

RUSSIA ON THE PACIFIC

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RUSSIA ON THE PACIFIC

AND THE

SIBERIAN RAILWAY

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BY

VLADIMIR

AUTHOR OF 'THE CHINA-JAPAN WAR'

'Туда, гдѣ царствовалъ Чингисъ'

'There where Genghiz reigned'

(From the Verses recited in honour of Muravioff on the 9th May, 1854)

WITH MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS



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TO MY READERS

MY last book, on the events which revealed to the world the rising young nation of the Far East, met with such unexpected success, and was so kindly reviewed, that I feel encouraged to publish the results of my studies on the expansion of that European nation which has two centuries of history in the Far East, though the fact has only lately attracted public attention. I have treated at some length ancient history both in Russia and Siberia, but I thought such treatment was necessary to enable the reader to form just notions of present conditions. Great ignorance prevails about Russia, even in the most unexpected quarters, as will appear by the following extract.

In the 'Nineteenth Century' for June 1898, No. 256, in an article by Mr. H. M. Stanley, M.P., 'Splendid Isolation or What?' at p. 873 there is the following passage:—

'Is this picture far-fetched? He who dares say so betrays his ignorance of the rate of Russian progress over Asia. Twenty-eight years ago she had just effected a landing on the eastern shore of the Caspian. During this

short interval she has stridden across the continent, and is now at Port Arthur preparing for the locomotive from St. Petersburg.'

Here we have a prominent man upbraiding people for ignoring what is historically false. Russia has not stridden across the continent in the last twenty-eight years; she did traverse Asia very rapidly—in about half a century—but it was more than two centuries ago.

As I studied the history of Russia and of her expansion in Northern Asia, I had gradually to discard the prejudices and false notions which are generally entertained about Russia in Western Europe. It is my object, therefore, to dispel in the minds of the public the errors which I formerly entertained, and to give a clear idea of Russia's work in the world. It is only at present that, as with Great Britain, the real mission of Russia, her extra-European and world-mission, is appearing before men's minds. For the future history of the world, the conquest of Siberia will be more important than most of the modern history of European Russia.

The subject has been difficult because the Russians themselves have not paid much attention to it, and I fear that, like most Westerners, I have committed many blunders. I have, however, spared no pains to perform my work conscientiously. I have studied the language carefully, and I spent four months in travelling across the Empire, from Vladivostok to the frontier of Galicia. I have also had the kind assistance of a cultured Russian nobleman, both in my travels and in my studies, and I have had thus the opportunity of seeing things from a