

vailing atmosphere of dread, oppression, and cruelty, an ominous something peculiar to that country and its inhabitants.

Miss Hapgood did not find this condition of things. She is amiable to an unusual degree and an optimist. She means to be candid, and endeavored to study the people from their own point of view instead of judging them by Western standards. The reader will conclude either that the Russians have been maligned or that this observing and cultivated writer is over-generous. Her experiences with passports, the police, and the post office, to which she devotes a chapter, were agreeably disappointing and greatly to the credit of the Russians. Equally surprising to her was the fact that Alexander III drove about St. Petersburg as freely as a private citizen, unescorted and without guards. In her intercourse with the ex-serfs she found that all with whom she talked "retained a soft spot in their hearts for the comforts and irresponsibility of the good old days of serfdom." The people, from the peasant up, "possess a naturally simple, sympathetic disposition and manner, as a rule, tinged with a friendly warmth, whose influence is felt as soon as one crosses the frontier." Miss Hapgood was very forcibly struck with the manners of the children as she saw them at play in the parks—their quiet self-possession and lack of boisterousness. She is inclined to think that they are born more agreeable than Western children, and that they are trained to have more respect for the rights of their elders.

Miss Hapgood's book is not a continuous narrative of travel, but is a collection of "detached pictures," many of which have already appeared in periodicals, but are none the less acceptable on that account. She writes in a bright, vivacious, and genial way, and such chapters as those on a "Russian Summer Resort," "A Journey on the Volga," "The Kumys Cure," and "Bargaining in Russia" are especially fresh and interesting. She became acquainted with the interior of the peasants' cottages in several localities. She went on a special fishing trip to learn the secret of the "genuine sterlet soup," and tells in a graphic way what she discovered. To become personally acquainted with the methods of the kumys cure she boarded for a time at one of the noted establishments out on the Steppes and made use of the peculiar beverage, which she found agreeable. She gives in detail an account of the treatment of the mares, the processes of milking, fermentation, and putting up in selters or champagne bottles. The odor is that of spirits of wine, and it is very easy for a person unaccustomed to kumys to become intoxicated on it.

Miss Hapgood was fortunate enough to purchase of a peasant woman her Sunday gown—a genuine Russian costume, which

RUSSIAN RAMBLES.*

A BOOK on Russia by Miss Hapgood is not only very welcome, but is sure of commanding unusual attention. Her exceptional advantages for studying the people give weight to her opinions. She was fortunate on her arrival in the country in knowing the language, an indispensable consideration for a correct understanding of many important matters. She went with some preconceived ideas regarding the Russians, like most travelers, starting, she says, with "a stock of misadvice, misinformation, and apprehension." She intimates that foreigners still expect to find the Russia of the seventeenth century, to see "queer things," to meet with serious difficulties about their passports, and to be continually suspected of designs upon the government. They are sure that the people are coarse, rough, unfeeling, and not far removed from a state of barbarism, that the Tsar lives in constant fear of assassination, and that there is a pre-

*Russian Rambles. By Isabel F. Hapgood. Houghton, Mifflin & Co. \$1.50.

was pronounced by artists to be an ethnographical prize :

The woman had spun, woven, and sewed it; she had embroidered it in beautiful Turanian, not Russian, patterns, with silks, dull red, pale green, relieved by touches of dark blue; she had striped it lengthwise with bands of red cotton and embroidery, and crosswise with fancy ribbons and gay calicoes. . . . One piece for the body, two for the head, a sham pocket, that was all. The foot gear consisted of crash bands, bast slippers, rope cross-garters.

The book abounds in interesting narratives of experience; episodes of journeyings, excursions, picnics; accounts of visits among the higher classes, where the writer had intimate friends; and items of information regarding manners and customs which the ordinary traveler either fails to obtain or writes about in a mistaken way. She sets us right on many minor points worth knowing. She went about leisurely, spent considerable time in the country, tried various modes of living, saw all kinds of people, and made the best of everything. Take it all in all, this certainly is one of the most enjoyable books written about the Russians.