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IMPRESSIONS OF RUSSIA.



George Brandes.

IMPRESSIONS OF RUSSIA

BY

DR. GEORG BRANDES

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TRANSLATED FROM THE DANISH

BY

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LONDON:

WALTER SCOTT, 24 WARWICK LANE,

PATERNOSTER ROW.

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P R E F A C E.

THIS book was published in October, 1888, while the translator was in Copenhagen. The great interest taken at the present time in the literature of Russia and in everything which relates to that great country makes all that aids in giving a correct impression of its political and social condition specially acceptable. Dr. Brandes is a shrewd observer of what he sees, and has an established reputation as an acute literary critic. During his lecturing tours he came in contact with the leading men of St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Warsaw. The brighter aspects of the Russian problem are incorporated in this volume, while his work on Poland contains the more sombre picture of the oppression to which that country has been subjected.

The translator desires to express his obligations to Professor Rasmus B. Anderson, late United States Minister to Denmark, for his advice and assistance, as well as to the author, who is himself thoroughly conversant with the English language and literature.

S. C. E.

CONCORD, N.H., May, 1889.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE cause of my trip to Russia in 1887 was an invitation by the Russian Authors' Association in St. Petersburg to deliver a course of lectures in French. They proposed to make all the arrangements, if I would give one-fourth of the receipts to their poor-fund.

While I was in St. Petersburg, I received a similar invitation from Count Kapnist, the curator of the university in Moscow, who also asked for the same portion of the receipts for the benefit of the poor students. On my way to St. Petersburg I also visited Helsingfors. After my lectures in Moscow, I spent some time in a villa in Central Russia, twenty hours' journey by rail south of Moscow. From there I went to Smolensk, and from Smolensk to Warsaw.

Thus in three months I became acquainted with widely separated parts of the country, and some of the most important of this great empire. I had the opportunity of observing both city and country life. I saw Russia both in winter and summer garb. The peculiar conditions under which I travelled brought me in connection with several hundred people of different races and of different classes in society; I met residents of Great and Little Russia, Finns and Swedes, Armenians and Poles, of both sexes, and was brought into close relations with fashionable and common people, conservatives and

liberals, lawyers and doctors, authors and artists, princes and professors, journalists and peasants, officials and menials.

Although I am giving my impressions, I do not for a moment forget how imperfect must be my description of the Russian Empire in its entirety. I am not unmindful of how little of what I did see I was able to understand fully, nor of how inconsiderable a portion of a country like Russia and of its inhabitants was placed before me. But naturally I believe in my capacity for observation and in the soundness of my judgments.

G. B.