

SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER XLI .- Continued.

"It is sad," continued his majesty, "very sad, but be assured that, although the case is a somewhat difficult one, full justice shall be done. The American minister has already inquired about the matter, and has demanded that the fullest investigation be made. These Americans are very meddlesome. I am informed, how-ever, by the minister of foreign affairs that there will be little difficulty
in establishing this Hardy's guilt, as

At this character and has a bad record.

The princess turned pale as she repeated

A dangerous character? A bad record? Will you send for this record, tice may be done!"

'You-to plead for him?"

"Yes, sire, for he did not kill my rousin. Will your majesty grant me the favor that I may hear this red read in your majesty's presence? For I know this Mr. Hardy, and I know sch that is good of him, and nothing The czar rang a bell and comnanded a servant to send a confiutes later an old man entered, a stoopshouldered old man with a clean-sha ven face, whose eyes denoted infinite shrewdness, his manner infinite ser-

"Pypine," said his majesty, "can you bring to us immediately the record of the American, Hardy, concerning whom the minister of foreign affairs was speaking to us the other

"Yes, sire." replied Pypine, "a copy was ordered from the chief of police or Moscow and is now in his excel-

Bring it," said the czar, "immedi-

"While he is gone you may tell us what you know of this American Hardy, and why you think he did not to his brow as though he were what you know of this American Hardy, and why you think he did not he were "Little Father." said Box dy, and why you think he did not as-

high connections in his own country, my dead cousin's name. Grant my who has come here to engage in com- prayers. Let Mr. Hardy be freed, and go. I am overwhelmed by my good the bank, lifted up his voice, to be in bers of the pack had left it and were high connections in his own country,

merce and retrieve his fortunes. cousin first met him in Japan. This part of the story I have from Boris' own lips. Boris, being hard pressed by the police, put his telltale papers

"And the boy? Do you know where he is? He can be given up to jus-

tice. "The boy," replied the princess, solemnly, "no longer exists. Over-Overwhelmed with horror at what he had done, and feeling sure that the police

would find and punish him, he has made away with himself. He told me that it was his intention to do away with himself, and he has disap-At this moment Pypine entered with

ord? Will you send for this test size that I may hear it in your majestry's presence? For I come not to speak against this Hardy, who is action of sympathizing with the Japanese, of head shrouded in a thick cap, the cused of murdering my cousin, but to having affiliated with Jews, of having driver sat on the forward seat, partly plead for his release, to pray that justinsulted the authorities at Vladivostok protected by the high-curving dash, by requesting that the imperial gov-ernment use its influence to get him the one found in the nihilists' den on bottom of the sledge the evening of the explosion of the Frenchman's famous pill. Further-more, he had fought a duel with the and the trains were halted while re-Prince Romanoff, in which he had been wounded. This fact furnished the motive for his alleged erime, which, coupled with his suspicious record, left little room, in the Russian official mind, for doubt of his Most of these points had al-

> As for the overcoat." she remarked. "if he continued to wear it he could would stop for some time incognito in imperial government is by no means influence in the procuring of a clean

The emperor arose and pressed his

"Little Father," said Romanovna, "this man saved my life, my honor. "I know that he is a gentleman of if it is tried, do not reflect credit on me?"



"Rise, Daughter," Said the Czar Kindly.

the report given out that the police | fortune. It was too great an honor to have secret proof of his innocence, be hoped for—that I should ever be of but are on the track of the real cul-service to your highness again." prit"-and she sank again on her

"Rise, daughter," said the czar kindly. "We have already decided on this course. It's a relief to know that he is innocent, the American ambassa-dor is so troublesome. Pypine, see that this is done. Tell the proper au-thorities that it is our will."

CHAPTER XLII.

Gray Ghosts.

That part of Siberia which lies east "Absolutely. I give you my word here turns abruptly and bends north-as a Romanoff princess that it is ward, is known as trans-Baikalia. The among the white hills. Stanovoi range of mountains, continuing to the south, divides it nearly in halves, forming a watershed that feeds the lake on one side and the

Amur and its tributaries on the other.

The trans-Siberian railway, the great artery through which the blood of Russia flowed uninterruptedly from Alexandrov to Vladivostok and Port Arthur, pierces these mountains at an advantageous point, and, passing through Stryetensk, breaks into Manchuria.

Hardy's record. At the czar's com- runs for many miles parallel with this made the sign of the cross, and said mand he read it, rapidly and in a mat- mighty ant-trail, a sledge was flying quietly: ter-of-fact, sing song tone. It con-tained nearly every act of Hardy's abreast. The river was frozen to the life, except what had actually hap- very heart and snows, drifting pened within the four walls of his over it, had swept and polished tails, that were dogs and yet not dogs, sleeping chamber, since he had set its surface till it was smooth were seen flitting among the trees. and managed the lines. On a low seat behind him were a man and a woman, a clean towel in the hotel there, with also wrapped deep in robes of fur, having worn an overcoat similar to while a third woman sat silent in the

Somewhere behind them the rails

he pairs were made There Frederick Courtland Hardy. on his way to Stryetensk, had overtaken the princess, hastening to the front, undergoing all hardships, entirely forgetful of self, that she might employ her strength, her fortune and ready been covered by the story told her high courage and example in the relief of her wounded and suffering countrymen.

She greeted Hardy with frank not have left it, and your majesty would soon discover, if your majesty and told him that he had arrived just in time to help her carry out a plan

"We can take sledges down the river," she said, "to Petrovska-Zavod, where I have no doubt we shall be nature. able to catch an outgoing train. should have started before, but was deterred by the fact that—that—in fact, I was afraid. Now, with my gal-lant defender of the Amur, I shall

The mere presence of this woman transformed him from the merchant into the courtier and polished gentleman.

"You forget," she said, while the ghost of one of her merry smiles lighted up her beautiful features, "that such things are to be said in French."

The maid, Hardy scarcely noticed. She came out at the last moment, her head covered with a fur hood that almost entirely obscured her face, and took her place in the bottom of the sledge.

of the great inland sea, Lake Baikal, and west of the mighty Amur, which here turns abruptly and bends north-the roof covered with snow, nestling

ago. Just then the driver pointed with

Manchuria.

On a river in trans-Baikalia that crossed himself. The princess also

"Those are wolves! May the holy Virgin protect us!

Two large, gray animals with bushy were seen flitting among the trees Their tongues hung out of their mouths and as they glanced from cupants, their teeth could be plainly

"Have no fear," said Hardy, "they are so few they will not dare to at

At that moment a third joined the two and ran with them. They ran easily, flitting along as lightly thistle-down driven by the wind. driver arose in his seat and cracked denly in and leaped at the throat of his whip over the horses' heads.

"Be careful, Ivan," said the princess, "do not tire them out. How far it is yet to Petrovska?"

"Twenty versts," he replied, "we should make it in something over an hour, if the horses hold out. It was near here over a year ago that Farmer Gogol was dragged from his sledge by wolves and devoured. I had not heard of many being seen this year. The Virgin defend us!'

For at this moment one of the animals emitted a long, mournful howl, the most dismal and terrible sound in

"I beg of your highness not to be commenced Hardy, but she laid her hand on his arm, and whispered:

Far in the depths of the forest an have no hesitation in going. Will you answering howl was heard, then another, farther away, and still others, both up and down the river.

from the forest.

trees like gray ghosts. Soon one of these tripped lightly through the snow down the river bank and trotted along after the sledge on far back on the river.

the ice, like a faithful dog. "They show no signs of attacking," said Hardy.

"They are famished," said the prin-ess, "but they are as patient as death, and as intelligent as humans. They are too few yet."

A second and a third joined the two on the river, while the pack on the bank steadily grew, and noiselessly, save for an occasional call into the deeps for help.

The maid sat motionless, without looking up or stirring.

Hardy lifted a rifle from the bot-

tom of the sledge.

I could kill one of them now," he said, "and perhaps that would scare them away."

"It is not time yet, my friend," replied the princess. "I shall tell you. I am a Russian and I know when to shoot. You must not waste a single shot. Nothing would scare them away," she added.

The isvoschik was using all his strength to keep his horses from exhausting themselves in one wild dash. Snorting with fear, they were tearing down the long ribbon of ice at terrific speed.

CHAPTER XLIII.

The Gift of Aisome.

Not more than ten minutes in all could have elapsed since the appearance of the first wolf, and they had already gathered in terrifying num-

"How far is it yet to Petrovska?" asked Hardy.

"About 20 versts," replied the man, "we can make it in an hour if the horses hold out."

"But this is the same answer that he gave before!" said Hardy. "He means that it is a long way," explained the princess. "Twenty versts—about 20 versts! I fear the horses a not run so far!"
"But ae wolves?" asked Hardy;

"will ey not also tire?" "They are very hungry," replied the princess; "they could run for ever!"

At this moment the entire pack wheeled as if at a word of command, and drifted chilescale described the second drifted chilescale described. and drifted obliquely down on the ice. Some ran beside the sledge, a couple of rods away, while those in the rear came up closer. Though the maddened horses were going at their utmost speed, their hoofs making a confused and incredibly rapid clatter on the ice, the fierce, wild dogs simply drifted, drifted along, without the least seeming effort. The pack was evidently nearly complete now, though an occasional gray form would flit out from among the trees, stand and look with lifted head, and then join the chase with a long, easy lope.

The little maid, crouched in the bot-tom of the sledge and bundled in furs still remained motionless, speechless, as though paralyzed with terror. The princess sat erect, looking straight ahead, the seal of a sublime courage set on her pale, noble brow. The blood of the Romanoff did not fear to die. She turned to the man at her side and smiled sweetly—more sweetly than he had ever seen woman

smile before. 'Forgive me, my friend." she said. "for bringing you into this fearful

thank God," cried Hardy, "that I am here and nowhere else! His voice rang out with sudden fer-

vor, with a sob of joy. 'Thank you, my friend,' said the

princess simply. "May I shoot now?" asked Hardy.

Several of the wolves were close to one of the horses, and were looking up at the animal's throat. was the horse that was running free: he was crowded against the other two of the team in his terror.

Not yet, not quite yet," replied the princess, "they become when they smell blood."

A moment later a wolf darted sudthe horse, which reared, snorted with terror, and then bounded ahead with a sudden burst of incredible speed.

Hardy arose, and leaning against the driver's seat, took quick aim and fired at this particular wolf, the one that had begun the attack in earn-He fell kicking and writhing on the ice and instantly the entire pack huddled above and about him snarling, snapping, scrambling, tearing--an indiscriminate mass of fur and fury, teeth and hunger.

There are 11 shots in the magazine, and five in the revolver,' Hardy, who saw a ray of hope in this action of the wolves. "With care, Se Hardy, who saw a ray
action of the wolves. "With care, action of the wolves when they should last us to Petrovska. How to the top of the bank, glanced at the houses and the villagers swarming houses and slunk away. One of

"About 20 versts," replied Ivan, "we

turn answered by a sporadic chorus | taking up the chase again. He stood om the forest.

There were now six wolves in line, leaving the carcass one by one. sight, drifting out and in among the In less than five minutes they were all back by the sledge again, and the low sun was shining on a white pile of bones, that could be distinctly seen,

"It doesn't take long," muttered Hardy, "if it must come."

Then he thought of the princess shuddered and breathed a prayer.

And still the horses ran on and on; the sledge was light and they were winged with terror. Again and again, Hardy shot-shot as never before, and seldom missed. The fire of battle was in his veins, that fierce and deadly mastery of self that exalts a brave man when he both hunts and is hunted.

"Have courage," he cried, "we shall reach Petrovska yet!"

But now the chase took on a new and more dangerous feature. When a wolf was killed, not all of the pack dropped behind to devour him.

One, more bold than the others, sprang up at the back of the sledge as if to leap in, and Hardy, firing into the open mouth, fairly blew the fierce creature's head off. The flash and explosion for a moment terrified the following pack and caused it to drop back. He turned and aimed at an animal that was snapping at one of the horses, but, when he pulled the trigger, no report ensued. His face blanched as he dropped the weapon, and drew his revolver. The shots in the magazine of the rifle were all ex-hausted! In this moment's delay a wolf succeeded in fastening its fangs in the horse's flank, and hung there, snarling. The unfortunate steed leaped forward with such violence that the traces parted, and instantly all the wolves were tearing at him, pulling him down.

"God have mercy! God have mer-

cy!" she groaned.
"Have courage," cried Hardy, "he will soon be out of his agony, and I think his death has saved our lives."

The two remaining horses did not seem to notice the loss of their com-panion, as the sledge glided easily over the smooth ice. They still ran nobly on, though they were reeking with steam.

The sledge came to a bend in the river, and for a moment its occupants lost sight of the wolves.

"Perhaps they have given up the chase," said Hardy; "perhaps, too, they are satisfied with the horse."
But the princess shook her head.

"They will never give over the chase," she said, and, at that moment, a gray form flitted around the bend in the river; two, three, half a dozen, and soon 20 or 30 of the pack were again about the sledge, leaping at it and at the horses with sharp, short yelps and snarls, their red tongues lolling, their jaws flecked with blood

"There! there!" cried the isvoschik, pointing down the river with the handle of his whip. "Petrovska! Petrovska! Bless the Virgin!" The rays of the setting sun fell full

on the dome of a Greek church, but it was a conspicuous object and far away

A wolf was hanging to the neck of one of the horses. Him Hardy shot, and, leaning over the curved dash, discharged his weapon into the body of another that was clinging to the other horse. "Elizabetha," he said, turning to the princess, his face white but glorified,

"that is the last shot. If th re were but one more, we might reac Petrovska. Here, with Death for I tell you that I love yo In the presence of Death, there! no rank, here are no princesses, no herchants. I love you, dear. She arose and threw herself on his breast. For a long minute they stood

thus, clasped in each other's arms, lip to lip, forgetful even of death itself. The wolves came on again. They ran snarling up to the rear of the

sledge, for the last attack, Then the little maid, seated on the

floor, arose from her bundle of furs become maddened and tore the hood from her head. The rays of the setting sun were shining her face, "Look into my eyes once more," she

eried; "oh, let me look on your face again-one long, last look!" Hardy raised his head.

Wang!"

wonder and could say no more "Farewell, my beloved!" as voice sounded like the voice of a priestess, chanting, "I give you to her and to happiness-I, who have loved

A path beaten in the snow led up the river bank, into the outskirts of Petrovska, and up this the tired horses dashed, their noble run at an

the horses, his strong heart bursting, fell dead beside his mate. With tears tlardy glanced behind. The strug-streaming down his checks, Hardy gling, snading mass was still there stood erect in the sledge, holding the on the ice, but already several mem-swooning princess in his arms. swooning princess in his arms.
THE END.