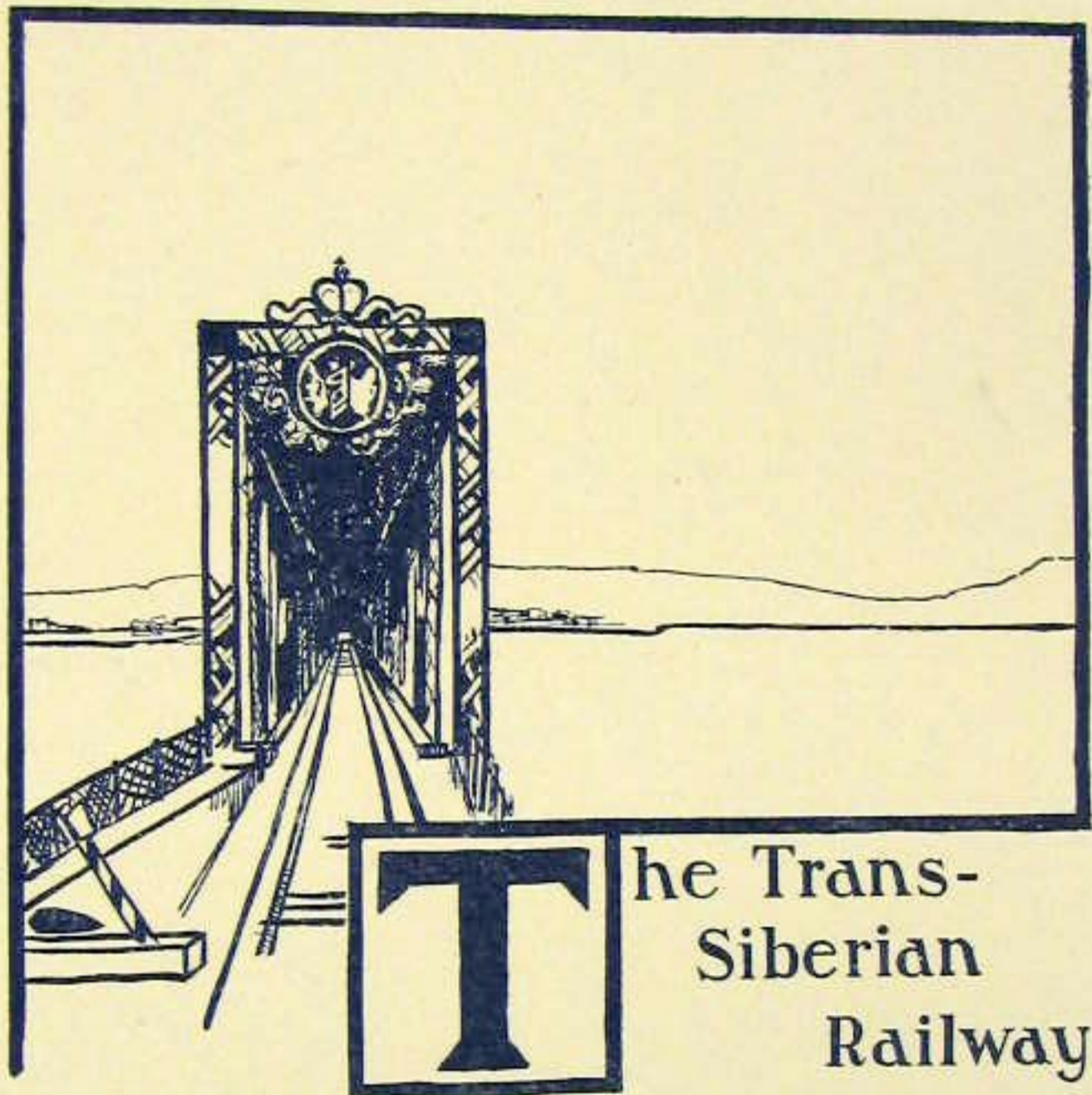


“ BAIKALIAN STATION ”

THE TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILWAY



The Trans-Siberian Railway

WESTWARD the Star of Empire has taken its way for centuries, shedding its luster upon the nations that have held the scepter of dominion. Of old it shone upon Egypt, Greece, and Rome; it flashed above the armies of Napoleon; it guided England's ships as they sailed forth to the commercial conquest of the two hemispheres. To-day it is soaring swiftly toward a new zenith, beneath which lies our own broad, rich, and splendid land, now prepared to achieve her destiny as a world-power. Already have the rays of what



OFFICE OF THE WAGONS-LITS COMPANY

is now *our* star been shot across the waters of the west, and touched the Philippines on the far side of the Pacific; but simultaneously the world becomes aware of a new light there in the Farthest West,—which is at the same time the Farthest East,—a light that came not with our star from the East by sea but from the West by land, across the vastnesses of northern Asia.

What is this new light that almost unnoticed has crept from out of the Siberian forests, down the banks of the Siberian rivers and now glows with ominous incandescence at Port Arthur and Dalni, and above the splendid harbor of the city so prophetically christened "Vladivostok"; for "Vladi" means "Dominion," and "Vostok" means "The East."

What is this light? Whence comes it? By what route has it made its way? Those who have looked upon the resplendent golden dome of Ivan's Tower in the Kremlin, the Heart of Moscow, know whence it comes. Those who, pursuing the New Way Around the World, journey from Moscow

to the eastern edge of Asia, can trace the orbit of this east-bound Star of Empire, the star of the inevitable Muscovite, who, in his turn, despite the checks and the defeats that may become his portion, is destined to play a dominant part in the great world-drama of the future.

One of the most potent instruments of world-dominion to-day is the railway. Russia wields modern weapons. The Trans-Siberian Railway is the latest acquisition in her arsenal of conquest. The Moscow terminal station, the "Koursky Voxal," a white conspicuous edifice, may be regarded not only as the gateway to Siberia, but also as the gateway to the Orient, for it will soon be possible to travel in through-trains from that station to Peking.

But all this is difficult to realize, as we go through the usual forms of ticket-purchasing at the city office of the "Company International of Wagons-Beds and of Grand Expresses European," — which is a literal translation of



THE KURSK STATION, MOSCOW

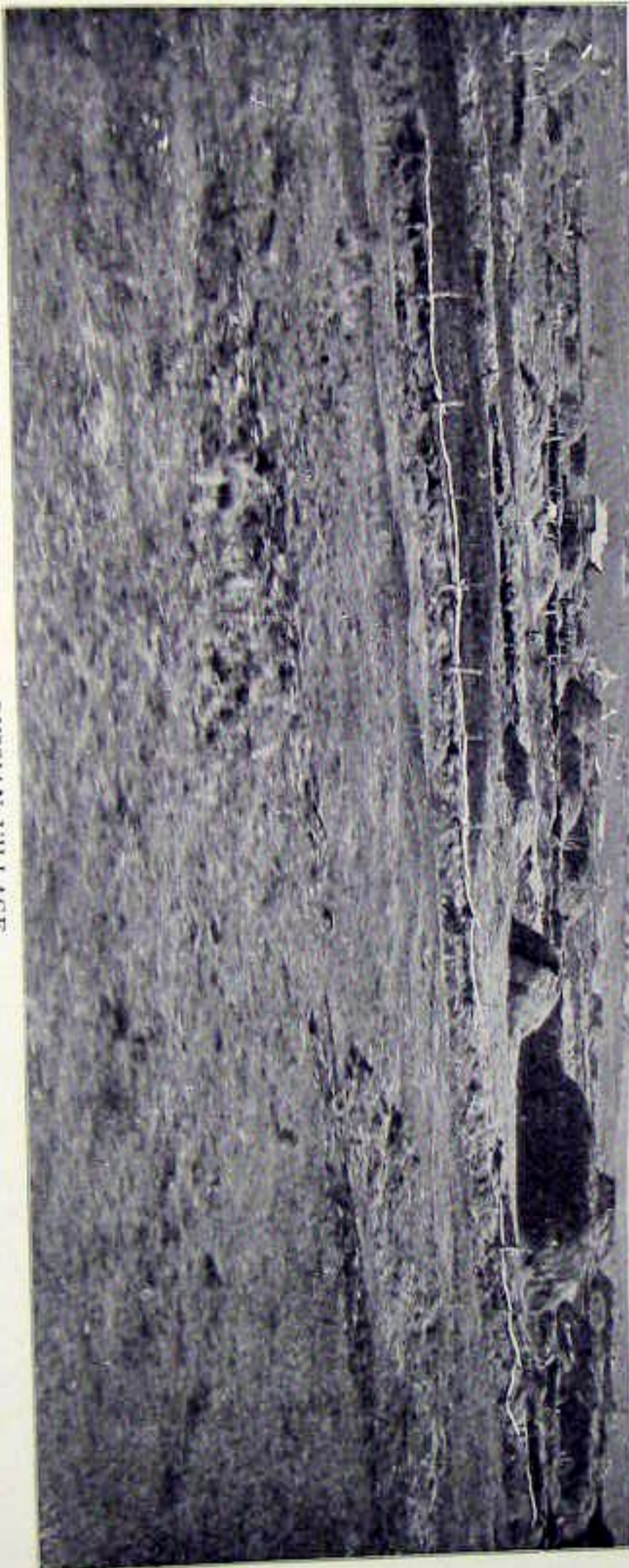
the title of the continental substitute for the Pullman Company; for Wagons-Lits trains are operated on the Trans-Siberian line, alternating with the older and less comfortable Russian trains. Through trains for Irkutsk are despatched twice weekly, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, at 8 P. M., and it so happens that we take the Russian *Train d'État* and not the *Train de Luxe* of the Wagons-Lits company, in which we should have traveled had we started one week earlier.



THE "TRAIN DE LUXE"

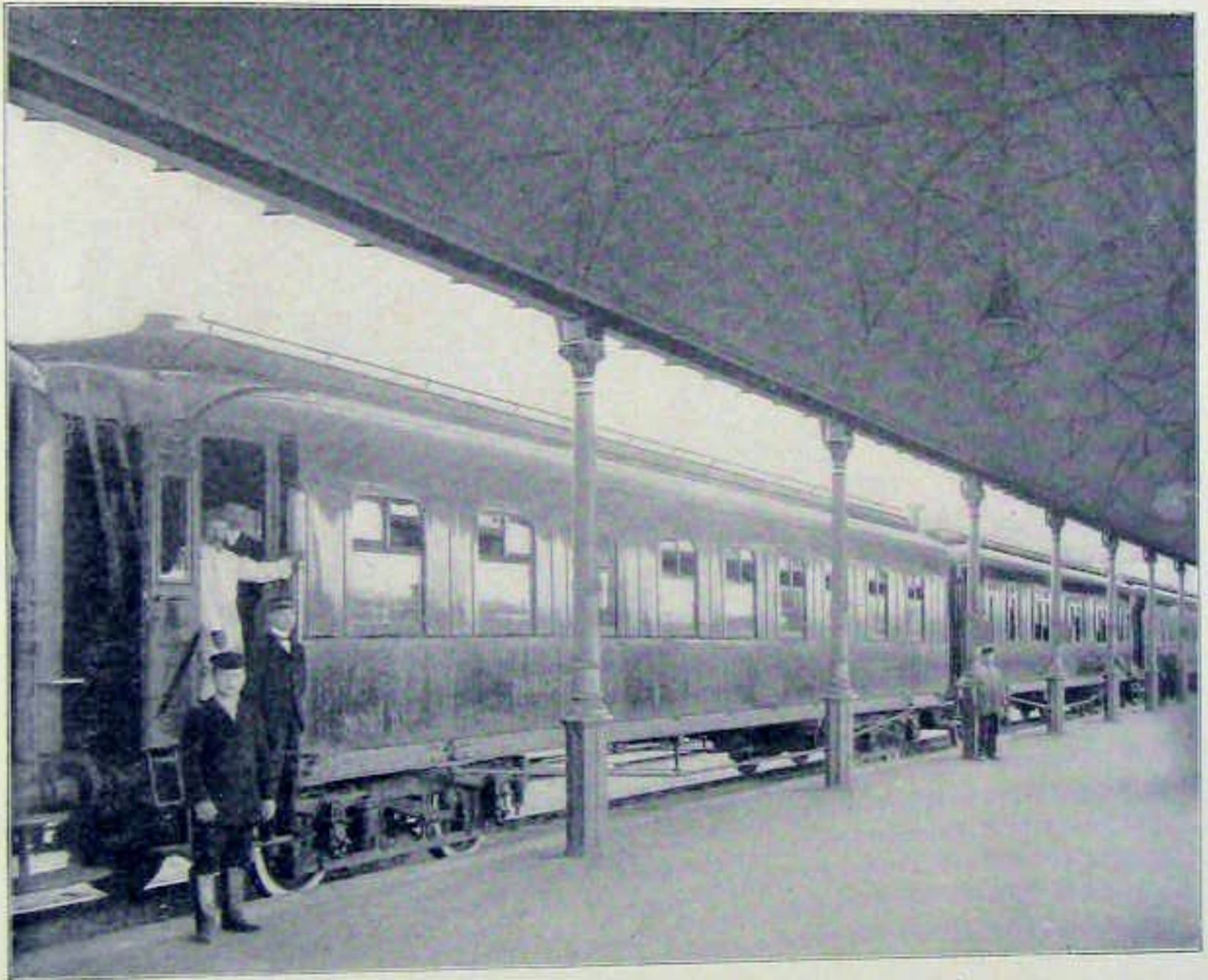
However, we made it a point to witness the departure of one of the new and more luxurious trains, which in future will be used exclusively. By chance we met on this occasion two of the American correspondents then racing eastward around the world. Their opponents, racing in the opposite direction, we shall look for later, in Siberia.

On the 19th of June, 1901, we begin our nine-day's journey toward the Rising Sun. For three days we roll on



A RUSSIAN VILLAGE

across the somber lands of eastern Russia, where there is little to relieve the sad monotony, save the crossing of several rivers, and glimpses of the big ragged cities of Sizran and Samara, which rise upon the banks of the greatest waterway of Russia, the old highroad to the South, the mighty Volga. But that which will linger longest in our



A "WAGONS-LITS" TRAIN

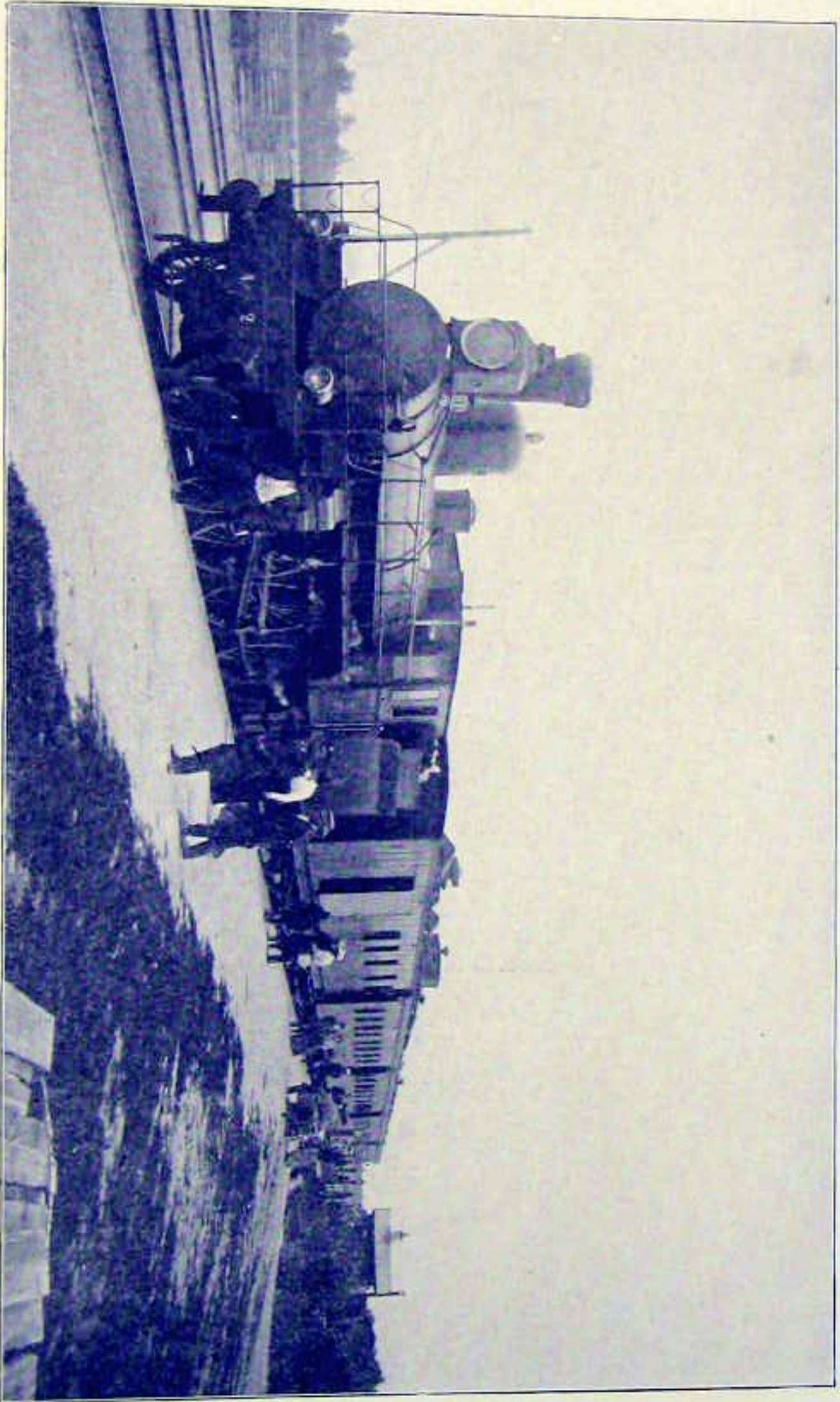
memory is the hopeless aspect of the Russian villages, which look like groups of hay-stacks or of mounds of refuse. We cannot at first believe that the shapeless heaps scattered around one or two frame-houses and a modest church are the abodes of human beings. But in these congeries of hovels we touch the very depths of Russian misery; as we leave the



IN EASTERN RUSSIA



A SIBERIAN VILLAGE



THE "TRAIN D'ÉTAT"

old overworked acres of Europe behind us, the condition of the people and the aspect of their habitations steadily improve. The hovels of thatch give place a few days later to crude log-cabins, surrounded by well-built rail-fences, and always dominated by a gracefully pretentious church. But we must not anticipate. Before we enter upon descriptions of Siberia let us describe the means by which we reach that huge, unknown, and misrepresented country.

The means is modern,—a railway-train,—so conventional that we cannot realize that in it we are to traverse what were not long ago the unknown vastnesses of northern Asia. Having missed one *train de luxe*, of the Wagons-Lits Company, and not caring to wait for the next new train,



DINING-CAR STAFF

we find ourselves installed in one of the *Trains d'État*, or Government Trains. It is composed of six long carriages, one first-class, two second-class, one restaurant- and one baggage-car. Over several of the early stages of the journey in Russia proper, this train was hauled by Baldwin locomotives at a speed surprisingly exhilarating. But the pace



NEARING THE URALS

grows slower as we mount the gentle inclines of the Ural Range, that inter-continental boundary composed of mountains so low and so soft in their wooded outlines that we find it difficult to look upon them with as much respect as they deserve by virtue of their geographic fame as the barriers between the continents of Europe and Asia. Yet we experience

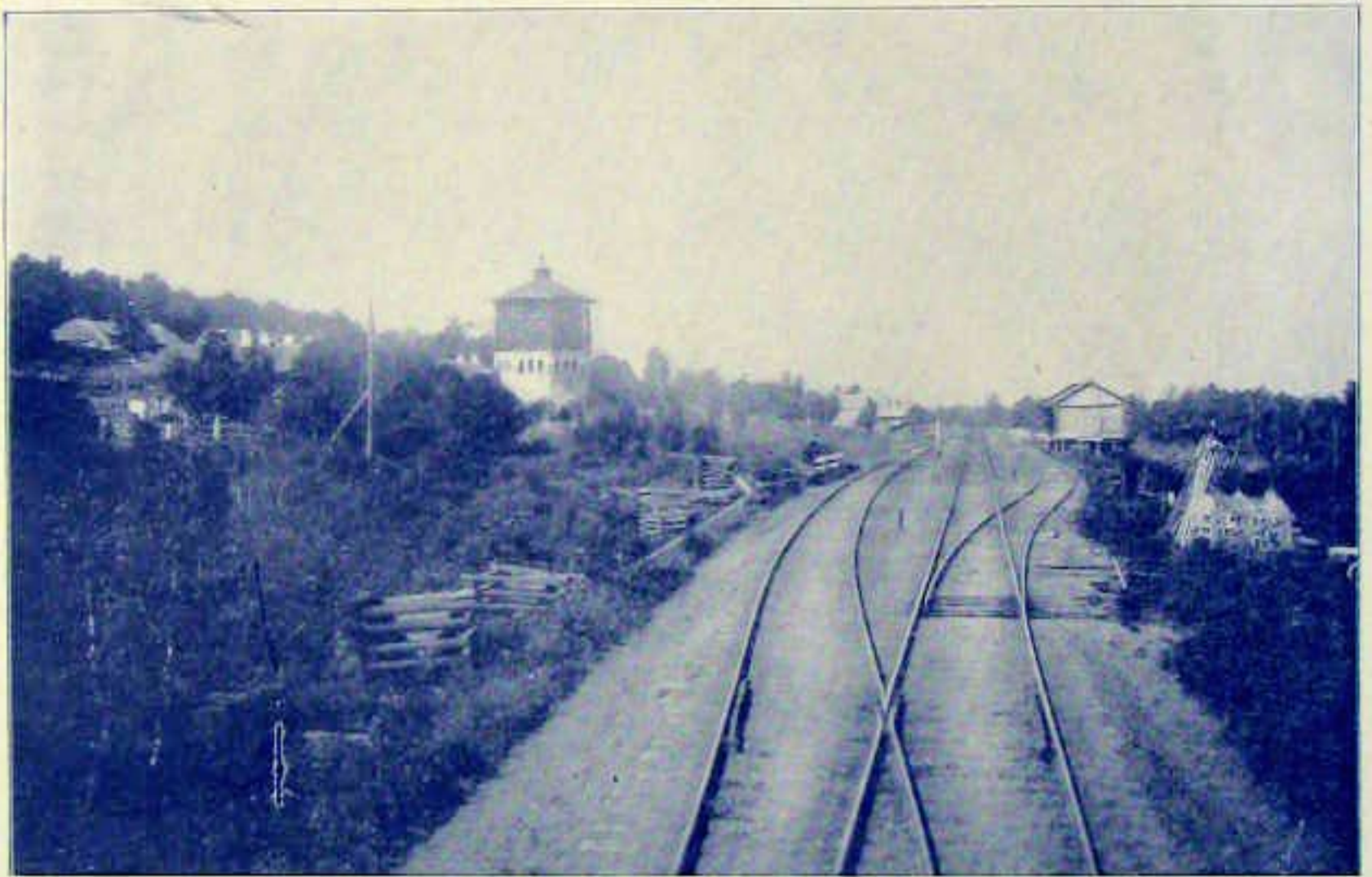


IN THE URALS



THE INTERCONTINENTAL LINE

a thrill as, standing on the rear platform, we watch the last few rods of Europe skimming beneath our feet and see the last Russian station flashing by. This thrill is intensified as, a few moments later, there glides past the simple monument which marks the line where Europe ends and Asia begins. The first Asiatic station is soon passed—an unimportant place at which the express-train does not stop.



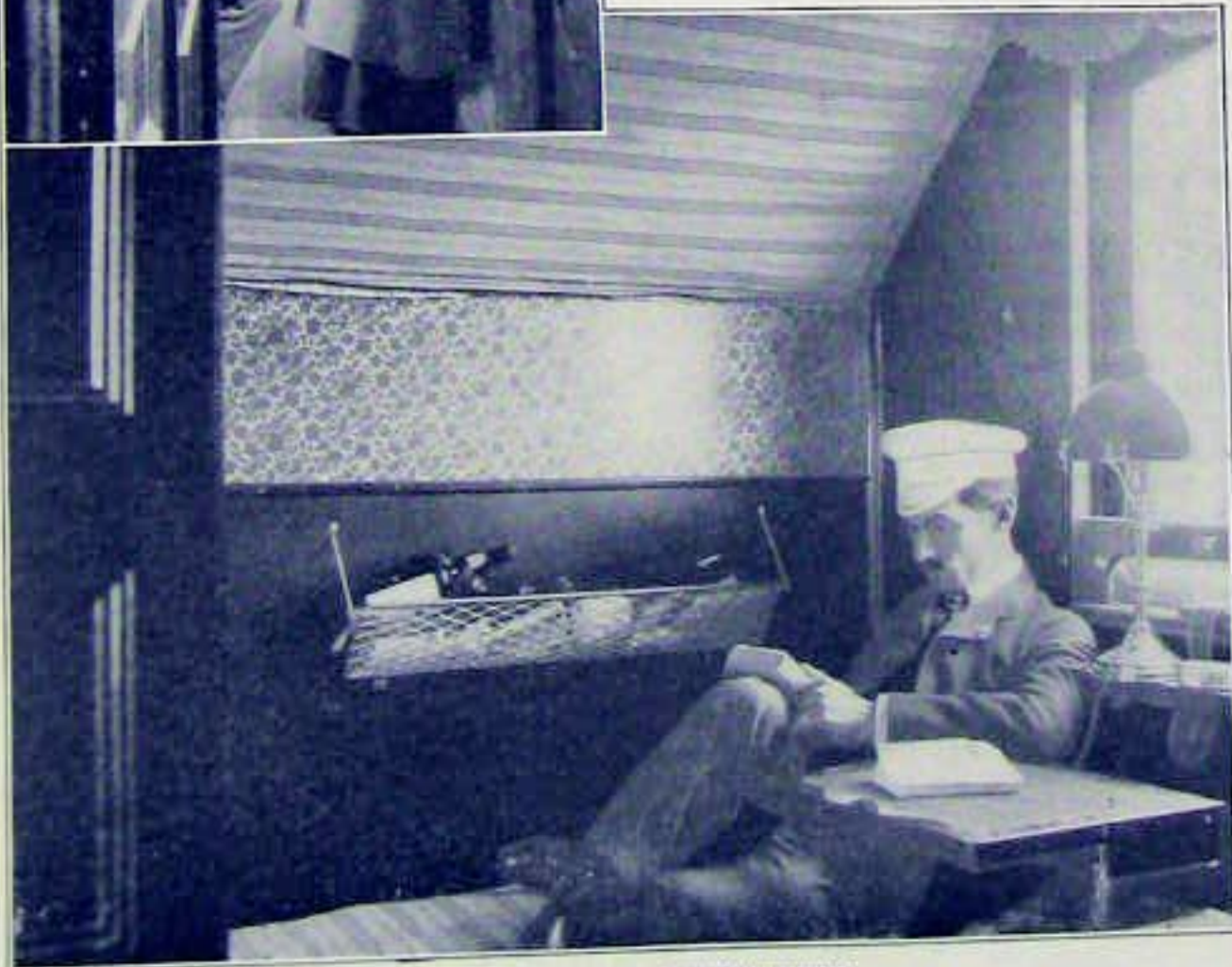
THE FIRST SIBERIAN STATION

But it was Russian Europe that we left behind, and we are now in Russian Asia. There is no shock of change, no startling contrast in the aspect of the lands that meet here in the passes of the Urals. It is *all Russia*, and will continue to be Russia until we reach the eastern coast of the continent we have just entered. We note already an improvement in the villages. Better houses, better fences, the same air of newness and crudeness that we find in the young settlements of the American northwest. We are

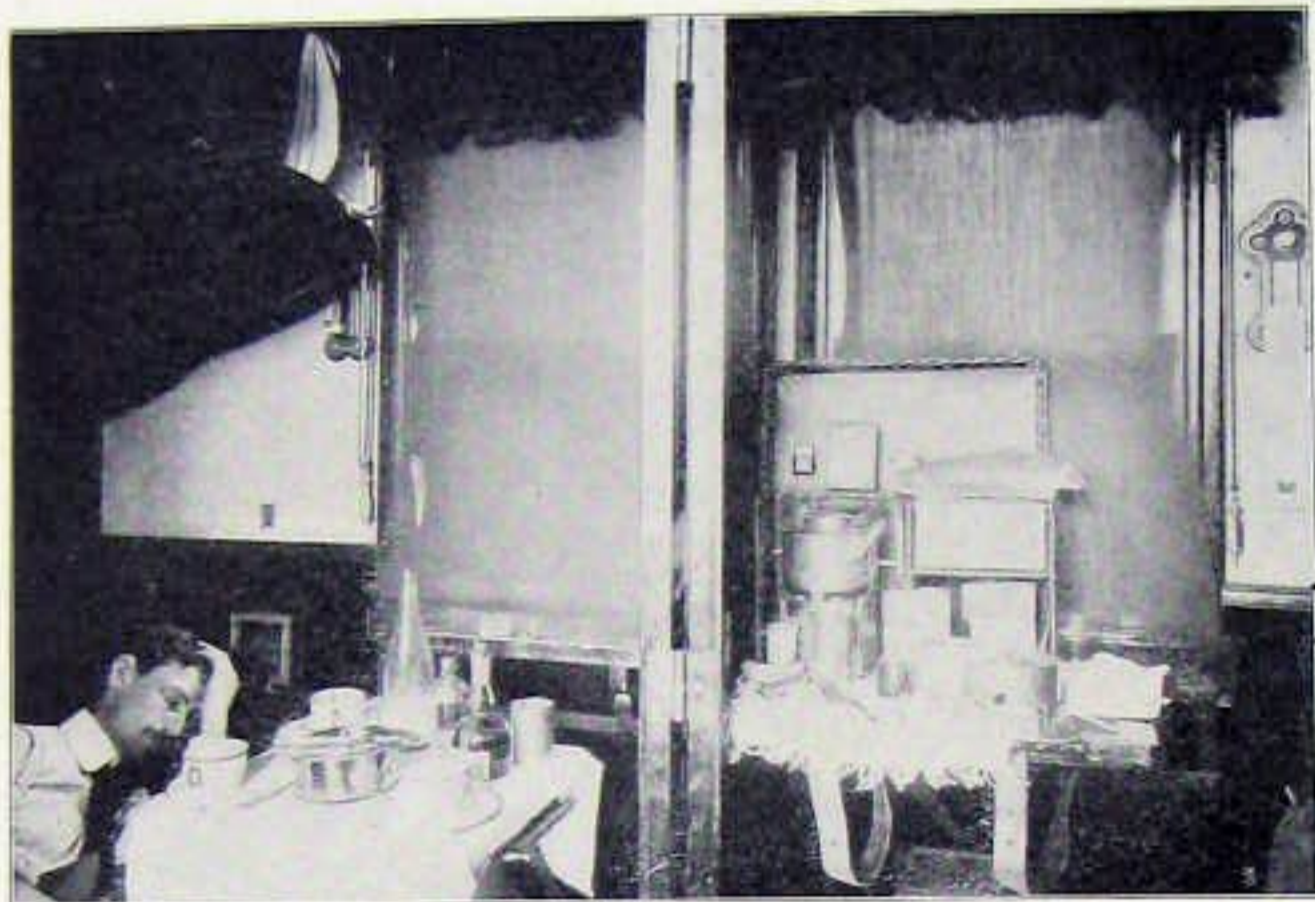
IN THE
CORRIDOR

impressed by the thought that now for nine days the endless panorama of Siberia is to unroll itself to us as we stand gazing from the windows of our car. I say "stand gazing," because that is what we did all day and day after day in the confined space of the narrow corridor of our *spalnia-vagon*, or sleeping-car.

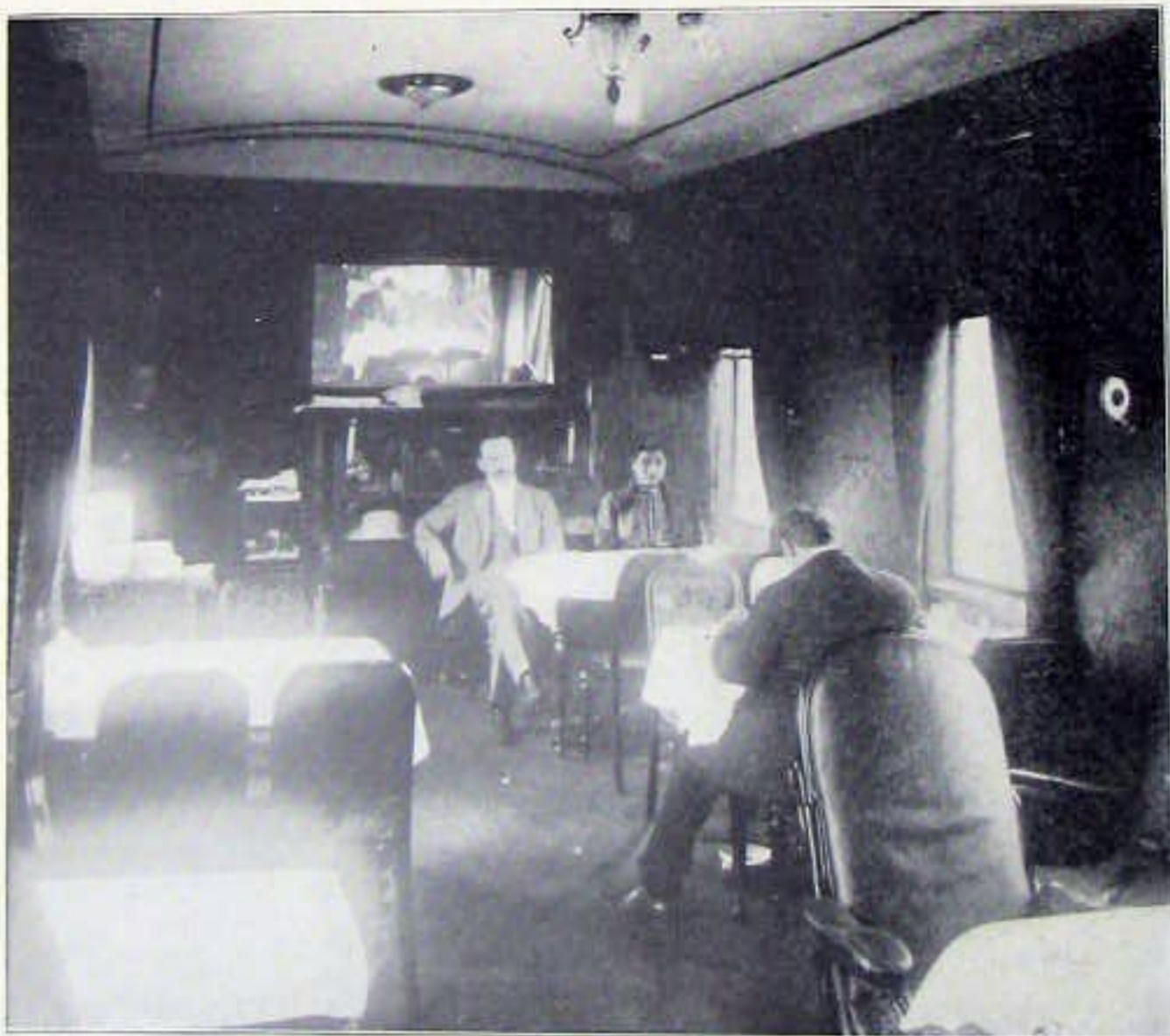
The compartments are extremely comfortable. They are arranged on the plan of the Mann Boudoir cars, with berths across the car instead of up and down the sides. The upper berth is raised



A COMFORTABLE COMPARTMENT



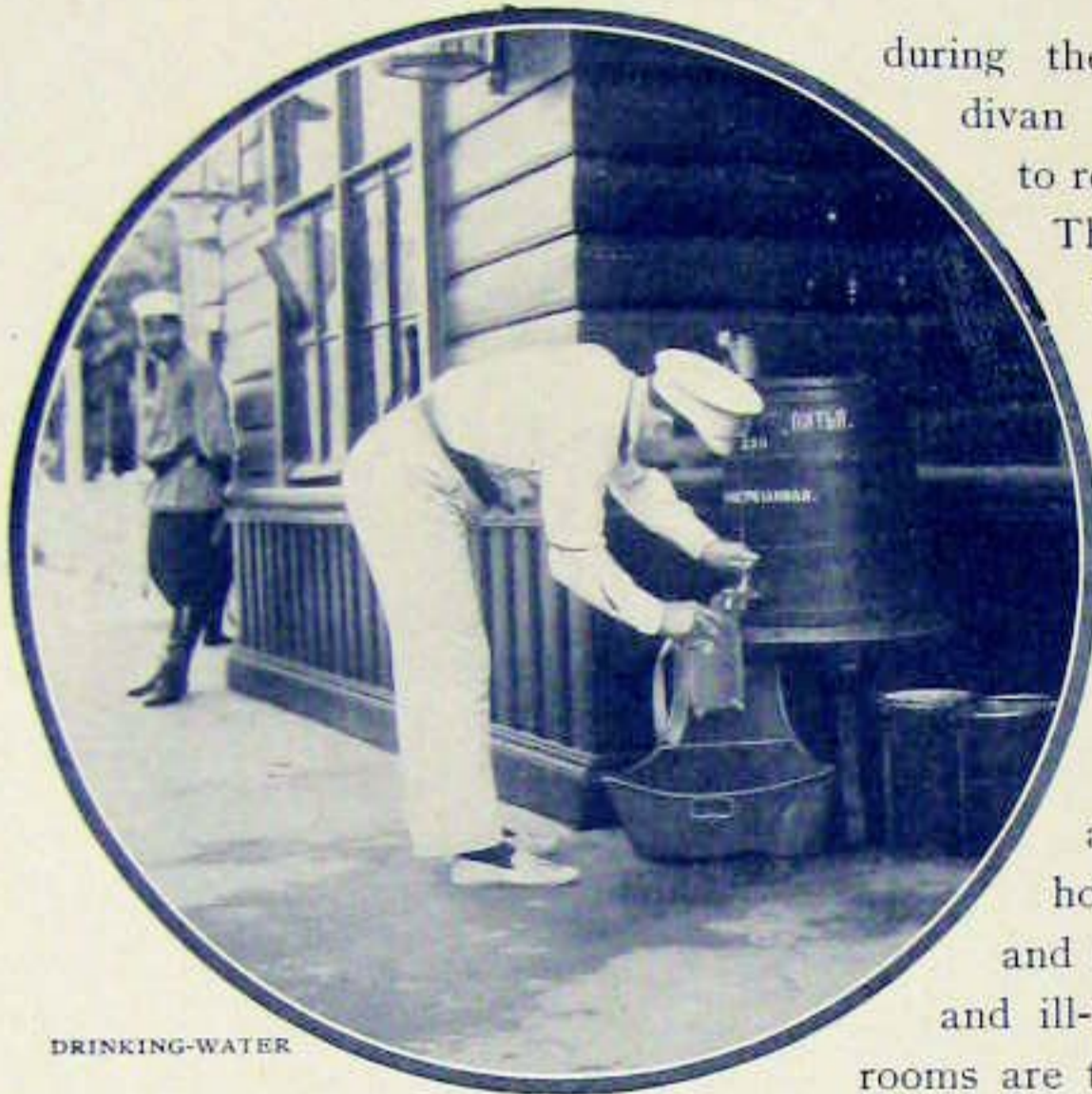
OUR QUARTERS



THE DINING-CAR



A STATION RESTAURANT



DRINKING-WATER

during the day, leaving a divan where we may sit to read or lie to doze.

There is an electric lamp and a folding table that may be instantly transformed into a step-ladder for the convenience of the person occupying the upper berth, and there are many racks for holding bundles large and small. The crude and ill-kept public wash-rooms are the most objection-

able feature. We have two compartments thrown into one by the opening of folding-doors. It gives us four beds for three people, for we have paid a trifle for the extra space. The fare from Moscow to Irkutsk was, even thus, a little less than fifty dollars each. We paid a dollar and a half apiece for the use of the bed



BUYING MILK

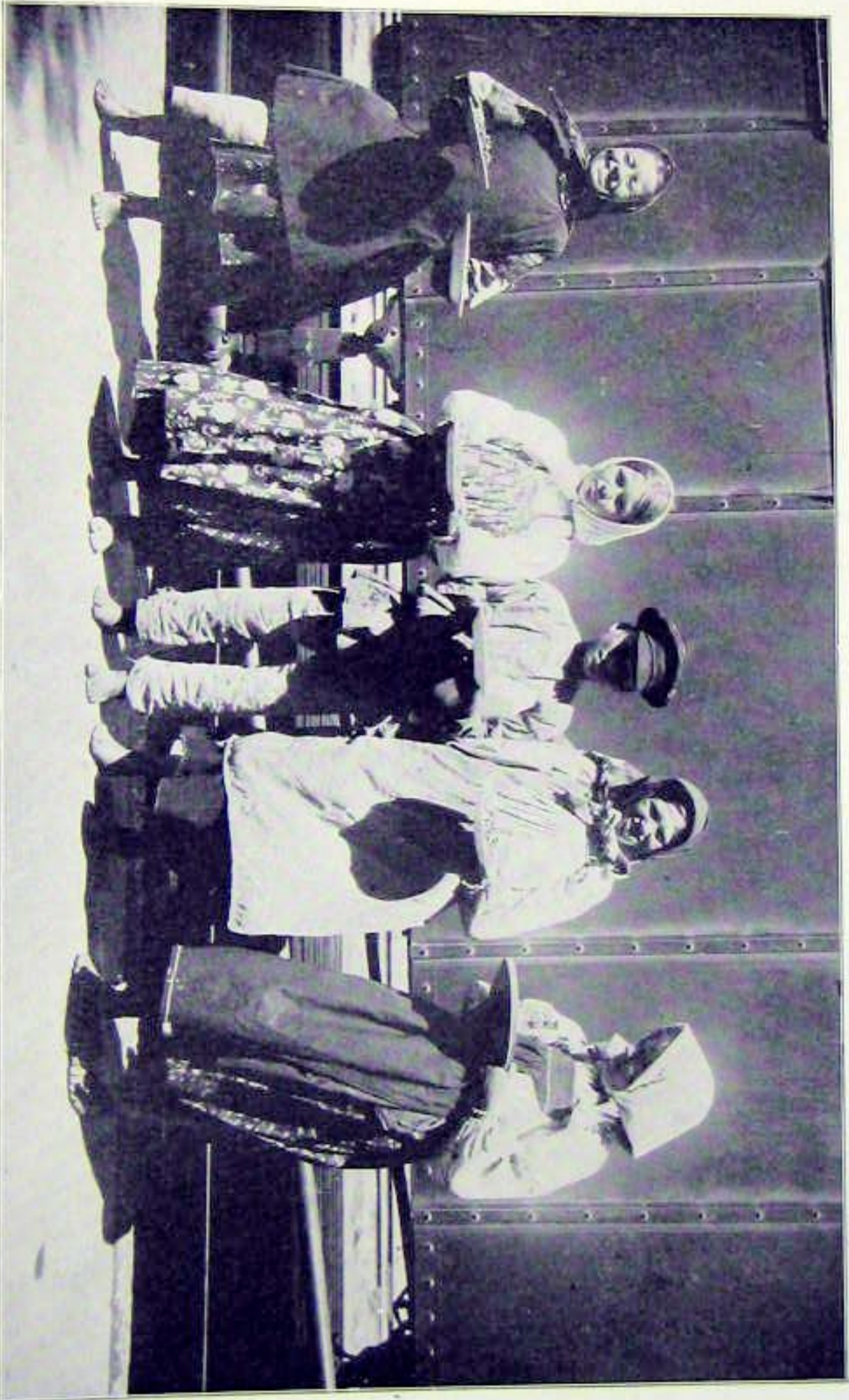


A MILKMAID

linen, three changes being given in the course of the nine days. The dining-car is a stuffy little affair with a piano at one end and a bookcase at the other — but neither music nor literature appeared to appeal to the passengers, for the ivories remained untouched and the books undisturbed. The meals although badly served were surprisingly well-cooked and appetizing; good bread, excellent veal, and hearty soups, sometimes *frappés*, with a clinking cake of ice floating on their chill depths, sometimes seething hot, with a hunk of steaming beef rising from them like a volcanic island. Meals as cheap as they are satisfying may be had in the station restaurants; and as for the untidiness of the service, we have been too long in Russia to take note of it. As a cure for squeam-

ishness let me prescribe a period of Russian travel. For example, napkins are rarely washed; the patrons carelessly throw them down; the waiters pick them up from floor and chair and table, spread them out as flat as possible, spray them as the Chinese washman sprays his washed linen,





fold them very carefully, and then put them in presses, so that at next meal-time they may be again produced with neat new creases that deceive those who have never chanced to look behind the scenes. Take plenty of Japanese paper napkins with you when you go to Russia. Take also a big empty bottle, for the little milkmaids are very loath to part with the precious vodka-bottles in which they bring fresh milk to the railway-station. We usually paid ten copecks,



A TEA-PARTY

about five cents, for a quart of rich, creamy milk, and we rarely missed an opportunity of replenishing our supply. Berries and caviar and eggs and milk, and the sour cream of which the Russians are so fond, may also be purchased of other young provision-venders, who appear scrupulously honest, invariably giving back the proper change, even to the careless foreigner, who, as they know, rarely counts his copecks. We first encounter crowds of emigrants, at the

town of Cheliabinsk, which may be called a sort of clearing-house for colonists, where the worthless "human documents" are canceled, and the stamp of government approval is set upon such migratory paper as may appear of value, even if it be composed chiefly of rags. But rags make good stout paper, and we cannot but admire the good wearing-qualities of the material that Russia sends out to people her Siberian wilderness. Significant indeed the little silver cross hung by a chain about the neck of a bearded giant, who fills one of the forty places in a fourth-class car. That little cross means much. It means that this man, like nine tenths of those who precede and follow him, is carrying into Asia the beliefs of the Russian Church, the traditions of the

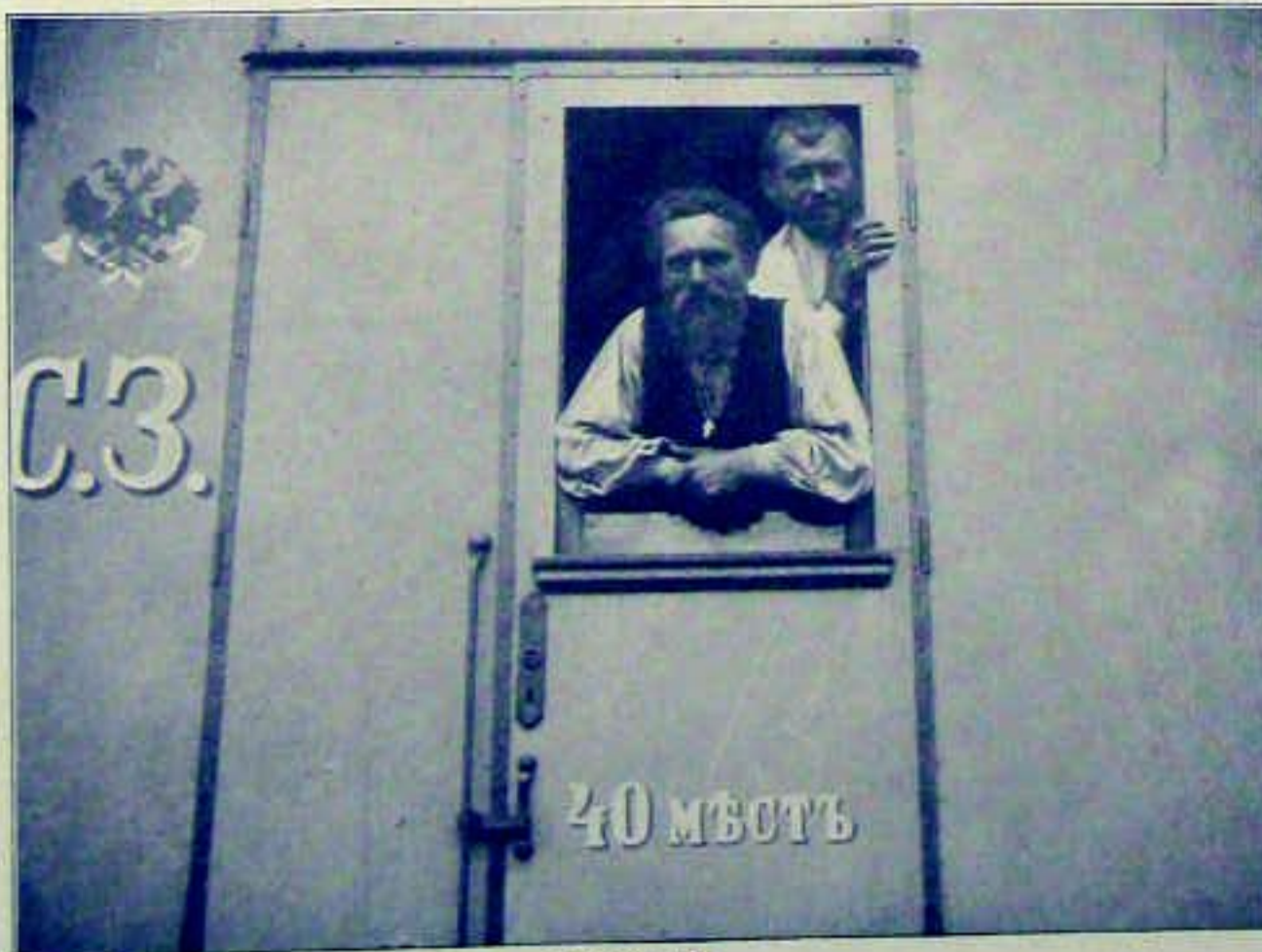


FRIENDLY OFFICES

Slavonic race, and the national spirit of submission to authority, which is the strength and might of Russia as an Empire. These are our thoughts until we learn something that will appear to spoil my point. This train of third- and fourth-class cars, that is packed full of mujiks with their wives and their children, is not proceeding to Siberia; it is going back to European Russia, with its load of disappointed peasants, who

A VENERABLE VISAGE

have had enough of the big new land and are returning to their hopeless villages in Russia proper, not because they



EMIGRANTS



RETURNING EMIGRANTS

have made fortunes warranting this return, but for the unique reason given by every one we questioned, — "home is better." But we are reassured by the knowledge that for every one emigrant who fails or who fears to thrive on this new soil, four or five sturdier and



OFFICER AND MEN

braver peasants come to till it. Crowds of them awaiting shipment on the station platform at Cheliabinsk, watched our fast train as it rolled away toward the broad land that is to be the empire of their children's children.

The Russian soldier is in evidence at all the stations. Not many of him at a time, but little squads of him all along the line. Always as respectful as he is uncouth, always as sturdy as he is good-humored. His cap is spotless, boots well-cleaned, but the rest of him is usually more or less unkempt.

Our fellow-passengers deserve a chapter to themselves,— a chapter that should be

ONE OF MANY



A SIBERIAN TOWN



A MYSTERIOUS PERSONAGE

written by a novelist, for there is material in nearly every compartment for a romance, a character-study, or perhaps a detective-story. A picturesque old man, Oriental in garb, Asiatic in feature, speaking a language we have never heard, would serve as a fit protagonist for the

projected "penny dreadful." As for the romances, almost all of them were nearly completed, the most charming being that of the pretty little Berlin bride, who with her capable young German husband is on her way to Irkutsk where she is to spend the remainder of her life. She is extremely young, appealingly pretty, with big soulful eyes set far apart, eyes that seem to look tearfully toward the fatherland now left so far behind us. But it is dangerous to begin to pity a pretty little exile. I verily believe that every man aboard the train was sadly and secretly in love



NONDESCRIPT



THE NEW HOME OF THE GERMAN BRIDE

with her,— for just nine days. Had she started unprovided with a husband she could have had her pick of all the bachelors, and the long-haired priest would have been called upon for nuptial blessings before the journey ended.

There is not much to photograph along the way. But rarely do we get away from any of the stations without the customary interview with the police and military guards. As courteous as in Russia, and even more strict in the perform-



SLUMBER

ance of their duties, the watchful officers, at sight of cameras in foreign hands, or, for that matter in the hands of Russians, invariably demand by virtue of what official paper the camera is being used. The letter given us by Prince Khilkoff, the Minister of Railways, proves a most potent "Bou-maga," and that august document is continually produced and is very respectfully perused by the police at almost every station that lies between the Baltic and the Japan Sea.



BRIDE AND GROOM



FELLOW-PASSENGERS

Departures are announced by the ringing of a big bell at the station. We soon learn not to be startled by the first ring, for it means merely that it is time to begin to think about beginning to commence to get ready to prepare to go. By and by comes another clap or two, just to remind us that the bell has rung before. Then finally after we have stepped aboard at the polite personal request of the numerous employees, a final, ultimate, and authoritative clang



AT A STATION

announces that something is really going to happen, by and by. And sure enough, after a shrill blast from the whistle of the station-master, a toot from the horn of the switchman, and a squeak from the locomotive, the Trans-Siberian flyer does move at last, and before long we are once more "out of sight of land," encircled by the wide horizon of limitless Siberia. There is nothing in sight except *distance*, bisected by the straight and seemingly endless line of the track.

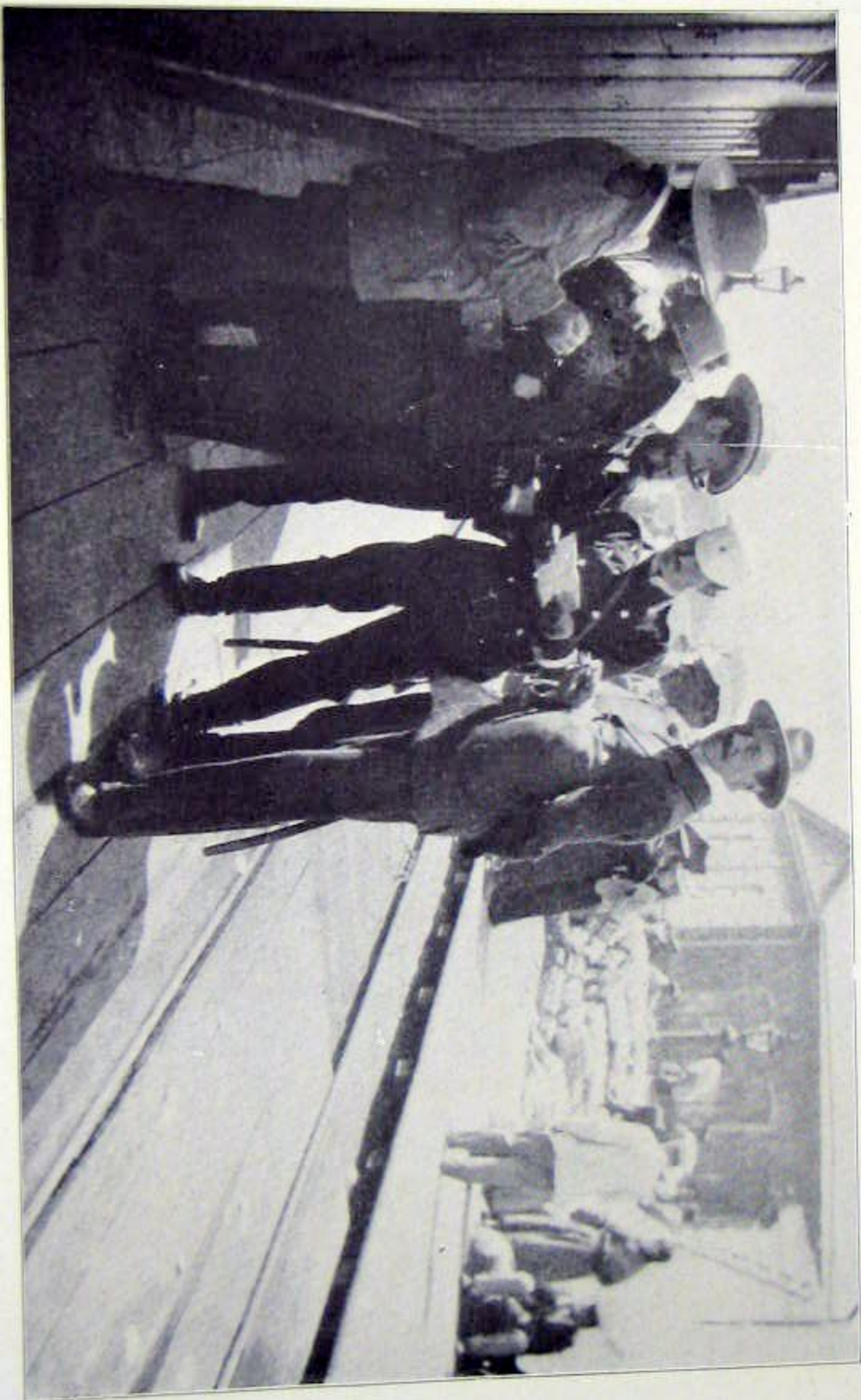
We seem to be far from everywhere. Yet this line of steel marks a new route around the world; we never lose this thought, — a thought that shrinks this old world of ours and makes of it a ball so small that we almost arrive at a conception of it in its entirety. Despite the seeming levelness of this vast plain of Siberia, we are conscious in some way



"ALL ABOARD!"



A PARK-LIKE VISTA



READING OUR PERMITS.

of the earth's rotundity. Thus we speed eastward for many hundreds of miles across a Dakota-like expanse, which awaits only the touch of agricultural industry to transform it into an infinity of wheat. Again for many miles the line runs over marshy ground, unpromising and even more repellent than the deserts traversed by our own Trans-continental lines. It surprises us to learn that the Trans-Siberian railway traverses



DURING A HALT

no sandy plains ; no regions that may be described as deserts. We are still more surprised to find so many miles of wooded country where a broad swath has been cut through primeval forests of fir and birch. There is but little variety in the landscape, one day all plain, another day all marsh, another day nothing but endless curvings in tree-bordered aisles, where, more than in the open wilderness, the sense of vastness takes possession of us. But as if to keep the settlers

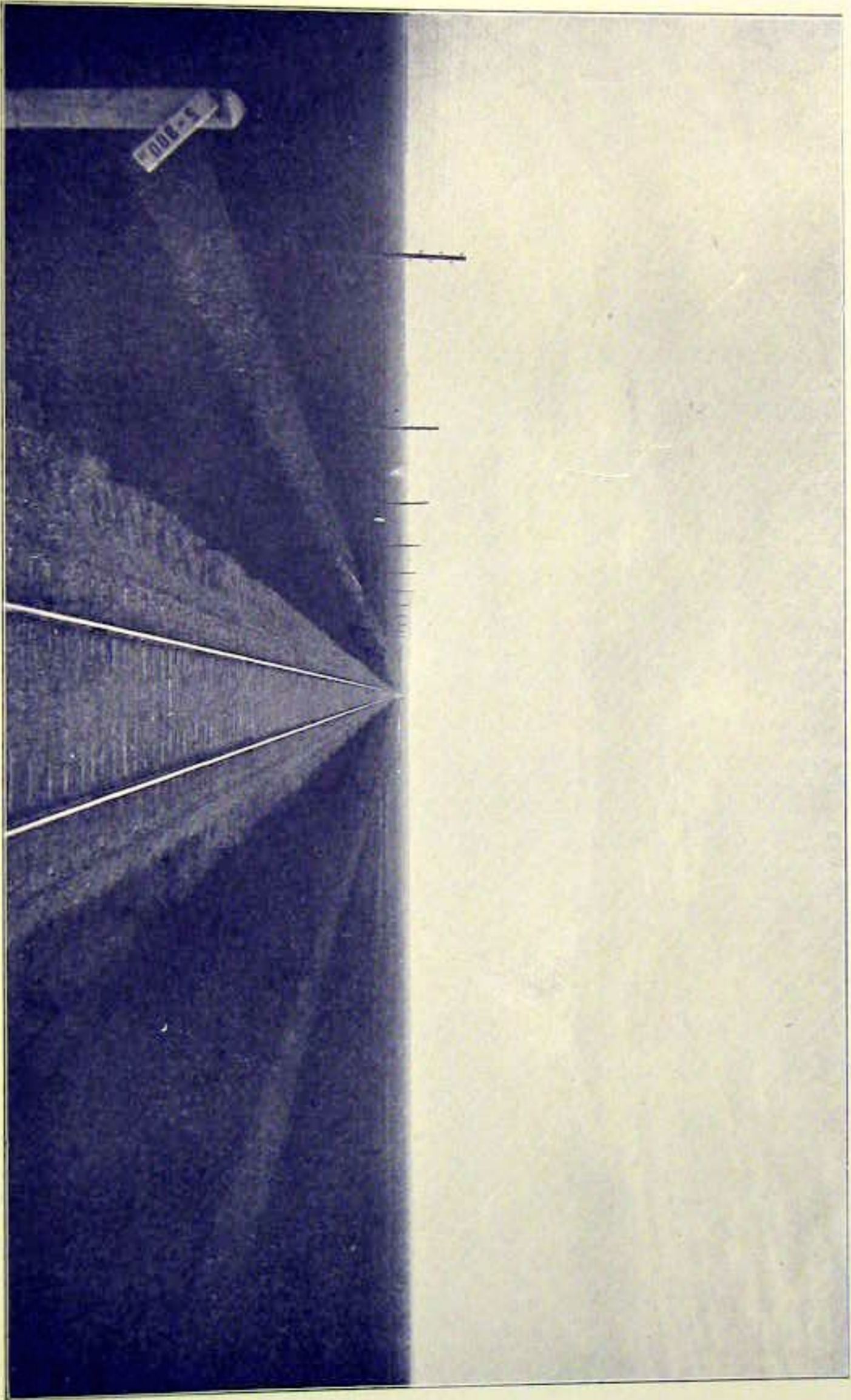


EASTWARD HO!

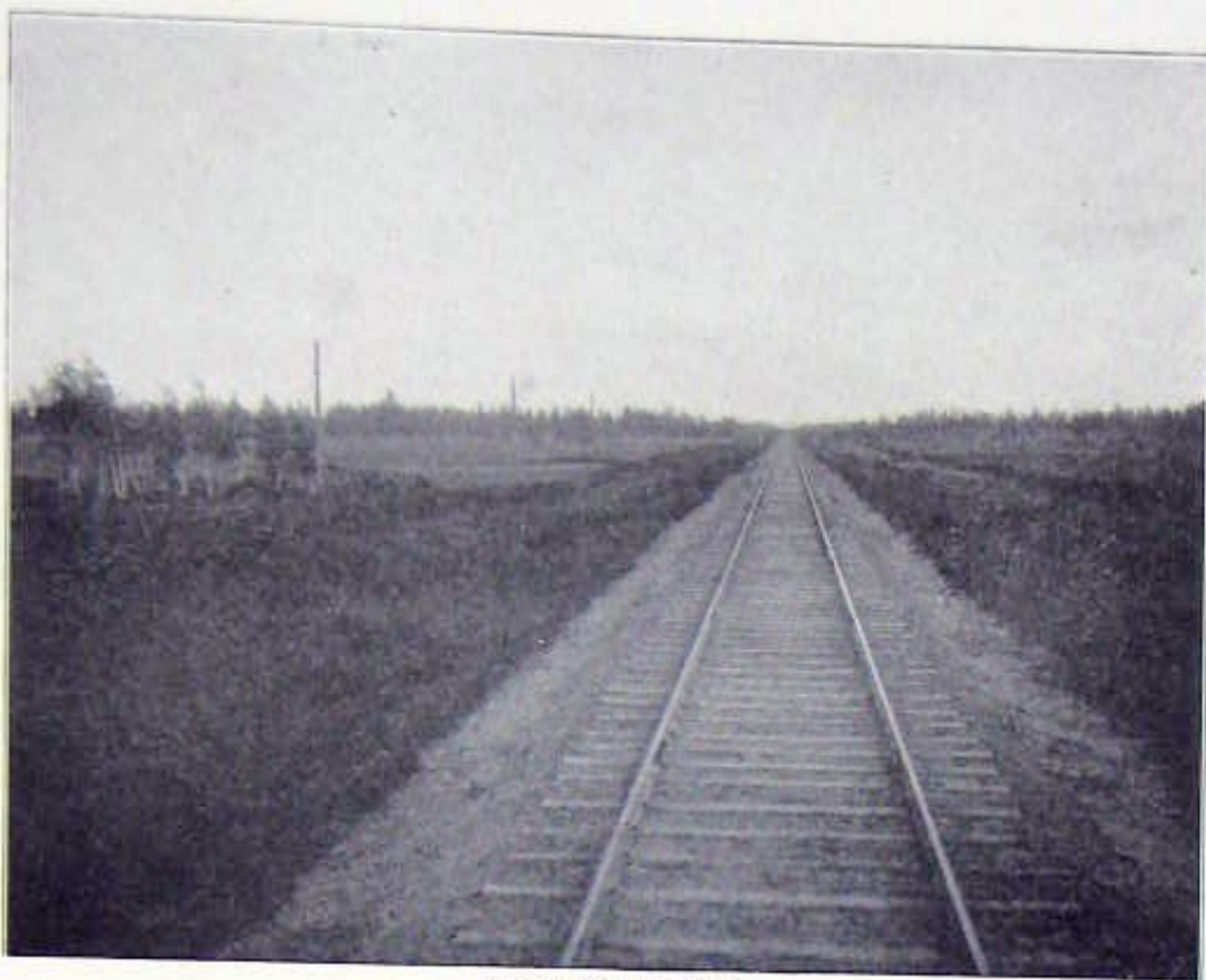
and the railway employees of the region from brooding on this oppressive vastness, there are tiny things by millions. The Siberian gnat is not to be ignored even in the big land



IN THE FOREST REGION



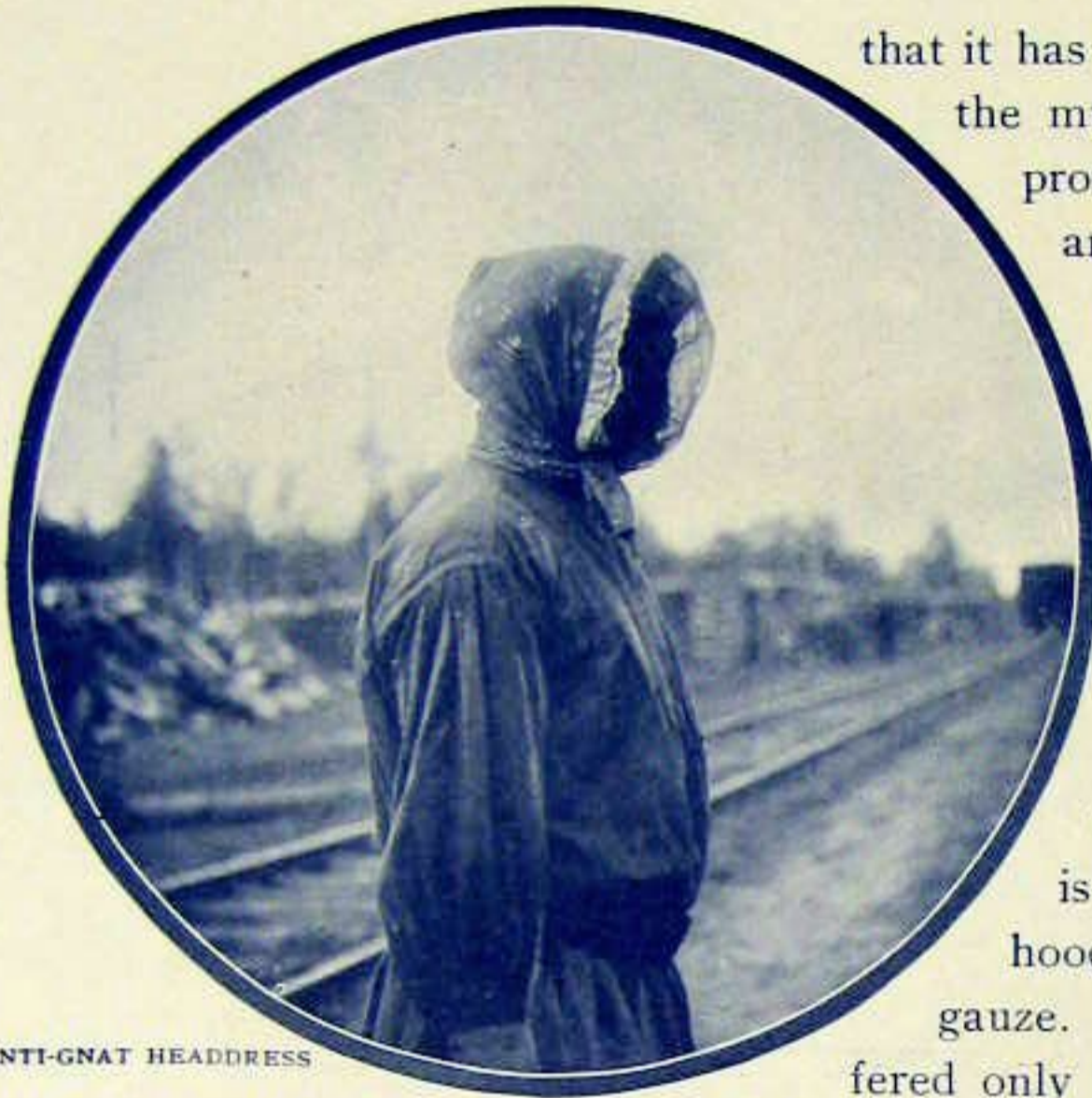
SIBERIA I



A CURVELESS LINE



SECTION-HANDS



AN ANTI-GNAT HEADDRESS

that it has made its own. But the mujiks of this infested province have devised an armor that successfully protects them from attacks and makes life and labor in the region possible if not exactly pleasant. The entire population appears to have "taken the veil," for every head is swathed in a net or hood of black or greenish gauze. We, however, suffered only while the train was stationary; apparently the insects do not care to travel.



NOT AFRAID OF INSECTS



AN EXTENSIVE WOODPILE

Much work is being done along the line. Regrading has been already undertaken in many places, and the entire line is to be rerailed with heavier steel, for the existing rails have proved far too light for speed or heavy traffic. In the meantime trains run slowly and accidents are rare occurrences. Only one marred our journey — a fatal one, resulting in the death of the conductor who fell from the

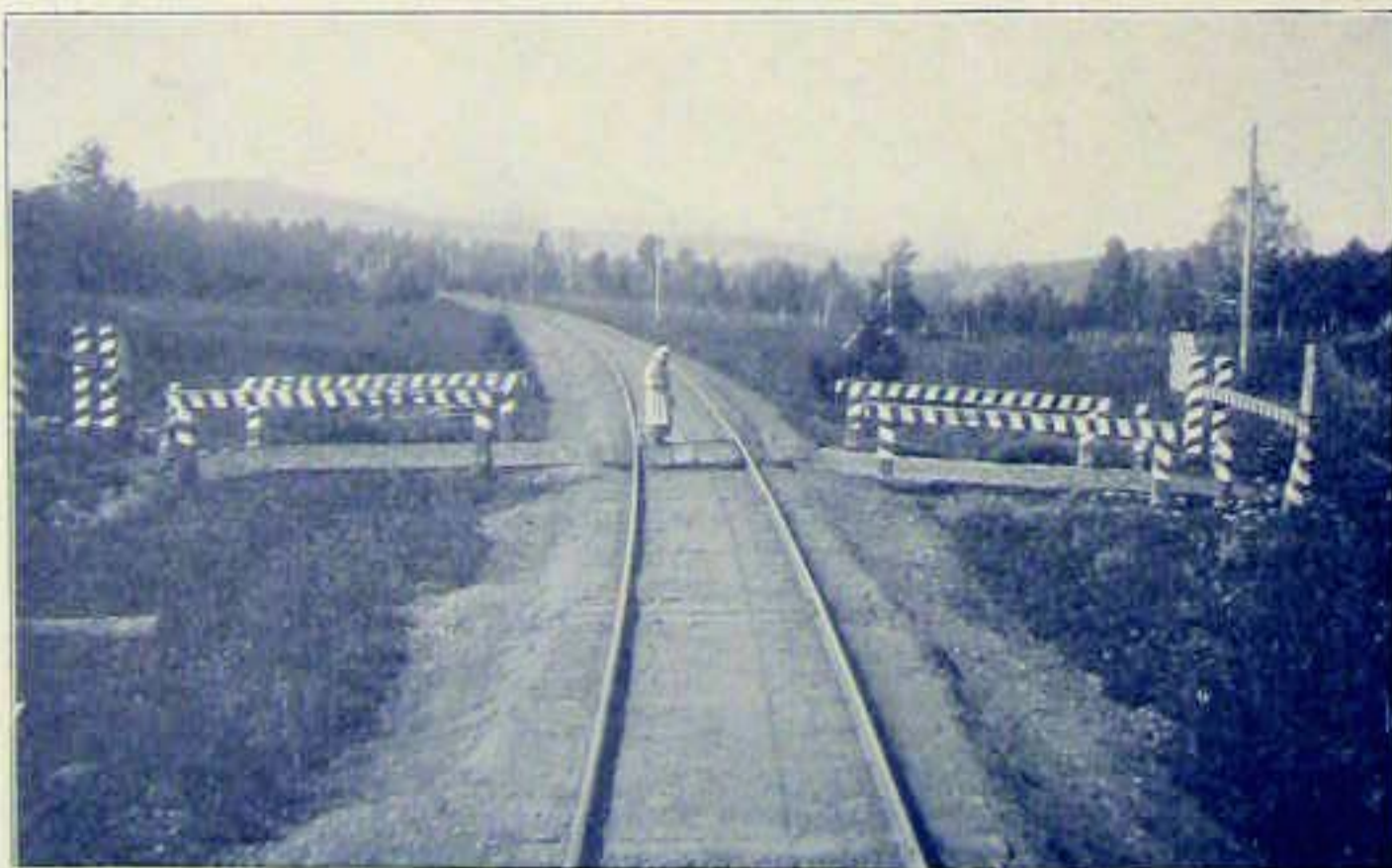


THE CONDUCTOR



A FATAL ACCIDENT

platform while reaching out to take a written order from a station-master. Fortunately, his death was instantaneous and painless. They left him lying there on the track to await the coming of the proper officials upon whom devolved the duty of reporting the occurrence to the administration at Moscow. We did not go to look, but went to work with a subscription-list for the benefit of his wife and children.



NEARING IRKUTSK

As we approach Irkutsk, the country becomes more picturesque, and hills that are almost mountains roll about on the horizon, and the roads and crossings take on a look of trimness. Every grade-crossing and almost every switch is guarded by a man or by a woman, who with a flag stands at salute while the train passes, and then steps out between the rails and with extended flag poses as rigid as a statue, looking after us until the train is nearly out of sight.



A WILDERNESS OF MUD

On the ninth evening we roll into the great Siberian city of Irkutsk—metropolis of northern Asia. We are on time to the minute; but this is not remarkable, for the schedule is so arranged that if the brakes were not in working order, even these leisurely, inexperienced trains would have difficulty in avoiding premature arrivals. We have covered the 5,107 versts—roughly, equivalent to about three thousand miles—between Moscow and Irkutsk in nine days, that is, at an average speed of about fifteen miles an hour.



PANORAMA OF IRKUTSK

The station is surrounded by a wilderness of mud ; between it and the city flows the rapid Angara, through which the waters of Lake Baikal seek an outlet to the Arctic Ocean. I have not told of the other splendid rivers we have crossed, nor have I spoken of the Siberian cities which we passed by night or day,—of Kourgan on the Tobol River,



PANORAMA OF



THE RIVER ANGARA

Omsk on Om, Tomsk on the Tom, Krasnoyarsk on the Yenisei, Kansk on the Kan and Nijniudinsk on the Uda. All these I have spared you because in Irkutsk at the junction of the Irkut and the Angara, we find the prototype of all, —richer, larger, and finer. It appears almost



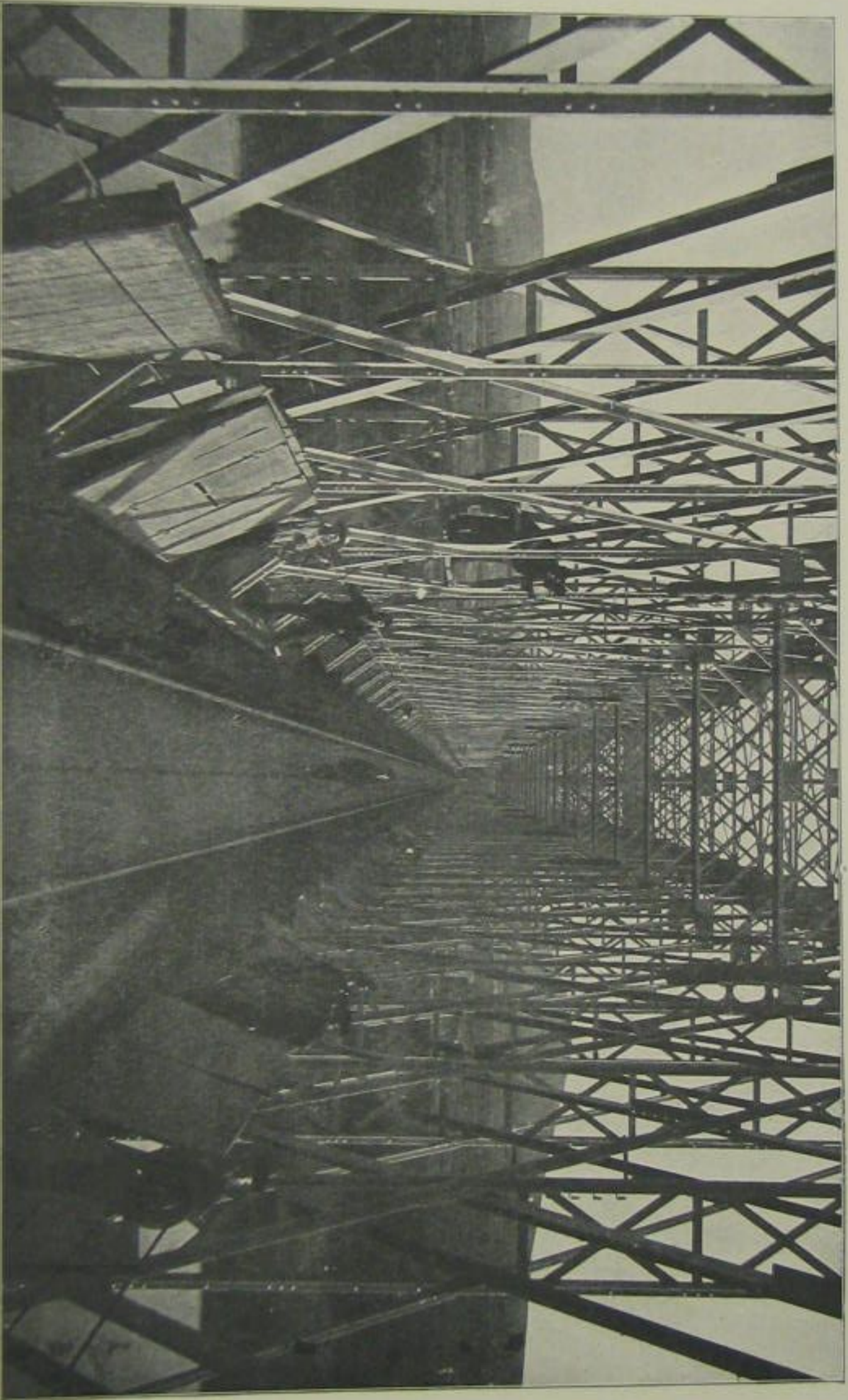
CITY OF IRKUTSK



THE MAIN STREET OF IRKUTSK



A TYPICAL THOROUGHFARE



A BRIDGE

magnificent as one views it from the belfry of a church, but disillusion awaits the traveler below. I cannot understand why photographs should make the city look so trim when in reality it is so soiled and dingy and unkempt.

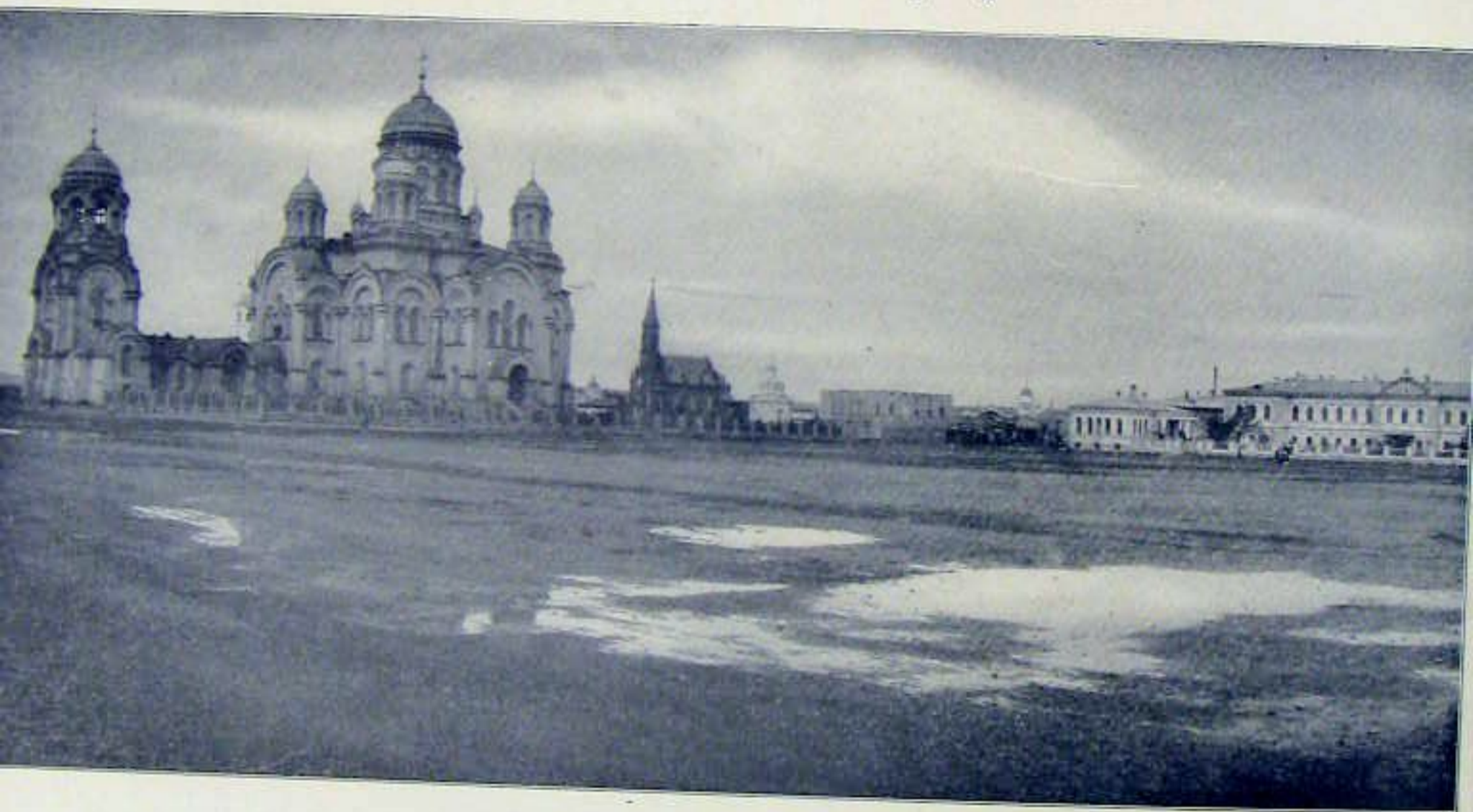
Russia is always striving for effect, and here in Irkutsk we get the same impression as in St. Petersburg, of a city built to order — designed to impress the observer. The same "stone" walls of stucco, the same "marble" pillars of staff,



THE CATHEDRAL

the wide streets and the endless avenues, still unpaved and insistently suggestive of the wilderness of which they lately formed a part. Space is the cheapest thing in northern Asia. The Russians have been prodigal of space in laying out their cities. The Orthodox Cathedral is huge enough to satisfy the needs of a city four times the present size of Irkutsk; but the critical tourist must not forget that Irkutsk will in the near future quadruple its population.

A great city should have a museum. The government has seen to it that Irkutsk does not lack one. Within we find one floor devoted to natural history and one to ethnological collections; but the fine arts have not yet appeared in Mid-Siberia. There are also an imposing theater, several official palaces, many fine private residences, and in the main street an astounding row of big department-stores, in one of which we photographed an effective array of spring bonnets



PANORAMA OF THE

fresh from the milliners of Paris and Berlin,—that is, as fresh as distance and slow communication will permit. All this is most impressive—from the cathedral to the imported finery. It speaks of wealth and luxury; but the Irkutsk of the traveler is comfortless in the extreme. Yet even the abominable hotel in which we lodged and tried to eat looks almost attractive in an illustration. You do not see the unwashed linen, the grimy waiters, nor can you scent the odors that pervade the *Gastinitza Métropole*. The contrasts

in Irkutsk are striking, log-houses and electric lights, mud-holes before the houses of the millionaires, infinite leisure for the officials, and never-ending labor for the mujiks. The lumber industry is the most conspicuous local interest. Irkutsk is protected on the river side by the most splendid wall of logs that I have ever seen,—a mountain-range of horizontal timber rises along the river bank for several miles. It would appear as if the forests of Siberia had all been



SQUARE OF THE CATHEDRAL, IRKUTSK

felled, and that their trees were lying prostrate for miles along the high banks of the Angara. Two days exhaust the sights of this new city, which at the same time is quite old, for Irkutsk dates from 1654, and was a place of great importance long before the Trans-Siberian was dreamed of. Its future will be shaped by the railway; its place at one of the great cross-roads of the eastern hemisphere is already defined.

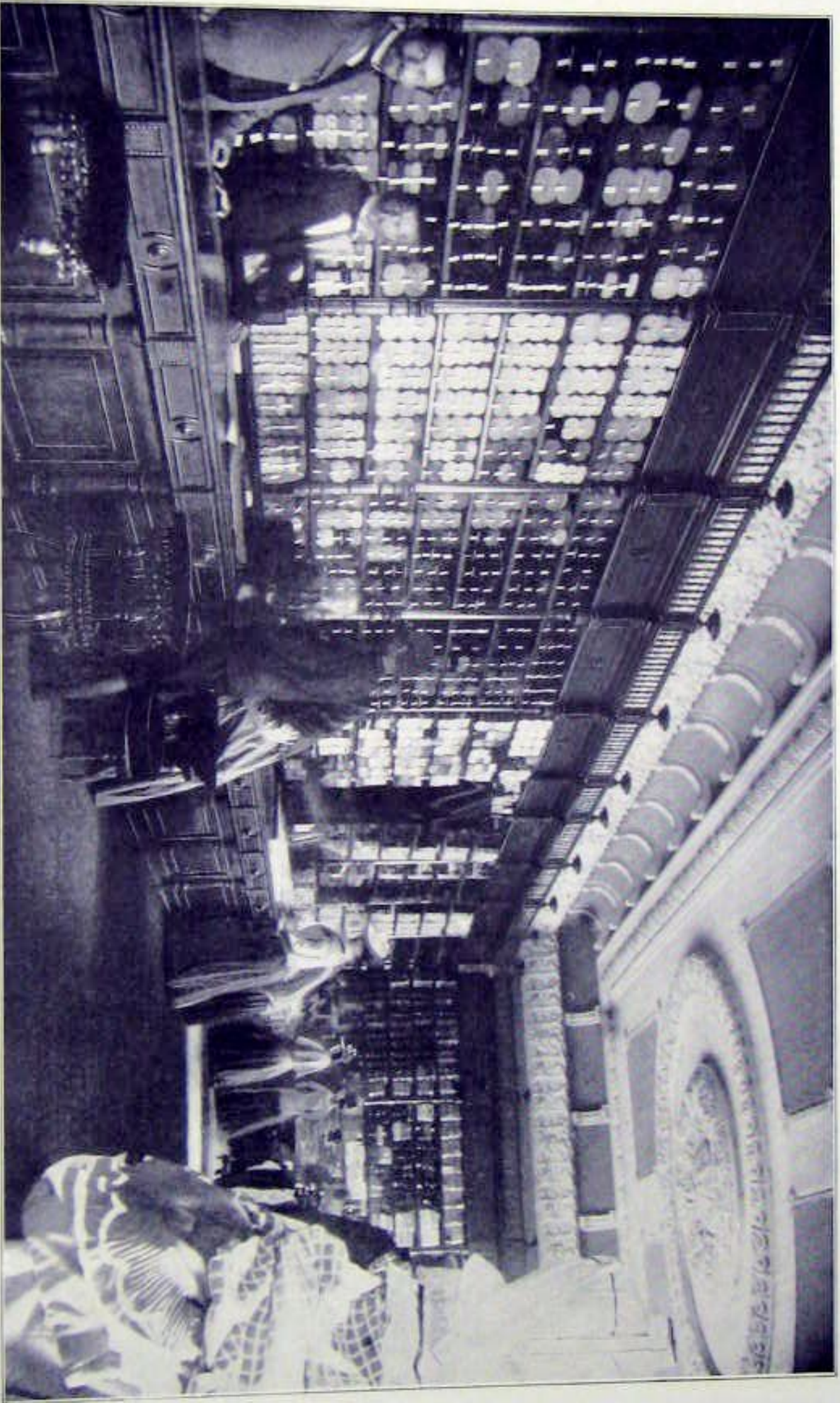
Significant indeed was the presence there in 1901 of two Englishmen who came to the station to see us off, for



THE MUSEUM



DEPARTMENT-STORES



A METROPOLITAN ESTABLISHMENT



IMPORTED MODES



A TARANTASS

one was the prospective agent of Cook & Sons and the other was a pioneer tourist, conscientiously visiting the various cities, courageously investigating the hotels and incessantly on the lookout for things worthy of stars and double stars; in a word, he was compiling the Siberian Baedeker. These two men are the advance guard of the tourist army that is soon to invade Asiatic Russia. They wave farewell to us as



THE HOTEL MÉTROPOLE

our train starts eastward from the busy, crowded station of Irkutsk. Along the picturesque shore of the Angara, we now proceed, toward the great lake where this swift cold river has its birth,—Lake Baikal,—forty miles away. The locomotive barely creeps. As we lean out from our places (we are sitting on the platform-steps), we see the smoking-monster slowly rounding the successive headlands, like a discreet and almost timid tiger treading an unknown path, putting forward



THE THEATER



A RICH MAN'S RESIDENCE

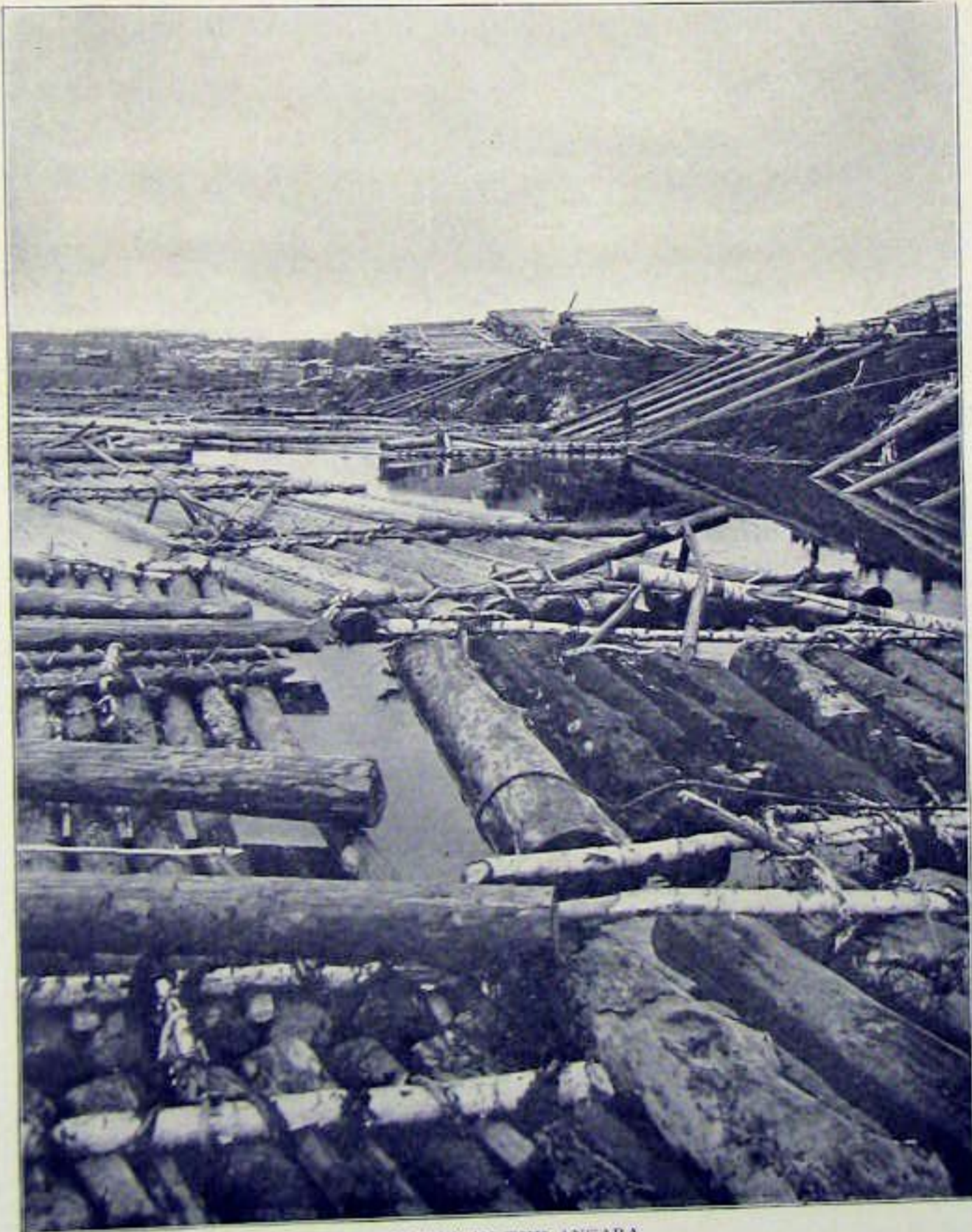


A TYPICAL GATEWAY

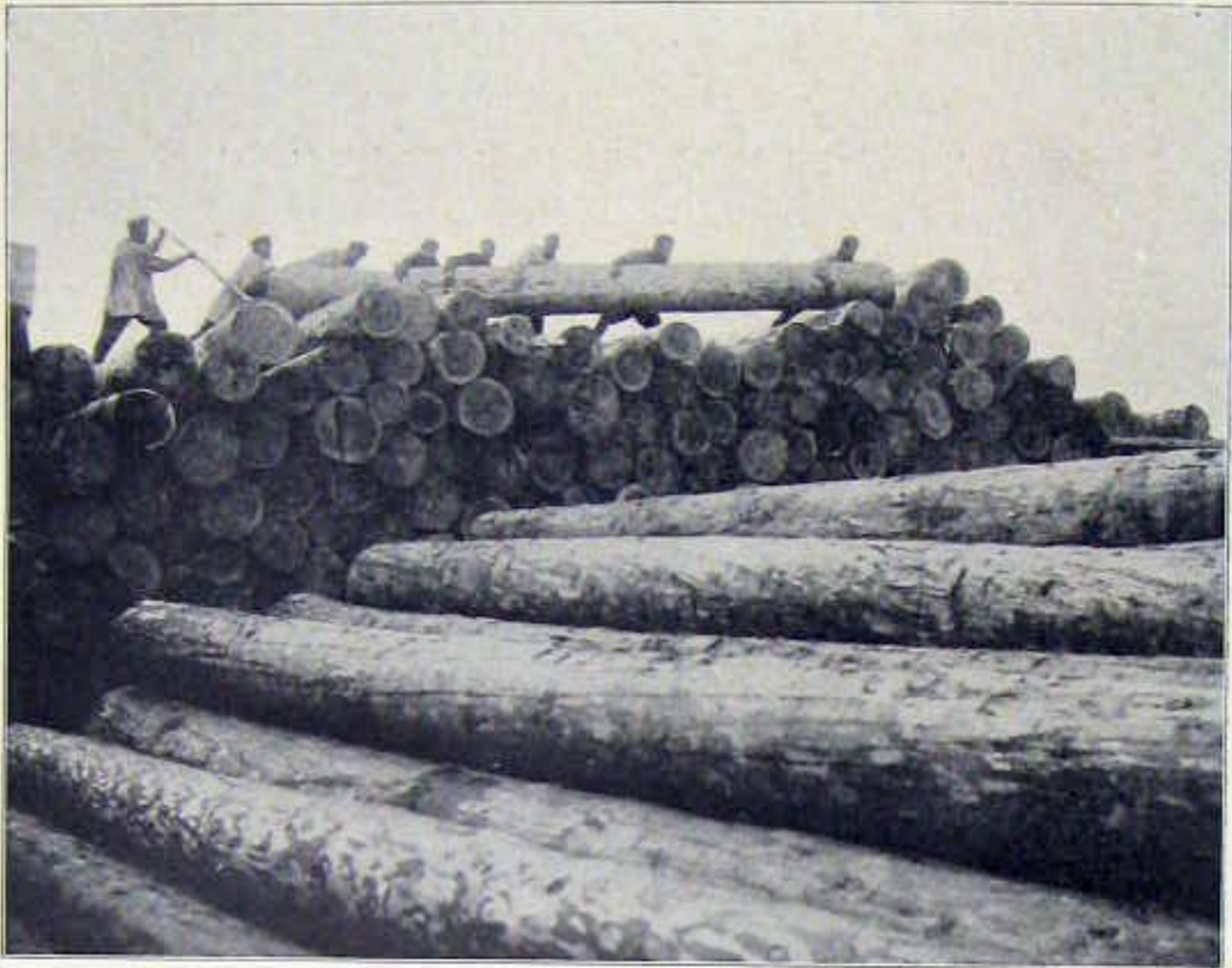


LOG STRUCTURES

one foot, gently, then the other, as if fearful of the consequence of every step. Why this unseemly caution? The rails appear well laid, the roadbed seems firm. Why not go faster? And as we ask the question, another turn reveals the reason and the cause of caution, a wrecked locomotive, partially submerged. Content, therefore, to ride over this new, almost untried line at a rate of less than seven miles an hour, up this valley which with every mile becomes more



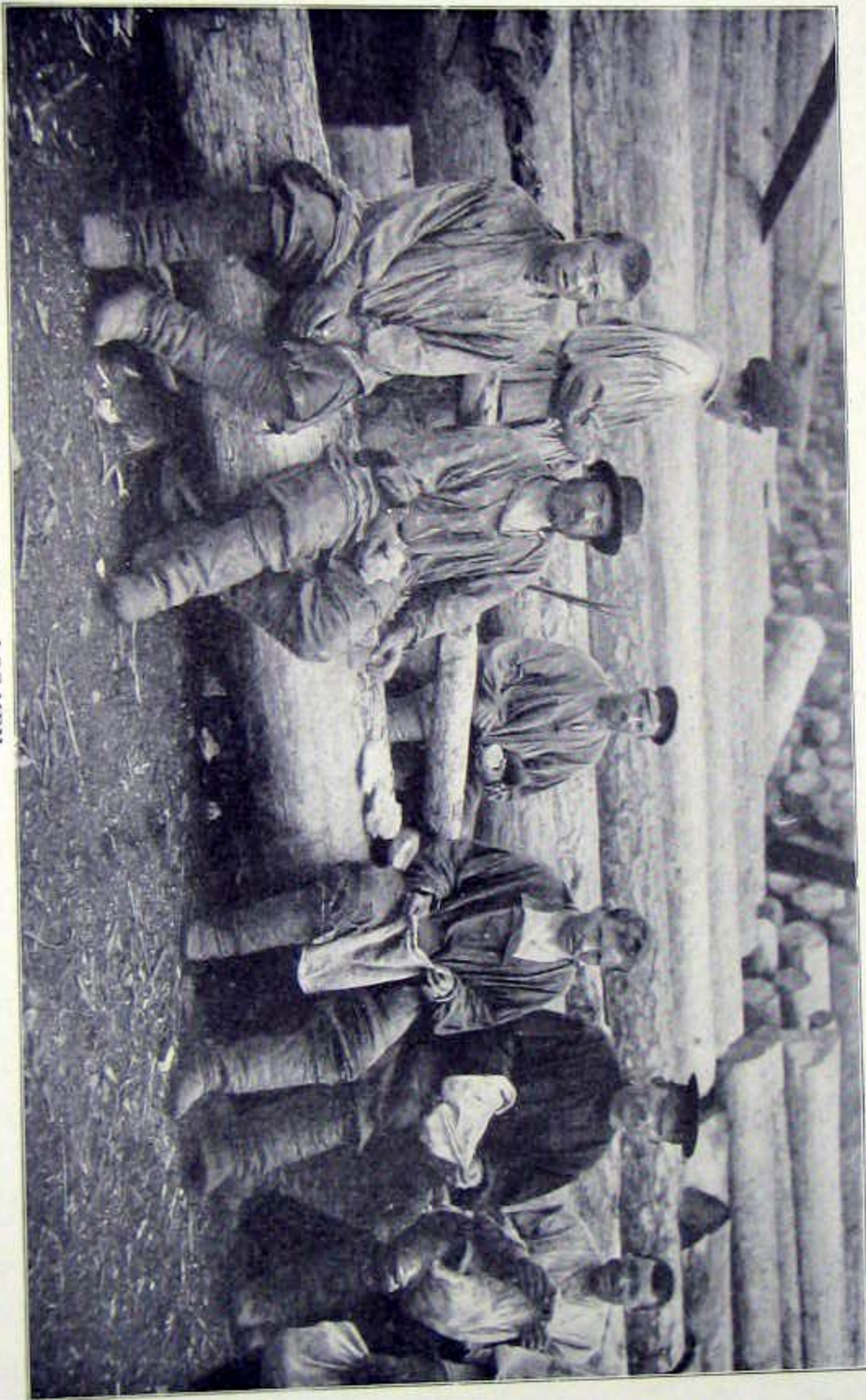
LUMBER IN THE ANGARA



MOUNTAINS OF LOGS



SAWING



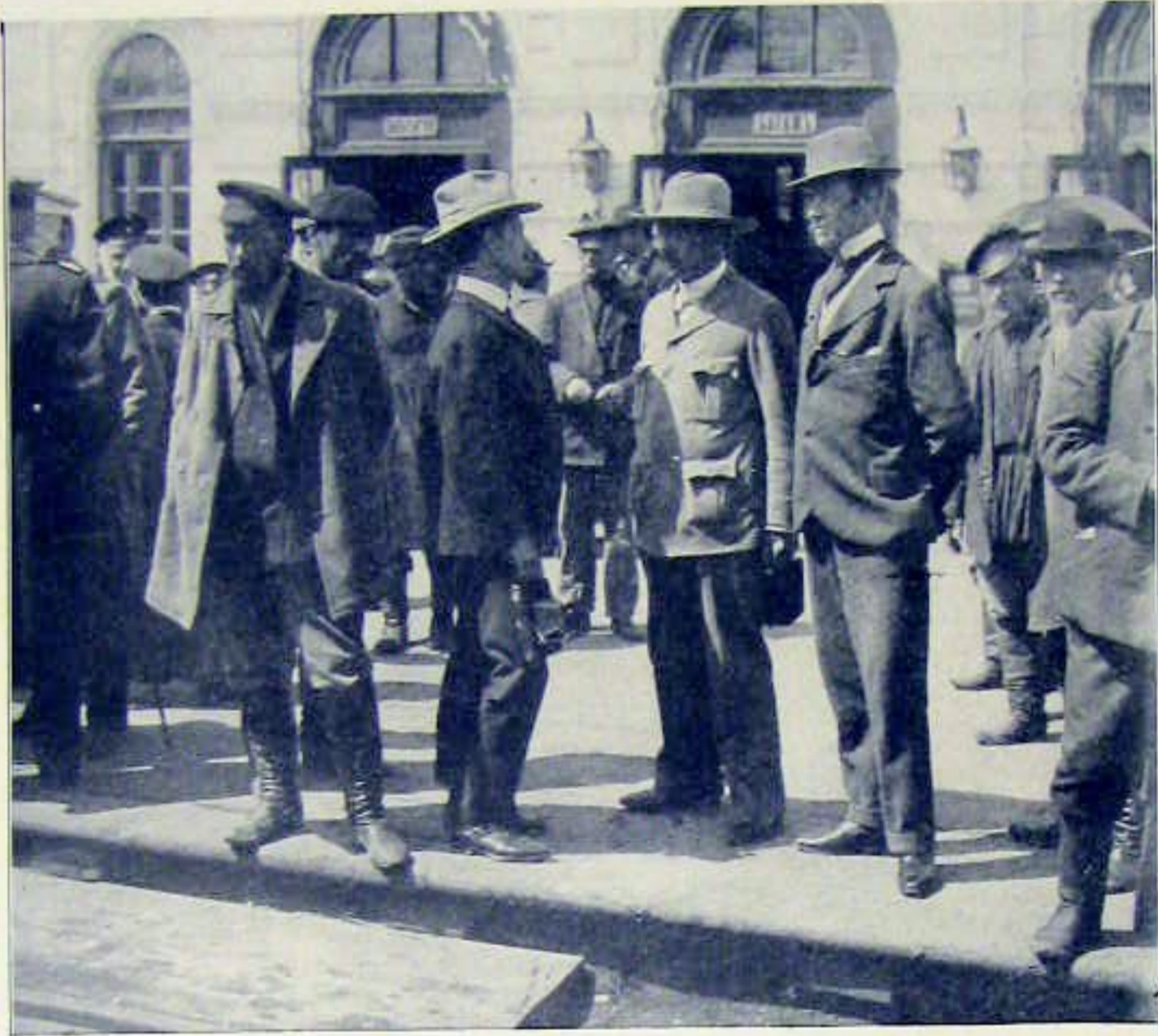
LOG-MEN



THE IRKUTSK STATION



THE ONLY BUGGY



REPRESENTATIVES OF COOK AND BAEDEKER

picturesque, we amuse ourselves by alighting from the train, picking wild flowers, and regaining our places on the platform



THE FIRE-STATION



A LITTLE MUJIK

without undue haste or difficulty. Colder and colder grows the wind that sweeps down with the waters, until at last a final turn reveals the "Holy Inland Sea of Baikal," an ocean of fresh icy water, one thousand feet above sea-level, about four hundred miles in length, and averaging about fifty miles in breadth. At the pier is the huge ice-breaker, built in England and brought hither piecemeal, especially designed for its arduous duty of keeping open a pathway across the frozen Baikal throughout the fearful winters.

The railway around the mountainous south shore of the lake will not be finished before 1905, because of the alpine nature of the country; therefore we must now quit the train and hasten to embark on the ice-breaking ferry-boat.



MONGOLIAN TRAVELERS



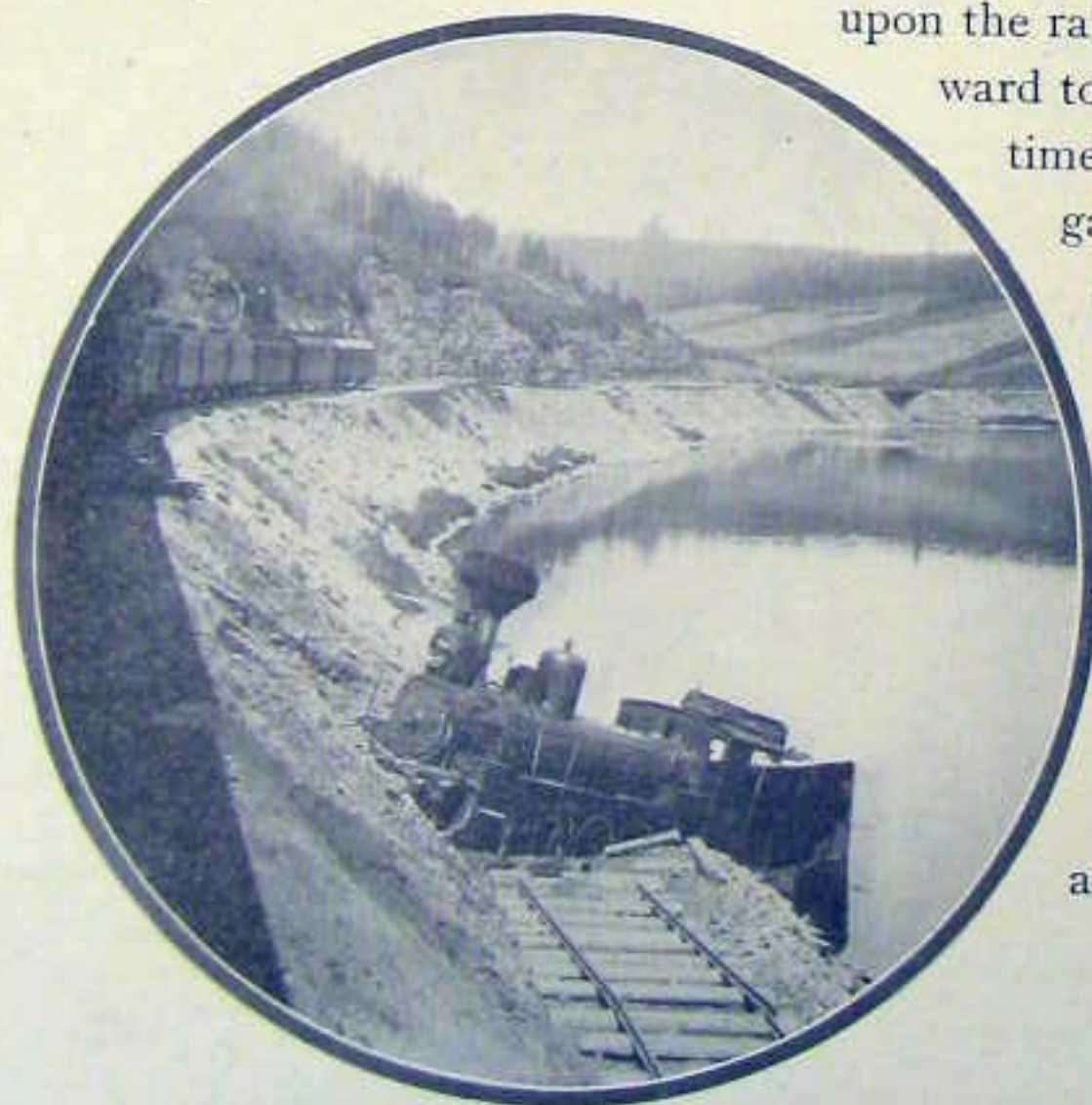
ON THE BAIKAL BRANCH

Only the baggage-cars were ferried over at the time of our crossing, but it is now announced that the through train from Moscow is carried intact across the lake and launched upon the rails that lead it east-

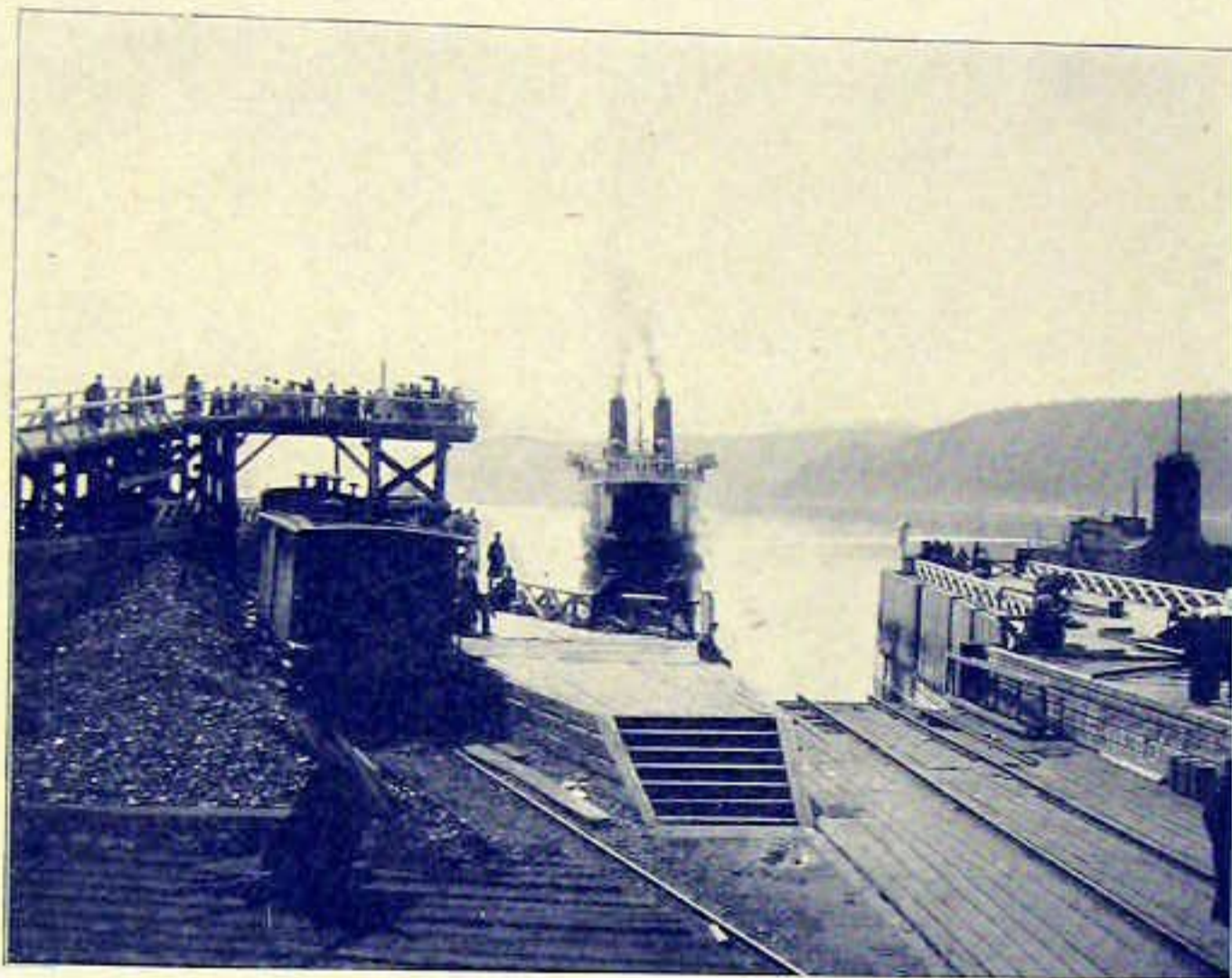
ward to Manchuria. Mean-

time we transfer our baggage from sleeping-car compartments to the cabins on the steamer "Baikal" amid the confusion of the hundred or more emigrants who are our fellow-passengers.

An hour later we are alone upon the



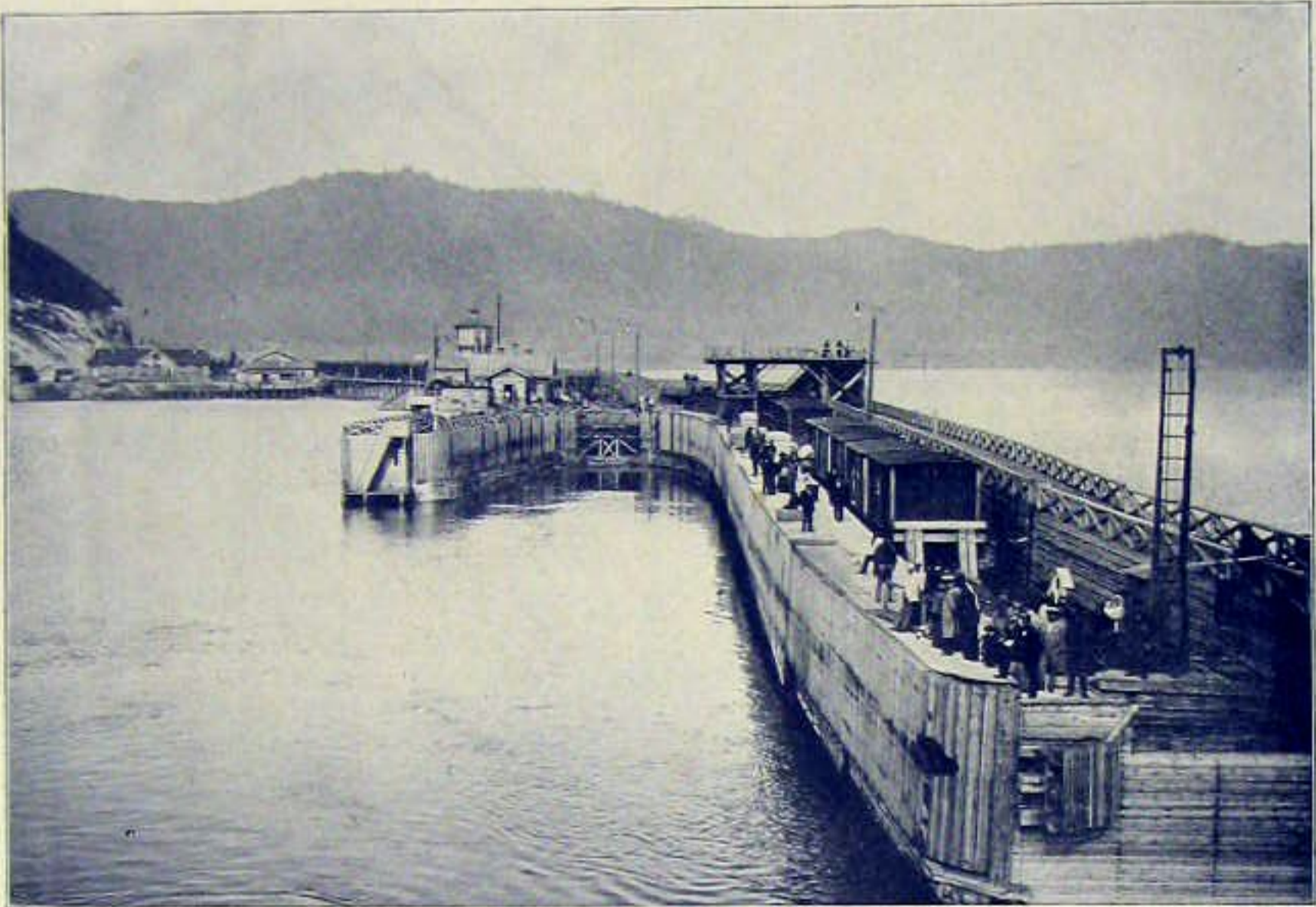
A WARNING AGAINST SPEED



THE BAIKAL FERRY



THE ICE-BREAKER AT THE PIER



THE BAIKAL PIER

cold, calm bosom of the Baikal Sea. But why alone?—where are the forty first-class passengers and officers and all the teeming population of the third-class cars? They are all on a smaller steamer which will not start till after dark.

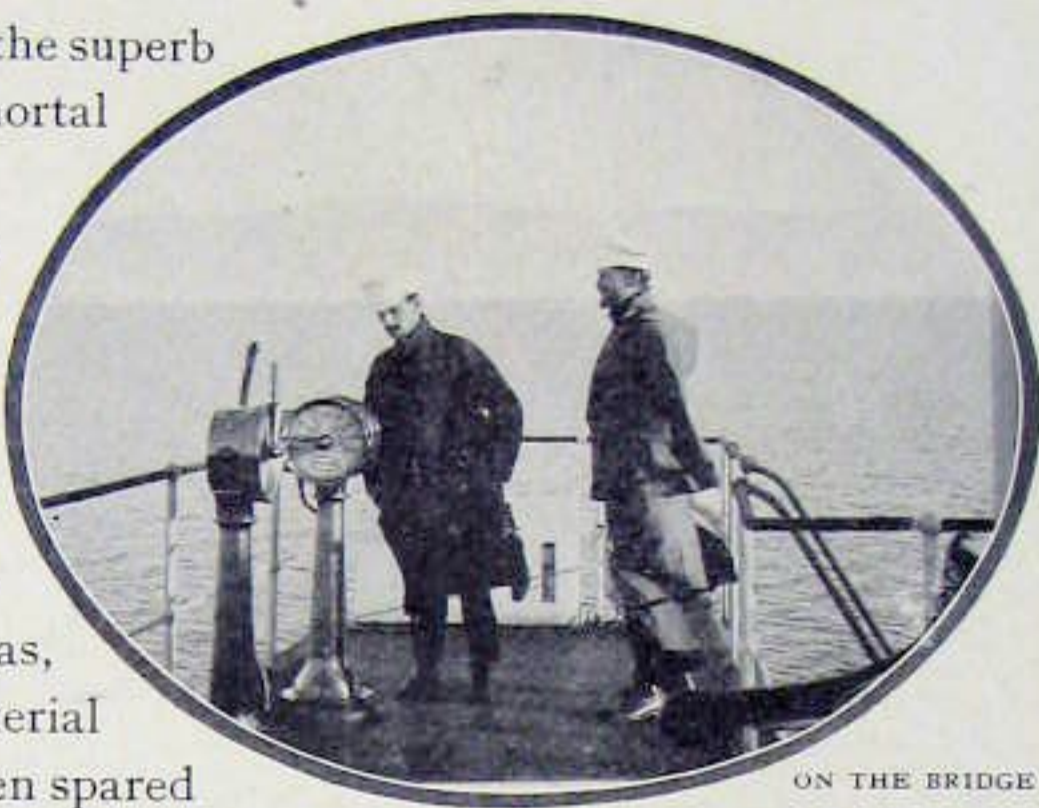


TRANSFERRING BAGGAGE

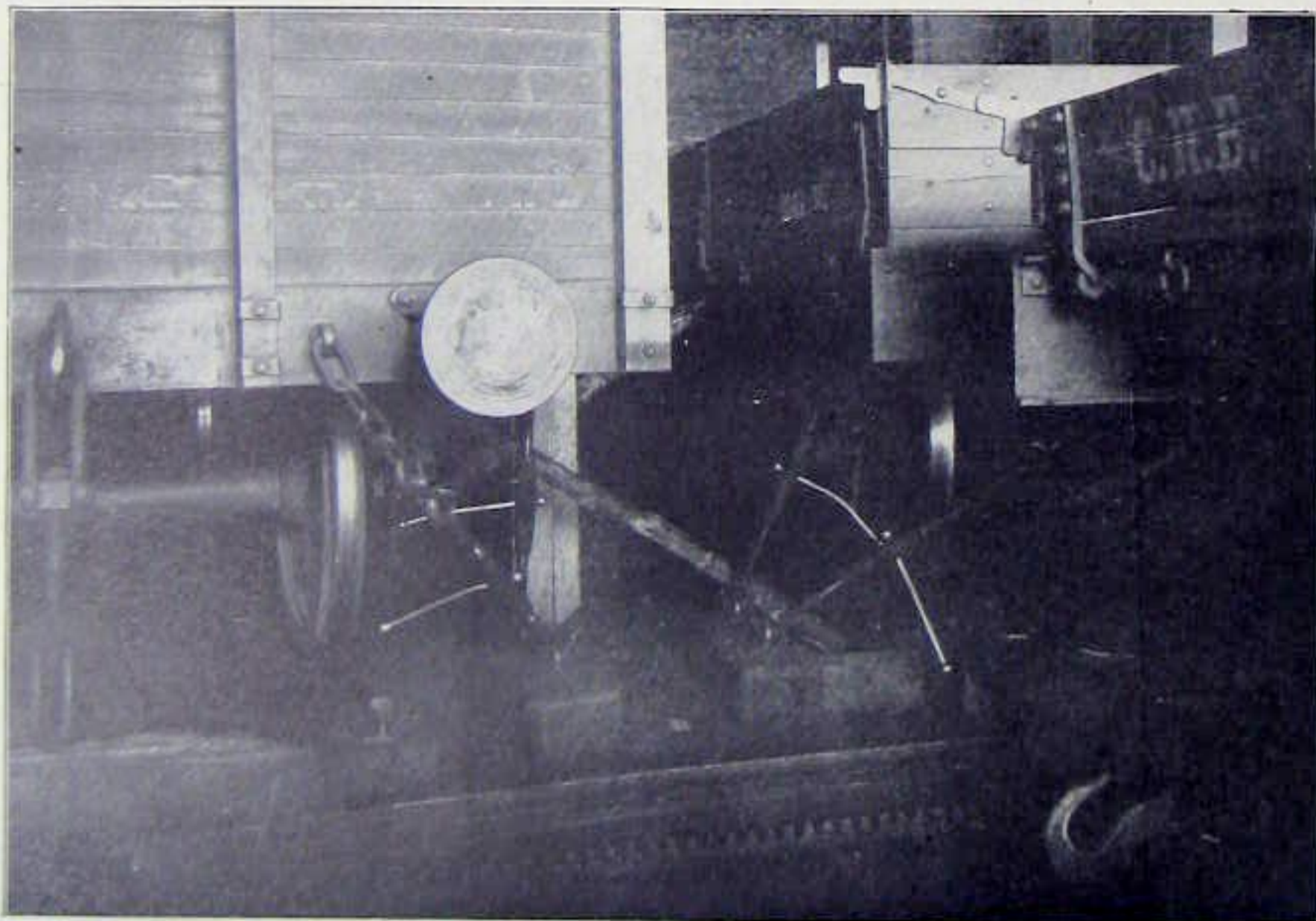
Why? we inquire. No one can reply. Such is the custom; the big boat without passengers crosses this inspiring lake by day, but, with its load of weary human freight, the smaller steamer

follows long after dark when the superb scenery is hidden from all mortal eyes by the veil of night.

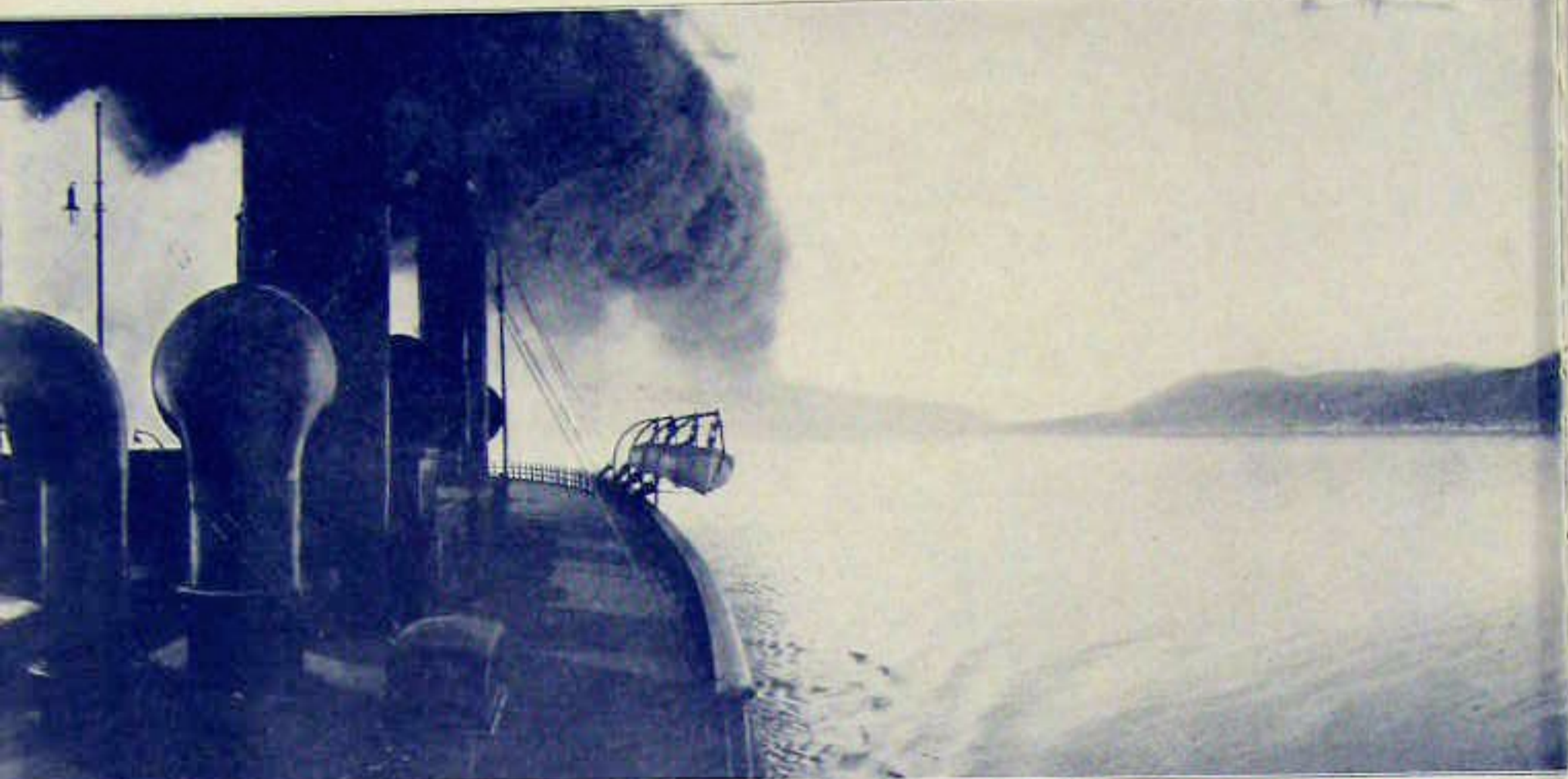
As we walk the spacious decks, we realize the importance of carrying "Boumaga," for without our letter from Prince Khilkoff, we should have fared no better than the rest, whereas, many thanks to the ministerial autograph letter, we have been spared the cold voyage by night upon the comfortless and crowded tender. Moreover, we had first choice of compartments in the Trans-Baikal train, awaiting us at Myssovaya, where,



ON THE BRIDGE



CARS MADE FAST



CROSSING LAKE BAIKAL

barricaded in selfish comfort in our berths, we listened to the tumult of our unhappy fellow-travelers when they attacked the train in the desperation of fatigue at three o'clock next morning. We could see no reason why all could not have crossed by day in comfort had the railway management desired. But there was not a murmur of complaint; the people knew that they had been uncomfortable, but seemed to feel that they had been merely unlucky, and never dreamed of blaming any one for such a gross abuse of patience and disregard of common sense. Next morning they looked worn and hungry, and at the earliest opportunity descended like a rav-
ening horde upon a small roadside



MILITARY STUDENTS



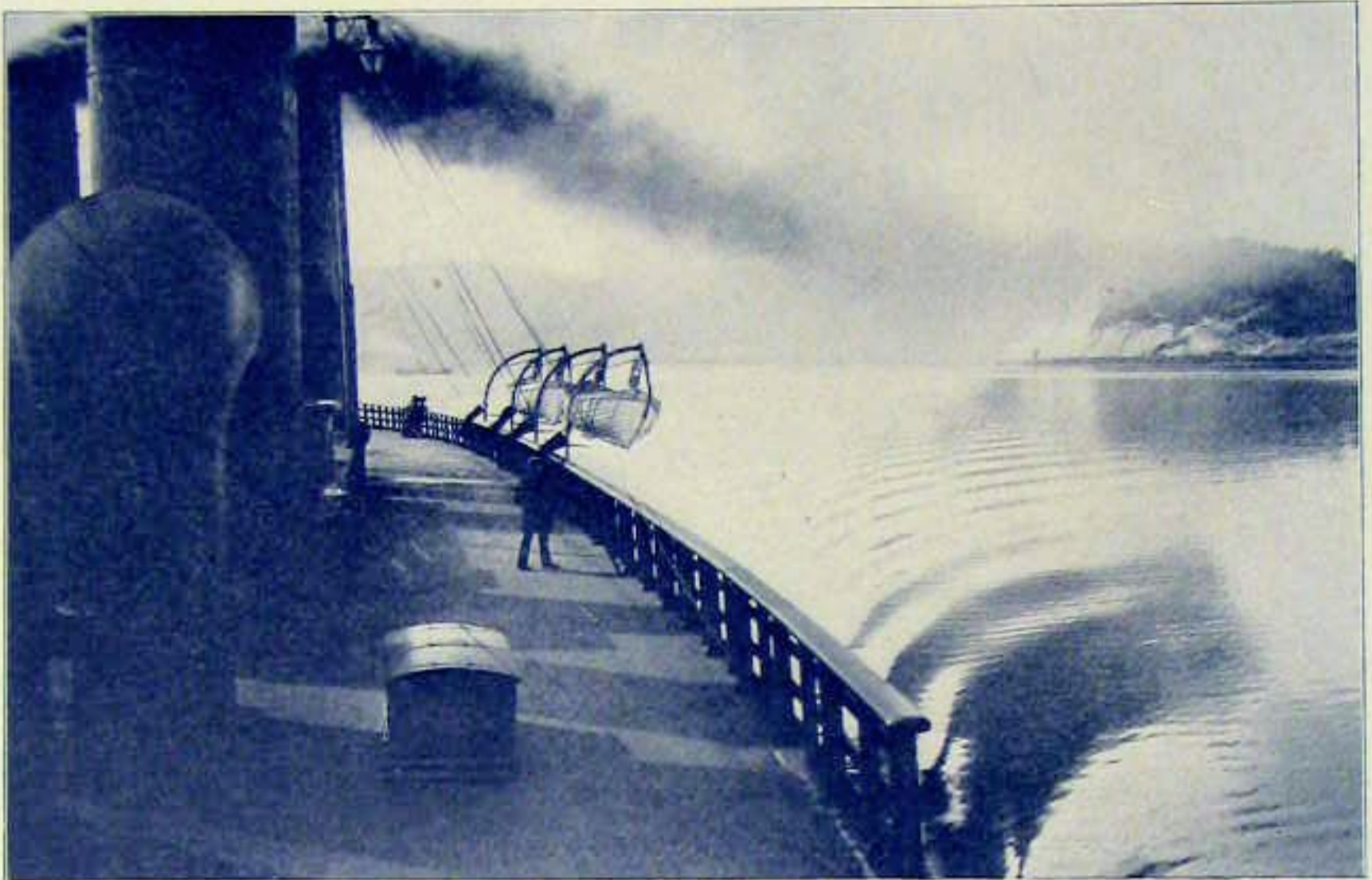
ON THE ICE-BREAKER

refreshment-market, where smiling Siberians presiding over steaming samovars dispensed good tea and cheap but wholesome food. At Verchneudinsk we find, side-tracked between two freight-cars, the celebrated "church on wheels." This itinerant Basilica is a complete Orthodox sanctuary, for it has even a chime of bells at one end, golden crosses on the roof, and an elaborate equipment on the inside for the performance of the full Greek ritual.

Pending the completion of the permanent churches which are building all along the line, this rolling place of worship fills a void felt by the devout and the prayerful emigrants



A TINY TARANTASS

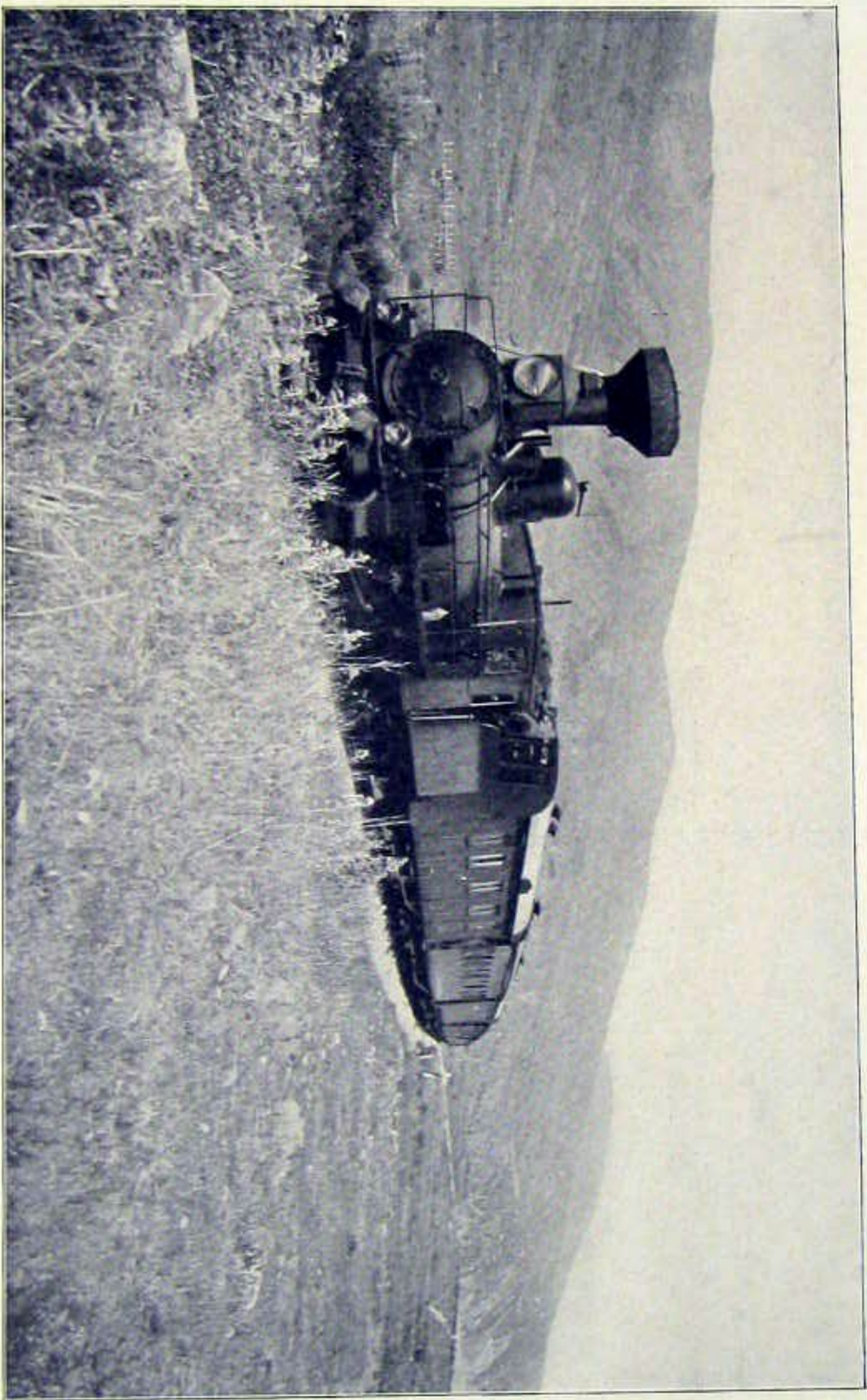


THE DECK OF THE S. S. "BAIKAL"

and railway employees. We frequently surprised guards crossing themselves and murmuring prayers in the corridors on the platforms of our train. Verchneudinsk is the junction for the post-road to Mongolia, the old caravan-route to Peking




MYSSOVAYA



THE TRANS-BAIKAL TRAIN

via Kiachta, Urga, and the Gobi Desert. Wild types of sturdy Mongols of the Buriat tribe are seen among platform loafers. They remind us of the Indians who hang around our western railway-stations, and like them they suggest the passing of the aboriginal and the inevitable dominance of the white



AMUSING THE NATIVES

invader. We found it most amusing to let them look into a little motion-picture instrument, a portable mutoscope. The sight of the animated pictures delighted them, and for the moment transformed the little savage sons of Genghis Khan into innocent and enthusiastic infants.



A TRANS-BAIKAL STATION



RAILWAY LUNCH



TRAPOT TOILETS



MONGOLS VIEWING MOTION-PICTURES

It was upon this section of the railway that we encountered one of the "engineering triumphs" of the line; for days we had been looking forward to the first and only tunnel on the Trans-Siberian. Our Russian fellow-passengers warn us an hour in advance that we are coming to it, that



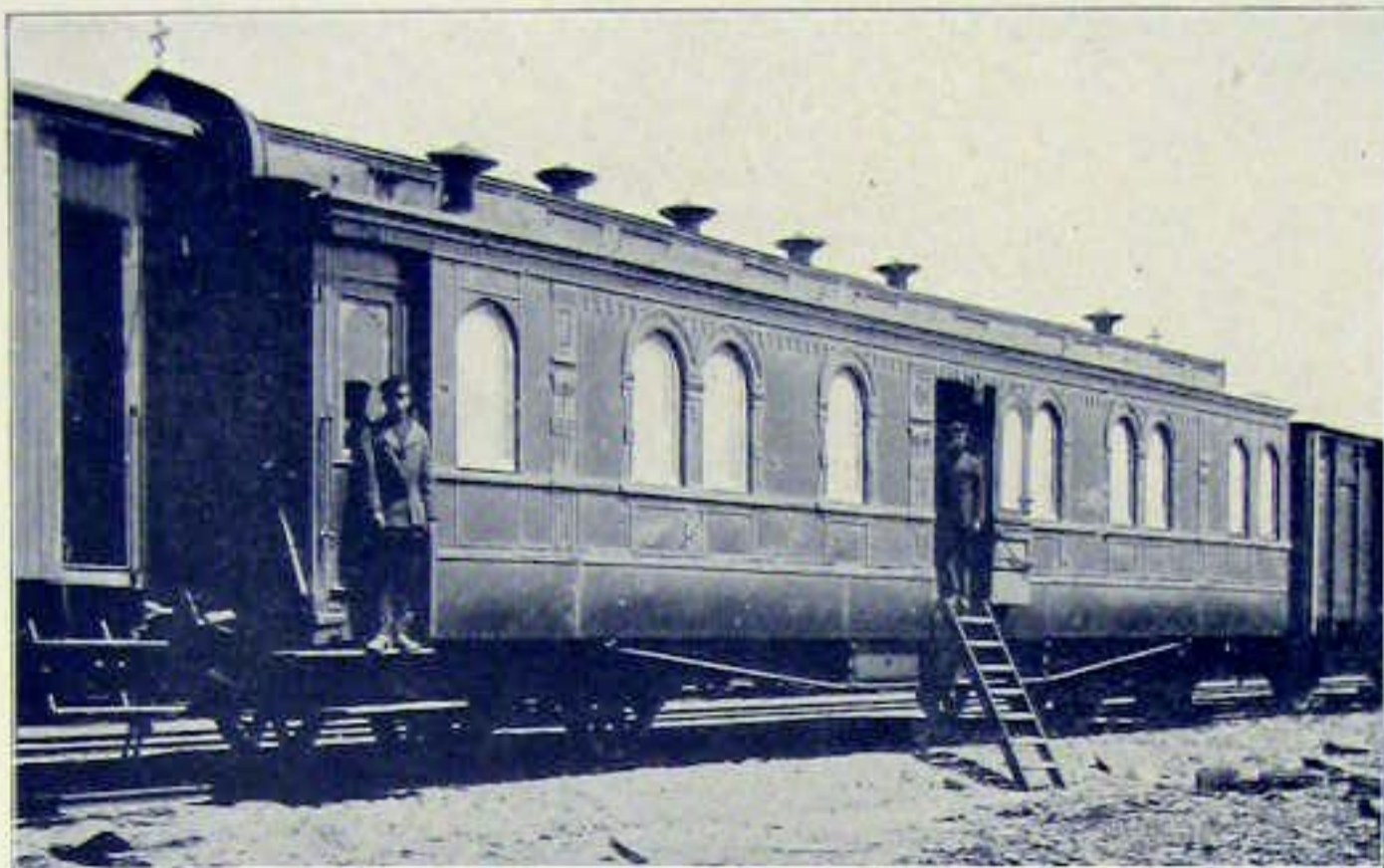
A TOWN IN TRANS-BAIKALIA

we must be careful not to miss it, that it is one of the wonders of the line. At last our eager peering is rewarded. There comes in view a tunnel mouth. But the much-

vaunted tunnel is only a deep cut, a few rods long, which, after being completed as an open cut, was arched over to protect the track from landslides. At the station of Chita occurs a very happy meeting, one of the surprising coincidental happenings of our long journey. A Russian gentleman

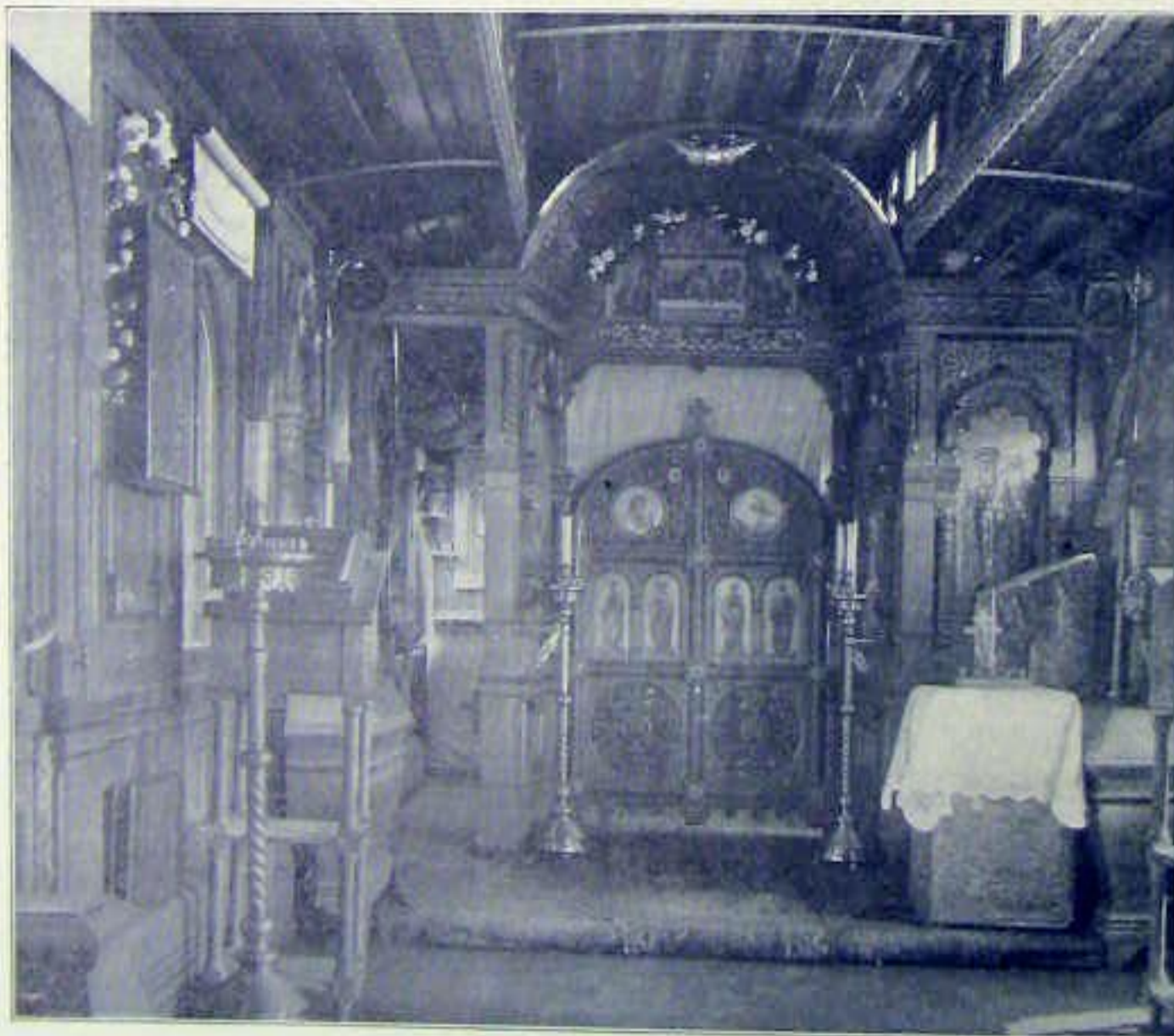


SAMOVARS



A CHURCH ON WHEELS

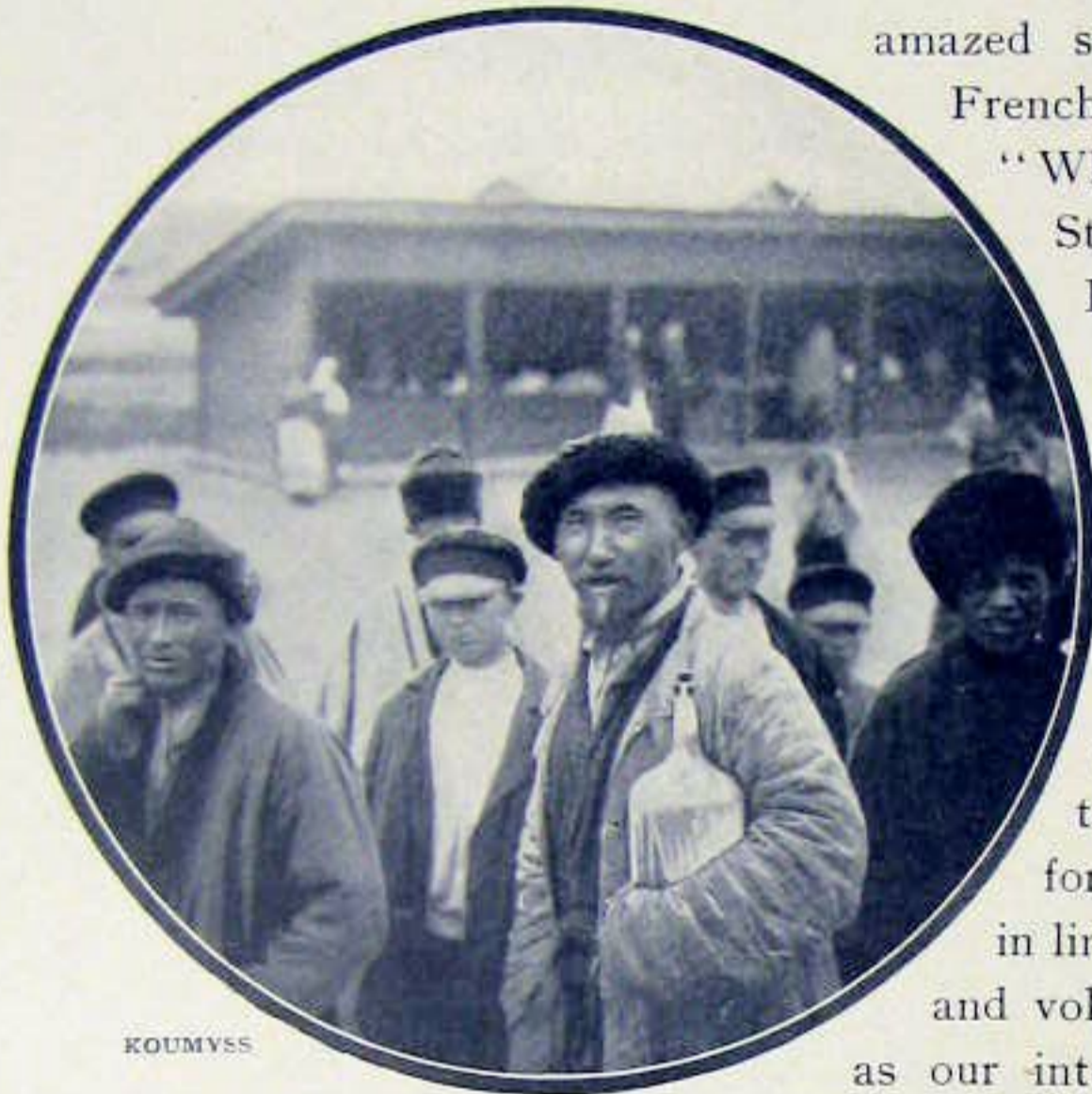
there boards the train; his face is vaguely familiar; apparently our faces are not new to him, for greeting us with an



IN THE CHURCH CAR



A FOOD-MARKET



KOU MYSS

amazed smile, he asks in French:

“When did you leave St. Petersburg?”

Instantly we place him as the courteous Russian professor who had helped us purchase our seats for the military review in the capital two months before. He stood next in line at the box-office and volunteered to serve as our interpreter, securing excellent places for us;—and now to our great surprise and



SOMETHING NEW



THE ONLY TUNNEL

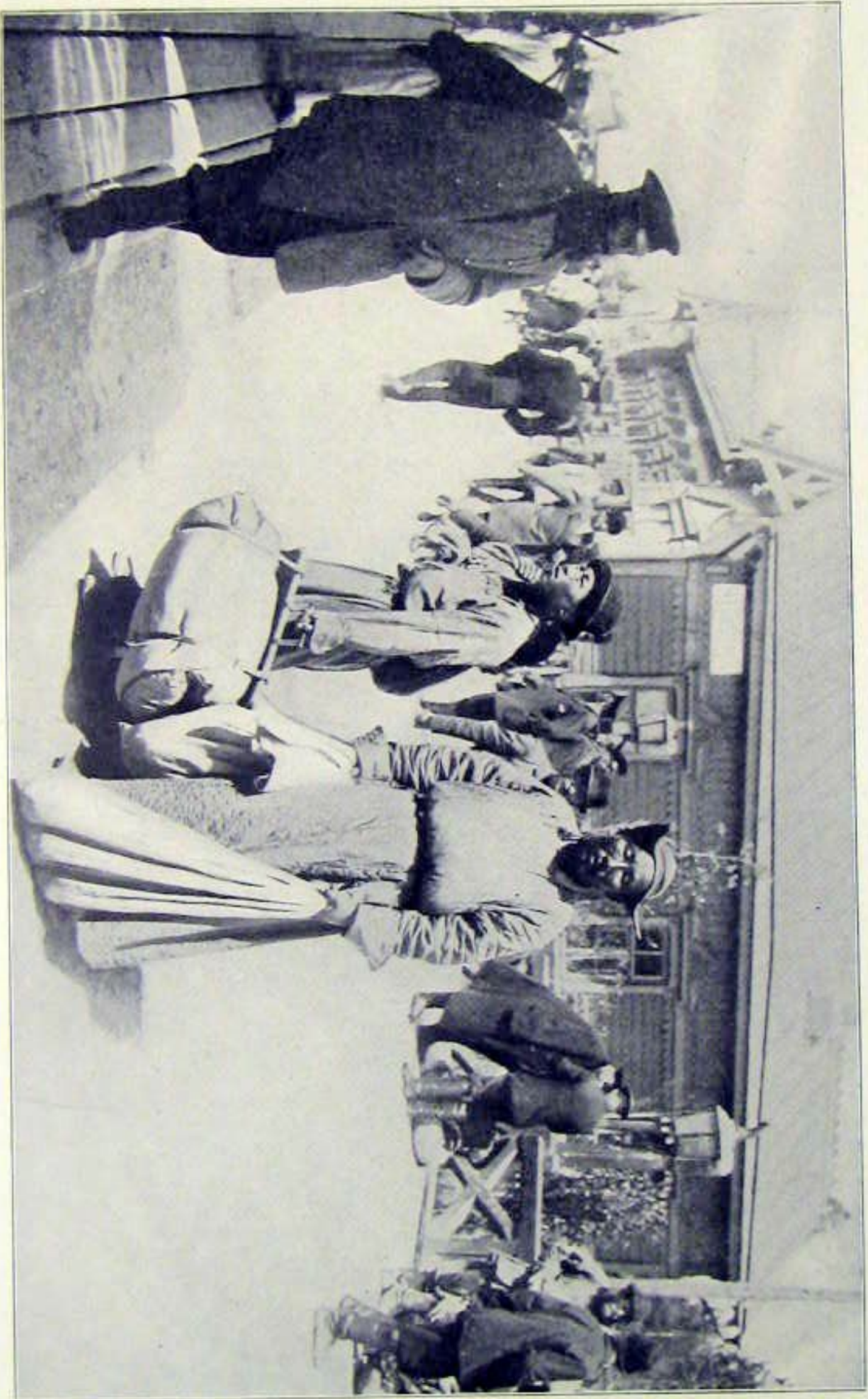
subsequent advantage, he turns up in Trans-Baikalia as eager to inform, advise, and help us here as in the capital.

But we did not fully appreciate the value of his good-will and eagerness to be of service to the strangers in a strange land, until after our arrival in Stryetensk at the conclusion of



THREE OF A KIND

the four-day journey from Irkutsk. Stryetensk on the Shilka River was the Trans-Siberian terminal in July, 1901; but since we passed by that way, the Manchurian Line which branches off some distance west of the town of Stryetensk has been practically



MONGOLIANS



ON THE PLATFORM

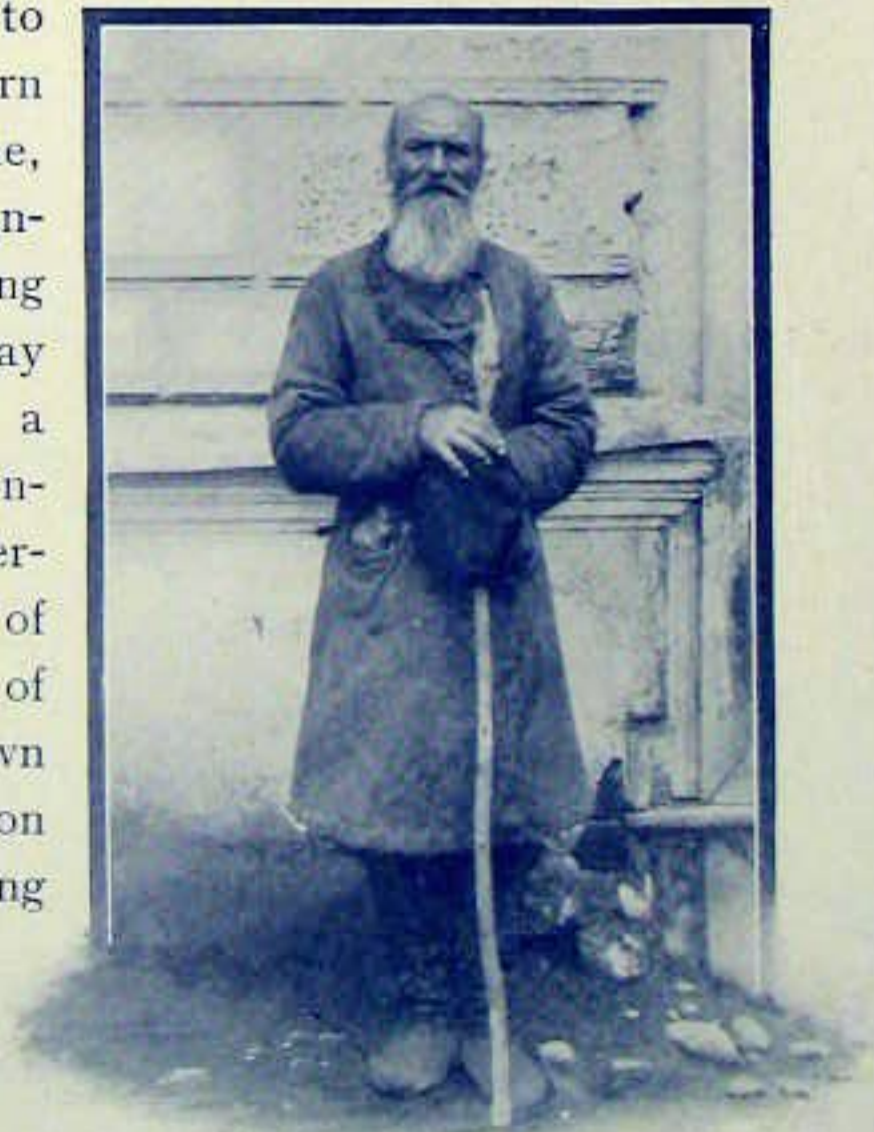


BEGINNING OF THE MANCHURIAN LINE AT KAI DALOVO

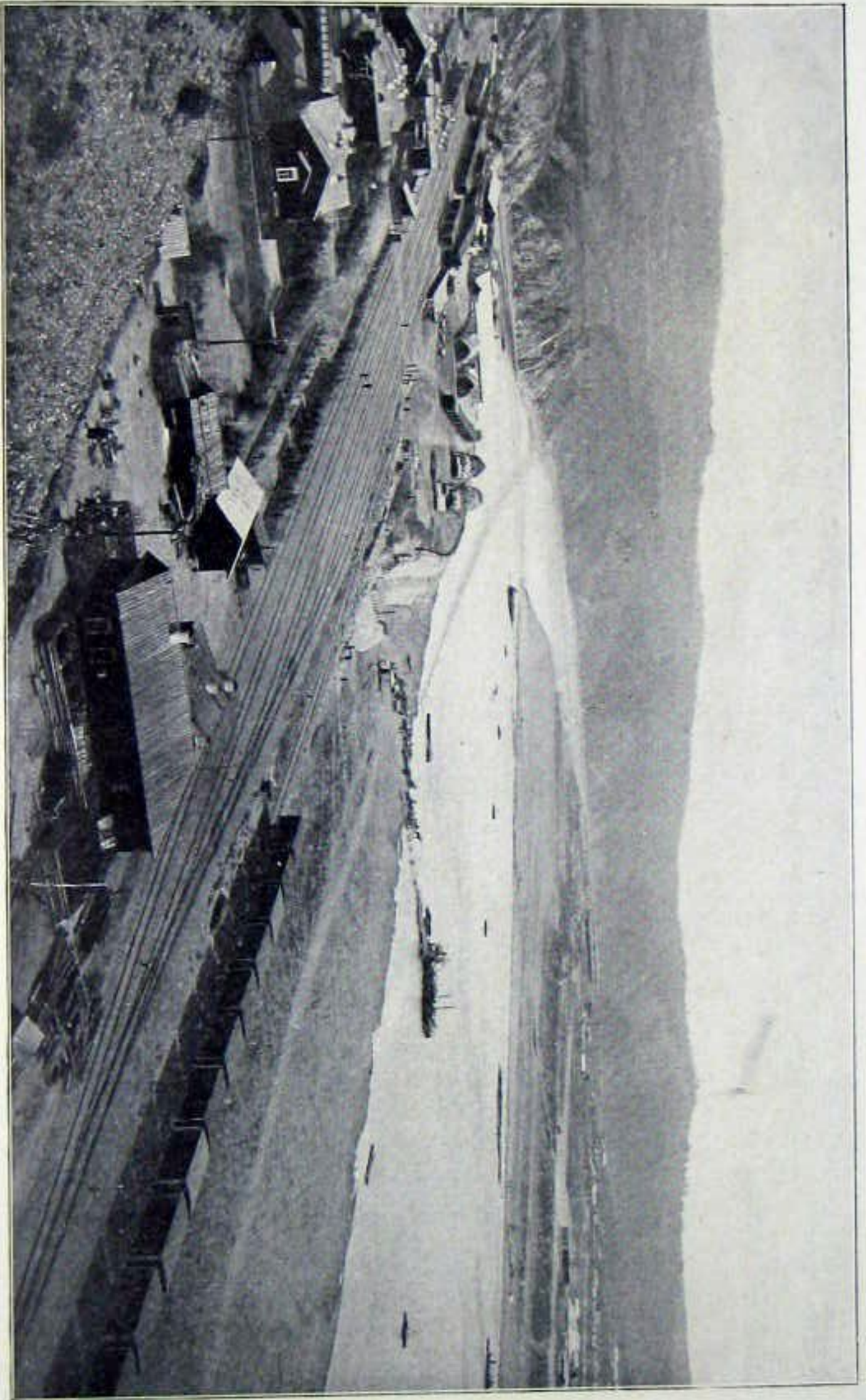


STRYETENSK

completed, and over it the trains will soon be running direct to Vladivostok. Russia has abandoned the continuation of the line down the Shilka River to the Amur, and thence along the Amur's banks to Khabarovsk, the northern terminus of the Ussuri line, from Vladivostok. The Manchurian agreement, enabling Russia to extend her railway across what is nominally a Chinese province, has rendered this longer route superfluous. In the summer of 1901, however, the tide of travel was still flowing down the waterways. As we soon discover, it is not flowing easily,—there is both a boat- and a water-famine on the river. There is



A MENDICANT



STREYETENSK ON THE SHILKA



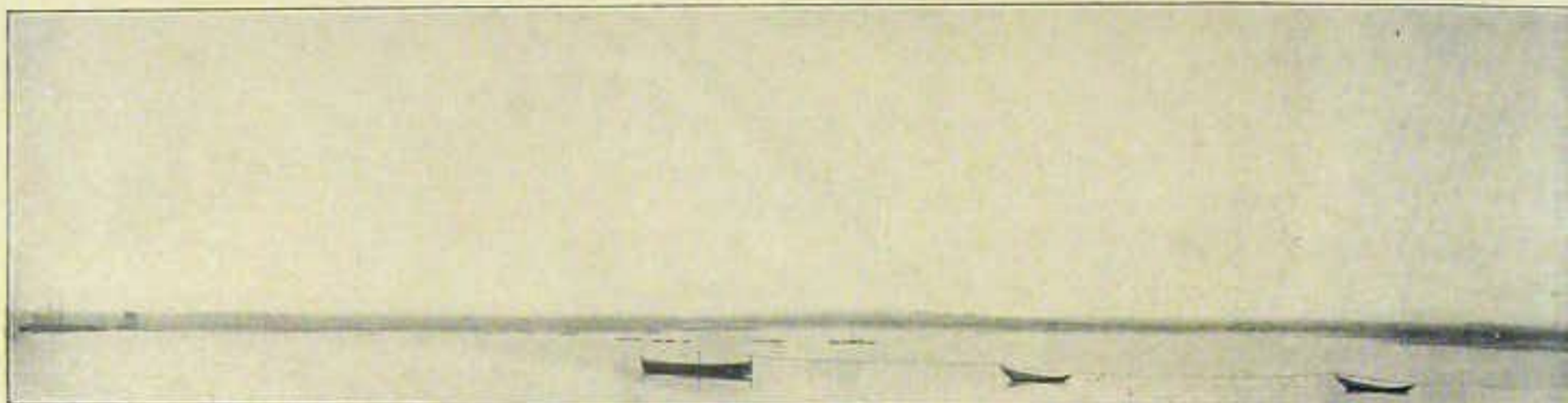
OUR FRIEND THE PROFESSOR



ISTVOSTCHIK

very little water in the shallow Shilka, and as a result no boats in port. The post-boat had left the day before our arrival, carrying off the friends who had not lingered in Irkutsk but had hastened on to make sure of the official steamer. We had taken our chances of catching it, and had lost not only the

steamer but also the receipt for one of our trunks ; and here it was that the professor proved himself more than a friend and brother, for he devoted two days of time and all his skill and patience to getting that unhappy trunk from the official meshes of red tape in which it seemed inextricably entangled.



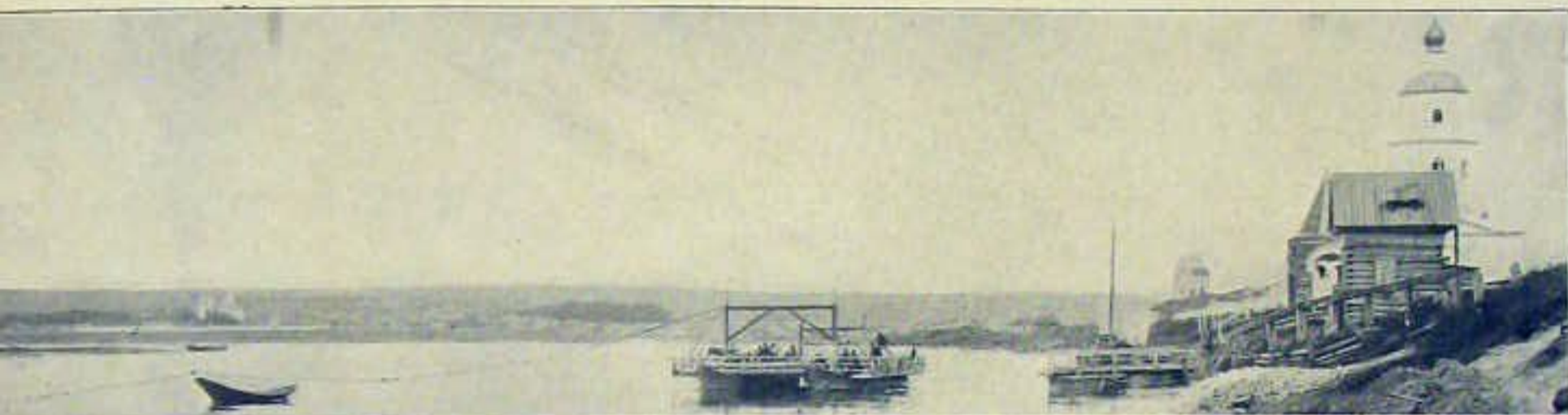
ILLUSTRATING THE NOVE

This meant many wild-goose chases up and down the town, the signing of many petitions, declarations, affidavits, releases, and receipts ; a call upon the Ataman or Cossack commander (for Stryetensk is not officially a town, it is merely a Cossack settlement), a parley with the station-master, gifts to all his underlings — in fact, an infinity of troublesome detail through



IN MID-STREAM

which the kind professor glided unruffled, like the patient, polite Russian that he was. Fortunately, we could not express ourselves in Russian, or we should be still in Streyetensk, waiting for the authorities to forget and forgive what we had said, and to render up at last the captive trunk.



SIBERIAN FERRY SYSTEM

To us the most interesting feature of Streyetensk was the ferry. Never shall we forget our initial crossing of the Shilka in the darkness of the night of our arrival. Sitting on top of our innumerable bags and boxes, piled high on two



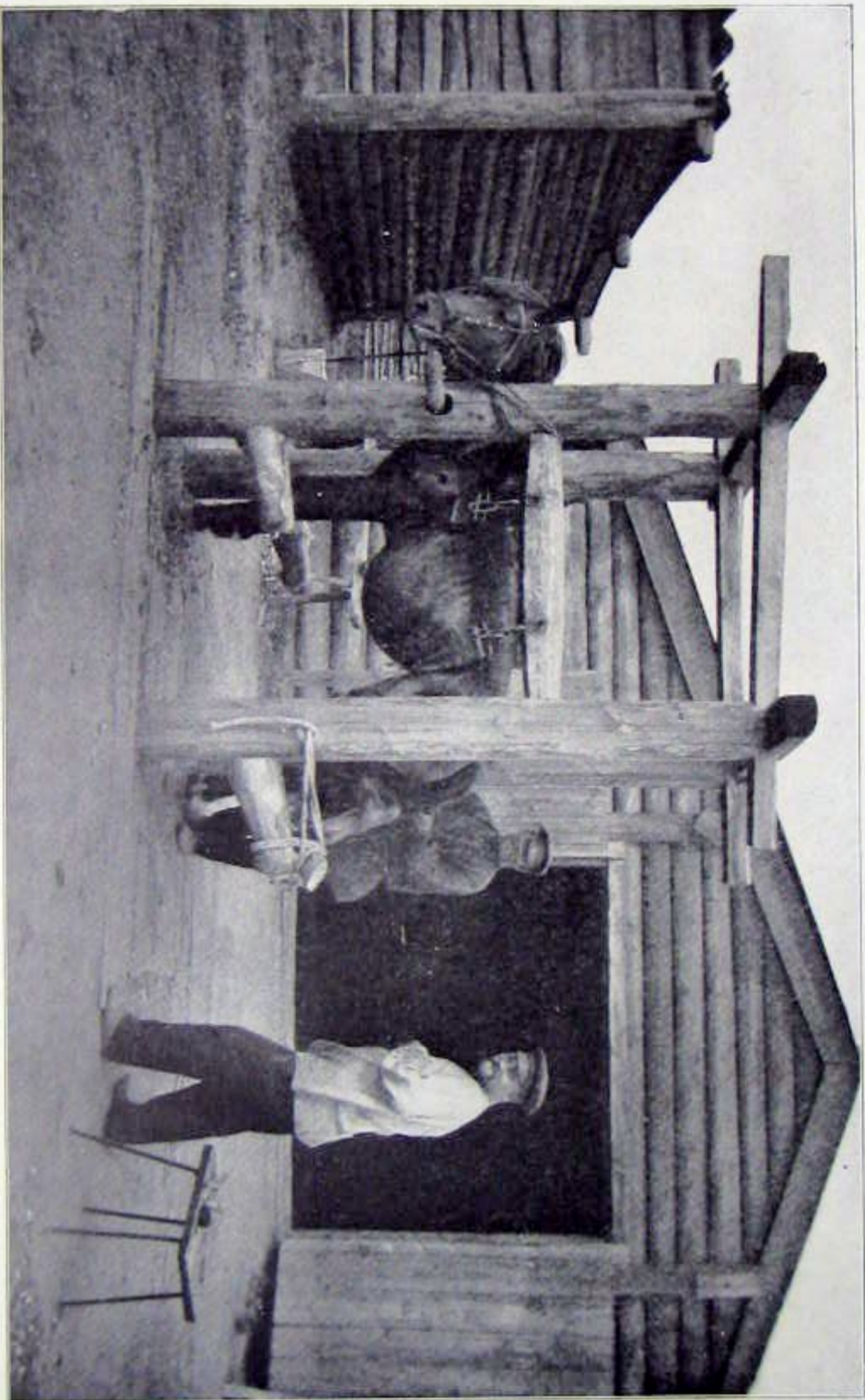
WAGONS BOARDING FERRY



TROIKA COMING ASHORE



THE HOTEL AT STRVETENSK



PRUDENT BLACKSMITHS



OUR FOURTH-OF-JULY DINNER, 1901

barbaric wagons, we were whirled down a steep embankment, then out into the river, the water rising to the wagon-floor, then up a steep incline to the deck of an overcrowded barge, which slowly swung part way across the stream, and there discharged its cargo, the horses and wagons splashing through the shallows, and jolting over submerged boulders until the shore is gained. Experienced by day all this may be amusing; but in the pitchy darkness of a stormy night, when one cannot



EXILES FROM WARSAW — AND MILWAUKEE

see ten feet ahead, it is, to tired travelers, an ordeal almost terrifying. We secured miserable accommodations in the pretentious hotel called the "Star of the Orient." But here again photography intervenes to soften aspects, for the picture gives to that hostelry an air of well-washed respectability that was as far from the real state of affairs as it was from the desire of the proprietor. "Disgusting" is the adjective most generally applicable to the Siberian hotels. There was but one room vacant. It had a single bed



YURTAS

in which the Professor courageously volunteered to sleep, while I lay on the floor, softened for the occasion by a straw mattress, covered with two flour-sacks which bore the legend of a famous American flour-mill in Oregon. Our two companions slept, or tried to sleep, on the benches, in a sort of concert-hall connected with the caravansary. Next day we moved to the rival establishment, where, as the rooms were full, we were installed in an enclosed veranda. There



THE EMIGRANT STATION

we celebrated the glorious "Fourth of July" with a noon-day banquet of American dishes cooked by our ambitious amateur chef and washed down with three bottles of the beverage that makes Milwaukee famous, the selling price for which in Stryetensk—the absolute antipodes of Milwaukee—is three rubles, or one dollar and a half, per quart. We



A GOODLY FAMILY

are exactly on the other side of the world. We realize that we are as far away from home as we can get, upon this parallel of latitude; that we have reached the half-way point of our journey, at the forsaken, boatless river-port of Stryetensk; and to our discouraged minds the prospects are that we shall be compelled to stay in this place forever.

We are not surprised in the least to learn that the proprietor of this antipodal establishment is a convict and an exile. Deported after the Polish revolution of 1863, he has lived as an exile in Stryetensk for thirty-seven years. He has grown rich in catering to the hunger and the thirst of travelers stranded at Stryetensk during the seasons of low water. But we are not the "only people on the beach," for besides the scores of "officially-assisted" settlers at the government-



TOUGH MATERIAL



WOULD-BE SETTLERS

station on the hillside opposite the town, other emigrants, poorer and more independent, are camping along the dirty water-front waiting for the steamer, of which the arrival is as uncertain as is the possibility of a subsequent departure; for the river is falling rapidly. All boats drawing over two feet are already hard aground along the upper reaches



WAITING FOR THE STEAMER

of the Shilka. Human hulks, too, are stranded on the Shilka shores. We saw lying near the steamer-landing a despairing female who had given up the whole affair as a bad piece of business, and had fallen back on her reserve supply of vodka, as the surest ship to the harbors of forgetfulness. For three days that miserable creature lay there in a stupor, unmolested save by the chilling rain of one night and the burning sun of the ensuing day. Now and then she would

wake, take a long pull at the bottle that she gripped tightly even while she lay unconscious, and then, with a glassy stare at the empty, receding river, resume her horrid revery.

But just as our stay in Stryetensk threatens to become a waking nightmare,—the dirt, the heat, the discomfort, and uncertainty beginning to get upon our nerves,—the Professor makes a glorious discovery. He rushes in to report that the good ship "Rurik," drawing only two feet of water, has been reclaimed from some fluvial bone-yard and hastily thrown into shape to take advantage of the extraordinary conditions that prevailed during the summer of 1901.

The story of our subsequent experiences is told in another chapter entitled "Down the Amur."







