

RUSSIA,
POLITICAL AND SOCIAL.

BY

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Translated from the French by

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VOL. I.



LONDON:
SWAN SONNENSCH E I N , L O W R E Y & C O . ,
PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

1888.

V58. M9

B8.1

2512

BUTLER & TANNER,
THE SELWOOD PRINTING WORKS,
FROME, AND LONDON.

P R E F A C E .

OF late years Russia has attracted more and more of the attention of England and the civilised world. This attention is the more significant, as its object is not now, as formerly, only the Government. That which engages it is the country itself, *i.e.*, the people. Many publications on Russia, multitudes of translations from Russian novelists, are a clear proof of this.

I hope, therefore, that I need not explain the reasons that have urged me to undertake this work. I have tried, as much as possible, to bring it within the reach of the general public by making it as brief as possible, and at the same time sufficiently thorough and serious for the reader to study in it Russia as a whole.

Russia as a social organism is my subject. I aim at describing political and social Russia just as it is, with its infinite territories, peopled by

millions of peasants, uncultured but, full of sympathetic qualities; with its oddly organised classes; with its *intelligentia*, that martyr of its historic mission; with its political problems, so mysterious, so involved. I see before me this land that causes so much suffering to those who love her, and yet knows how to attach them to her so strongly that no sufferings on her behalf terrify them. I am thinking of the poet's cry :

“ Poor and rich,
Powerful and powerless,
Oh, Mother Russia !”

Will this image rise to the eyes of my reader ? It is for him to answer the question.

An indispensable explanation is yet necessary. Not knowing enough French to write in that tongue, I wrote the work in Russian, and then translated it with the help of my friend, M. Albert Savine. I made a literal translation : M. Savine gave to this translation a literary style. Thus the purely literary form of the book belongs to his able pen. I may add that I have always been struck with the refinement of M. Savine's taste; and although he does not know Russian, I find he has rendered admirably the finest shades of meaning in my text, a task the more difficult

as my ideas often, by his own confession, go far beyond, and sometimes are in opposition to, his.

Moreover, my book owes to M. Albert Savine certain slight alterations in the arrangement of the chapters, etc. Finally, and most important, I owe to M. Savine many hints as to the side of Russian life most likely to interest the general public. If, therefore, the reader finds this book answer in any way the questions he wants to ask about Russia, he will bear in mind that he owes this in a great measure to my collaborator. Without his help, the attainment of this end would have been very difficult for one addressing a public unknown to him and so different from the Russian audience to which he is accustomed.

L. TIKHOMIROV.

February, 1886.

NOTE BY THE TRANSLATOR.

I HAVE tried to translate the work of Leo Tikhomirov accurately, but I would not wish to be understood as necessarily endorsing every opinion expressed in it. Whilst in almost every case such an endorsement would be forthcoming, there are one or two instances in which his ideas, though not, I believe, going beyond mine, are to some extent in opposition to them.

E. A.

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