Through the immense spaces of Siberia, many ancient wanderers scattered their treasures. Many tribes, in an unceasing procession, filled the soil of Mongolia, Minusinsk and Altai. In Altai they remembered the call of other remote mountains, and again strove onward, counting not the days, nor years, nor centuries of their wanderings.

The memory of the people preserves the sacred stories about the relics of these great wanderers. And fantasy adorns them with most beautiful garlands.

Oh, these hidden treasures! What aspiration is directed towards them!

This is not merely anxiety to become possessor of riches. It is the eternal striving toward the mystery of the earth.

Many manuscripts flow through the people's hands. Wandering singers, minstrels, monks and beggars carry wonderful tales inscribed in a peculiar secret language. And why do these not acquire the treasures themselves? They have always some excuses; the hidden language must be understood.

At times you can see these curious writings on yellow leaves, their corners ragged from long usage. Through many villages and camps these scriptures went their ways. They were written in old script, sometimes like old prayer books, with strange flourishes and ornamentations. Really it is not easy to decipher these rudimentary signs. Many people try to follow these indications. It is true, that some places are indicated correctly. Some typical details are marked down. But it is not known that precisely in these places treasures were found. Either an exact indication was veiled, or fortunate discoverers had reason for maintaining silence. From most ancient times, old graves and tumuli have been pillaged. It appears that people who lived shortly after their erection carried on the sacrilege. It seems that the desecrators knew well all approaches and passages to the place of burial. The old custom to kill all who performed the burial had its special reason. But we do not speak now of burials, but of treasures; about the treasures, whose origin and destiny are so mysterious. We are speaking of treasures.

One remembers the majestic burial sites in the tumuli, under huge golden plaques. How many of them have been pillaged! I remember how in the steppes a boy shepherd noticed on a slope of a hill a spark of gold. His attention was attracted and he was rightly rewarded. He found two hundred pounds of gold in ancient vessels.

Let us see how treasures are indicated in the books of treasure seekers:

"From the Red Field thou shalt go in the direction of the winter's sunrise. Follow this trail until thou shalt see a tomb hill. Ascend this hill and turn to the left and proceed to the rusty stream, until thou shalt see a huge gray stone. Upon this stone find a trace of a horse's hoof. Leave behind thee the stone and proceed from this imprint of a hoof until thou comest to a small swamp. Thou must know that some strange unknown people buried in there five huge pieces of gold............."

"In the elk forest on the cross path, is huge horny fir tree. This fir tree
remains here not without reason. He who searches can find some signs cut into it. Stand with your back to these signs and walk straight from them across a moss swamp. And having passed, there will be a stony place. Two stones will be larger than the others. Stand between them in the centre and count forty steps towards the spring sunset. There is a large barrel of gold buried there during the time of Tsar the Terrible.

Here is still better treasure:

"On the river Peresnya find a fording. And it will be called the Prince's fording. From this fording walk again toward the spring sunset. And when you will have walked three hundred steps turn half sideways. And walk across thirty steps to the right. And there will be something like an old pit. And behind this pit you will see a stump of a large tree. And there is buried a great treasure. All gold Krestovics (big golden coins) and all kinds of golden armour. And one cannot count all the golden treasures. And this treasure was buried during the Mongol invasion."

Another good big treasure:

"On the very shore of Irtysh you will find an old site. And on this site is an ancient chapel. And behind it you may see an old cemetery. Amidst the tombs you behold a small kurgan. Under this kurgan, as told by old men is a deep subterranean passage. And this passage leads into a small cave and in there are to be found untold riches. An old writing about this treasure is in the cathedral of Sophia. And the high one himself, the Metropolite, once a year gives this writing to read to those who come from afar."

Now I shall tell you the most difficult one:

"This treasure was buried with a deathly conjuration. Should you decide to go after it, you will have headaches and great anxiety of the soul. And at midnight you will hear horrifying voices. And a bell will ring over you, as for a funeral service. But if you will succeed in conquering all deadly terrors, if your heart will decide to go against all fear, then yours is the great fortune.

"There is a place called Great Mane. From the mountain there flows a golden stream and into this stream robbers have sunk innumerable quantities of gold. And over this place are woven all healing herbs. Be merciful! Send me from out of these herbs a herb of power!

"And here know how to show your luck. If you succeed in deflecting the water from the ground and if you succeed in uncourning the conjured slabs, and if you catch hold of the ring in time—then your luck is untold and inexpressible!

"Many treasures are buried everywhere. I do not speak in vain. Our grandfathers wrote much about them. Even recently in our forge a passing traveller repaired a wheel. He spoke and I overheard: 'In subterranean Siberia,' said he, 'Many riches are buried. Guard Siberia!'

"He was of great appearance, this man.

"From grandfather I know this. Sometimes on the eve of a great holiday he spoke to us, lighting the candles before old ikons.

"Thus he spoke: 'For every man a treasure is buried. Only one must know how to take these treasures. To a traitor, a treasure is not given. A drunkard does not know how to approach it. Do not hearken to the treasure with evil thoughts. The treasure knows its worth. Do not dare to harm the treasure. One should cherish the treasures. Many treasures fell from the stars. Angels guard many treasures. Treasures are not buried with a foolish word, but with prayers and conjurations. And the conjurations are awe-inspiring. And whenever there is blood on a treasure it is better not to approach it.'

"Satan himself and, with him, all devils guard the bloody gold.

"And if your heart has decided to go for a treasure, then go cautiously. Long before approaching, do not talk in vain, do not show yourself too open; think your thoughts. There will be terrors before you, but you should not fear. Something will appear to you, but do not look. Do not hearken to cries. Go in great caution. Do not stumble. Because to go for a treasure is a great thing.

"Over the treasure hasten thy efforts. Do not look around and chiefly do not rest. Because to every one the rest is ordained later on earth. And if you should want to raise your voice, sing prayers to the Virgin. Remember, never take with you any companions in the quest for the treasure.

"If your luck comes and you take the treasure, do not prattle to any one about it. Let people think that misfortune silences you. But be you silent, because of fortune. In no way reveal at once to people your treasure because the human eye is heavy. Treasures are unaccustomed to people, they will again depart into the earth. And you will not have the treasure nor shall any one else. Many treasures were spoilt by people because of their pettiness."

"And where is your treasure, blacksmith? Why did you not take your treasure?"

"And for me there lies buried a treasure. I, alone, know when to go after it."

And the blacksmith spoke no more about treasures.