

Church, we should be familiar with its heroic history, especially in this year when the fourth centenary of John Knox is being celebrated; and whether we are or not, it is well worth knowing for its own sake.

"The Land of Riddles." (Russia of Today). By Hugo Ganz. Translated from the German, and edited by Herman Rosenthal. New York: Harper & Bros. Toronto: William Briggs. Pp. v-330. Price, \$2.00 net.

Nothing could be more opportune at this time, when every one wants to know the truth about Russia, than this recent study—in 1904—by an intelligent traveller, who has had the special opportunities of studying the problem. Mr. Hugo Ganz, a well-known writer of Vienna, had introductions to leading persons in Russia—publicists, lawyers, judges, bankers, merchants, professors, and princes. He went without prejudice, but records his judgment that Russia remains in a state of semi-barbarism akin to that of the middle ages. "An empire of one hundred and thirty million prisoners and one million jailers—such is Russia." St. Petersburg he regarded as a colossal prison—brilliant in its veneer of civilization, but its dungeons echoing with the groans of many of the noblest spirits of the empire. There was luxury in which the gilded youth squandered in vice the wages of the starved mujik; there was misery inconceivable. The real Nihilists, he says, are not the noble young men and women who stake their lives in effort to redeem their nation from ignorance and immorality, but the autocratic cynics, who are not held back even from murder when it is of service to the system.

The palaces, churches, and art galleries of St. Petersburg are the richest in Europe, but the condition of the people is the most deplorable. "We are maintaining," said a Russian prince, an army against the nation." The real authors of the Kishinef massacres were Plehve and his underlings, who, in the name of the Czar, proclaimed the outlawry of the Jews. It is the omnipresent police who terrorize the Czar by placing threatening letters in his pockets and under his pillow. By similar tactics they almost drove his father insane.

The Grand Duke Sergius was one of the

worst Jew-baiters, a man of odious life and morals, "the curse of the country," said a Russian professor, "whose inclination to torture human beings amounted to a disease."

A leading banker declared that the nation was practically bankrupt. It was paying its debts with new ones, and only able to obtain loans by paying the banks a commission of six per cent. when Prussia pays about one-half of one per cent.

The chief Russian paper, *Novoe Vremya*, is "branded with the deepest contempt by the flower of Russian intelligence as a well-poisoner, a worthless cynic. . . . It has not its equal in untruthfulness and diabolical business in the whole world." It finds no lie too infamous, no invention too childish to feed to its readers. It is the leading paper of the country, openly supported by the Government, "infamous, but indispensable," as its patrons say.

The beautiful enthusiasm, the almost religious fanaticism that makes martyrdom bliss, that was being shivered against the brutality of the Cossacks and gendarmes, was for him the most hopeful he saw in Russia. The officials and police, and even judges, are so ill paid that they live by bribes and corruption. It is, he affirms, a proof of the patience of the Russian people that assaults on official criminals are so rare.

The brutal persecutions of the Jews under Plehve involved unspeakable misery. A colonel of the Cossacks denounced the English as "a vile Jew-nation." The usurers, who advance money to the peasants at three hundred to two thousand per cent., are without exception Christians, not Jews. "Absolutism palliated by corruption" is the bitter description of police rule.

Eighty per cent. of the political indictments were against Jews, of whom there are only four per cent. in the empire.

"Every word that he speaks is a lie," is the assertion one oftenest heard about Plehve. "All Russia hopes he will soon be annihilated," a sentence which casts a lurid light upon his subsequent taking off. The present writer knew of his assassination before any one in America. The chief of the relay cable station at Placentia heard the news being repeated by the relay instrument and told us of the fact.

Plehve's rule was described as a regime of hell founded by a devil. "Misery, despair, inevitable collapse," was the