

## ON THE LINE

**F**ORTUNE, which treated Mr. Geoffrey Drage somewhat harshly as a politician, has now smiled upon him as an author. The conclusion, with its consequences, of a war in South Africa probably lost Mr. Drage the Woolwich election. The breaking out of a war in Manchuria will, in all likelihood, increase the attention very deservedly gained by his newest book, modestly entitled *Russian Affairs* (Murray, 21s.). Books on Japan and Russia are familiar announcements just now. It is a pleasure to light upon one altogether free from the suspicion of being hastily botched up to meet a sudden demand at the libraries. Here is a work obviously the outcome of years of hard study, observant travel, and the patient accumulation of evidence. A quarter of a century has now gone by since Sir D. Mackenzie Wallace surprised us with what to most English readers was a first revelation of how far modern Russia had marched since the Crimean War. In the intervening years authors not a few have trodden in his track, and the name of Mr. Henry Norman will at once occur to many. But no volume at once so handy, so readable, and so packed with just the information wanted by the ordinary English reader, has brought Russian affairs so nearly up to date as Mr. Drage's workmanlike summary. Beginning with a commendably brief historical outline he gives us, in succession, sketches of Slavonic ideals and Russia's governmental ambitions; of her agriculture; her manufactures nascent or