

Book Notices.

Russia and the Russians. By EDMUND NOBLE. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. Toronto: William Briggs. Pp. v-285. Price, \$1.50.

Mr. Noble has mastered the copious literature of the subject and has written a singularly sympathetic and interpretative book. The story of an empire covering a larger area than any other, having a population of over a hundred and fifty million souls, "who continue to be held by a church-supported autocracy in a condition of political serfdom," deserves our serious study. Within the century it has increased about fivefold and now its extent is "equal to the visible surface of the full moon." Vladivostok is in the latitude of Nice, and St. Petersburg has the highest latitude of any capital in Europe.

The Russian language and religion have been a barrier between Russia and Western civilization more formidable than any mountain chain, more unrelenting than any Imperial ukase. Russia failed to share the revival of learning, or the renaissance. Its sovereigns for centuries were autocrats of the type of Ivan the Terrible. Peter the Great, who earned his rouble a day as master carpenter, became a builder of empire as well as of ships. The Greek Church taught that smoking tobacco was sinful while drinking brandy or vodka was right, because "Not that which entereth into a man, but that which cometh out, defileth the man." But spite of this benediction the drink habit is the curse of Russia.

The greatest emancipator of the century was Alexander III., who in 1883 set free 22,000,000 serfs. But enfranchisement will not accomplish much without education, and Russia is the most illiterate country in Europe. In Great Russia the proportion is ninety-four per cent. Russia is living five hundred years behind Western Europe. She is as devoid of free institutions as she was in the days of Ivan the Terrible. Not one of the 150,000,000 of her population has the slightest voice in determining her home or foreign politics.

Russia refuses privileges granted even to the Maoris of New Zealand, denies the right of trial by jury elsewhere centuries old, and maintains the same odious system of *lettres de cachet* as that

which provoked against France the indignation of Europe. She is a fifteenth century state wearing the habiliments of the nineteenth. The peasants are poorer than they were forty years ago. Widespread famine has become almost well-nigh chronic. Even to-day the lord of the manor may scourge the peasant toiler as in the old days of serfdom. The Poles have been despoiled of their language, the Little Russians of their literature, the Baltic Germans of their religion, the Finlanders of their constitution. Her religious systems produce pronounced agnosticism or primitive superstition. Russia, the writer believes, is destined to collapse as Spain collapsed at the first decisive touch of a virile modern race. Yet out of this collapse a new Russia shall rise.

An instructive chapter is devoted to Nihilism and its causes, to the hunger strikes and to the more perilous revolt of the intellect of the universities, which not even the hoofs of the Cossacks trampling men and women students under foot can finally suppress. The story of Siberia and the exile system is a chapter like the prophets' scroll, written within and without with lamentation and weeping and woe. The author is not a pessimist. He discerns the exhaustless resources of Russia which shall produce an industrial emancipation full of promise in the future. Russian progress may be slow, but it is inevitable.

"The peasant brain shall yet be wise,
The untamed pulse grow calm and still;
The blind shall see, the lowly rise,
And work in peace Time's wondrous will."

The Russian Revolt, Its Causes, Conditions and Prospects. By EDMUND NOBLE. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. Toronto: William Briggs. Pp. 269.

This book is an admirable complement of Mr. Noble's volume on "Russia and the Russians," though written earlier. It gives a succinct account of the revolt against Russian tyranny, which has been in progress for many years. Mr. Noble traces much of the character of the Russians to their environments, their vast and lonely steppes, their sparse settlements, their long dreary winters and short hot summers. The monotonous