

THE VILLAGE. By ERNEST POOLE. The Macmillan Co.

THERE is a dreadful wrapper by Boardman Robinson, but he probably needed the money. It is quite the right wrapper too. Ernest Poole has driven the tank of ignorance and vulgarity across the steppes of Russia. Mr. Poole is not very deep, and he is exceptionally stagnant, with a thick green slime of New England prejudice on his surface. Even for a journalist he is appalling. Think of using words like "destroyed"! It deserves what he calls "le peine de mort." His method is to accumulate details, none of which he understands. There is no hint of vision. There is no understanding of Russia. There is nothing but interviews with uninteresting people, whose consciousness does not in any way represent them, or, as we used to say in days of less complicated speech, who do not know what they are talking about. Has he no shame to blot the 'scutcheon of the Pooes—the other scissors-knights of Savile Row?'

The book is interesting enough to any one who knows Russia even slightly, if only because there is a laugh on every page. Some old poet, I forget his name, remarked:

"Some minds improve by travel, others rather  
Resemble copper wire or brass,  
Which gets the narrower by going farther."

The days of the innocent God-help-me tourist seem to be done. The tourist of to-day has been bullied by the Y. M. C. A., in intervals between grafts, into moral responsibility and Christian earnestness, and all that sort of thing. A man can hardly go from New York to Philadelphia without writing a serious biography of George Fox. The poop-stick has given place to the prig. I have no hope whatever for the future of humanity.

S. O. S.