seemed satisfied, and made a sign of welcome.

The conversation soon brought other persons out of the several huts around. These consisted of men, women, and children—all low in stature, and with skins of the colour of a smoked ham. The men were dressed nearly in the same fashion as the person first described. The women were attired in short cotton gowns and flannel petticoats that reached but little below the knee. The children were half naked, or clad in cotton wrappers. Several of them had on seal-skin jackets, which the men had cast off, reaching

down to the middle, and making them look like half boy and half beast.

They were a queer-looking set of people altogether, but seemed frank and good-natured, and invited the strangers to spend the night, which was now approaching, with them. Linsk, who knew the language pretty well, accepted the offer, and the party was led to one of the largest huts. Alexis noticed some fine rein-deer standing at a little distance from the dwelling, and observed several large dogs, who now awoke from their repose and came smelling suspiciously around the newcomers.

On entering the hut, the scene presented was a curious one. The whole interior consisted of one room: this was circular, of a conical form, and about twenty feet across. Benches were set around, upon which the wife and one or two other women were sitting. The fire was burning in the centre, and, there being no chimney, the whole hut was filled with smoke; but the inmates did not seem to mind it. The children were crawling upon the floor like pigs.

After staying awhile in the hut, it was an-

nounced that supper was ready, and the travellers soon found that it was to be a feast. The men of the party had been on a fishing expedition, and, having been absent a week, had scarcely tasted a bit of food during that period, and their families at home had been fasting in the mean time. One of



the huts had been assigned to the cooking of the meal, and it was to be eaten in the same place.

When our Sable-hunters came to the hut, they found about sixty people there, of both sexes and of all sizes. Already had the revel

begun; for the hunger of the parties was beyond control. The feast itself was a fine sight. Four large iron caldrons had been set over the fire, filled with fish of all sorts, though chiefly cod. They were thrown in together without dressing—heads, tails, entrails, fins, and scales! A huge quantity of deer's grease and a little salt had been put in. A brisk fire had then been kindled beneath, and the whole mass was fried or rather boiled. The steam that gushed from the door of the hut, was almost strong enough for a supper: it was so rank as to satisfy Alexis and his two younger companions, who soon went out of doors, and mingled with the people there.

A feast of wolves could not have been more voracious. Knives, forks, and plates were not thought of; each one ran into the hut with a wooden bowl, and, dipping it into the caldron, brought forth the seething mass; and, while it yet seemed boiling hot, they devoured it with a rapacity absolutely amazing. The scalding heat seemed not to be the least hinderance; there was no ceremonious blowing and cooling—down it went, one

dishful after another, as if it were a strife to see who could devour the most in the shortest space of time.

In two or three instances the children upset their bowls, and picking up their food from the ground, heedless of the dirt attached to it, ate it up; no matter if it was trodden upon, it was all the same. One of the children was seen by Alexis, flat upon his



stomach, lapping up the broth, from the earth, that had been spilt. Among this crowd, the dogs came in for their share; but they were often obliged to dispute their claims to the remnants with the greedy children.

Among all this coarseness, the strangers were treated with the utmost hospitality, as,

indeed, they had been by all they had met since their departure from Tobolsk. After the meal had been finished, a few of the men treated themselves, apart, to brandy, in which entertainment our adventurers were permitted to join. A scene of drunkenness followed, after which the men staggered to their several houses. Linsk and his companions were comfortably lodged, having drank but sparingly.

In the morning, the travellers left their Tungusian friends, and set out on their journey, offering to pay for their entertainment, which was, however, refused. Indeed, this had been generally the case, and they had hardly found any necessity of having money since the commencement of their journey. Proceeding upon their way, Linsk, according to his wont, began to talk, and the Tungusians were naturally the subject of his discourse.

"They are very numerous," said he, "occupying nearly half of Siberia, and being confined to the central portions of it. They are as restless as Tartars, always moving from place to place, and alternately feasting and starving. They can go without food as

long as a wolf, and, like a wolf, they will gorge themselves when they get a chance. They eat food when and where they can get it. I have seen them eat candles, soap, and raw pork. I was once at a place where a reindeer died of disease; they threw him whole upon a fire, singed him a little, and then ate him, leaving nothing but the bones. A real hungry Tungusian will eat twenty pounds of meat in a day!"

Alexis would have expressed some doubt of all this, had not the scene he had witnessed prepared him to believe it, and had he not found that Linsk, though not a little inclined to superstition, was still a man of veracity in all that related to his own observation and experience. He went on with his description, therefore, without interruption.

"Yet, greedy as these people are, they have their good points, as I believe all God's creatures have. They are honest, frank, and hospitable. If they love feasting, their willingness to share the meal with a stranger is a greater virtue; and they are not so stupid

as one might expect, from their swallowing such oceans of lard. I know of no people so cunning in catching fish and game. In the winter season, many establish themselves in the forests along the branches of the Wittim and Olekminsk regions, lying to the south of where we now are. A young hunter from Tobolsk, whom I knew, and who dwelt there one winter, told me that they were the keenest fellows he had ever met with. They will trace a fox by his foot-prints upon the frozen snow, and can tell whether it is gray or black by the shape of his track. They kill their game with blunt arrows, so as not to injure the skin.

“The fact is, that the Tunguses are such good hunters that the wild beasts have found them out, and have pretty much left their country. The fine sables are now seldom found in these regions, even where they used to be abundant, and those who would hunt them must go farther north, to the places where we are going. These people have no books, and their religion is a strange belief in stupid gods, whom they worship under

the form of little wooden images. They believe in witchcraft and sorcery; and there are a good many cheats among them, who pretend to practise these forbidden arts."



CHAPTER VII.

A DISSERTATION UPON GOING ON FOOT—
ADVENTURE WITH WOLVES.

HAVING taken leave of their Tungusian friends, the travellers proceeded on their journey, hoping, before many days, to reach Yakootsk, a large town on the Lena, and the great fur market of eastern Siberia. Here they intended to stay a few days, and then to proceed down the Lena, in pursuit of game. Alexis expected also to find a letter there, from his sister, which was to be sent by the mail, and which would, of course, travel faster than our pedestrian party.

Incited, therefore, by several motives, the adventurers pressed cheerily forward upon their journey. But it was now October, and the ground was covered with snow. Every day, indeed, more or less snow fell, and the hunters found their progress much impeded by it. But in travelling, as in almost every-

thing else, practice makes perfect. A man who is well trained to walking, can travel farther in a month than a horse; and as the power of going from place to place, without being dependent on horses, railroads, or even money, is a great thing, I advise all young persons—particularly young men—to learn to perform journeys on foot. The best way to travel over a country is to go as a pedestrian: you can then stop and see the people along the road, and thus get acquainted with their manners and customs; their ways of living, acting, and thinking.

Some of the pleasantest passages in my own life, occurred when I was journeying on foot; and they are perhaps more delightful in my recollection, because I had then a good, sound pair of legs— and now, alas! it is otherwise. If I had time, I could relate many little incidents, to show that a traveller on foot is usually welcomed to the hut, the log-cabin, or the farm-house, along the road; and that his stories, his news, or even his company, are esteemed good pay for his lodging and his fare.

But I must proceed with my story of the

sable-hunter, or I shall never get through it. When I began to write, I expected to despatch it in two or three chapters; but the journey, as well as old Linsk's tongue, is much longer than I expected.

For some time after the party started, Alexis found his feet sore and his limbs weary, at night,—and more than once, he felt homesick and discouraged: but he was a youth of much energy of character, and he felt the importance of making a great effort in behalf of his father and sister, upon whose happiness the whole power of his soul was now concentrated. Beside these motives to effort, Linsk took pains to enliven the spirits of his party, by putting a cheerful face upon things, and by telling his tales, of which he seemed as full as a hive is of bees. And there was this difference between Linsk's tongue and the little honey-makers—that while they grow torpid as the cold weather comes on, his organ of speech seemed to move all the faster for it. A fall of snow was usually a prelude to a story, and a real storm seldom failed to bring out something interesting. Alexis remarked that the tale was

always lively in proportion as the day was dark, or the journey tedious; and Linsk seemed, indeed, as ready to attack depression with a joke, as he was to send a bullet after a bear. I note these things with some particularity, because I conceive that cheerfulness is a great virtue, and that it is of infinite importance in those passages of life which seem to demand of us patient endurance and protracted effort. Cheerfulness is the best of all stimulants, and I advise my young friends to lay in a good stock of it.

As I have said, the weather was now stormy, and the country through which the hunters were passing, was to the last degree dreary and desolate. It was generally level, or slightly undulating, and nearly destitute of vegetation. Occasionally, they came to extensive forests, consisting of low pines and cedars, and sometimes there was a deep ravine, where the fir trees grew to a considerable height, and were so matted together as hardly to admit the light between them.

One gloomy afternoon, as the party were winding their way through a forest, which covered a range of broken hills and ridges,

the younger portion had gone before, leaving Linsk a little in the rear. Turning an angle in the road, they lost sight of him, and went on for several minutes, forgetting that he was not with them. By and by, they heard a sharp whistle, and then a rifle-shot, and then a call, that made the sullen woods reecho, as if filled with twenty voices. They instantly looked around, and seeing that Linsk was not with them, turned back, and ran with all their might, knowing that something must have happened, to cause so loud and urgent a summons.

Turning the angle in the road, and pushing on for about a dozen rods, they came upon a scene which amazed and alarmed them. There stood old Linsk, battling for life, in the midst of a pack of wolves. One of the beasts lay dead at his feet; but another had hold of his leg, and a huge fellow, nearly as tall as the old hunter himself, was laying his paws upon him, and threatening to seize him by the throat.

The coolness of Linsk was admirable. He waited his opportunity, and then stretching himself to the full height, he brought down

his powerful arm, and striking his dagger into the side of the wolf, laid him prostrate in an instant. He then bestowed a kick upon the rude beast that had hold of his leg, and hitting him by the side of the head, made him roll over and over in the snow. Linsk fell upon him ; but the creature, being



only stunned, got up, and would have run away, but the old hunter, now more furious than the wolves themselves, seized him by the tail, and whirled him round. The animal seemed amazed and frightened, and set up such a hideous howl, that all the rest of the pack took to flight ; and even the beast upon which Linsk had fastened, slipped through

his fingers and fled for his life. Happening to take the direction of the young men, now coming up and near at hand, he came pretty near Alexis, who levelled his rifle and shot him through the head.

"Well done!" cried Linsk, clapping his hands; "well done, Alexis!—you are a true hunter, after all. I am all out of breath. Bravo, boys! It is the first bit of fun I have had since we set out. St. Nicholas! that fellow has stuck his forks into my calf, as if I was a piece of pork: and I suppose he expected to make a supper of me. The knave—to think of attacking an old fellow, all alone, while his companions had deserted him! The fool—to expect that an old hunter would not give, as well as take! However, he has got his last supper; a bullet in the stomach is hard of digestion. Poor fellow—there is something I like in a wolf, after all!"

While Linsk was uttering this last observation, Alexis came up, and although he was curious to know why his old friend could have an affection for an animal that had just threatened his life, and actually thrust his fangs into his flesh, he did not attempt now

to inquire into the subject. The hunter was, indeed, in too great a state of excitement for any deliberate conversation. He went on, with one exclamation after another, describing, by snatches, the attack of the wolves, and his own feats in the fray.

After spending some time on the spot, and taking a view of the several animals that had been slain, they proceeded on their way. Linsk was quite enlivened by the adventure, and, having talked about it for some time, began to tell of other scenes of the kind, in which, at various times, he had been engaged.



CHAPTER VIII.

RESPECTABILITY OF BEARS—YAKOOTSK
IN SIGHT.

WHILE the travellers proceeded on their journey, Linsk, now thoroughly excited by his adventure with the wolves, seemed to have his imagination filled with the scenes of former days. In the course of his observations, he remarked that though he had great respect for a wolf, he had a positive reverence for a bear.

"Indeed!" said Alexis, "how is it possible to have such a feeling as reverence for a wild beast, and one so savage as a bear? I never heard any good of the creature."

"That may be," said Linsk; "and yet what I say is all right and proper. If you never heard any good of a bear, then I can give you some information. Now there is a country far off to the east of Siberia, called Kamtschatka. It is a terribly cold country,

and the snow falls so deep there in winter, as to cover up the houses. The people are then obliged to dig holes under the snow from one house to another, and thus they live, like burrowing animals, till the warm weather comes and melts away their covering.



“Now what would the people do in such a country, if it were not for the bears? Of the warm skins of these creatures they make their beds, coverlets, caps, gloves, mittens, and jackets. Of them, they make collars for their dogs that draw their sledges, and also the soles of their shoes when they want to go

upon the ice to spear seals, for the hair prevents slipping. The creature's fat is used instead of butter, and when melted it is burnt instead of oil.

"The flesh of the bear is reckoned by these people as too good to be enjoyed alone; so, when any person has caught a bear, he always makes a feast and invites his neighbours. They say the meat has the flavour of a pig, the juiciness of whale-blubber, the tenderness of the grouse, and the richness of a seal or a walrus. So they consider it as embracing the perfections of fish, flesh, and fowl!

"And this is not all. Of the intestines of the bear, the Kamtschatdales make masks to shield the ladies' faces from the effects of the sun; and as they are rendered transparent, they are also used for window-panes, instead of glass. Of the shoulder-blades of this creature, the people make sickles for cutting their grass, and of the skins they make muffs to keep the ladies' fingers warm.

"Beside all this, they send the skins to market, which sell for high prices at St. Petersburg, for the use of the ladies, and for

many other purposes. Such is the value of this creature when dead; when alive he is also of some account. He has a rope put around his neck, and is taught a great many curious tricks. It seems to me that he might learn to read and go to college, as well as half those that do go there; but of this I cannot



speak with certainty, for I never went myself. All I can say is, that a well-taught bear is about the drollest creature that I ever saw. He looks so solemn, and yet is so droll! I cannot but think, sometimes, that there is a touch of human nature about the beast, for there is often a keen twinkle in his eye, which seems to say, 'I know as much as the

best of you : and if I do not speak, it is only because I scorn to imitate you.

“ It is chiefly on account of the amusement that bears thus afford, that these Kamtschadales catch a good many, and send them alive by ships to market. They also send live bears to St. Petersburg, London and Paris, for the perfumers. These people shut them up, and make them very fat, and then kill them for their grease, which is used by fops and dandies to make their locks grow. I suppose they think that the fat will make the hair grow on their heads as it does on the back of the bear. I am told that in the great cities, now-a-days, a young man is esteemed in proportion as he resembles a bear in this respect. Bear’s grease has become a necessary of life to a modern dandy, and so there is a great demand for the creature that affords such a treasure.

“ Now, master Alexis, I hope you are satisfied that in saying you never heard any good of a bear, you only betrayed ignorance—a thing that is no reproach to one so young as yourself. But, after all I have said, I have not half done. You must remember

that this creature is not—like a sheep, or a reindeer, or a cow, or a horse—always depending upon man for breakfast, dinner, and supper. He is too independent for that; so he supports himself, instead of taxing these poor Kamtschadales for his living. Why, they have to work half the year to provide food for their domestic animals the other half; whereas the bear feeds and clothes himself, and when they want his skin, or his flesh, he is all ready for them!”

“I am satisfied,” said Alexis, “that the bear is a most valuable creature to those people who live in cold, northern countries; for he seems to furnish them with food, dress, and money; but, after all, they have the trouble of hunting him.”

“Trouble!” said Linsk; “why, that is the best of it all!”

“But is it not dangerous?” said Alexis.

“Of course it is,” replied the old hunter; but danger is necessary to sport. It is to hunting, like mustard to your meat, or pepper and vinegar to your cabbage. Danger is the spice of all adventure; without this, hunting

would be as insipid as ploughing. There *is* danger in hunting the bear; for though he is peaceable enough when you let him alone, he is fierce and furious if you interfere with his business, or come in his way when he is pinched with hunger.

"I have had some adventures with bears myself, and I think I know the ways of the beast as well as anybody. Sometimes he will trot by, only giving you a surly look or a saucy growl. But if you chance to fall upon a she-bear, with a parcel of cubs about her, you must then look out."

"Did you ever see a bear with cubs, father?" said Nicholas, the elder of Linsk's sons.

"To be sure I have," was the answer.

"Well, what I want to know," said the boy, "is, whether they are such creatures as people say. I have been told that young cubs are as rough as a bramble bush, and that they do not look like living creatures till the old bear has licked them into shape. Is that true?"

"No, no—it is all nonsense, Nick. Young

cubs are the prettiest little things you ever saw. They are as soft and playful as young puppies; and they seem by nature to have a very gentle spirit. It is as the creature grows old that he becomes wicked and savage—and I believe it is the same with men as with bears. Who would think, to see a playful infant in his cradle or in his mother's arms, when he loves and takes delight in everything, that he would grow into such a grumbling, selfish, savage creature as you too often see amongst men? Such a change takes place in the character of a bear cub.



CHAPTER IX.

ARRIVAL AT YAKUTSK—LETTER FROM
HOME—DEPARTURE—ADVENTURE.

HAVING collected a considerable quantity of furs, our travellers proceeded to the town of Yakutsk. This place is situated on a nearly level plain, which was now covered with snow. There were only a few stunted trees to be seen, and not a dwelling for miles around the town. The river, of which a view was afforded, was frozen over, and the scene bespoke a land of sterility and the stern season of winter.

Yakutsk contains about 7000 inhabitants, and is built of wood. The houses are low and mean, and the people, for the most part, live in poverty and wretchedness. The climate is so severe, that, as late as June, the frost is not out of the ground; and in September the Lena, which is a large river, is frozen over. Of course, the fruits yielded by

the soil are exceedingly few, and the people have hard work, during the three brief months of summer, to lay up a sufficient store of food, fuel, and clothing, to save them from perishing during the long and bitter winter of nine months.

It was three months since Alexis had parted from his friends at Tobolsk, and he was separated from them by a space of almost two thousand miles. He expected to get letters from home, brought by the post, and as soon as he and his party had obtained lodgings, he went to the office, where they were to be left. It was with a beating heart that he entered the place and inquired. So long a time had elapsed since his departure, and so vast a distance now lay between him and his friends, that he experienced a sickening sense of anxiety. What might not have happened in the interval to his aged father or his dear sister?

These were the thoughts in his mind, as the person at the office handed him a letter, on which he instantly recognized the handwriting of Kathinka. He thrust it into his

bosom, and, with a rapid step, sought his lodgings. Here he broke the seal, and read as follows :

“Dearest Alexis,—It is now two months since you left us, and it seems a year. I have counted the very hours since your departure, and could I have foreseen the weariness, anxiety, and longing that your absence has occasioned, I should never have consented to your enterprise. When I think that you will be nearly two thousand miles from Tobolsk when this reaches you, I am really sick at heart.

“And yet nothing has happened to give us any particular cause of anxiety. Indeed, our condition has rather improved. The governor’s lady bought the lace collar which I wrought, and has since taken other articles, and she has paid me well for them. The governor himself has noticed me kindly, though there is something about him I do not like. He smiles when he meets me, and flatters me very much; but still, his dark brow frightens me. However, I must not

offend him, for he is not only kind to me, but he has called upon our poor father, and expressed his desire to make his exile as little painful as possible. I cannot tell what has so altered his manner towards us, but I hope it proceeds from kindness of heart.

“Do you remember young Suwarrow, who used, in former days, to be at our house in Warsaw? It is a long time ago, but I remembered him very well, when he called upon us here. He is of Polish birth, but his family is Russian, and he is now an officer of the castle in Tobolsk. He arrived shortly after you left us, and soon found us out, and has been to see us frequently.

“You will desire to know all about our dear father. He is now happily relieved from the fear of immediate want; the products of my needle, so liberally paid for by the governor’s lady, supply us with the few necessities of life. He spends a good deal of time in reading; for Suwarrow has furnished us with books, and occasionally we get the Petersburg Gazette from the same source. He seems more tranquil, but I see that sorrow is gradually weaving its shadows over his brow.

There is a settled sadness in his face, which sometimes makes me weep. Oh, how changed is his condition ! How is the light of his life put out ! Dear Alexis, these things move me to tears. I often desire that you were here to share, and thus to soften our cares.

“I have had a great deal of anxiety for you. Pray write me a long letter, and tell me all about your journey. How have you borne the long and weary march of two thousand miles ? Alas, that Alexis Pultova should have come to this ! And yet, my brother, it may be good for you : I mean, it may promote your happiness. It may seem strange to you, for it surprises myself, that I find a real pleasure in my toil. I once thought that labour was a curse, but I now find it a blessing. It is associated in my mind with the comfort and independence of our father ; there is something soothing and consoling to think that I can be so useful. And you, I trust, find the same compensation for your exertions and privations.

“I have now written my sheet nearly full, yet I have not told you a hundredth part of what I think and feel. Oh that I could see

you, dear, dear Alexis! I never loved you so well as now, in your absence. I am not content with this cold way of speaking to you. I want to pour out my soul with the lips to your own ear, and in your real presence. Yet I must not be impatient. I would not recall you, for I believe you are in the path of duty. Let the confidence that an arm more powerful protects you nerve your heart for your hardy enterprise. Write me a long letter. I shall write again in four months, so that on your return to Yakutsk, after your hunting excursion upon the banks of the Lena, you will get news from us once more. Father sends his blessing, and a thousand kind prayers and wishes for your safety. Suwarrow wishes to be kindly mentioned to you. Farewell! farewell!

“KATHINKA.”

We need hardly say that this tender epistle drew many tears from Alexis. For a time, he was almost overcome with a yearning for home, but this feeling subsided, and he was able to direct his attention to other matters. The streets of Yakutsk presented many

objects of curiosity. There were parties of Kamtschadales, in the town, muffled in skins, and drawn on sledges by dogs; and there were Samoiedes, short copper-coloured men, dressed in seal-skins, and drawn by reindeer. These, and hunters of many other tribes, were to be seen in the streets, all of them seeking a market for their furs. There were also merchants here to buy them, from



Russia, Tartary, Japan, and other countries. Nothing could be more curious than the contrasts furnished by these different people.

Linsk had been here before, and understood the manners and business of the place. He was a good judge of furs, and having some spare cash, he bought a few skins, remarkable for their fine quality, knowing that he

could make a large profit by them on his return to Tobolsk. These he deposited, for safe-keeping, in the hands of a merchant.

After a few days, having made provision for their wants, the hunters left Yakutsk, and taking a northern course along the banks of the Lena, pursued their way toward the hunting-ground, where they hoped to gather a rich harvest of sable skins.



It was now mid-winter, and it is hardly possible to conceive of anything more dreary than the country through which they passed. It was a plain, covered deep with snow, over which the wind was driving in its swift, unbroken career. Not a house or hut was visible for leagues; there was no path; and the travellers were obliged to guide themselves, as they proceeded on the hard snow-crust,

like the voyager upon the sea, by the heavenly bodies, or occasional landmarks.

Pursuing their weary and lonely way—seeming, in the vast expanse, like insects creeping slowly on—they reached at night a small uninhabited hut, situated in a wooded ravine, and designed for the shelter of travellers.



Here the party made preparations for rest, and soon fell asleep. Early the next morning, Linsk went forth, leaving Alexis and his sons to their repose; his object being to see if he could not find some game, for he was now becoming eager to enter upon business. Scarcely had he proceeded two hundred yards, when a bear sprung suddenly from a thicket of fir trees, and rearing on his hind legs, was about clasping the old hunter in his

fore-legs. But Linsk was like a weasel—always on the watch. Quick as thought he seized the bear by the throat, and drawing his dirk, plunged it into his bowels. He fell with a fearful growl to the earth, and Linsk, drawing back, levelled his rifle at his head, and killed him in an instant. He then returned to the hut, and called his companions to rejoice in his triumph. They took some refreshment, and proceeded to take off the skin of the bear, which proved to be a very fine one.



CHAPTER X.

A WEARY JOURNEY—TUNGUSES—WOLVES
—THE FIRST SABLES KILLED.

AFTER securing the skin of the bear, the travellers proceeded on their journey, the weather still continuing clear, but intensely cold. They were, however, well secured by furs, and plodded cheerfully on, over the snow-crust. There was little variety, for the country was generally level, and they often marched on for hours, without meeting a single object of the least interest. No villages were to be seen over the wide wastes; not a human being met the view; not a bird, not a living thing, enlivened the prospect. And it was as still as it was desolate; for, save when the wind sighed or howled over the snow, not a sound was to be heard. It seemed as if nature was in a repose, so profound as to resemble death itself.

It is not remarkable that, after several days of weary travel over a country like this, our adventurers at last rejoiced to meet with a small village of Tunguses. This was



situated in a little valley; and so low were the houses, that the travellers had come close upon them before they were perceived. Their approach was announced by the barking of

three or four shaggy wolf-dogs, which seemed to exert their lungs to the utmost upon the occasion, and one especially,—the mother of a litter of puppies.

The party was stared at in silence by the inhabitants for a short time, but Linsk soon announced himself and his friends as hunters; and as he spoke in the Tungusian language, the little party was at once made welcome. Alexis was amused at the whole scene, which, however, was very similar to what they had before seen.

Supper was soon provided, for it was evening when the travellers arrived. The fare consisted of a piece of bear's flesh, which was very juicy, and resembled pork. It seemed to be esteemed a great delicacy by the people themselves, and a number of persons came into the hut where our adventurers were entertained, and, somewhat unceremoniously, helped themselves with their fingers to a portion of the viands.

Our travellers had before seen something of Tungusian life and manners; but their curiosity was excited anew by the greediness which the people displayed upon the pre-

sent occasion—men, women, and children. But there was withal much good nature and merriment among the party, and though the speech was often rough and the manner uncouth, good humour seemed to pervade the whole scene.

When the meal was over, brandy was brought in and circulated freely among the men of the company. Some of the women contrived to get a little for themselves through the influence of their admirers. The party soon grew merry, then boisterous, and at last quarrelsome. There were some scuffling and many hard words. Late at night, the revel broke up, and the party separated.

It was late the next day, when Alexis and his two young companions were called by Linsk from their repose. They took an ample breakfast, and then set forward upon their journey. For several days, they proceeded without any occurrence worthy of note. At last, they came to a little forest of evergreen trees, in which they found two or three small huts, which were now deserted by their inhabitants; and here, as it was evening, they concluded to spend the night.

Having slightly closed the entrance with a few pieces of bark to exclude the cold, they made a fire, and had sat down to their frugal supper of dried deer's flesh, when the ever-watchful ear of Linsk caught certain sounds from without, which arrested his attention. He had listened but a moment, when the fragments at the door were pushed aside, and a wolf thrust his head in at the opening, and gazed intently upon the party. They were all so taken by surprise, that, for a moment, they neither spoke nor moved. It was not long, however, before Linsk arose, seized his gun, and was on the point of discharging it at the wolf, when the latter suddenly withdrew. The whole party followed him out, but what was their astonishment to see around them a pack of at least forty wolves, now ready to make a united attack upon them! It was night, and their glaring eyeballs seemed like sparks of fire; while their teeth were laid bare, as if to rend their victims in pieces. At the same time the barking, yelping, and howling of the savage animals, apparently driven to desperation by hunger, were terrific. The whole scene was indeed

so unexpected and so startling, that Alexis and his two young companions immediately slunk back into the hut. Linsk followed, but at least a dozen of the assailants were at his heels, as he drew back through the door. The old hunter saw in an instant that there was but one mode of warfare which offered the least chance of safety, and this was, to face the enemy at the opening,



and to prevent them, at all hazards, from effecting an entrance. Getting down upon his knees, therefore, he looked his furious assailants full in the face. His gun was in his hand, and his knife ready in his belt.

Fixing his eye intently upon the wolves, so as to watch every movement, he spoke rapidly to the young men behind him,—“Steady, boys, steady; do not be afraid. Draw up close and keep your guns ready. What an ill-mannered set they are! I will give them a dose directly.—Now!”

At this instant, the hunters fired their guns, and a yell of terror and anguish burst from those of the pack which at the moment were jammed into the entrance of the hut. Two or three of them were killed, and several wounded; but others rushed into their places, and in the space of a few seconds, Linsk was again threatened with a mass of savage creatures struggling for entrance at the door. He soon gave them another shot, and finally a third, and the disheartened beasts, leaving eight or ten of their companions dead or mortally wounded on the scene of combat, retired, with many a howl, into the echoing forest.

The next day was occupied in securing the skins of the wolves, and the hunters concluded to spend the following night in the hut, taking care, however, to close the en-

trance firmly, against the possibility of an attack like that of the preceding evening.

On the second morning, the party rose early, and, instead of pursuing their journey, they plunged into the forest, hoping to meet with some sables or ermines. They had not gone far before two little, dark-coloured ani-



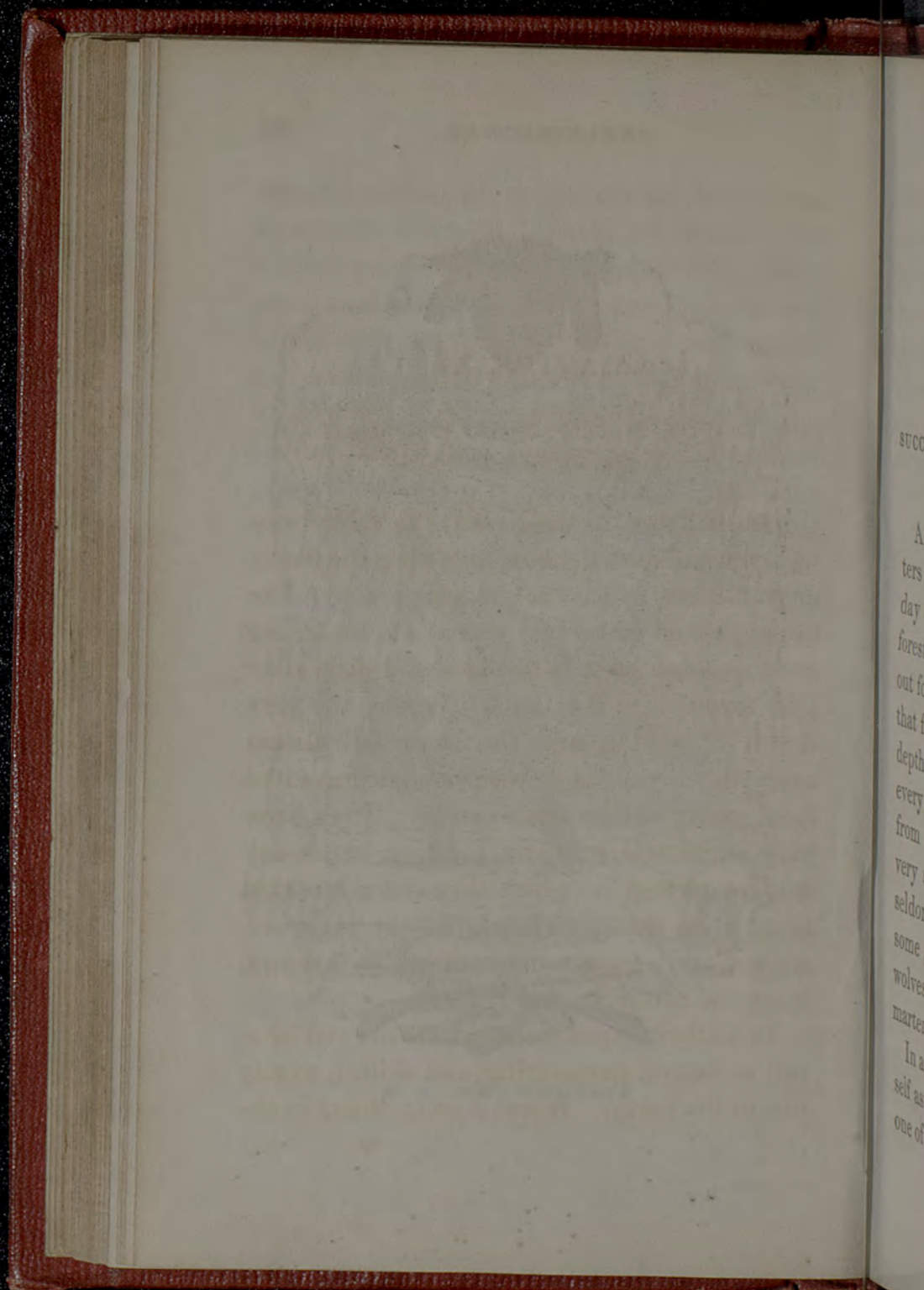
mals, with very long bodies and short legs, were seen running and leaping upon the snow. Linsk uttered a deep "hush," approached them carefully, under cover of a large tree, and raising his gun to his eye, seemed about to fire, when, suddenly lower-

ing his piece, he beckoned to Alexis: at a signal given by Linsk, he fired; the whole party ran to the spot, and, with great exultation, picked up two fine sables. These were the first that Alexis had killed, and they brought to his mind so forcibly the injunctions of Kathinka, and her intense desire that he should be successful in his enterprise, that he burst into tears. The two sons of Linsk looked at him with amazement, but the old man guessed the cause of his emotion, and by some sportive remark, diverted the thoughts of the party into other channels. The kindness of Linsk in thus giving Alexis the first chance to fire, filled the heart of the young hunter with gratitude.

They now pursued their sport, and before the evening came, they had caught seven sables and three ermines. They then returned to their hut, and now made up their minds to spend a few days at this place, for the purpose of pursuing the object of their expedition.



The First Success. p. 96



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CHAPTER XI.

SUCCESSFUL HUNTING—ALEXIS IN TROUBLE—A STRANGER INTRODUCED.

AGREEABLY to their plan, the sable-hunters continued at the hut, following the game, day after day, with the greatest ardour. The forest proved to be very extensive, stretching out for miles upon both sides of a little river that flowed into the Lena. It was the very depth of winter, and the snow fell almost every day; yet they were seldom prevented from going out by the weather. They were very successful in their hunting, and a day seldom passed in which they did not obtain some good skins. They killed several bears, wolves, and a great number of sables, ermines, martens, squirrels, and lynxes.

In all their expeditions, Alexis showed himself as active, persevering, and skilful, as any one of the party. It was a great object in ob-

taining the finest furs, to kill the animal without breaking the skin of the body. In this art, Alexis excelled; for he could shoot with such precision, as to bring down his game by sending a ball through the head; but he was of an ardent temper, and sometimes his zeal led him into danger. One day, being at a distance from his party, he saw a silver fox,



and pursued him for several hours, entirely forgetting that he was separated from his friends, and wandering to a great distance, amid the mazes of the woods.

At last, in pursuing the fox, he entered a wild and rocky dell, where perpendicular cliffs, fringed by pines and hemlocks, frowned over the glen. Plunging into the place, which seemed almost like a vast cavern, he soon came near the object of his pursuit,

and brought him with a bullet to the ground. Before he had time to pick up his game, he saw a couple of sables peering through a crevice in a decayed oak that had taken root high in the rocks above. Loading his gun, he fired, and the animals immediately dis-



appeared within the cavity. Believing they were killed, he clambered up the steep precipice with great labour and no little danger. At length, he reached the foot of the tree which leaned from the cliff, over the valley beneath. He immediately began to ascend it, not observing, in his eagerness, that it was rotten to the very root, and

trembled throughout its whole extent, as he climbed up.

Up he went, heedless of all but the game, until he reached the crevice, where two sables, of the largest kind, were lying dead. He took them out, and, for the first time, looked beneath: he was touched with a momentary thrill of fear as he gazed down, and perceived the gulf that yawned beneath him. At the same moment he heard a crackling at the root of the tree, and perceived a descending motion in the limbs to which he clung. He now knew that he was falling, and that, with the vast mass, he must descend into the valley beneath. The moment was almost too awful for thought: yet his mind turned to his father and sister, with a feeling of farewell, and a prayer to heaven for his soul; how swift is the wing of thought in the moment of peril! He felt himself rushing downward through the air; he closed his eyes; there was a horrid crash in his ears, and he knew no more.

The sound of the falling oak rung through the glen, and, in the space of a few minutes, a man, clothed as a hunter, emerged from

one of the caverns, at a little distance; who approached the spot where Alexis had fallen; but at first nothing was to be seen save the trunk of the tree, the rest being imbedded in the snow; and he was about



to turn away, when he saw the fox lying at a little distance, and then perceived one of the sables, half buried in the snow. Finding that the animal was warm, as if just killed, he looked around for the hunter. Not seeing him, the truth seemed at once to

flash upon his mind; and he began to dig in the snow beneath the trunk of the tree. He laboured with prodigious strength and zeal. A large excavation was made, and pretty soon he found the cap of Alexis. This increased his exertions, and he continued to dig with unabated ardour for more than an hour. Buried at the depth of eight feet in the snow, he found the young man, and with great labour took him out from the place in which he was imbedded, and which, but for this timely aid, had been his grave.

The surface of the snow in the ravine was so hard as to bear the man's weight, provided as he was with huntsman's broad-soled shoes. Still it was with great difficulty that he could carry Alexis forward: he, however, succeeded in bearing him to his cave, and had the satisfaction of soon finding that the youth was still alive; that he was indeed only stunned, and otherwise entirely unhurt. Alexis soon awoke from his insensibility, and looking around, inquired where he was. "You are safe," said the stranger, "and in my castle, where no one will come to molest you. You are safe; and now tell me your name."

For a moment, Alexis was bewildered, and could not recollect himself, but after a little time, he said falteringly, "Pultova,—my name is Alexis Pultova."

"Pultova!" said the stranger, with great interest; "are you of Warsaw—the son of Ludovicus Pultova?"

"I am," was the reply.

"Yes," said the other, "you are; I see by the resemblance, you are the son of my noble friend, General Pultova. And what brought you here?"

"I am a hunter," said Alexis.

"Alas, alas!" said the man; "and so it is with the brave sons of poor Poland: scattered over this desolate region of winter—this wild and lone Siberia—banished, forgotten, save only to be pursued and crushed by the vengeful heel of power. Oh God! O Heaven! how long will thy justice permit such cruelty toward those whose only crime is, that they loved their country too well?" Saying these words, the stranger's bosom heaved convulsively, the tears fell fast down his cheeks, and, as if ashamed of his emotion, he rushed out of the cavern.

Alexis was greatly moved, yet his curiosity was excited, and he began to look around to ascertain what all this might mean. He now, for the first time, recollected his fall from the tree. He perceived that he was in a lofty cavern, in which he saw a bed made of skins, a gun, and various other trappings belonging to a hunter, and justly concluded that he had been rescued by the stranger; to whom, when he returned, as he did in a few minutes. Alexis poured out his grateful thanks for saving his life.

They now entered into conversation: and Alexis heard the details of his own rescue, as well as the story of the hunter. He was a Polish nobleman, who had taken part in the struggle for liberty, and had also shared in the doom of those patriots who survived the issue. While conversing, they thought they heard sounds without, and going to the mouth of the cave, Alexis knew the piercing tones of Linsk, and immediately answered him. The old hunter, with his two sons, came up, and there was a shaking of hands all round. The story was soon told, and the hunters were invited into the cave.

The evening was now approaching, and Linsk, with his party, being pressed to spend the night at the cave, cheerfully accepted the request. A fire was kindled, a haunch of fat bear's meat was roasted, and the company sat down to their meal. There was for a time a good deal of hilarity; for, even in comfortless situations, a sense of deliverance from peril breaks into the heart, scattering with its brief sunshine the gloom around. So it was with the hunters, in the bosom of the cavern, and in the scenes and season of winter; the laugh, the joke, and the story passed from one to the other. Even the stern and stony brow of the stranger relaxed at some of the droll remarks and odd phrases of Linsk, and unconsciously he became interested in the passing scene.



CHAPTER XII.

THE NOBLEMAN'S STORY—RETURN OF THE
HUNTERS TO YAKUTSK.

As soon as they had finished their repast, Alexis and his companions united in a request that their host should relate to them his history. He commenced as follows:

"I am a native of Poland. You see me here, clothed in skins, and a mere hunter like yourselves. I am but a man, and a very poor one, though the noblest blood of my country flows in my veins. I had a vast estate, situated thirty miles from Warsaw. I there became acquainted with a Russian princess, and loved her: my love was returned, and we vowed fidelity to each other for life. The revolution broke out, and I took an active part in it. My suit had been favoured by the emperor before, but now I was informed that he frowned upon my hopes and wishes, and that he looked upon me with a

special desire of vengeance. Twice was I assailed by ruffians in the streets of Warsaw, hired to take my life. In battle, I was repeatedly set upon by men, who had been offered large rewards if they would kill or capture me; but I escaped all these dangers.

“The princess whom I loved was in the Russian camp. I was one of a party who broke in, by a desperate assault, and surrounded the house where she dwelt. We took her captive, and carried her to Warsaw. She was offended, and would not see me; but contrived her escape: I was near her all the time, even during her flight. As we were about to part, I made myself known to her, and asked her forgiveness. She wept, and leaned on my breast.

“Warsaw had that day fallen; the hopes of liberty had perished; Poland was conquered; the emperor was master of the lives and fortunes of the people, and too well did we know his cruel nature to have any other hope than that of the gallows, the dungeon, or Siberia.

“I told these things to the princess. She heard me, and said she would share my fate.

While we were speaking, a close carriage and six horses came near. It was night, but the moon was shining brightly. I perceived it to be the carriage of Nicholas, the emperor; but at the moment I recognized it, it was set upon by four men on horseback, who rushed out of an adjacent thicket: they were heavily armed, and, discharging their pistols, killed the postilion and one of the guard. There were but three of the emperor's men left, and these would have been quickly despatched, had I not dashed in, with my two attendants, to the rescue. One of the robbers was killed, and the others fled.

"Though Nicholas is harsh, he is no coward. He had just leaped from the carriage, when the ruffians escaped. He was perfectly cool, and, turning to me, surveyed me for an instant: he had often seen me at court, and, I think, recognized me. 'To whom do I owe my safety?' said he. 'To a rebel!' said I, and we parted.

"The carriage passed on. The princess had witnessed the whole scene, though she had not been observed by the emperor's party. I returned to her. She seemed to

have changed her mind, and begged me to see her conducted to the emperor's camp. 'You are now safe,' said she. 'You have saved the czar's life, and that insures you his forgiveness—his gratitude. I know him well. In matters of government he is severe, but in all personal things he is noble and generous. I will plead your cause, and I know I shall prevail. Your life, your fortune, your honour, are secure.'

"I adopted her views, though with much anxiety. I conducted her nearly to the Russian camp, and she was then taken in safety to the czar's tent. Soon after, she went to St. Petersburg, since which I have heard nothing of her.

"The judgment of the enraged emperor fell like a thunderbolt upon the insurgents of Poland. The blood of thousands was shed upon the scaffold. Thousands were shut up in dungeons, never more to see the light or breathe the air of heaven. Thousands more were banished to Siberia, and myself among the number. The emperor's hard heart knew no mercy. Here I am, and here, alone, am I resolved to die."

This story was told with such energy, and with an air so lofty and stern, as to make all the party afraid to speak. Soon after, the stranger left the cave for a short time, as if the thoughts excited by his narrative could not brook the confinement of the cavern. He soon returned, and all retired to rest. In the morning the hunters took leave, Alexis bearing with him a rich present of furs from the hermit, several of them the finest sable skins. One of these was carefully rolled up, and Alexis was instructed in a whisper to see that, if possible, it should be sent to the princess Lodoiska. At the same time, he was told never to reveal the name and character of the stranger whom he had met, and was also requested to enjoin secrecy upon his companions.

Linsk and his party went back to their hut; and in a few weeks, having obtained a large number of rich furs, they took advantage of the sledges of some Tungusians, going to Yakutsk, and returned to that place, making a brisk and rapid journey of several hundred miles in a few days.

CHAPTER XIII.

NEWS FROM HOME—NEW PLAN—OKOTSK
—KAMTSCHATKA—JAPAN—CHINA.



ALTHOUGH Alexis did not expect to find letters from home, as he had returned from his hunting expedition earlier than he calculated, still on his arrival at Yakutsk, he went to the house where they were to be left if any came. To his great joy he there found two letters, and on looking at them, recognized the hand-writing of his father upon

one, and that of Kathinka on the other. He hurried home to read them alone, in his room. With mingled feelings of hope and fear—of pleasure that he could thus hold communion with his dearest friends—of pain that he was separated from them by thousands of miles,— he broke the seal of that which was superscribed with his father's hand, and read as follows :

“Tobolsk, ——— 18 —.

“My dear Alexis,—I embrace a good opportunity to send you letters, and thus to inform you of the state of things here. You will first desire to know how it is with Kathinka and me. We get on more comfortably than I could have hoped, through your sister's strenuous and dutiful efforts. We are far removed from want, though of course we have many trials.

“Kathinka will tell you all the little details of news. I am ill able to do that, for my memory fails fast : and, my dear boy—I may as well say it frankly, that I think my days are fast drawing to a close. I have no special disease—but it seems to me that my

heart beats feebly, and that the last sands of life are nearly running out. It may be otherwise—but so I feel. It is for this reason that I have had some reluctance in giving my consent to a plan for your returning home in a Russian vessel, which is offered to you.

“A young Russian officer, a relative of the Princess Lodoiska, by the name of Suwarrow, is going to Okotsk, at the western extremity of Siberia, where he will enter a Russian ship of war, that is to be there; he will take command of a corps of marines on board, and will return home in her. Krusenstern has offered you a passage with him; and as Suwarrow is a fine fellow, and, I suspect, is disposed to become your brother-in-law, if Kathinka will consent—nothing could be more pleasant or beneficial to you. You will see a good deal of the world, learn the manners and customs of various peoples at whose harbours you will touch, and make agreeable, and, perhaps, useful acquaintances on board the ship. These are advantages not to be lightly rejected; and, therefore, if you so decide and accept the offer, I shall not oppose your choice. Indeed, the only thing that

makes me waver in my advice, is my fear that I shall not live to see you, and that Kathinka will be left here without a protector. Yet if this happens—she is well qualified to take care of herself, for she has a vigour and energy only surpassed by her discretion. And after all, the voyage from Okotsk to St. Petersburg will not occupy much more than a year, though it requires a passage almost round the globe, while, even if you do not go with Suwarrow, you can hardly get home in much less than a year, so that the increased time of your absence will not constitute a serious objection. Therefore, go, if you prefer it.

“I have now said all that is necessary, and I must stop here—for my hand is feeble. Take with you, my dear boy, a father’s blessing—and wherever you are, whether upon the mountain wave, or amid the snows of a Siberian winter—place your trust in God. Farewell.

“PULTOVA.”

This affecting letter touched Alexis to the quick; the tears ran down his cheeks, and such was his anxiety and gloom on account

of his father's feelings, that he waited several minutes before he could gather courage to open the epistle from Kathinka. At last he broke the seal, and to his great joy found in it a much more cheerful vein of thought and feeling. She said her father was feeble, and subject to fits of great depression—but she thought him pretty well, and if not content, at least submissive and tranquil.

She spoke of Suwarrow, and the scheme suggested by her father, and urged it strongly upon Alexis to accept the offer. She presented the subject, indeed, in such a light, that Alexis arose from reading the letter with his mind made up to join Suwarrow, and return in the Russian vessel. He immediately stated the plan to Linsk and his two sons, and to his great surprise, found them totally opposed to it. They were very fond of Alexis, and it seemed to them like unkind desertion, for him to leave them as he proposed. Such was the strength of their feelings, that Alexis abandoned the idea of leaving them, and gave up the project he had adopted. This was, however, but transient. Linsk, who was a reasonable man, though a rough

one, after a little reflection, seeing the great advantages that might accrue to his young friend, withdrew his objections, and urged Alexis to follow the advice of his sister.

As no farther difficulties laid in his way, our youthful adventurer made his preparations to join Suwarrow as soon as he should arrive; an event which was expected in a month. This time soon slipped away, in which Alexis had sold a portion of his furs to great advantage. The greater part of the money he sent to his father, as also a share of his furs. A large number of sable skins, of the very finest quality, he directed to Kathinka, taking care to place with them the one which the hermit hunter of the dell had requested might be sent to the princess Lodoiska, at St. Petersburg. He also wrote a long letter to his sister, detailing his adventures, and dwelling particularly on that portion which related to the hermit. He specially urged Kathinka to endeavour to have the skin sent as desired; for though he had not ventured to unroll it, he could not get rid of the impression that it contained something of deep interest to the princess.

At the appointed time, Suwarrow arrived, and as his mission brooked no delay, Alexis set off with him at once. He parted with his humble friends and companions with regret, and even with tears. Expressing the hope, however, of meeting them again, at Tobolsk, after the lapse of two years, he took his leave.

We must allow Linsk and his sons to pursue their plans without further notice at present, only remarking that they made one more hunting excursion into the forest, and then returned to Tobolsk, laden with a rich harvest of valuable furs. Our duty is to follow the fortunes of Alexis, who immediately joined Suwarrow. The two were good friends in a short time, and their journey to Okotsk was very pleasant.

This town is situated upon the border of the sea of Okotsk, and at the northern part. To the west lies Kamtschatka—to the south, the islands of Japan. Although there are only fifteen hundred people in the place, yet it carries on an extensive trade in furs, which are brought from Kamtschatka, the eastern part of Siberia, and the north-west

coast of America, where the Russians have some settlements.

Alexis found Okotsk a much pleasanter place than he expected. The country around is quite fertile; the town is pleasantly situated on a ridge between the river and the sea, and the houses are very neatly built. Most of the people are either soldiers, or those who are connected with the military establishments; yet there are some merchants, and a good many strange looking men from all the neighbouring parts, who come here to sell their furs. Amongst those of this kind, Alexis saw some short, flat-faced Kamtschadales, clothed in bears' skins, and looking almost like bears walking on their hind legs. There were numbers of Kuriles, people with a yellow skin, from the Kurile Islands, which stretch from Japan to the southern point of Kamtschatka; and there were Tartars, with black eyes and yellow skins—and many other people of strange features, and still stranger attire. He remained at this place for a month, and the time passed away pleasantly enough.

Alexis, instead of going about with his

eyes shut, and his mind in a maze of stupid wonder, took careful observation of all he saw; and having pleasant manners, he mixed with the people, and talked with them, and thus picked up a great fund of knowledge. He became acquainted with the geographical situation of all the countries and islands around the great sea of Okotsk; about the people who inhabited them; about the governments of these countries; their climate, productions, and trade; and also the religion, manners, and customs of the people.

Now, as I am writing a story, I do not wish to cheat my readers into reading a book of history and geography—but, it is well enough to mix in a little of the useful with the amusing. I will, therefore, say a few words, showing what kind of information Alexis acquired respecting these far-off regions of which we are speaking.

Kamtschatka, you must know, is a long strip of land, very far north, and projecting into the sea, almost a thousand miles from north to south. The southern point is about as far north as Canada, but it is much colder. Near this is a Russian post, called St. Peter's

and St. Paul's. The Kamtschadales are chiefly heathen, who worship strange idols in a foolish way—though a few belong to the Greek church, which has been brought into the country by the Russians

The cold bleak winds that sweep over Siberia, carry their chill to Kamtschatka, and though the sea lies on two sides of it, they make it one of the coldest places in the world. The winter lasts nine months of the year, and no kind of grain can be made to grow upon its soil. But this sterility in the vegetable kingdom is compensated by the abundance of animal life. In no place in the world is there such a quantity of game. The coasts swarm with seals and other marine animals; the rocks are coated with shell-fish; the bays are almost choked with herrings and the rivers with salmon. Flocks of grouse, woodcocks, wild geese and ducks are most abundant. In the woods are bears, beavers, deer, ermines, sables, and other quadrupeds, producing abundance of rich furs. These form the basis of a good deal of trade.

Thus, though the Kamtschadales have no bread, or very little, they have abundance of

fish, flesh, and fowl. In no part of the world, are the people more gluttonously fed. They are, in fact, a very luxurious race, spending a great part of their time in coarse feasting and frolics. They sell their furs to the Russians, by which they get rum and brandy, and thus obtain the means of intoxication. Many of them are, therefore, sunk to a state of the most brutal degradation.

The Kurile islands, as I have stated, extend from the southern point of Kamtschatka to Jesso, one of the principal of the Japan isles. They are twenty-four in number, and contain about a thousand inhabitants. The length of the chain is nearly nine hundred miles. Some of them are destitute of people, but most of them abound in seals, sea otters, and other game. The people are heathens, and are a wild, savage set.

The Japan isles lie in a long, curving line, in a southerly direction from Okotsk. They are very numerous, but the largest are Jesso and Nippon. These are the seat of the powerful and famous empire of Japan, which has existed for ages, and has excited nearly as much curiosity and interest as China.

One thing that increases this interest is, that foreigners are carefully excluded from the country, as they are from China. The only place which Europeans are allowed to visit, is Nangasaki, on the island of Ximo. This is a large town, but the place assigned to foreigners is very small ; and none of these are permitted to reside there, except some Dutch merchants, through whom all the trade and intercourse with foreigners must be carried on.

The interior of Japan is very populous, there being twenty-six millions of people in the empire. The capital is Jeddo, on the island of Nippon ; this is perhaps as populous a city as London. The lands in the country are said to be finely cultivated, and many of the gardens are very beautiful. The people are polite, and nearly all can read and write. They have many ingenious arts, and excel even European workmen in certain curious manufactures.

To the east of Japan is the great empire of China, which contains two hundred and fifty millions of people.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE VESSEL SETS SAIL—COUNTRIES AND
SEAS PASSED—TALES OF THE TARTARS.

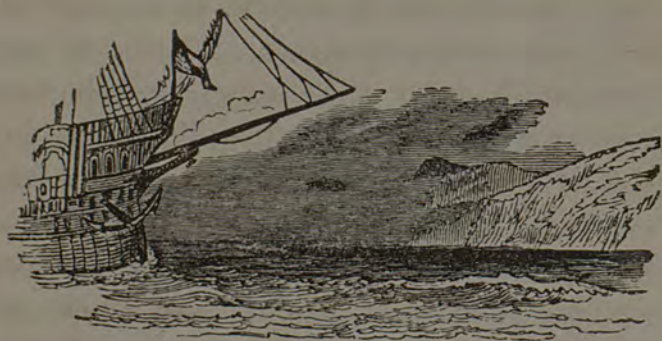
THE season of summer, at Okotsk, consisting of the months of June, July, and August, is the only time when a vessel can venture to navigate the stormy sea of that far northern region. Alexis was, therefore, obliged to wait several weeks, before the time of departure arrived. As the land mail came once every month from St. Petersburg to Okotsk, by way of Tobolsk, he twice received a letter from his sister. In the latter instance, the epistle arrived but a single day before the vessel was to sail, and contained somewhat painful intelligence in regard to her father's health, and some suspicions of the governor's intentions towards them.

Alexis was so much affected by this that he was on the point of deciding to return

immediately to Tobolsk—but before he had quite made up his mind, the vessel was ready to depart, and Suwarrow hurried him on board. There all was activity and bustle. The ship called the *Czarina*, carried seventy-four guns, and contained three hundred men. To get a vessel of war, of this size, under way, is a serious matter. The heavy anchor is to be taken in; a variety of sails to be set; and it seemed as if all was to be done with as much noise as possible. Alexis had never been on board a ship before, and the scene was quite strange and bewildering to him. But at last the anchor was aboard; several sheets of broad canvass were spread to the wind; the vessel began to move forward; the waves dashed against her prow, and rippled along her sides; a stream of milky foam was at her stern, and the little town of Okotsk began to appear smaller and smaller, and at last sank from the view, behind the swelling bosom of the sea!

The die was now cast; Alexis was upon the ocean, separated from the land on which he had hitherto dwelt, and many months must elapse before he could hope to see his

kindred, about whom he now had occasion to feel the greatest anxiety. But his attention was soon called to other things. The wind blew more and more fresh, and the gallant ship flew like an eagle upon her way. Everything was new to our young hero, and for a long time his mind was diverted by the scenes on board the ship, or by the aspect of



the great deep. But at last he grew sea-sick, and was obliged to go to his berth.

The sea of Okotsk appears like a little spot upon the map, but it is a thousand miles long, and five hundred miles wide. The vessel, therefore, was soon out of sight of land, but proceeding southward, she approached a rugged and rocky shore, in about

a week. Alexis was now able to be on deck, and was told that they were about to pass between the great island of Jesso, on the left, and the island of Saghalien, on the right. They soon entered a narrow strip of water, called the straits of Peyrouse, in honour of that celebrated navigator, who passed through them in 1788. The land was visible on both sides, but it presented a dreary and desolate appearance.

The Czarina made no stay in these parts, farther than to catch a supply of salmon, which were amazingly abundant in all the waters along the shore. The mariners found the sea almost constantly beset by thick fogs, rendering the navigation very difficult and dangerous. Beside this, there seemed to be rocks and reefs on every hand, and swift currents, that made it necessary to use the utmost caution.

The straits were soon passed, and the ship entered the Japanese Sea, which lies between Tartary and the islands of Japan. The course of the ship was still southerly, and for several days nothing of particular interest happened. While they were thus pursuing their voyage,

the officers of the ship usually dined together, Alexis and a Russian merchant, who had entered the vessel at Okotsk, being of the party. Much hilarity prevailed, songs were sung, and many good stories were told.

One day after dinner, while all were sitting around the table, the conversation turned upon Tartary, the vast country which lay westward of the Japanese Sea. After a good deal had been said on the subject, the captain of the ship, whose name was Orlof, joined in the discourse, and proceeded as follows :

“In ancient times, the Tartars were called Scythians; and in their contests with the Romans, they appear to have displayed great vigour of character. They have been spread over nearly all the central and northern part of Asia, from time immemorial; but they are broken into many tribes, and pass under many different names, as Cossacks, Kalmucks, Mongols, Kirghises, Kalkas, Mandshurs, Uzbeks, and Turkomans. The tribes which inhabit Siberia, the Ostiacks, Tunguses and others, are but fragments of the great Tartar family.

“At the present day, the central part of

Asia, from the Caspian and Volga on the west, to the Sea of Japan on the east, is occupied by Tartars, though divided into two separate governments, Independent Tartary and Chinese Tartary. The latter, including Thibet, is nearly as extensive as Siberia, and has been subject to the emperor of China, since 1647, for it was about that time that the Mandshur Tartars took Peking, and set one of their princes on the throne of China. Since that time, the emperors of China have been of this Tartar line.

“The Mongols are regarded as the original race of all the Tartars, and also of the Japanese, Chinese, and some of the adjacent nations. They are, also, the original stock from which the Turks have sprung, as well as the Huns, and some other tribes of Europe. But the point about which I was going to speak, is the inconsistency of the Tartar character. With other nations, they are considered savage and merciless, while, among each other, they are kind, gentle, and affectionate, in a remarkable degree. Of these two opposite characters there is abundant proof.

“Attila, leader of the Huns, a kindred race which fell like a cloud of locusts upon Italy, about the year 400 after Christ, was called the ‘scourge of God.’ His mission seemed to be to destroy, and he performed the fearful work without mercy. Hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children, were sacrificed to his fury, and that of his bloody followers.

“In 1206, Gengis Khan founded the empire of the Mongols, and spread his empire from east to west, three thousand five hundred miles. Not only smaller kingdoms, but China itself became subject to his sway. In the early part of his career, he took a large number of prisoners; but, as if to make his name a terror throughout the world, he ordered those of the most elevated rank to be thrown into caldrons of boiling water. He pursued his conquests with amazing success, but with unsparing severity. Cities, towns, and countries he laid waste, and he felt no hesitation in destroying thousands, when they stood in the way of his merciless and selfish ambition. He turned his armies against China, and passed the great wall, which had been built a thousand years before, to defend the em-

pire from the Tartars, who even then appear to have excited the dread of their neighbours.

“Genghis entered China, and attacked Pekin. The city at last yielded, and for an entire month it was given up to fire and the sword. He afterwards led his armies against the more western nations. The conflict and the slaughter were fearful; in the destruction of two cities, alone, Bochara and Samarcand, two hundred thousand people were destroyed, of every age and sex. Everywhere he was successful; but at last he died, in his sixty-sixth year. Six millions of people had fallen victims to the bloody wars of this great butcher of his fellow-men. Yet, savage as he was in war, Genghis was a promoter of learning, and a friend to religious freedom; he welcomed all learned men at his court, and showed great attachment to his friends, and especially to his own family.

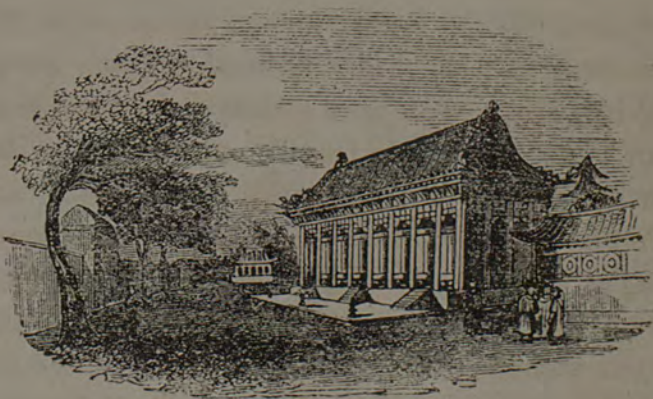
“Timour the Tartar, or Tamerlane, though the son of a peasant, became a king, and, about the year 1400, had so extended his conquests that his empire nearly equalled that of Genghis Khan. He subdued Persia, India, Syria, and Asia Minor. He conquered

Bajazet, the sultan of Constantinople, and took him prisoner. He twice took Bagdat, and in the latter case, gave it up to the fury of his soldiers, who slew eight hundred thousand men. Yet Timour, like Genghis, was a man of many agreeable qualities, and has left behind him the memory of numerous instances of justice and gentleness.

“There are many other proofs to be found in history of this savageness of the Tartars in war; yet, all travellers tell us of their hospitality, humanity, and kindness in peace. Many of them are robbers by trade, and from the earliest times they have been accustomed to pour down, by thousands, from their colder climes, to ravage the rich and luxurious natives of the south.”

When the captain paused, the merchant remarked, that he was much gratified at this sketch of Tartar history and character. “I suppose,” said he, “that the phrase, ‘he has caught a Tartar,’ arose from the general notion among mankind, that the people of this stock are a rough untameable race. I have, indeed, heard a story told as having given origin to this proverb. A braggadocia

soldier, it is said, in one of our wars against some of the Tartar tribes on the borders of the Caspian, getting separated from his companions, was taken by one of the enemy. His commander being near—the soldier called out—‘Captain, I have caught a Tartar,’—‘Well,’ said the captain, ‘bring him along!’ ‘But the fellow won’t let me come!’ said the soldier. Since that time, the expression, *he has caught a Tartar*, is applied to those, who, in seeking to get an advantage of others, have been taken in themselves.”



CHAPTER XV.

A SECRET DISCOVERED.

AFTER some further acquaintance with the merchant, Alexis to his astonishment and pleasure found in him the hermit who had extricated him from the snow; but so changed was he by an alteration in his dress that he had easily passed unrecognized.

While the ship continued steadily on her voyage, Alexis found abundant sources of amusement. It might seem that being shut up in a ship was a kind of imprisonment, but our young sable-hunter did not feel it to be so. He often talked with Suwarrow, of Tobolsk, of home, of his father, and, above all, of his sister. Upon this latter subject, Suwarrow did not say much, but he spoke in such terms of tender interest as at once to bind the young officer to the heart of Alexis, and, at the same time, to assure him that he was sincerely attached to Kathinka.

The disguised merchant often took occasion to converse with Alexis, and while he cautioned him to keep his secret, he spoke freely of his plans and wishes. "I desire," said he, "once more to see the princess Lodoiska; I desire to bid her farewell; and then I am ready to lay my head on the block, if the emperor wishes to take my life. At all events, death, imprisonment, the rack—anything is preferable to Siberia. To live in that chill, lonely, desolate exile; to waste, drop by drop, the blood of life; to see existence creep away with the slow ticking of the clock; to gnaw one's own heart in very anguish—is what I cannot and will not endure. I will see the princess—and then I will go to the emperor; I will tell him that I once saved his life; and then, if he chooses, he may take mine as a compensation?"

Alexis was almost awed by the energy and firmness of the Polish nobleman; yet he looked upon his present enterprise as little better than courting death. One thing led him to hope for better things: he had sent the sable-skins designed for the princess to Kathinka, requesting her to see them for-

warded to Petersburg. This, he had no doubt, would be done ; and, as it contained evidence that Count Zinski was still living, and entertained the deepest affection for the princess, he fancied, with the fond ardour of a youthful mind, that she would be incited to obtain his pardon.

Intent upon gathering knowledge, Alexis listened to the various observations of the officers of the ship, several of whom were very intelligent men ; and as Japan naturally be-



came the subject of discourse, while they were sailing near the Japanese islands, he learnt a good deal about the country. One day, one of the officers gave him the following account :

“The people of Japan, like many others,

pretend that their nation existed for ages, and they tell of rulers that lived at least millions of years ago. Yet they were entirely unknown to Europe, till discovered by the Portuguese navigators, who were the first to explore that portion of the world. The government of Portugal was then eager to take advantage of intercourse with these eastern nations, and, accordingly, they sent ships and ambassadors to Japan. They also despatched missionaries to introduce the Christian religion into that country.

“At first these were kindly received, and, in the space of sixty years, a number of the inhabitants were converted to Christianity. Had the Europeans conducted themselves wisely, it is probable that Japan would at this time have been a Christian nation, and the intercourse between that country and the civilized nations of Europe, would have been permanently established. But, instead of pursuing such a course, their conduct was licentious, and they meddled, improperly, in political matters. Accordingly, in 1617, the missionaries were banished for ever from the country, and the Japanese

who had become Christians were subjected to the most cruel persecution. These were continued for forty years, and several millions of people were sacrificed to the fury of the storm."



CHAPTER XVI.

COREA—LOO CHOO—FORMOSA—
PSALMANAZAR.

THE good ship Czarina continued to pursue her southerly course, and soon came in sight of Corea, a large peninsula, separated from China by the Yellow Sea, and from the Japanese islands by the straits of Corea. The peninsula is four hundred miles long, and one hundred and fifty broad, and inhabited by a tall, brave and polite race, who appear to live much after the fashion of the Chinese. The country is finely cultivated, and though traversed by a range of mountains, many portions are very fertile. Kingkitao, an inland town, is the capital. The king of Corea pays a small tribute to the emperor of China, but he is in most respects independent. The government here exclude strangers from the country with the same jealous care, as in China and Japan.

Sailing in a southerly direction the vessel soon came near the Loo Choo islands, the largest of which is sixty miles long. These islands possess the most delightful climate in the world. Fanned by perpetual sea-breezes, they are alike free from the frosts of winter



and the scorching heat of summer. The vegetation is of the most luxuriant kind.

But the people of these islands are the most interesting objects of observation. The captain of the Czarina went ashore upon the great Loo Choo, and Suwarrow and Alexis

were permitted to accompany him. They found the people not more than five feet high, very fat, and with a smooth, oily skin, of a copper colour. Their houses were low, and built in the Chinese fashion. The people seemed the most cheerful and happy creatures imaginable. They were very polite to the captain and his party, and gave them a feast of roasted dogs, monkeys and cats. Nothing could exceed the beauty of the country. Though it was now winter, still the whole of the woods and fields were nearly as verdant as spring, and the island bore the appearance of a vast garden.

Alexis and Suwarrow left this lovely island and these gentle people with great regret, and proceeded, with the captain, to the ship. Their course was still southward, and they soon came in sight of the large island of Formosa, the name of which signifies "fair." The western portion of the island is very fertile, and inhabited by a civilized people. The eastern part is mountainous, and is occupied by savages, who tattoo their skins, sleep in caves on beds of leaves, and have scarcely any clothes or furniture.

While the ship was passing by the island, the Russian merchant asked Alexis if he had ever heard of Psalmanazar. To this the youth replied in the negative; but expressing a desire to hear about him, the merchant related it as follows:

"This extraordinary man is supposed to have been a native of France, but this is not



certainly known. He obtained an excellent education in one of the colleges of the Jesuits; and at an early age stole a pilgrim's cloak from a church, where it had been dedicated, and putting it on, travelled about as a pilgrim, and lived upon the charity he thus obtained.

"After this, he put on another disguise, and pretended to be a native of Japan. Not succeeding very well in his scheme, he went to another place, and there passed himself off as a native of Formosa. In this character he went to Liege, in Belgium, and there being met with by an English clergyman, who was duped by his plausible story, he was apparently converted to Christianity, was baptized, and formally admitted into the church!

"The conversion of so able and extraordinary a man was esteemed a great thing, and accordingly, as he went to London soon after, he easily obtained the patronage of Compton, the bishop of London. Under his auspices, Psalmanazar became one of the greatest objects of interest and curiosity, especially among learned men. He lived in the house of bishop Compton, and was greatly sought after and flattered by persons of high rank and station. All this time, he pretended to be very pious, but to keep up his imposition, he affected a little of the wild man too, and fed upon raw flesh, roots, and herbs.

“Things went on very well with him, and so he set to work and made up a language, which he called Formosan. He even translated the church catechism into his fictitious lingo; and finally he wrote a history of Formosa out of his own brains.—Such was the ingenuity of his trick, and such the credulity of the public, that this fabrication quickly passed through two editions, few or none doubting that it was all a genuine relation of real events. But at last some inconsistencies were detected in the history; suspicions were excited; the learned Formosan was charged with his imposition; and being fully detected, he confessed his guilt. He lived a number of years in London after this—and though fully exposed, he devoted himself to writing books, and greatly assisted in preparing a famous work entitled ‘The Universal History.’ He professed to be penitent for his imposture, and lived in an exemplary manner. He wrote a life of himself, in which he told the story of his deception, and died in 1763.”

Leaving the Chinese sea to the right, the navigators now turned to the east, and were

soon upon that mighty sea—the Pacific Ocean. In a few weeks they came to the Ladrones, a group of islands, inhabited by an interesting race of people, who appeared to have made further advances in civilization than most of the barbarous tribes who occupied the islands of the Pacific. When first discovered, in 1512, the islands were quite populous, the whole number of inhabitants amounting to forty thousand. They are now reduced to five thousand.

Passing by various other groups of islands, our voyagers at length approached the Fejee islands, which are situated nearly in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. At one of the largest of the group, called Paoo, the captain concluded to stop for a short time, for the purpose of obtaining fresh water. The vessel was accordingly brought to anchor near the land; and the captain, with two or three of the officers, the Russian merchant, and about a dozen men, went on shore.

Here they were met by some of the natives, who invited them by signs, to visit the king, at a short distance. To this the party agreed, and were led forward about a mile, where

*

there was a considerable village, at the head of a small bay. As the strangers approached this place, their attention was drawn to a large vessel, built in the fashion of a canoe, coming up the bay. She had tall masts, and four ranges of spars across them, to each of which were suspended a great number of figures bearing a resemblance to the human shape.

The margin of the bay was soon crowded with the natives, all eagerly awaiting the arrival of the canoe, and seemingly excited by some event of great and animating interest. The strangers paused on the brow of a hill near the bay, for they began to be surrounded with multitudes of savages. The Fejee vessel soon came to the shore, and now the captain and his friends could easily see that the images which decorated the spars of the vessel were human bodies—the upper tier consisting of infants, the second of larger children, the third of women, and the fourth of men! It appeared that the king and his warriors had been to wage war against a neighbouring island, and these mangled bodies were the trophies of victory

which they bore back with shouts of triumph and rejoicing.

No sooner was the Fejee king informed of the visit of the Russian captain and his company, than he marched to his cabin, and there awaited the strangers. Here a short interview took place, during which the Russians observed that a crowd of warriors were gradually surrounding them. Alarmed at this, the captain begged leave of the swarthy prince, to withdraw, when a sudden signal was made, and the Fejee warriors set up a wild yell, and brandished their weapons in the air, with a fierce and threatening aspect. It was clear that an attack was about to follow, and it was to be the onset of hundreds upon but a few more than a dozen men.

It was a fearful moment—and even the Russian officers seemed to quail before the dark and lowering throng of armed men that hemmed them in on all sides. The hope of escape appeared to be utterly vain; and by degrees they were making up their minds to sell their lives as dearly as they might—when an incident occurred which suddenly changed the whole aspect of the scene. The Russian

merchant had taken the precaution, before leaving the ship, to arm himself with a brace of pistols, which were stuck in his belt, and a dagger, which he had swung at his side. Seeing the imminent danger which now threatened his party—he sprang forward like a tiger, seized the king, hurled him to the ground, and holding his pistol to his face,



threatened him with instant death. At the same time, he required him, by signs, to command his men to depart. The king, utterly confounded at the whole manœuvre, did as he was required; the warriors drew back, and the Russians made a hasty retreat—leaving their savage foes to recover at leisure from their panic. Scarcely had the party reached the boat, when the throng of

savages came roaring after them, like a foaming tide fretting upon a rocky beach.

The Russians soon gained their vessel in safety—and were glad to take leave of the island of the Fejee king. Nor did the captain fail to express his gratitude to the Fur Merchant, who saved his life and the lives of his companions by his prompt skill and manly daring. The event indeed was noticed by all on board, and from that time the Fur Merchant became an object of notice, every one fancying that he saw something extraordinary about him.



CHAPTER XVII.

TALK ABOUT INDIA.—THE VOYAGE—ST.
PETERSBURG—OLD LINSK AGAIN.

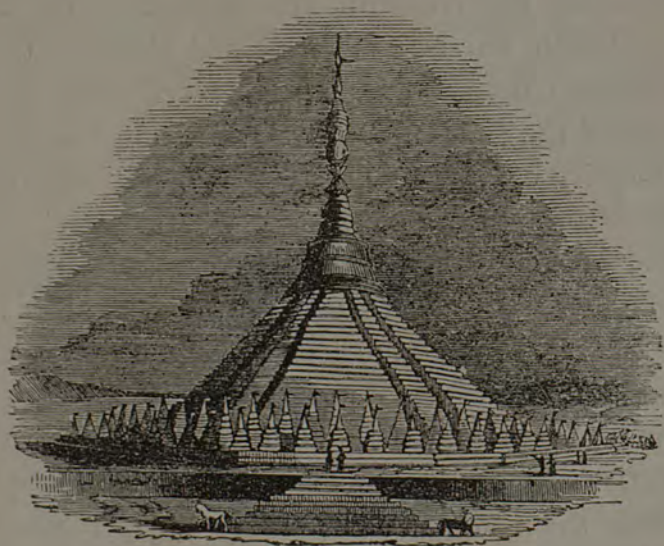
I CANNOT undertake to tell all the details of the voyage of the Czarina in her passage homeward. My readers must be content with a few very brief sketches of what passed on board the ship. The Fur Merchant seemed to possess a vast deal of knowledge, and his happy talent in the way of story telling rendered his conversation very interesting. In the course of the voyage he gave an account of his travels in Hindostan, and particularly described a huge image that he once saw in a temple of that country. It consisted of three enormous heads, cut in stone, and fifteen feet high. These represented the three great deities in

the Hindo religion; Bramha the *creator*, Vishnoo the *preserver*, and Sheva the *destroyer*.



He also gave an interesting account of a curious temple at Pegu, in Birmah, shaped like a speaking trumpet, with the broad part set on the ground. The foundation consisted of a vast flight of steps, around which are the

dwellings of hundreds of priests. The spire was hung with bells, which made a tinkling sound in the wind. The height of this curious edifice was about three hundred and sixty feet.



By conversations on such topics, the hours that had otherwise been tedious, passed lightly away, especially to our young hero, who had a lively curiosity, and drank in with eager interest whatever was said that might enlarge his store of knowledge. If we had space we could tell a great variety of such

tales and incidents as we have already related—but it is now time to hasten on with our story.

After touching at various islands in the Pacific Ocean; after doubling Cape Horn, crossing the Atlantic, and stretching far to the north, she at length passed through the British Channel, entered the North Sea, traversed the gulf of Finland, and approached the city of Cronstadt, a port about twenty miles from St. Petersburg, where vessels of war always stop, it being impossible for them to reach the capital on account of the shoals.

It was now about a year since the vessel had left Okotsk, and at least eighteen months since Alexis had parted with his father and sister at Tobolsk. He expected to find letters from them at St. Petersburg; but what mingled emotions agitated his heart as he approached that great city! What hopes and fears—what ardent desire—and yet what apprehension lest it should all end in learning that some fearful calamity had befallen those he loved—alternately took possession of his heart!

In this agitation, Suwarrow participated to

a considerable degree. Although he always spoke cheerfully to Alexis, in respect to his father and sister, he could not deny to himself, that there were causes of uneasiness. He feared that the misfortunes which had befallen the noble-minded Pultova—misfortunes which alike extended to his country and himself—had broken his spirit, and, added to the weight of years, had borne him down to the grave. This apprehension was founded partly upon his own observations before he left Tobolsk, and partly upon the last letters which Alexis had received from his father and sister.

Nor was this his only source of uneasiness. A shadowy fear—a dim suspicion of Krusenstern, the commandant of the castle at Tobolsk, as to his intentions towards the exiles, had sprung up in his bosom, before he left that place, and by degrees it had grown into an active feeling of distrust and jealousy.

While Alexis and his young friend had these common sources of uneasiness, there was still another, which affected them in no small degree. Alexis knew the secret

of the mysterious merchant, and as he had become deeply interested in his behalf, he trembled when he thought of the probable fate that awaited him on his arrival at St. Petersburg. Impelled by his fears for the safety of one whom he now loved as a friend, he urged the count, almost with tears, not to take the rash step he meditated, which was immediately to report himself to the emperor; but, rather to seek concealment for a time; to make his situation known to the princess Lodoiska, and trust to her mediation in his behalf. These suggestions, though kindly received, seemed to have little effect upon the determined purpose of the count.

While such were the feelings of Alexis, in respect to the count, those of Suwarrow, though of a lively nature, were somewhat different. He had not been told the real name and character of the merchant—for Alexis had kept his friend's counsel in good faith; but still, the bearing of the stranger, though in general harmonizing with the part he was playing, in a multitude of instances, and especially in the affair of the Fejee islands,

betrayed the fact that he was not what he would seem to be. Suwarrow was not alone in remarking this—for the captain of the ship, and the other officers had come to the same conclusion. Suwarrow had often heard them expressing their suspicions, and more than once he had listened to the suggestion that the seeming Russian merchant was no other than the Polish exile count Zinski.

Under these circumstances, Suwarrow had a severe struggle between his feelings and his sense of duty. He was a Russian officer, and bound by every tie of honour to act with fidelity to the government. Could he let such a secret as this, in respect to the count, pass by, without communicating his knowledge to the emperor? While he was thus debating the question in his own mind, he was summoned to the apartment of the captain, where he found the officers of the ship assembled, together with Alexis and the count. The latter soon after rose, and addressed the captain as follows :

“Before we part, my dear sir, I have an apology to make to you and these gentlemen. It is to hear this apology that I have requested

you to meet me here. I have practised a disguise, I may almost say, an imposition, upon you all. I am not a Russian merchant—but the disgraced and banished Count Zinski. I have taken this step merely to reach St. Petersburg. We are now approaching the city, and my object being accomplished, it is due to you and my own character to remove the mask under which I have sought and obtained your kindness and courtesy. Do not fear that either your character or mine shall suffer for this ; my purpose is fixed : I shall forthwith surrender myself to the emperor.—Here,” said he, addressing the captain, while he held a paper in his hand, “is a statement of my return : this I shall entrust to Alexis Pultova, who will bear it to the emperor. As is your duty, captain, I have to request that you will place me under a guard, that I may remain in security on board your vessel, at Cronstadt, till the will of the emperor is known. At the same time, my wish is, that my real name may not be exposed. Indeed, captain and gentlemen, if it be compatible with your sense of duty and propriety, I could wish that

96

my whole story might for the present be held in reserve, as a matter only known to ourselves."

As the count finished, the captain rose, and, grasping his hand, was about to speak—but his voice was choked, and the tears gushed down his cheeks. In a moment, however, he recovered, and said—"My dear count, I will do as you request, for I know that this is as well my duty, as your interest; I would not encourage false hopes—but, sir, I am indebted to you for my life, and for the lives of many of these friends around me. But for you, our career had ended ingloriously, at the island of Paoo. You shall not suffer for the want of due representation of this service rendered to us and to the country."

The vessel at last approached the frowning castle of Cronstadt, and was saluted with a discharge of cannon which shook the sea to its bed and made even the stout ship stagger in her path. This attention was returned by the vessel—and soon after, she entered one of the docks provided for the Russian fleet.

After taking an affectionate leave of the count, the captain and other officers, Suwarrow

and Alexis set out immediately for St. Petersburg, where they arrived late in the evening. The latter proceeded immediately to the place where he expected to obtain letters from Tobolsk; but judge of his disappointment to find that none awaited him ! With a heavy heart he returned to the hotel where he had taken lodgings—but as he was about to ascend the steps, his arms was seized by a rough, strong hand, and turning suddenly round, he recognized the well-known features of old Linsk !



CHAPTER XVIII.

LINSK'S STORY—PULTOVA AND KATHINKA
IN PRISON—HAPPY ENDING.



IN a state of extreme agitation, Alexis hurried Linsk into his room, locked the door, and then turning round upon him said, almost with fierceness, "Tell me, Linsk—tell me—are they well?"

"Who do you mean?" said the old fur-

hunter—almost doubting whether Alexis was not out of his mind.

“Tell me instantly,” said Alexis, “is he alive?”

“Is who alive?” said Linsk.

“My father—my father,” said Alexis, bursting into tears, from apprehensions suggested by the hesitation of Linsk.

“I hope he is,” said Linsk, a good deal affected; “I hope he is alive, and well.”

“And Kathinka—is she well?”

“I hope so,” said Linsk.

“My dear friend—do not torment me thus; see, I am calm! Tell me the whole truth—I will hear it all—I believe I can bear it. If they are dead, let me know it—anything is better than suspense.”

“Well, now, that is right: be calm and I will tell it all—but you must give me time.”

“Go on—go on!”

“Well—now you must know that four months ago I left Tobolsk to come here and sell my furs. As I was coming away, your sister Kathinka gave me the roll of furs you had sent her, and requested me to seek out

the princess Lodoiska, and see that they were safely placed in her hands.

"All this I promised faithfully to do, and departed. When I reached this city, I sought out the princess, and gave her the parcel. There was something in it from that hermit whom we saw in the cave of Siberia, and who, it seems, was the famous exile, Count Zinski. The princess almost went mad about it; she told me to go straight back to Siberia, and find the hermit and bring him here, and she would give me a thousand dollars! I should have taken her offer, but that I saw the count in Yakutsk, just after you left the place, in the disguise of a fur merchant, and I doubted if I should be able to find him."

"But my father—my sister?"

"When I left Tobolsk your father was very poorly, and Kathinka used to shed a great many tears about it. At last Col. Krusenstern, who had seemed all the while to be very kind, told your father that he had got the consent of the emperor, that he and Kathinka should leave Siberia, and return to Poland. The old gentleman had no suspicion of any trick:

this intelligence put new life into him, and he set off with Kathinka for St. Petersburg. They had money enough, for the colonel provided everything.

"Well, when they got to St. Petersburg Krusenstern was there. He immediately caused information to be lodged at one of the police offices, that your father had fled from Tobolsk and was in the city."

"The villain—the villain!" said Alexis, springing on his feet.

"Be quiet—be quiet," said Linsk; "you must command yourself. Your father was arrested and hurried to prison, with poor Kathinka. There was no one to appear in their behalf, for Krusenstern kept the matter very quiet. At last I heard what was going on. With the greatest difficulty I gained admittance to the prison. I had heard about angels, master Alexis, but I never saw one till then. Your sister was pale as death, but there was a sweet sunshine upon her face, that seemed to cast a gleam of light through the dungeon. She was sitting by your father, and telling him some pleasant tale, for I saw

the old man smile—though the place was very dim.”

Alexis wrung his hands and groaned in an agony of impatience. Linsk proceeded :

“Well—they were delighted to see me; and your sister, taking me apart, told me to



go to the princess Lodoiska, and take her a ring that she took off her finger, and tell her that Pultova of Warsaw and his daughter were in prison, and begged her immediate aid. I went to find the princess immediately, but she was gone to Poland. In the meantime your father was tried and condemned. In this state of things, Krusenstern, who was in love

with your sister, told her that if his love could be returned, he would save her father. She spurned him as if he had been a serpent, and this turned his heart to gall. Now he seems anxious that your father should die, and the fatal day is fixed for a week from to-morrow."

Alexis seemed for a few moments in a state of mind which threatened to upset his reason: but soon recovering himself, his step became firm, and his countenance decided. "Take me," said he, "to the prison, Linsk: I want to see my father and sister without delay." They went to the place, but found that they could not be admitted. What could now be done? "I will go to the emperor," said Alexis—"I will appeal to him."

At this moment the message committed to him by Count Zinski, came into his mind. He forthwith made the most rapid preparations in his power, for proceeding to the palace. This, however, was a work of several hours. At last, he set out. Dismounting from the carriage at the gate of the palace, he entered, and as he was crossing the court, a coach with a lady was passing by. At this

moment, the horses took fright at some object, and rearing fearfully for a moment, set forward at a full run. They swept quite round the circular court with desperate fury, and were now approaching Alexis.

Springing suddenly upon them, he fortunately seized the bridle of one of the horses, and by his vigorous arm, arrested the progress of the furious animals. While he held them, the driver descended from his box, opened the door of the coach, and the lady, almost fainting from fright, sprang forth upon the ground. Alexis approached the trembling lady, and was about to offer to conduct her across the court to the palace, when some of the servants, who had witnessed the scene we have described, came up, and gave their assistance. As the lady was moving away, she spoke to Alexis, and asked his name. "Alexis Pultova," said he.

"Pultova? Pultova?" said the lady, "Alexis Pultova, of Warsaw?"

"Once of Warsaw, madam, but now of Tobolsk."

It is unnecessary to give the details of the interview. The lady was the princess

Lodoiska, who had just returned from Poland. The story of Count Zinski was soon told, as well as that of the father and sister of Alexis. The princess seemed at first overwhelmed with the double calamity, the news of which fell like shocks of thunder upon her ear. She saw at once the danger to which Zinski, whom she still loved with devoted attachment, had exposed himself by his rash return: and she also felt the extreme difficulty of disappointing the artful and villanous scheme of the wicked Krusenstern, in respect to Pultova and his daughter.

She begged Alexis to delay his interview with the emperor a single day, and promised her utmost efforts in behalf of all those in whom Alexis felt so deeply interested. When he was gone, she went to Nicholas, and told him the story of the count, as she had heard it from Alexis. She then told frankly her feelings, and stated the circumstances of their former acquaintance, which have already been detailed to the reader. She then threw herself upon her knees, and begged for the life and liberty of her lover.

We need not say that it was a touching

plea—but the emperor seemed unmoved, and positively refused to grant the request. He insisted that the count's crime was one of the highest nature, and it was indispensable that he should receive a signal punishment. "His fate is sealed," said Nicholas, firmly, "and it shall be executed to-morrow. I hope, fair lady, if you do not approve my mercy, you will at least acknowledge my justice."



Baffled and broken-hearted, the princess left the stern monarch, and sought her room. On the morrow, Zinski was taken to the castle of St. Petersburg, and preparations for his execution seemed to be immediately set on foot. In vain was the petition of Lodoiska: in vain the representations and the prayers of the captain of the Czarina. When Alexis

came, and delivered the message of Zinski, Nicholas showed that he felt a touch of emotion ; but it appeared to pass immediately away.

About four o'clock in the afternoon of the day fixed for the count's execution, there was a heavy sound of musketry in the court of the castle : then a dead silence, and finally a gate was opened, and a coach, with its curtains closely drawn, issued forth, wending its way to the palace of the emperor. A man of a noble form, and still youthful aspect, issued from the coach, and was conducted to the audience room of the czar.

There stood Nicholas—a man of great height, and vast breadth of shoulder, as if he had been made for the very model and personification of strength : at the same time, his countenance, lighted up by a full blue eye, expressed, amid a lofty and somewhat stern aspect, an emotion of gentleness. By his side was the princess Lodoiska.

The stranger entered the hall, and proceeding toward the emperor, was about to kneel. "Nay, Count Zinski," said the emperor, "we will not have that ceremony to-

day. You have been shot, and that is enough, I owe you my life, Count, and I am glad of being able to testify my gratitude. I sentenced you to Siberia, expecting that you would petition for reprieve; but you were too proud. I have long mourned over your stubbornness. Your return has given me pleasure, though I could have wished that it had



been in some other way. I could not overlook your crime, so I ordered you to be shot—but with blank-cartridges. And now, count, what can I do for you?"

"One thing, sire, and but one."

"What is it?—you shall have your wish."

"The restoration of Pultova and his family."

"It cannot be—it cannot be! The rebel has just returned from Tobolsk, like yourself."

"Then, sire, let him be like me—forgiven"

"You are ready with your wit, count—but you shall have your way. I will give immediate orders for the liberation of Pultova; and he, as well as yourself, shall be restored to your estates at Warsaw."



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"There is we opine a vast difference between what is commonly called catechetical instruction and the principle of interrogation. One is mere parrot work, consisting of set questions to set answers, addressed simply to the memory and lingual organs, the other has reference to a thinking mind. For this reason we are led to look upon all question and answer modes of instruction with great suspicion, but in glancing over the Catechisms of the REV. T. WILSON we find so much to recommend, both in the subjects themselves and the way in which they are treated, that we must afford our meed of praise to the excellent publications before us."

"Nothing is more striking than the great advances made by education in the present day, which has at last begun to burst the trammels which pedagogues had thrown around it. And it is one of the signs of improvement to observe men of high attainments turning their attention to the preparation of books for children. Among the many which fall under our notice, there are few that will bear comparison with the excellent manuals of elementary instruction now placed beneath our view."

"When knowledge is made the handmaid to religion, and education is placed on the only solid foundation of our English Church, we have every desire to foster its growth and to accelerate its progress; but it behoves us to be careful what food, intellectual or moral, we put before the young mind. We see nothing to object to in these publications, and very much indeed to recommend them for adoption in our schools. They are simple, and at the same time sufficiently comprehensive for all practical purposes, and embrace a round of education, such as in the present day seems to be almost necessary, if not indispensable."

"The Catechisms of the REV. T. WILSON comprehend many branches of knowledge, and all of them useful; they are well drawn up, and the

10 *Opinions of the London and Provincial Press*

answers to the questions not of that unwieldy length usually appended to them. We have seldom seen little manuals so nicely got up, so far as the printing is concerned, and their cheapness will recommend them above many others."

"Never have we seen so much information in so small a space as in these Catechisms. They are multum in parvo, terse, short, clear worded, and clear headed "expositions in little." Many persons of mature years would find great advantage in conning over these works as refresheners. They are adapted for young and old, for poor and rich; and have a straightforwardness of expression about them thoroughly English."

"If we were asked what is the first recommendation to a school book, we should reply—accuracy. If we were asked what is the second recommendation, we should reply—accuracy; and if we were asked what is the third, we should still reply—accuracy. Accuracy of data—of facts. There seems to us to be a great deal of veritableness in these little books, which is to us their most prominent recommendation."

"It is difficult to believe that so much sterling information can be put into so small a space, and it is more difficult still to imagine that works of

such great cheapness could be so well got up. We are not much in the habit of passing critical remarks upon school books, but we cannot refrain from saying a word in behalf of publications so extremely useful as these appear to be."

"Great tact, extensive tutorial knowledge, much information, a pure taste, a sound judgment may be noticed in these Catechisms of Messrs. Darton & Co. The editor MR. WILSON is quite equal to his task, which he carries out very effectively."

"Here we have a bundle of Catechisms on History, Geography, Grammar, Botany, Drawing, Music, and many other subjects. They do not seem to be at all like the old sets of Catechisms, which have afforded so much disgust to the learner, but they appear to possess a kind of literary or educational vitality which will recommend them to that class of teachers who are teaching real instead of fictitious knowledge."

"There is a good time coming" we may safely aver when we observe the excellent books which are now brought forth from the press for educational purposes. These books are particularly to be recommended to "Model Schools." They are quite on the constructive method; and the Privy Council would do well to lay in a store of them.

12 *Opinions of the London and Provincial Press*

They will be found useful from the college to the pauper school, and amply repay those who adopt them.

“Catechisms for teaching dogmatically we object to in toto, but when we see the great facts of the outward and visible world brought before our senses, by means of interrogation on the true Socratic method, we are always ready to record the fact, and to offer our humble meed of praise, as we confidently can do in this instance.”

“To the Sunday school teacher these concise manuals of instruction will be very welcome. They are a vast improvement upon the lessonal school plans and those of sale. We believe the Scottish Book Association have adopted them in many of their schools. We think the Botany a little too comprehensive for poor children, but for schools of a better class excellent. The other parts are well worthy the attention of Sunday schools.”

“The Congregational schools, who very properly are making their stand against Government encroachment on the rights of education, have, we understand it in contemplation to compose a set of books for their schools; we would recommend these Catechisms as infinitely superior to any yet

before the public, whether we regard them in relation to the accuracy of their plan, the correctness of the mass of facts they contain, or the *bon hommie* feeling with which they are drawn up."

"Methods are innumerable, both theoretic and practical, in every branch of education, but they are frequently contradictory; some starting from the same principle, but diverging in their application; others starting from different posts in their outset, yet few possessing concentration and uniformity. When we meet with this uniformity we always rejoice; and it is not too much to say that the Catechisms under the editorship of the REV. T. WILSON quite realise our views in these particulars."

"Between a mind taught at random and a mind educated there is a vast difference. As much as there is between a lumber room and a store room—a book manufactory and a library. One is disorder and confusion, the other is order and discipline. To teach the mind thoroughly is the business of modern education, and we have seldom seen a set of works more admirably adapted for this important work than the judicious little manuals brought under our editorial notice on the present occasion, which present features of great excellence in all their various departments of instruction."

14 *Opinions of the London and Provincial Press*

"In these little works there is more philosophy than strikes the eye on a casual perusal, and we were by no means sensible of their merits till we gave them a trial in our school room. We have tried them in the upper classes with great success, and have no doubt of their becoming very popular among our teachers."

"Among the many enterprising efforts of spirited publishers, few have been attended with more success than those of the publishers of the little books of instruction now before us. Infant schools in particular have been much indebted to the name and the exertions of Mr. Darton for very great improvements in the pictures, lessons, and materials of the school room. Nor have private schools been less under obligation to the same source. We therefore hail the Catechism series of MR. WILSON as a boon conferred not only on the rising generation but upon the mass of teachers in this great empire."

"Our attention has been called to a Catechetical series of elementary books, having for their objects the storing of the youthful minds with practical information on a great variety of matters, including History, Botany, Astronomy, Natural Philosophy, Music, Drawing, and Morals of life, and we can bear testimony to the excellent way in

which they are drawn up. They are both synthetic and analytic, and embrace the constructive methods of Dr. Kay Shuttleworth, in a manner which must be highly agreeable to that strenuous supporter of educational freedom."

"A great authority averred that 'knowledge was power.' If this be true, the children of the present day ought to be more powerful than their grandfathers ever were. Of all the works written for the information of the young none are better calculated than those before us to implant leading principles and important facts on the mind. They are to be recommended not more for their comprehensiveness than for their accuracy—not more for their cheapness than for their utility."

"We have often heard it cherished by the modern educationists, some of whom have gone to France, Holland, and Germany for information which they overlooked at their own doors, that England was far behind other countries in her educational productions, but we think that foreign countries would fail to present to the scholastic teacher such a mass of well-digested facts and principles as are to be found in these catechetical books, which exhibit features of excellence seldom seen in any of the continental manuals. Short, concise, pithy, and comprehensive, they are well

16 *Opinions of the London and Provincial Press*

adapted to fix leading ideas in the mind, to serve as pegs upon which other matters may be conveniently hung."

"In Economic Magazines such as ours, devoted as we are to the store-room, the kitchen, the laundry, the brewery, and the garden, we cannot be expected to say much of mere book learning, yet we cannot refrain from affording our meed of praise to the very intelligent set of books presented to us by the publisher, so convinced have we been of their admirable adaptation to all the wants of childhood, that we have sent them into the nursery and school room, and we can report most favorably upon the important services they have rendered our governess in her arduous duties."

"We have seldom been called upon to notice a more excellent series of works than those transmitted to us by the enterprising publishers. It behoves all who have to do with the culture of the youthful mind, to be careful what kind of books they put before their young charge; for under the plausible name of education, a vast mass of deleterious matters spread abroad, but in these works a degree of excellence is attained, rarely to be found in similar publications."

"This series of elementary works places religious,

moral, historical, and scientific knowledge so emphatically before the young reader that we think no parent or teacher into whose hands the books may fall, would be performing justice to himself or his pupils, if he did not adopt them as one of the best modes of juvenile instruction."

"The works under the name of the REV. T. WILSON, although simple and brief in their character, possess features of excellence not common to many of the works of this character, viz., a simplicity of arrangement, an accuracy of expression, and a strictness of definition, which render them well worthy the attention of the scholastic teacher, who will find them valuable auxiliaries in the work of instruction."

"These works are not the mere parrot question and answer system of Pinnock and his imitators, but truly interrogative, and are calculated not so much to teach children to learn things by heart, as to make them understand what they learn by a series of inductive questions appealing to the reason and the judgment, as well as to the memory, which render them admirable vehicles of instruction."

"The series of works submitted to our notice in the catechetical form under the editorship of the REV. T. WILSON, have required from us, owing

18 *Opinions of the London and Provincial Press*

to their comprehensive nature, a much larger amount of critical acumen than we are able to afford at all times to similar issues from the press. But taking the series as a whole, and having compared them with other kinds in vogue among schools, we have no hesitation in pronouncing them in every way superior to the great number of similar works palmed upon the public as interrogative lessons."

"The instruction of the young in wholesome truths and sound facts of practical information, has ever been held by all thinking men as the true basis for educational development. The authors of the Catechisms under the editorial name of the REV. T. WILSON, have we think performed an essential service to the rising generation by the lucid arrangement, the very copious collection of facts, and the clever treatment of them, which distinguish the series, and which we cannot but recommend to all interested in the work of instruction."

"There is perhaps no circumstance that more favorably distinguishes the modern from the ancient subject of education than the substitution of historical and scientific fact for flimsy fable. And the success of the teacher is to be measured not by the number of words with which he loads the memory

of his pupil, but by the number of facts and principles established in his mind. On these premises the works of the REV. T. WILSON have been prepared, and it is not too much to say that they in every way realize the expectation formed by a perusal of the intelligent prospectus attached to them."

"The importance and advantage of establishing in the minds of the rising generation the great mass of facts with which the present day abounds is now no longer controvertible, and we therefore hail the appearance of a set of books, simple in their character, yet powerful as means in the work of education. These works contain not such questions as are usually appended to school books—a mere mechanical contrivance to save the teacher the labour of thought, but lively interrogations, springing impromptu from the subjects under consideration. Of such a kind are the series of Catechisms which we have stepped a little out of our way to notice."

"The enterprising publishers of these works are entitled to great praise for so creditable an undertaking, and one so very likely to be useful to society. If extensively circulated, such a series of books cannot fail to assist very materially in forming good and clever men and women. They are

20 *Opinions of the London and Provincial Press*

both moral and scientific, as well as historical, and we are glad to observe that while the facts appertaining to the latter branches of study are extremely correct, the great truths of Bible and Gospel history are set forth in a manner to command our highest commendation."

"Books relating to education are now-a-days so numerous, that our editorial shelves groan with them, few indeed are worthy of much consideration, but among those that occasionally seem to call for our remarks are the series of the REV. T. WILSON. They comprehend a complete circle of knowledge, both moral, religious, scientific, and historical. They appear to us to be compiled with distinguished ability, and to leave nothing wanted in the instruction of the young. We regret not to have noticed this series at an earlier period."

"This series of little books for the instruction of children and young persons, is likely to be extremely serviceable, both in the school and nursery. They are not mere dry facts strung together without order or arrangement, but a well considered and properly graduated course of instruction, comprehending almost every subject that ought to come within the scope of the juvenile mind. They are clear and perspicuous, and we confidently recom-

mend them to the parent and the governess, the old schoolmaster and the young teacher."

"Half the labour, to speak within bounds, of every educator of our race, from the mother and teacher to the professor at the college, is lost in consequence of a want of attention to fundamental principles and correct data in early years. Those who use WILSON'S Catechisms will certainly not make this mistake. It is not to be supposed that every teacher is to be a Haller, a Richardson, a Newton, a Locke, or a Bacon, but he may be as great as either by becoming a good educator, and nothing is more likely to aid him in this noble attempt than the use of the series of books brought under our editorial notice."

"The arrangement of this series of books for the young is truly excellent. It is not desultory as is usually the case, but systematic, embracing within reasonable limits the elements of the vast field of human culture, and if simplicity and exactitude, clear and pointed examples, and apt and cogent applications of them be meritorious in a school book, every little compendium in this series may be truly said to embrace these merits. They would be exceedingly useful in Sunday Schools if freely adopted, and very much reduce the labour of teachers."

"There is no subject more curious in its nature, or that can possibly be more interesting than the manner in which nature operates in the development of the natural faculties. The slowness of the process is apt to excite our impatience, and the blunders of the bungler in education and of educational books our abhorrence. We only wish that works of the description above alluded to were more numerous. The Government educational board would do well to avail themselves of the assistance of MR. WILSON, who has in this series of little books conferred a boon upon schools and school masters."

"The name of the REV. T. WILSON is already familiar to most of our readers as an indefatigable labourer in the work of instruction. His works generally display the soundest orthodoxy and the most correct principles in morals. We need fear no ill effects from any publication proceeding from his active, free, and fertile mind, if any proof were wanting of the skilful application of his powers to elementary instructions, this set of books, compiled on a new principle, would supply it, and we heartily wish them success."

"The training of the young mind to habits of reflection and the speech to a proper selection of words, together with the storing of the understand-

ding with substantial knowledge, are the most important undertakings either of the parent or schoolmaster. It was long a reproach to the English that there were but few books really calculated to subserve the purposes of the trainer. This series of elementary works appears to fill a hiatus in this department of literature, and really leaves little to be wished for in the way of simple interrogation. We hope the Reverend Author will continue his labours in a field so admirably suited to his talents and attainments."

"A vast deal has been done for the improvement of elementary instruction of late years. Education is not only becoming more general, but more systematic, knowledge once applied to the memory only is now incorporated with the understanding, and in the new order of things the concise and intelligent series by the Rev. DR. WILSON stands in the first place. We have examined these works and tested them in the school room, and we can conscientiously bear witness to their excellence and fitness for juvenile instruction."

"To bring the youth of our Country to just principles and correct notions of things in the moral and intellectual world is a task worthy the highest commendation, and nothing so well aids in this great work as the tools put into the hands

24 *Opinions of the London and Provincial Press*

of the teacher. These tools are generally books, and for the most part short and definite expositions of the subjects to be taught. They are numerous enough certainly, but of all that have been brought under our notice the series we are now called upon to give judgment on is one that we can confidently recommend, not more from the highly proper subjects treated of than from the clear and explicit manner in which the author or authors have dealt with them."

"These are not "dry" books, as school books usually are, but have a vivacity and life about them which will powerfully recommend them to the young pupil, and thus ease the labour of the teacher. History, Science, Morals, Religion. Happy are the young minds that can be thoroughly imbued with the principles of universal knowledge from such excellent compendiums."

"Plain and simple expositions of a vast number of elementary subjects drawn up with great skill on the interrogative or catechetical system. We are not advocates for the cramming of children at an early age, but when the various branches of education are so happily treated as they are in this series of books, we cannot but consider their introduction to schools of considerable advantage both to the teacher and the pupil."

"The great charm of the Catechisms under the editorship of the REV. T. WILSON, a veteran in Educational instruction, is clearness and perspicuity. Every question propounded is the symbol of an idea. We have no accumulation of "Words without things," but the embodying of mental perceptions clearly propounded; and hence these little books possess a character far superior to that which is usually found in similar publications."

"Superficial knowledge is attended with many inconveniences, and did we consider the little works before us as merely the dressing up of short phrases on Scientific and other subjects, to be committed to memory and then forgotten, we should discard them from our school library entirely; but we look upon them as of a far higher character, and feel that they recommend themselves by the intellectual turn which is given to the subjects by the peculiar talent with which the author or authors have treated them for the purposes of juvenile instruction."

"The education usually afforded even in our best boarding schools has been far from practical. Too much attention has been paid to the dead languages, and too little to living principles. It therefore gives us pleasure to find that books for the young are now written which combine good

practical information and useful knowledge. Of the best of these are the works before us, which are not only well designed but admirably executed, and do great credit both to author and publisher."

"A mass of highly useful information put together in a very clever manner. The author has completely seized upon the way of treating the human intellect; he grapples with it in its best moods and forms, teaches as it were without teaching, communicating knowledge in a manner highly commendable. These works are not merely questions and answers loosely strung together, but present features of great order and arrangement."

"Really useful knowledge well communicated. Plain facts clearly stated. Information of both a general and a specific nature emphatically enunciated. We have not observed in the whole circle of school literature, a class of works so well deserving public and private patronage. The REV. T. WILSON has added to his popularity greatly by their publication."

"The cheapness and intrinsic value of the Catechisms of the REV. T. WILSON stand far before all others, they will be alike useful to the parent and the school-master. Our public schools would also do well to incorporate these methods into their own establishments."

"The REV. T. WILSON is an adept in writing practical works for the young. These are some of his best productions, and present in a very succinct form a vast amount of useful knowledge—knowledge which should be acquired by every child. We have always held that the elements of History, Science, and Philosophy, ought to form a leading branch in school instruction."

"The works of a juvenile character under the editorship of the REV. T. WILSON are numerous and justly celebrated; they generally relate to the subject matter of instruction, and carry with them many powerful recommendations to the youthful student. In the series before us the peculiar happiness of this author in communicating useful knowledge in a pleasant manner has not been departed from, while the subjects themselves are in every way interesting."

"The series of Catechetical Books under the editorship of MR. WILSON, the well known author of elementary works for the young, appears to be written with very great care. The more Scientific portions have been it appears confided to the pens of gentlemen well known in scientific matters, while the historical and religious portions are compiled with the strictest regard to well ascertained facts, and to the records of Divine Truth."

“The series of elementary books similar to those of Sir Richard Phillips and Pinnock, but presenting important features of improvement, and illustrated in a superior style, comprehend history, both sacred and secular, Natural Philosophy, Botany, and useful knowledge, with arts, manufactures and commerce. They are well worth the attention of all engaged in the important work of education, and can be recommended for their simplicity as well as for their accuracy.”

“The set of interrogative works for the young were preceded by some very clever compilations by the Rev. Dr. Blair, which comprise the simplest elementary knowledge which a mother might communicate to her children. These little works take up the same system and carry it out with great effectiveness, through the more advanced subjects of History, Philosophy, Geography, Music, and Grammar. We can only say that they add greatly to the deserved celebrity of the works already published by the celebrated author.”

“Among the numerous helps to a comprehensive education which the present age presents to the Parent and Teacher, few present so many advantages as the comprehensive and elaborately compiled Catechisms which have been forwarded to us by the well known publishers, Messrs. Darton &

Co. We believe this firm to be the oldest of our juvenile Book Houses, but these works have all the qualities of youthfulness and adaptation to the forward spirit of the age. They are exceedingly well written, judiciously selected, and clear in their arrangement, while the illustrations are very superior to those found in publications of the kind."

"In glancing over a set of books for young persons from the prolific press of Darton & Co., we have been much struck with a number of elementary books designed for family and school instruction, under the name of the REV. T. WILSON, they comprise every branch of knowledge likely to be required even in the advanced age of literature, and the author, or authors, seem to have bestowed the utmost care upon the composition. The little manuals of Botany, History, and Geography, are models in their way of elegant composition."

"We hear a great deal about useful knowledge, but a vast quantity of what is called such might better bear the appellation of *Useless Knowledge*. Children are so crammed now a-days with all kinds of "stuff" that the little creatures hardly know what to learn; and it really gives us pleasure to see a set of juvenile volumes fit for the teaching

of Children. There is nothing in those before us but what is absolutely essential in school or family teaching, and we may congratulate both author and reader upon the success with which the compilations have been drawn up for the purposes of instruction."

"In the Catechisms presented to our notice for Editorial remark we may say with a strict regard to truth, that they are at once the simplest and the most comprehensive books we have been called upon to notice. They include all those subjects usually forming a part of school instruction, and placed in the hands of an intelligent teacher will admirably assist him in his efforts."

"We hold all education to be useless, unless it has for its aim the developement of the faculties both intellectual and moral, and we think that the works of MR. WILSON are of a character well calculated to promote this desirable end, and to add force, precision, and intelligence to the youthful mind."

"We cannot too strongly recommend WILSON's set of Catechisms to our scholastic readers. They embody a vast fund of information in every department of Literature, Science, and History. Adopting the interrogative system, the author has

succeeded in presenting to the pupil a mass of interesting facts and cogitative reasoning not to be found in any other books with which we are acquainted."

"It has been said by a great writer that we should pour in knowledge gently,—and we may add, systematically. There is much of simplicity, method, accuracy, and information in these books. They are strictly inductive and ratiocinative, and while they store the mind with great facts, they also strengthen its powers and enlarge the sphere of its activity."

"To train the young mind to habits of reflection, to induce it to think,—to compare,—to reason, and to decide, is the great aim of the true Educator. Any works that will aid in this important task, will ever have our meed of praise. We think the works before us compiled under the superintendence of the REV. MR. WILSON, conducive to this important end, and we are therefore under no hesitation in recommending them to all interested in the advancement of education."

"The works of the REV. T. WILSON are marvels in their way, for they bring such a quantity of facts before us, and so elaborately treat those facts

32 *Opinions of the London and Provincial Press*

with a view to their ready comprehension, that they take precedence of all other similar publications with which we are acquainted."

"The Catechisms under the name of the REV. T. WILSON are we believe written by various individuals, distinguished in those particular branches of History, Science, and Art of which they respectively treat. The work on Botany although merely elementary gives evidence of a master hand, while those on Grammar, Drawing, and Music are evidently written by professors in the branches of knowledge. The revisions of the Editor have been most judicious, and as a whole they may be confidently recommended as the best set of Elementary books extant."

"These works are well prepared in their most important features, and will save the teacher a vast deal of trouble while engaged in the ill paid drudgery of scholastic teaching. They are so simple that the meanest capacity may understand them, so general in their subjects as to embrace all the requisites of school tuition. They have a sterling character and durability about them, which argues well for the authors and publishers."

"There are from twelve to fifteen admirable little treatises on general, historical, and scientific sub-

jects, adapted to children of all ages. They are worthy successors of Blair's Catechisms, of which they form an extended series. They place before the young mind a vast quantity of information in a pleasing manner, and may be safely recommended for general adoption by parents, governesses, and teachers."

"The great aim of modern education should be, in the words of a great writer on education, not to teach words, but things, by a process of moral and intellectual training and developement, in which all the powers of the mind are duly excited and exercised; and of all the juvenile works before the public calculated for this important end, there are none so well calculated to ensure success as the series of Catechisms of the REV. T. WILSON, to which we have so often adverted, and which we would most cordially recommend to the notice of our numerous scholastic readers."

"As serials for children, and well adapted to woo the infant mind to the acquaintance of knowledge, we can confidently recommend these Catechisms, which, for perspicuity of style, and accuracy of information, have not been equalled."

"MR. WILSON'S *Catechisms*, which have superseded those of PINNOCK, appear to have avoided

34 *Opinions of the London and Provincial Press*

the defects of the ancient pedagogue. They are written by different eminent individuals, each subject having been wisely intrusted to a person peculiarly conversant with it; but all have worked together in harmony with the common design, and the result is a series of Catechisms for schools and families, which not only bring down the information to the present state of knowledge in every branch, but convey it in a form adapted to the comprehension of those who have to perform the double task of learning both the meanings of words and the things those words are intended to describe. With such recommendations, WILSON'S *Catechisms* have deservedly taken the place of PINNOCK'S, and we can confidently recommend them wherever they may be yet unknown."

"The treatise on Common Things is a familiar exposition, in simple, intelligible language, adapted to the comprehension of children, of every day matters that come before us in the shape of Aliment, Apparel, Trade, Chronology, &c."

"The compendium of the leading events in English History, MR. WILSON has ably given in his Catechism, and his Analysis of the Holy Scriptures reflects equal credit upon his judgment."

REV. T. WILSON'S CATECHISMS.

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THE FIRST CATECHISM OF GEOGRAPHY.

THE CATECHISM OF MUSIC.

THE CATECHISM OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR.

THE CATECHISM OF ASTRONOMY.

THE CATECHISM OF BOTANY.

THE SECOND CATECHISM OF BOTANY.

to be followed by others.

* * * The plan of the series of Catechisms edited by the REV. T. WILSON was originally suggested by those admirable little works, the First, Second and Third Mother's Catechisms, by the REV. D. BLAIR. They were intended to form, with the latter, a complete set of Elementary Works, for young pupils, in a catechetical form, which should be distinguished for their simple and practical character, and for other qualities, which experienced teachers alone know how to appreciate. Their now established and far-spread reputation furnishes the most satisfactory proof of how far this object has been attained. The last addition to the series is THE SECOND CATECHISM OF BOTANY, which, it is confidently hoped, will be found worthy to rank with its predecessors.

