

III. THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE.

Here we have a country with 9,000,000 square miles of territory, and only 140,000,000 of a population, a country that within 200 years has been spreading in every direction—towards the Baltic enveloping Finland, towards Germany annexing Poland, towards the South acquiring the Causasian countries, and trying to bite into the Himalayan territories, towards the Far East pressing down through Manchuria towards Corea, and ever drawing nearer Peking. What is to be the end of this great ethnic movement no man can foresee; but were it to go no further than it has gone, there is a mighty nation that has to be reckoned with as one of the great world forces.

How far the aim of the Bible Society has gone towards its accomplishment here it is difficult to say. Great numbers of people are unable to read and, therefore, cannot be reached. Then the vastness of the country, the variety of languages spoken, the difficulties of travel, the inclemency of climate make Russia a hard country for any kind of progress. Still, good work is being done. The last printed report tells of a circulation of nearly half a million copies in 53 different languages. Agents are scattered over the land from St. Petersburg to Vladivostock and Port Arthur. The Greek church, though not enthusiastic in regard to Bible reading, are doing something towards the circulation of the Scriptures. The Government, which at one time was hostile, has assumed a more friendly attitude.

But much remains to be done before Russia can be classed as a Bible reading land. That it might become that should be our earnest prayer. For then the night of superstition will flee away, the chains of despotism will be broken, and a great, free, intelligent nation shall compel the respect of the world.

IV. CHINA.

How lightly we use the word! And yet what slumbering possibilities are involved therein! "China," says a recent writer, "is larger than the whole United States.