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

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RUSSIA.

BY A. H. MUNRO.

During the brief reign of Feodor, the success of Alexei little of interest transpired. At his death passing over the prior right of his brother Ivan and sister Sophia, Feodor nominated his half-brother Peter to succeed him.

A history of Russia without the life of Peter the Great, would appear to some as defective as "Hamlet" with the "Prince of Denmark left out." Yet this is an omission we have been tempted to make, for in these brief sketches only the leading facts can be related and we presume that most of our readers are familiar with the outline of Peter's career. Instead then of repeating an oft told tale, we shall confine ourselves to a few particulars which tend to throw light upon the character of this Russian prodigy, who, if neither a truly good or great man, was at least a very remarkable one.

The two relatives of Peter whom we have named as rival claimants to the throne, were very dissimilar from him and each other. Ivan was mild, retiring and warmly attached to Peter. Sophia was ambitious, daring and clever, and regarded Peter as merely a formidable obstacle in the way of her possessing herself of that power which she coveted. Without attempting to set a side the succession of Peter to the throne, she artfully succeeded in having Ivan united with him in the sovereignty, and while they nominally reigned, she was the actual ruler possessing all the authority and dignity of a Russian Empress. In the accomplishment of this arrangement she had been ably assisted by her minister and favourite Galatin. The acquiescence of the nobles was, probably the more cheerfully given in consequence of the dread and dislike generally entertained towards Peter, feelings engendered by his frequent displays of a disposition so fitful and cruel that all who witnessed its outbreaks might well fear and shun him. There are circumstances connected with this period of Peter's life which are often mis-stated and made the subject of eulogies, as it appears to us, by no means merited. While Sophia was exercising the power which belonged to the two brothers, Peter, who was then in his 17th year, formed a military company, apparently for amusement. In the drilling of his little force he was assisted by two foreigners, Gordon and Lefort. From the post of drummer boy, it is said that the young Czar rose step by step till he became commander of the youthful troop. And thus say his eulogists he perfected himself in military science and formed the nucleus of those vast armies, &c. In simple honesty and plain truth he did nothing of the kind, and still further he did not even try to do it. His design has been misunderstood by the writers of such panegyrics as the above. Peter had submitted from bitter necessity to the usurpation of his sister Sophia, but not without strong reasons to regain if possible, the possession from which he had been thrust. The chief difficulty in his way was the aversion entertained towards him by the nobility of Moscow. To remove this obstacle and to win for Peter the sympathies of those whose aid was indispensable to him, older heads than his planned the military company, which was composed almost entirely of the young nobles of the Capital. Towards these Peter was instructed to display the utmost consideration and suavity of which he was capable, and thus to remove from their minds, if possible the dislike entertained towards him. This was a well laid scheme for creating a party favourable to Peter. As for the knowledge of military science either acquired or displayed by him in connection with this amateur troop, it could have been but small in amount. He never was a skillful General. How and where he learnt the sci-

ence of war we may know by his reckless reply to the officers who repined at the loss of successive armies cut to pieces by the Swedes. "Never mind gentlemen" said Peter, "they will teach us how to fight by beating us, and perhaps we shall beat them one of these days." That day came but not owing to Peter's judicious management of his forces so much as to the madness of his antagonist. To his consort Catherine also belongs the credit of having saved him on one occasion from disasters as great as those which befell Charles the 12th, at Pultovas.

The military company having been under the command of Peter long enough to impress upon the young nobles the mildness and strict impartiality of his rule as well as the equally important fact, that the fictitious honours they enjoyed would be exchanged for real ones had he the latter to bestow, the time was ready to be sprung. The first step was to remove Galatin. An opportunity for doing this was afforded by Russia engaging in war with the Turks. Galatin had too much vanity to decline accepting the command of the Russian army. At the seat of war he arrived in entire ignorance of military art, and killed his men by useless and incessant marches and countermarches. His absence from Moscow leaving his party without their leader was a favourable opportunity for Peter's party to try its strength. At a public festival a dispute having arisen as to whom the post of honour belonged, to Peter or Sophia, and the latter having refused to resign it, Peter withdrew to the Convent of the Holy Trinity—followed by a large number of the nobles. This was the commencement of a revolution which though short lived, ended in Sophia's incarceration in a Convent. Galatin's banishment and Peter's undisputed possession of the throne—Ivan having resigned.

The remaining part of Peter's life we do not propose to narrate. His wars and travels, his desire to introduce into Russia the arts of civilization as well as the singular course he adopted for the accomplishment of his purpose are things well known to the readers of popular literature. We cannot however conclude this paper without protesting against the unqualified praise of which Peter is so frequently made the subject. In many books especially intended for the young, he is held up to admiration as a truly great and noble man.—That in energy and indomitable perseverance he was superior to most men, is true, no doubt, but it is just as true that his judgment was very defective, and his penetration far from being deep. In connection with some of the most important events of his life he evinced a stupidity and obstinacy not very dissimilar from madness, and which more than once led him to the verge of ruin.

[TO BE CONCLUDED.]

The Church's Prayer for a more Adequate Supply of Ministers.

BY JOHN ANGELL JAMES.

[CONTINUED.]

The attitude, operations, and prospects of the church in this age, call imperatively for this spirit of believing prayer for laborers in the harvest field. Associations of all kinds are formed and are still multiplying. But who is to work them? By whom are the means of working them to be called forth?—Perhaps we are too eager for the multiplication of organizations, and too dependant upon them. We are in danger of idolizing our institutions, and becoming Society worshippers. Individuality is being lost sight of, and the power of the one noble minded, large-hearted, energetic, and earnest man is under-estimated. What might not one such man do? What has not such a man often done? Without selecting for illustration such men as Luther,

Calvin, Knox or Cranmer; or even as Whitefield or Wesley—those spiritual giants—but referring to men of lower stature and more ordinary powers, what has not one man done, in many cases that have come under our own observation? God could raise us up many such men, and would do it, if we had but a spirit to seek the blessing by believing, importunate prayer. Let us ask not only for the might of associated numbers, but of single laborers. I often look round, and fixing upon such men as have been eminently useful, plead with the Almighty by their names and usefulness, saying, Lord God of the spirits of all flesh, give to thy churches such preachers and pastors as these. We should plead not only for good men but great men. Great I mean in the power of the pulpit,—great in power to gather in the harvest.

Still we can not do without Societies, and for their sakes, also, we want wise, holy, and commanding men,—men that shall influence others and multiply themselves. Good and great men make other good and great men. The age is wonderful, and we want men for the age. God is telling us by the signs of the times, what kind of ministers are wanting. He is lifting up a voice on this subject which grows louder and louder continually, as if He meant that it should at last be heard. But it is not yet heard. No response is given; no loud, general, persevering cry is going up to Heaven, saying, "Send more laborers into the harvest!" Christians are satisfied with giving money, attending meetings, hearing speeches, but they do not pray in equal proportion. God is not acknowledged; the Spirit is not implored. The giving age and the working age are happily come, but the praying age is yet to come. We hope it is coming, though there are not many indications of it at present. Look at your prayer-meetings,—yes, and your Missionary prayer-meetings, too. "Must it not be a cause of constant heaviness and sorrow of heart to every one not under the general infatuation, that our concerts for prayer, of all other occasions of concourse among Christians, should have the very last place in the esteem of the Church? It is impossible to lament too deeply this portentous fact." So wrote an eminent American minister, in one of the most heart-stirring sermons on this subject ever published. By this we find that the spirit of Prayer is as low on the other side of the Atlantic as it is on ours.

Let me then send out the call over our land for more prayer on behalf of a supply of ministers. Oh, if all pulpits, all social meetings, all family altars, all closets, were from this hour solemnly, earnestly, importunately consecrated to this work of prayer to the Lord of the harvest for more laborers, what a revival would take place both in the Church and in the world! Oh, what an amount of beneficent power would be exerted on the destinies of the whole earth's population, if we should henceforth witness these scenes of importunate and wrestling supplication!—What students would fill our colleges! what ministers would occupy our pulpits! what pastors would preside over our churches!—How should we break forth on the right hand and on the left! Let the whole church, then, continually lift up its hands, its heart, its eyes to heaven, in imploring cries for this great blessing. Let us thus meet the cry which comes to us from our colleges—"Send us students!" which comes to us from our destitute churches—"Send us pastors!" which comes to us from benighted realms of paganism—"Send us Missionaries!" which comes to us from all these quarters, without, indeed, the Macedonian vision, but with a cry not less piercing, or affecting, saying, "Come over and help us!"

But, as we are to seek, as well as ask, there is something else for us to do besides praying

for ministers, and that is, to look out for them. Christ's bounty in giving pastors and teachers does not at all supersede our duty in endeavoring to obtain them. I hold it to be a solemn duty on the part of the pastors and their churches to look among their members for young men of eminent piety, good physical qualifications, competent abilities and great devotedness. Christ may, and often does, save through the pastors to a selected youth—"Son, go work in my vineyard." It ought not to be left in all cases to an impulse from within, but the desire may be in some persons awakened by a call from without. It may of our churches young men are to be found in whose hearts a secret desire is cherished, but repressed by modesty, to be engaged in a definite form, would, on its being presented to them, immediately embrace it. Great care, however, should be taken, that incompetent men are not selected. The most ardent piety without physical qualifications and competent abilities, will not do for the work of the ministry at any time, much less in such times as these. We had better send none to college than men not up to the right standard. We have already hundreds of men who are doing nothing, and who are standing in the way of others. We must pick out the best and most devoted men that our churches contain. A pastor should be as intimately acquainted as possible with all the young men in his church, and should take under his care and training any one whom he deems eminently qualified for the work of the ministry. It is to be regretted that our more wealthy families have little sympathy with the Apostle or his views, where he says, "If a man desire the office of a bishop he desireth a good work." It is worthy of remark how few of our ministers come from our affluent families, some of whom would consider it almost a misfortune if one of their sons should become a Dissenting minister, though, perhaps, they would feel little objection to his going to Oxford and becoming a clergyman. I much question whether, if the Universities be thrown open to Dissenters, many will ever come from thence to our pulpits. Dissenters may go to Oxford and Cambridge; but will they return such? Should the privilege be granted to us, it may be our bane after all.

In conclusion, I return to the subject of Prayer, and most earnestly call upon all who feel interested in the welfare of our own denomination in particular,—in the prosperity of the universal church, or in the conversion of the world to Christ; upon all who own subjection to the Redeemer's commands or sympathies with him in the desires of his immaculate and loving heart, upon all whose the connection of an adequate and efficient ministry with the support and advancement of Christ's kingdom in our world,—to consider from henceforth more deeply, solemnly, and practically than before, the necessity and importance of believing, importunate, and persevering prayer for the Lord to send more laborers into the harvest. It is with small hope of much effect, as regards either ministers or their flocks in general, that I send forth this paper. Alas! alas! we are all too busy to pray. We can find time and inclination for anything rather than this. And yet, is not Prayer the very lock of our strength, the secret of our success? Let us begin a new era in the history of religious activities, which, without being attended with any decay of zeal and liberality, shall be characterized by a spirit of deep devotion and earnest supplication. Let the past be characterized as it may by coldness and neglect, neither the present nor the future ought or need to be, on that or any other account, similarly distinguished. Let the end of averseness to prayer be now come, and a wrestling spirit begin its mighty power and prevalence with God. Some anxious, earnest hearts will sympathise in his view