

THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE.

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THE recent series of startling events in the Far East has called the world's attention to Russia more than anything else that has happened in the past or present generation. The Crimean War, the emancipation of the serfs, the exile hardships, the Eastern question, the Nihilist outrages, the intrigues in China, the Jewish massacres, and the Czar's peace proposals all appear insignificant when compared with the gigantic struggle with Japan. Circumstances compel an expression of opinion on the part of every one. That opinion ought to be as candid and intelligent as it is possible to make it. We cannot serve the highest interests of our own nation in these days of universal knowledge if we allow ourselves to be uninformed or misinformed about other nations. It is to some such reprehensible cause as this that the unhappy condition of Russia to-day is due.

There is a great deal of prejudice in the minds of the majority of people against Russia. This may be due, as some think, to our natural feelings of jealousy, or to the finer sense of humanity that we profess to have, and which we claim Russia has repeatedly outraged. But if we would learn the truth about Russia and her people, the causes of their vices and the force of their virtues, we must lay prejudice aside. The Russian nation is an organism. If it is only a "Bear," it calls for study. As a human organism it deserves the most scientific and Christian treatment of which we are

capable. The basis of any successful study is sympathy. So we must, figuratively, live with the Russian people if we would rightly appreciate the story of their national struggles, extending backward for more than a thousand years.

It is unfair, if not pharisaical, to judge Russia by our Canadian standards of political and religious life. In point of origin, initial equipment and surrounding circumstances there can properly be no comparison. The same may be said with almost equal truth concerning Western Europe. If we are to find a point in our history where we may justly compare ourselves to Russia, we must go back to the time of the Stuarts or to the days preceding the French Revolution. We have out-distanced Russia on the road of human progress, and we ourselves are only "yet in the go-cart." Viewed from this standpoint we shall find that Russia presents a study as valuable and interesting as that of any nation in history.

We must, then, review briefly the checkered history of Russia in order that we may see the people in their own light. Ethnologists have not been able to agree as to the particular race or tribe that formed the nucleus of the present Russian people. That we have a reference to them in the first part of the thirty-ninth chapter of Ezekiel has been maintained in both ancient and modern times. Laying aside the age of fabled monsters, Arimaspians, Gryphons and Sauromati, and coming down to something practical and tangible in history, we find the supposed forefathers of the Russians living between the Don and the Dneiper