A NEW BOOK ABOUT RUSSIA.

The Emancipation of the Seris-Result of Ten Years.

The London house of Smith, Elder & Co. has published Dr. Julius Eckhardt's work on "Modern Russia," a volume which makes a timely appearance in view of possible contingencies in Europe. Dr. Eckhardt, contining his researches chiefly to the reign of Alexander II, describes the present condition of Russia better than any other writer of the day, and a large part of his book is devoted to the serfs and the effect of the decree of emancipation. This decree became a law less than ten years ago—February, 1861—but this brief period has sufficed to create a peaceful revolution in the empire and to strengthen the Government by elevating twenty-five millions of persons from a condition of slavery to the rank of citizens and free-

holders. The old custom had been that a certain amount, usually a third, of every estate was reserved to the proprietor, the remainder falling to the use of the village community. But the peasants were obliged to cultivate their masters' portion without wages, and three days a week were generally devoted to this service. The serfs were divided into two classes, those who tilled the soil and the household servants, who were entirely depen-dent on and supported by their lord. The former possessed their land in common, which was divided anew, according to fami lies, every nine years. It by no means fol-lowed that the head of a family received the same allotment at each recurring redistribu-tion, and it frequently happened that the portions assigned him did not lie all together. The individual possessions of each man consisted of his house and garden, horses, cattle, and movable goods. Runaway serfs were severely dealt with, but any peasant desiring to quit his village and settle in the towns could do so by purchasing his freedom or by paying an annual tax to his lord. Many proprietors derived large sums in this way from serfs who had become wealthy merchants and tradesmen.

PROVISION OF THE EMANCIPATION ACT. By the Emancipation act the freedom of the serfs, both agricultural and domestic, was assured, and the village communities were allowed to acquire absolute possession of the land by purchase, or to hold it under easy leases. Nothing else was altered. The household servants were to remain in their former positions, receiving fixed wages, until the 19th February, 1863, when they could terminate their engagement if they pleased. The serfs who were living in the towns remained for the same period under the old conditions, except that the tax paid to their lord was limited to thirty rubles (about £4) for a man and ten rubles for a woman. At

the same time, all obligations on the proprie-

tor to provide for his serfs in sickness, scar-

city, or old age ceased.

Previously to the Emancipation act, it depended solely on the will of the proprietor as to what portions of his estate should be assigned to the village communities, the only rule being that each peasant was to receive four and a half dessiatins (about twelve acres) for his support. Here, then, arose a difficulty. It was the peasant's interest to get the cultivated and most productive par of the land, the lord's to keep in his own possession as much of those portions of his estate as possible. The question was left to the parties themselves to settle, under the supervision of officials appointed for the purpose and styled peace mediators. It was impossible, of course, to apply the same rules throughout such a diversified territory as the Russian Empire. It was therefore divided into three zones, each of which was subdivided into regions.

Special regulations were drawn up for each of these divisions, according to the varying conditions of soil, climate, and agricultural life and customs. These regulations were most complicated, and the transition period during which they were to be carried out was originally fixed to terminate in the present year, but a much longer time will probably elapse before the land question may be considered as settled. Not the least difficult part of the business is to be found in the fact that the Russian peasant, as a rule, hates work almost as much as the negroes in the West Indies showed they did after their emancipation, and he is ready, for the sake of immediate and temporary gratification, to surrender all his prospects of future wellbeing and prosperity.

RESULTS OF TEN YEARS.

The results of this change, as described by Dr. Eckhardt, are summed up by the London Spectator in its review of his work:-

The serfs settled in towns were the first to recognize the benefits conferred upon them. They were no longer in danger of being recalled, at the caprice of their lord, for their lucrative occupations, to resume the old drudgery they had abandoned; and the tax which they were to pay for the next two years was a mere trifle. The lower orders of these, such as mechanics, droschky drivers, and the like, after the fashion of true Russian peasants, immediately proceeded to get drunk, and paraded the streets in bands, shout-ing "Volyushka!" "Volyushka," "dear little freedom." The agricultural serfs, on the other hand, did not at first comprehend what had been done. Their ignorance was played upon by political agitators, and disturbances arose in various quarters. They thought that the real Emancipation act of the Tsar had been tampered with in its transmission to them. They said, "We belong to the lords, but the land belongs to us," and they imagined that it had been the Tsar's intention to give them absolute possession of the land without any payment to the proprietors. These disturbances were, however, easily suppressed, though not without bloodshed, and the readjustment of the land tenure has since gone peaceably on. But is is not until a comprehensive system of education-such as that now in contemplation-is in force throughout the land, that the Emancipation act will bear the full fruits contemplated by its enlightened

THE MOST POWERFUL SECT IN RUSSIA. Dr. Eckhardt gives a long account of the religious sects in Russia. The most power-ful is that of the Raskolnikoi or Old Believers, who date from 1657. In that year the patriarch Nikon carried out a revision of the mass books and rituals, which, owing to the errors of ignorant copyists, had caused considerable alteration in the old teaching of the Greek Church. But the majority of the people and the inferior clergy, with one soli-tary bishep at their head, still clung to them. and nine years later were solemnly banned as heretics in a council held for that purpose. At the death of their bishop the Old Believers became subdivided into priestless sects, and sects still possessing ordained ministers The former held that the link of apostolical ordination was broken, their bishop having died without consecrating any other bishop: the latter recruited the ranks of their clergy by secessions from the dominant Church. At the present day, they are connived at, if not

tolerated, by the Government, with which they have come to some tacit kind of understanding. Their history in Dr. Eckbardt's hands reads like a romance.

Modern Tolerance.—Nothing perhaps can in the long run be worse for humanity than the notion that men should be hated and persecuted for their opinions. The world may be held to have learnt this lesson. It has found it out. And everybody knows that the reason why it is bad, and why it can never answer to persecute and put down those who think differently from ourselves, is because no man can be certain that his view of truth is the correct one. If one could be sure upon this point, war against a false opinion would be right and expedient. It can never be so, be right and expedient. It can never be so, because we are really in doubt upon the subject; because when A. says, "I hold the truth;" and B. says, "No, you hold falsehood; I hold the truth," there is no umpire to whom appeal can be made to decide between them. These are the cases in which, as the world have by this time pretty well learned absolute. has by this time pretty well learned, absolute toleration is and should be the rule. But surely we are in danger, in these latter days, of falling into the equally mistaken converse of the mistake our forefathers fell into. They very readily burned with a "divine white-heat," as Carlyle says of indignation against both wrong-doers and wrong-thinkers. We extend an equally tepid tolerance to both!
But we may quite depend upon this—that
unless, to use the words of our poet-prophet
again, a sufficient number of heroic men are
found in the nation to stand forth with the hot indignant protest on their lips that such things shall not be-such things as have been too much lately tolerated among us-we shall 'right surely, we for one, stumble to the Devil, and are every day and hour, little as we imagine it, making progress thither."-

SINGULAR PROCEEDINGS UNDER DIFFERENT Wills.-The town of Sherborn, Mass., has just become entitled to about \$50,000, the bequests of Thomas Sawin and Martha, his sister, late of Natick. The Newton Journal states that reciprocal wills were made nearly twenty years ago by the brother and sister, by which the survivor was to have nearly all the property, on condition that a suitable provision was made for a Mrs. Perry, their only sister. Thomas died in 1868; but this will was contested by Mrs. Perry, and was not allowed until Martha had made a satisfactory arrangement with her sister—giving her a life interest in a certain house in Granville, \$8000 down, and an annuity of \$900 during Mrs. Perry's life and that of her daughter. In 1869 Martha Sawin died, leaving a will which gave all her property but about \$7000 to the town of Sherborn, for the maintenance of a high school. This will Mrs. Perry also con tested, and it was not allowed until the parties interested had agreed that she should have the estate at Granville in fee simple, and a sum of money equivalent to two life annuities of \$900 each, and \$10,000 in money. By this arrangement Sherborn loses about \$10,000, but gets nevertheless, the handsome sum of

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