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REV. I. E. BILL,

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth Peace, good will toward Men."

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DEATH.

Angel, who treadest in the track of Time!
Guarding the entrance to that unknown clime,
Whence come no whispers to the world below,
Whence not a song we hear
Of triumph or of cheer,
Or sound of happy footsteps passing to and fro,

Pale as the Maybell trembling in the breeze
Thou makest youthful cheeks. The summer seas
Lose their calm blue beneath thy waving wing;
Fierce storms thou summonest
From the deep mountain breast,
To be thy pursuivants when thou art wandering.

Thy name is terrible; thine icy breath
Worn order to the War-Fiend uttereth,
Who stains the pleasant turf a fearful red;
Or dashes in the wave
A myriad of spirits brave,
For whose eternal rest no saintly song is said.

Yet have I known thee, Death, with gentle hand
Lead some poor wanderer to the heavenly land,
Amid the purple light of autumn eves;
While to the harvest moon
Arose a rustic tune
From sunburnt, lusty reapers, binding up their
sheaves.

And even if, in some too cruel mood,
Thou didst neglect the weary multitude,
To clutch the fair bride in her orange bloom—
To dim her eyes of light
Upon the marriage night,
And bear her pallid beauty to the marble tomb;

Or the sweet child who prattles all day long,
Didst touch with chillness 'mid his cradle song,
Yet, unreproving, let us hope and pray,
The Master calls his own
Up to his golden throne;
When they are gathered there, thou, Death shall
pass away.

[Written for the Visitor.

RUSSIA.

BY A. H. MUNRO.

(Continued.)

We have been congratulating ourselves upon a circumstance in connexion with Russian history. It is this: That the most notable persons who figure in it are blessed with pronounceable names. Now Olga is a name which possesses a very comfortable adaptation for being "talked about." But had aught by which its owner render it famous or infamous, as the reader pleases, been done by some of her less happily distinguished successors, whom we could not name if called upon, it might be easy to write, but difficult to say, who did it. If we were to ornament our pages with the appellatives of a few of these worthies, whatever opinion the reader might form respecting their characters, we feel assured that he would on trial admit, that it was impossible to speak of them without calling them *hard names*. But, from untrained Saxon lips—

"Their names are never heard,"

we verily believe. None need, however, regret consigning to the silent shades, so many gems of antiquity. They were a sad set—most of them—these Russian heroes and heroines. Eminent only in wickedness; conspicuous only from enormity of crime: treacherous as wolves; bloody as tigers; too ferocious and reckless to be acquitted even as "barbarians of the dark ages." In oblivion let them lie. We have no taste, no time to slowly wade through the details of lives like theirs. Over these moral sloughs our pen must take Kangaroo leaps, long and frequent. Our breathing places shall fittingly be, the salient, and fortunate for us, more interesting points of the nation's career. Many of these may, (very appropriately be reverted to as proofs that—

"Truth is strange, stranger than fiction."

For there has been much of romance associated with every leading incident and important episode connected with the great changes

through which Russia has passed. Not a few pages of her history read as if torn from the creations of the realms of fancy, and by mistake inserted among the records of sober historic narrative.

The third from Olga, on the list of Russian Sovereigns, we find Vladimir. Should the reader think that the substitution of B, for the first letter of this name, would facilitate its pronunciation, we advise him to be deterred by no conscientious scruples from resorting to that expedient; for we beg to assure him, that to the best of our knowledge, however it may be with Russian politics, Russian orthography, by no means rests on a satisfactory basis. Never be positive about Russian names, either Historical or Geographical. They are continually being altered; travestied, we should say. Every new volume of travels in the land of which we are treating, gives us a batch of names in new dress.—Scarce any Russian names are spelt now as they formerly were. We should look in vain for the Volga, Sebastopol or Cronstad in the maps which aided our grandmothers in tracing the wanderings of the adventurous daughter of the "Exiles of Siberia."

In the reign of Vladimir, there are but two events to which we shall call the reader's attention. The first is, the attempt to make Christianity the national religion of his country. In this he succeeded surprisingly. How far he was an intelligent and sincere believer and how far his obedient subjects comprehended the nature of the religion which they were called upon to adopt, we leave the reader to infer from the following undoubted fact.—The inhabitants of one of his chief towns being ordered by him to have themselves baptized, cheerfully submitted to the performance of the rite, saying, "It must be a good thing or else the Czar and boyars would not be baptized." The second important circumstance connected with the reign of Vladimir to which we made allusion, was, the division of his empire among his twelve sons. This measure, which served as a precedent frequently imitated by his successors, yielded its natural fruits, interminable dissensions, civil discord and national impotence. This condition of affairs presented a strong temptation to the rapacity of the powerful and warlike neighbours, by whom Russia was surrounded. Among these, the Tartars, who had pitched their tents on the plains near the sea of Arel, were, in many respects, the best fitted to achieve the conquest of a country so ill prepared from internal discord to defend itself. Some of the numberless hordes of this migratory Asiatic race, led by Tusch, a worthy son of Tschinghis Khan, head of the Mogul Empire, swept along the shores of the Caspian Sea, to the banks of the Dnieper.—While thus enlarging their knowledge of European Geography, they cultivated the acquaintance of the inhabitants of the region through which they were passing, in a way less pleasant than ominous. Heaps of slain and smouldering ruins marked their course. In the brave Mountaineers of the Caucasus, they, however, found a foe, who soon taught them the necessity of giving all their attention to their travelling facilities, for which there was immediate and urgent demand. In fact, in their encounter with the Circassians, the Tartars for once "caught a Tartar" and glad enough they were to get rid of him.—Still, on they past, intent upon the great drama of which they designed to make Russia the theatre. On the banks of the Kalka, a small stream which falls into the sea of Azof, they met the forces of the latter people. Victorious in the bloody conflict which ensued, they eventually brought Russia into entire subjugation to their yoke. A triumph, which, however, was obtained less by superior valour and military science, than by treachery. From obvious policy, they allowed the country to

be ruled by native princes, from whom, however, they exacted heavy tribute. About the middle of the fourteenth century, one of these tributary Chieftains, of the name of Dimitri, held sway in Moscow. Ambitious and cautious, with much tact he persuaded his cotemporary Chiefs to acknowledge him as their Sovereign, and to hold their various governments in Russia, as fiefs from him.—This was not done, however, without exciting the jealousy and suspicion of Maimmai, the Tartar Khan, to whom they all paid tribute, and whom they all had to acknowledge as Master. Maimmai demanding an increased tribute from Dimitri, the latter not only refused compliance, but believing himself strong enough to brave the oppressors of his country, summoned all his forces and led them against the Tartars, whom he encountered on the banks of the Don, and defeated in a most tremendous battle, in the year 1380. The only real benefit that the Russians derived from this victory, was the self-reliance which it inspired, and the evidence it gave, that the Tartars were not invincible. It did not, however, free their country from Tartar rule which was established more firmly than ever, by Tamerlane, not long after. The system of governing by means of native tributary Chiefs being continued. From 1462 to 1505, Ivan (or John) Basilovitch reigned at Moscow. Though nominally the Sovereign of Russia, he had to pay tribute and the most abject homage to the envoys of the Khan—Happily for his reputation and his country's freedom; he married a high spirited woman, named Sophia, whose unrestrained expression of her opinion had rendered Constantinople so warm a residence for her, that she found it desirable to try the cooler air of Italy. On her arrival at Moscow, as the consort of Ivan, she appears to have been by no means struck with admiration of these points of etiquette which had special reference to the Khan's representatives at her husband's court. These proud Asiatics, before whom all around her trembled, she treated with haughty contempt, and even turned into ridicule. The Tartar envoys had been provided sumptuous residences, within the walls of the Kremlin, decorated in the gorgeous style of barbaric splendour, and where they had surrounded themselves with all the pomp and exacted the observances usual at Asiatic Courts. The contrast which this presented to the plainness of Ivan's Court was insufferable to Sophia. She soon determined upon ejecting the Tartar Ambassadors from the pleasant quarters. One morning she sent for them, and on their arrival, publicly informed them that during the night she had a dream, in which a heavenly visitant appeared to her, and commanded her to build a church in that part of the Kremlin occupied by their residences, and that she had solemnly vowed to obey this mandate. She then requested them to remove from their present dwellings as speedily as convenient, adding a promise to build them magnificent abodes as soon as the church was finished. Not daring to excite the superstitions and fanatical fury of the people, the Ambassadors obligingly vacated as desired. They soon saw their former residences torn down, but long waited in vain, for the commencement of the church.

At last, stung by the sarcasms, and emboldened by the daring example of Sophia, Ivan and his nobles raised the standard of rebellion, which never again kissed the dust beneath Tartar feet. But, although Ivan was crowned at Kason in 1470, it was not till 1553 that Russia was completely emancipated from Tartar domination.

QUEEN VICTORIA.

[CONCLUDED.]

Besides her preceptor, Victoria had an excellent instructress, the Baroness Lehzen, whose services were likewise retained through the whole term of her education; and the long harmony so happily maintained between the mother and her auxiliaries in this important work of preparing a sovereign to be worthy of a throne, is an example worth consideration by those who would seek the best models for private education.

It has been stated repeatedly, and never contradicted, that the Princess Victoria was not aware of her claims on the succession till a little before the death of her uncle, George IV. The Duchess had thus carefully guarded her child from the pernicious flattery of inferiors, and kept her young heart free from hopes or wishes which the future might have disappointed. When the accession of King William placed her next the throne, she had completed her eleventh year, "and evinced abilities and possessed accomplishments very rare for that tender age in any rank of life," says an English author. "She spoke French and German with fluency, and was acquainted with Italian; she had made some progress in Latin, being able to read Virgil and Horace with ease; she had commenced Greek, and studied mathematics, and evinced peculiar aptness for that science of reality; indeed, in all the sciences connected with numbers the royal pupil showed great powers of reason." She had also made good proficiency in music and drawing; in both of which arts she afterwards became quite accomplished. Thus happily engaged in acquiring knowledge of every kind necessary for her royal station—among which the knowledge of the people was not neglected, nor the arts, sciences, and employments which most conduce to the prosperity and advancement of a nation—this young Princess passed the intervening years till her majority, May 24, 1837. The day was kept as a general holiday throughout the kingdom. The city of London voted addresses of congratulation to the Princess Victoria and the Duchess of Kent on that occasion, which we notice in order to give a few sentiments from the reply of the Duchess. She said: "The Princess has arrived at that age which now justifies me in expressing my confident expectation that she will be found competent to execute the sacred trust that may be reposed in her; for, communicating as she does, with all classes of society, she cannot but perceive that the greater the diffusion of religious knowledge and the love of freedom in a country, the more orderly, industrious, and wealthy is its population; and that the desire to preserve the constitutional prerogatives of the crown ought to be co-ordinate with the protection of the liberties of the people."

In four weeks from that day, the sudden death of William IV. gave the Sovereignty of the British Empire to this young maiden of eighteen.—Beautifully has she fulfilled the expectations of her mother, and the hopes of the nation. The manner in which the Duchess relinquished her power over her daughter, was a fitting sequel to the faithfulness with which she had exercised it. The great officers of State and privy counsellors, a hundred or more of the noblest in the land, assembled on the morning of June 20th, at Kensington Palace. They were ushered into the grand saloon. Soon Victoria appeared, accompanied by her mother and the officers of her household. After the Duchess had seen her royal daughter enthroned on a seat of state prepared for the occasion, she withdrew and left the young Queen with her Council. From that hour the Duchess treated her august daughter with the respectful observance which her station, according to court etiquette, demands. No more advice, no further instruc-