

Month's Department.

HYMNS FOR LITTLE CHILDREN (By Author of *Lord of the Forest*.)

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

Hush! little Christian child,
Speak not that Holy Name,
Not with a laughing lip,
Not in thy playful game.
For the Great God of all
Heareth each word we say
He will remember it
In the great Judgment Day

Hush! for His hosts unseen
Are watching over thee,
His Angels spread their wings,
Thy shelter kind to be.
Wilt thou with words profane,
Rash, and undutiful,
Scatter thine Angel guards,
Glorious and beautiful?

Honour God's Holy Name,
Speak it with thought and care
Sing to it holy hymns,
Breathe it in earnest prayer.
But not with sudden cry,
In thy light joy or pain,
For God will hold guilty all
Who take His Name in vain."

PETER THE GREAT.

PETER, when a mere boy, perceived the degradation and barbarism of his subjects, and resolved to raise them above the innumerable evils which he beheld on every side. At eighteen years of age he had meditated gigantic plans of reform, to be effected only by assuming greater powers than were ever exercised even by his despotic predecessors. We have the faith to believe, that he did not exercise his mighty power with the ultimate view of aggrandizing his own person and family, as some of his successors have; that he did not aim merely to make himself "the state," like Louis XIV. from the mere selfish passion of absorbing the state in his throne, but rather that he might create a mighty empire out of disordered states—that he might raise barbarians from brutal ignorance and apathy, to be efficient, healthy, happy, civilized beings—that he might repress crime and violence—restore order, decency, and law—promote industry, art, science, and material wealth, and make his nation respected and powerful in Europe. That these were the great objects of his desire, in spite of his arbitrary temper, his jealousy of all authority that did not emanate from himself, his occasional excesses, his violent passions, his barbarous traits, his savage cruelties, and his many crimes, we believe can be made clear and evident to all impartial persons. We detest his many vices, and do not love him as a man; but we honour him as a sovereign, despot though he was, because he did not believe himself a god, but only the vicegerent of God, whose ultimate and eternal laws were to be enforced by any or all the powers which the Almighty had delegated to him as the sovereign ruler of a mighty people.

When he ascended the throne, on the death of his father, Alexis Michaelovitz, in 1682, and when his opened eyes surveyed the state of the empire which he was called upon to rule, not only by the suffrages of the people, or the authority of a constitution, but by the will of God, he beheld national poverty, universal rudeness and coarseness, infinite injustice, petty tyrannies without end, general ignorance, baseness, and barbarism. All the evils which have ever depraved and degraded humanity were around him, and were indulged in with recklessness and remorseless eagerness at once disgusting and destructive.

Under such circumstances Peter commenced his reign. How great was the labour which he imposed upon himself! But he was a Hercules—he was equal to his task, and that task, in spite of his tyranny, was a beneficent one.

Before he began his first labour, while a mere boy, under eighteen years of age, he strangled a serpent. Sophia, daughter of Alexis by a first marriage,—a woman of masculine vigour, who had secured to herself the office of regent during the minority of Peter,—aimed, as soon as she perceived his genius and restless enterprise, to rid herself of him and reign alone. She leagued with Prince Galitzen and the strelitzes, those disorderly Moscow soldiers; an insurrection took place, with the ultimate view of assassinating the Emperor; but Peter escaped, suppressed the insurrection, punished his enemies with the knout and with death, and assumed in good earnestness the government of the realm. Heretofore he had been devoted to pleasure, his education had been purposely neglected, and he was

barbarous in his tastes, but soon the work of reformation began on himself and on his country.

His first labour was the creation of a navy, originating, perhaps, in his love of sailing rather than in any enlarged views of the value of commerce, or any prophetic foresight of the benefits which it was ultimately destined to confer on his country. He was, when a boy, fond of adventure and enterprise, and especially attracted by the wonderful qualities of a sailing vessel. Other boys have felt the same enthusiasm, and who shall say how much heroism has been excited among young men by the passion of sailing? To how many is it fascinating, romantic, delightful. But there is a Providence in the world, and that Providence is seen in the early taste of the czar, which led him, step by step, to construct a navy, and lay the foundation of commercial enterprise in his barbarous land.

Every one is familiar with the story of his first experiments with a boat which had been built by a Dutchman, to sail in the little river which passes through Moscow. How Peter was delighted when he learned that it could sail against the wind. How he learned to manage it himself. How he engaged Brandt, the Dutchman, to build him a yacht to sail on Lake Peipus, south of the gulf of Finland, between Ingria and Livonia. How his ambition expanded to sail on the ocean. How he purchased a Dutch merchant ship at Archangel, and accompanied by an English man-of-war sailed to the frozen ocean. How his passion for ships increased. How he performed all the duties of a seaman, from the lowest drudgery of a common sailor to the management of a ship itself. How he incurred great risks, but manifested the greatest intrepidity and ability. These things are known—these early pastimes, which show the adventurous boy rather than the comprehensive statesman. It were a mistake to suppose that he started with the idea of founding a navy, for political and commercial purposes; he was too young, too inexperienced, too ignorant. But God had a work for him to do, and he made use of this early passion to lead him on gradually to the perception of the value of commercial enterprise. The ambition of the youthful sovereign was not content with the two or three clumsy merchant vessels. He resolved to found a navy; for this purpose he studied the art of ship-building, and employed a vast number of men in different places, to gird his empire around with wooden walls, in imitation of England and Holland.

The czar had now an army and an navy, and the respect of his subjects. But he perceived his own deficiencies—that he was inexperienced—that he was ignorant of those arts and of the knowledge which had elevated neighbouring nations—and he resolved, not from mere curiosity, nor for the sake of pleasure, to visit the various kingdoms of Europe, and learn their social and political institutions, with a view of introducing such as he liked into his own country.

His efforts to civilize his subjects constitute his highest glory, and his highest claim to our regard. Before he could reform his people, he must be himself reformed—he must educate himself.

His third labour, and no slight one for an absolute ruler, was to renounce, for a time, the honours and pleasures of royalty, and assume the character of a servant, a labourer, a student, and a traveller, in order that he might become a more mighty monarch. There is so much romance in the incidents of his tour through England and Holland, that it invests his history and character with peculiar charms. It was in a red woolen shirt and duck trousers, with a sailor's hat upon his head, an adze in his hand, seated on a rough log of timber in the ship-yard of Saardam, that the great Duke of Marlborough first beheld this extraordinary man. Contemplate the novelty and phenomenon of a sovereign, who governed with absolute sway the largest empire in Europe, and who had command of unbounded wealth, submitting to the hardships of manual labour like a common workman, eating brown bread, sleeping in a mean hut, and astonishing every one by his feats of physical labour, and all that he might make himself master of a great art—an art on which the future prospects of his country in no slight degree depended. Contemplate this active-minded, energetic man, studying civil engineering, fortifications, mathematics, and languages, visiting schools, charitable institutions, manufacturing establishments, corn-mills, paper-mills, oil factories, blacksmiths' shops, dock-yards, churches, Quaker meeting-houses, courts of law, parliament-houses, hospitals, and libraries; holding interviews with artists, merchants, admirals, generals, judges, senators, and kings; doing one day in a mean eating-house on Tower Hill, and on the next with the Archbishop of Canterbury, at Lambeth, and on the third with King

William, at Kensington Avenue to ceremony and pomp, and aiming solely to his own improvement, and finally leaving the kingdom with an army, not of soldiers, but of pilots and sailing-masters, surgeons, gunners, blacksmiths, sail-makers, carpenters, compass-makers, timmermen, painters, architects, in all five hundred persons, whom he had induced to settle in Russia for the civilization of his subjects. Is there not greatness in this? Greater than the pomp of courts, or the march of armies, or gorgeous triumphal processions? It was the end which he had in view which constituted their moral greatness, and the control which he exercised upon himself, with all his violent passions and his vast ambition. Such is the way that greatness is ever secured—by self-sacrifice, labour, and temporary humiliation. What a lesson to the pampered sons of the rich and luxurious in the marts of commerce, or in the capitals of aristocratic pride! Oh, ye young men, self-indulgence, ease, supercilious self-complacency, pleasure-seeking, idleness, and vanity, are inconsistent with greatness, or any pursuit which ennoble man! In your comfortable and proud obscurity, look up to Peter the Great—the mighty monarch, teaching the world an immortal lesson—a lesson which should be engraven on your memories so deeply that no pleasure or vanity should ever efface it for an hour.—*Southern Quarterly Review*.

Selections.

CATARACTS OF THE NILE.—The banks of the Nile are often picturesque and beautiful; and the eastern side, to the Arabian Gulf, is bounded by high mountain ranges, composed of granite, porphyry, and marble, of the greatest variety of colours. Lofly granite rocks enclose the green and fertile valley of Jar-jar, a narrow oasis rescued from the surrounding desolation. Preeminent in beauty amid the numerous islands which stud the river with their emerald verdure, is the "Garden of the Tropics," called by the Egyptians the "Island of Flowers." Within the space of a mile in length and a quarter in breadth, it presents a fertility equal to the finest part of Egypt. It is three miles above the island of Elephantine; and the most remarkable feature in the scenery is caused by the Nile dashing through the wild confusion of granite rocks, with which its bed for many miles is thickly strewed. The noise of the cataracts formed by the river, which boils and foams amid a thousand rocks, is heard at a distance of three miles. The stream, forcing its way through the innumerable islets situated near this spot, is tossed about in every direction, forming numberless little cascades, and presents to the traveller's eye a scene of peculiar grandeur and effect. The noise resembles that of a tempestuous ocean beating on a rocky shore.—*Sharp's London Magazine*.

PRACTICAL USE OF SCIENCE.—In every branch of natural history the study of science, in its manifold forms of classification, is constantly leading the most valuable discoveries connected with our means of existence. Some twenty years ago all the timber of the Hartz Forest was destroyed by a species of beetle gnawing completely round the bark, prevented the sap from rising. This destructive animal made its appearance in England; and science very soon discovered the cause of the evil, and provided for its removal. If there had been no knowledge of natural history here, not a tree would have been left in our woods: and what then would have been the cost of timber? The naturalist is now carrying his investigations, with the aid of the microscope, into the lower departments of animal life. He finds the causes of blight and mildew, and knows the species of the minutest insect that mars the hopes of the farmer and the gardener. The chemist steps in; and the ravager is destroyed or rendered less noxious.—*C. Knight*.

Miss Nightingale is one of those whom God forms for great ends. You cannot hear her say a few sentences—no, not even look at her, without feeling that she is an extraordinary being. Simple, intellectual, sweet, full of love and benevolence, innocent—she is a fascinating and perfect woman. She is tall and pale. Her face is exceedingly lovely; but better than all is the soul's glory that shines through every feature so exultingly. Nothing can be sweeter than her smile. It is like a sunny day in summer; and more of holiness than is expressed in her countenance one does not often meet on a human face as one passes along the dusty highways of life. Through all her movements breathes that high intellectual calm which is God's own patent of nobility, and is the true seal of the most glorious aristocracy—that of mind, of soul.—*Trevelyan's City of the Crescent*.