THE CRIMEA.

Little has recently occurred to mark the progress of events in the Crimea. With the exception of the gallant exploit of Captain Osborne in destroying the Russian stores at Gheisk, which was performed on the 13th of November, and the terrible explosion of the French magazine in the vicinity of Sebastopol, which occurred on the 15th of the same month, nothing of the slightest note has taken place to disturb the serenity of the winter quarters into which the Allied army seems now to be quietly and comfortably settled down.

A correspondent at Bala Clava, in speaking of Captain Osborn's success, says—"This news has afforded us the highest gratification. It seems that this gallant officer has succeeded in destroying, at Gheisk, fodder and grain of various kinds, piled up in stacks for the distance of no less than two miles, and that the efforts of the 3,000 Russians stationed on the spot for the protection of these prodigious stores were unavailing. The fire of the Vesuvius and the gunboats, and the precision of their shell and shot practice, drove those grey-coated gentry away in confusion and dismay, and they were unable to fire a shot in defence of their magazines, which our men burst before their eyes. Officers and sailors are said to have displayed great coolness and zeal in the affair which has more importance, perhaps, in Russian eyes than it will have in our own, bearing as it does so materially on the position of the enemy in the Crimea and their supplies during the winter. The exploit is all the more welcome, that it was quite unexpected, as no one imagined our gunboats would be able to remain in the Sea of Azoff after the first week in November."

The same graphic pen gives us a vivid picture of the awful explosion of the French magazine. "I was riding from head-quarters, reading my letters, last Thursday when the explosion took place, and had just reached the hill, or elevated part of the plateau, at the time, and happened to be looking in the very direction of the park. The phenomena were so startling, that they took away one's breath. Neither pen nor pencil could describe them. The rush of fire, smoke, and iron attained a height I dare not estimate in one great pillar, and then seemed to shoot out like a tree, which overshadowed half the camp on the right, and rained down missiles upon it. The colour of the pillar was dark grey, flushed with red, but it was pitted all over with white puffs of smoke, which marked the explosion of the shells. It retained the shape of a fir-tree for nearly a minute, and then the sides began to swell out and the overhanging canopy to expand and twist about in prodigious wreaths of smoke, which flew out to the right and left and let drop, as it were from solution in its embrace, a precipitate of shells, carcases, and iron projectiles. I clapped spurs to my horse, and rode off as fast as I could towards the spot as soon as my ears had recovered the shock. The noise was horrible; and, when the shells began to explode, the din was like the opening crash of one of the great cannonades or bombardment of the siege."

Apart from the calamitous incident, and from the daring and successful exploits of Captain Osborn, the attitude of the Allies in the Crimea has become one of complete inactivity. The weather, we are told, continues to be remarkably fine, and favourable in the highest degree for any kind of operations that might be undertaken in the field; but nothing is attempted—nothing thought of—the troops are hutted, and the Crimean campaign of 1855 at an end. Whether our Generals have not left off a little too soon may the open to cavil. The *Times* is very angry upon the point, and rails at all the Commanders in "good set terms;" but our contemporary is not always just in his censure; and in the present instance, it is to be borne in mind that the Allied Generals, in preparing for the winter of this year, had only the experience of last year to guide them. Winter overtook them in the first week of November in 1854. If it has not done so in 1855, the fact is only to be attributed to one of those variations of the season against which it is impossible for any human foresight to provide with exact accuracy.

Let us congratulate ourselves that the army is this year comfortably housed and amply fed—that it is in the highest health and discipline—and that it bids fair to be capable of any duty that may be demanded of it on the first return of spring. The correspondent, from whom we have already quoted, in speaking of the present condition of the camp, further remarks:—"The health of our troops is excellent; the draughts which arrive are rather younger than is desirable, but they will get experience and instruction during the winter. They are admirably clothed, and fed as no army was ever fed before—fresh meat, bread, and vegetables are issued to all. Henceforth the men are to get fresh meat *only* three times a week, and bread *only* thrice times a week, instead of every day. On the other days, they will receive pork or salt beef, and excellent biscuit. In respect of winter clothing, hutting, and feeding, our men are immeasurably better off than our Allies, and it is not unusual to see the latter eating in the English camp of the excess of our soldiers' cooking kettles." This state of things, presenting so striking a contrast to the condition of the English camp at this time last year, ought at least to be satisfactory to all who profess to feel an interest in the welfare of our gallant soldiery.

The intelligent writer, from whose communications (penned in the midst of the scenes he describes) we have so largely borrowed, does not think it probable that Prince Gortschakoff will succeed in extricating himself from the critical position in which he is now left. "The Russian General," says he, "must be a man of extraordinary confidence if he thinks he can extricate his army when the spring comes from the grasp of an enemy which already clutches the whole of his coast, is established at two points in his rear, and has four distinct bases of operations, with sufficient troops to use them all, and to concentrate a prodigious force on any point he pleases. He may err, and if he does, and the blot is hit, the result will be fatal. The Russian infantry, in spite of its stubborn endurance and passive courage, is not equal to either French, Sardinian, English, or Turkish troops. Every day shows us, that it has no chance even against the latter when they are led and officered by Englishmen or brave and skilful European soldiers. Their cavalry, in equal numbers, will be ridden down like grass whenever they stand against English or French squadrons; and notwithstanding the excellence of their artillery, compared with other arms of their service, it cannot compete with ours for an instant as regards rapidity of motion or precision of fire. Prince Gortschakoff will be a grand strategist opposed to very weak generals if if he succeeds in saving his army, and marching them scatheless from the Crimea."

These opinions, founded upon observations made within sight of the position which the Russian General now occupies, must be allowed to have considerable weight. Let us trust that they will prove to be correct.

The Emperor Napoleon has presented to the Princess Royal of England the fan once belonging to Maria Antoinette, and to the Prince of Wales a small watch, of which the case is composed of a single ruby split in half.

The Colonelcy of the Eighth Hussars.—The Earl of Lucan has been gazetted to the Colonelcy of the 8th Royal Irish Light Dragoons or Hussars, vacant by the recent demise of Lieut.-Gen. Sir John Brown. The Colonelcy (a sinecure) is worth about £1,100 per annum. He of course, being a General officer, cannot command the regiment, that duty devolving upon the Lieut. Colonel, or commanding officer. On entering upon the receipts of the regiment, the noble lord will have to give up his pay as General officer, viz., £1 5s per diem. Lord Lucan, now in his 56th year, entered the service when about 16 years of age. He has, consequently, been in it close upon 40 years. The Earl of Cardigan, his brother-in-law, is three years his senior in point of age, but more than double that period his junior, in regard to service.

POLAND.

By intelligence received from Hamburg, dated the 5th, we are informed, that, by imperial command, a grand review had been held at Warsaw, to celebrate the anniversary of the victory of Russia over the Polish revolution.

THE PEACE PROPOSITIONS.

(From Wilmer's European Times).

Most of the papers during the week have been discussing the question whether we shall have peace before another campaign. All the accounts seem to warrant the conclusion, that terms have been proposed, but the acceptance of these terms by Russia depends upon circumstances into which the chapter of accidents must necessarily enter largely. A recent telegraph despatch from Berlin states, that Prince Gortschakoff assured Count Buol, that Russia was willing to concede largely on the Four Points; and the French Minister at Vienna is declared to have informed the Austrian Minister, that the arrangements concluded by General Canrobert are equally satisfactory to Sweden and the Western Powers. There appears now to be no doubt, that Sweden has entered into some formal compact with England and France, and such being the case, it will readily be conceived that Russia is willing to "concede largely" on the Four Points. This treaty between Sweden and the Allies is the most important compact which has been entered into since the commencement of the war. It cannot fail to produce intense uneasiness at St. Petersburg, and in the same degree to strengthen the probabilities of peace. A London Morning paper, of rather apocryphal authority, which sometimes puts forth startling statements on slender grounds, gives this version of the terms which Austria is said to be pressing on the attention of the Czar:—"That the Dardanelles should be closed to the ships of war of any Power; that the Black Sea should be declared open to the commerce and navigation of all nations; that the south angle of Bessarabia which commands the navigation of the Danube should be incorporated with Moldavia, thus rendering the river free from Russian control; and that the Crimea should remain in possession of Russia without any naval establishments."

Meantime, we learn that a Grand Council of War is about to be held at St. Petersburg, at which all the Archdukes, with several Generals and Admirals,—all, indeed, except those employed in the South,—are summoned to attend. The advices from the Russian Capital, while they speak of the misery and poverty caused by the war, and of the dissatisfaction which it is producing, mention at the same time the resolve of the Czar to prosecute it with vigour, and to listen to no overtures for peace.

The leading journal of yesterday touches upon the peace propositions, but not in a tone which will induce people to think that there is much in them. "What is it, then," says our great contemporary, "which has sent up our funds, and led to the general belief that all our troubles are at an end? Simply this—that now, as in the month of December last year, we are favored with the offer of the good services of Austria. This is but a sandy foundation on which to rest such towring hopes, and yet though the sand may be a quicksand, it may also cover a rock. Austria may at last have risen somewhat nearer to the level of her duties and her pretensions; she may at last have begun to feel that, though true to the letter, she has been false to the spirit of the Treaty of the 2d of December, and weary of a position which is neither neutral, hostile, nor friendly, she may think the time has arrived to seek for herself a position at once more secure and more dignified. All is as yet uncertain; the past bids us to be anything but sanguine, and the future, however, bright it may be, is yet impenetrable."

This in all probability, is the present state of the question. All is uncertainty, but the money market is sensitive, and the feeling of the money market has a pacific bearing. It is now stated that Parliament will meet on the 31st of January for the despatch of business.

The visit of the King of Sardinia has kept the British metropolis during the greater part of the present week in that state of excitement which the Cockneys love, and if it had taken place at a more genial season of the year, the impression produced on the mind of our Italian ally would have been highly favorable. As it was, all the public bodies, and more especially the people, gave the king a greeting as hearty and enthusiastic as he could desire. The spirit of the addresses which were presented to him breathed a love for constitutional freedom, and an attachment to civil and religious liberty which could not be unpalatable to a monarch who has carried out in his own policy the noble principles which these addresses reflected. The King's replies were for the most part happy and to the point, and the visit cannot fail to bind us more closely in alliance with a State the head of which is fighting with us energetically in a common cause. The friendship and mutual self-interest thus cemented must long survive the cause which called it into operation. His Majesty left our shores on the morning of Thursday, and arrived in Paris the same evening.

Reinforcement of Russians.—The latest intelligence from the seat of war says, that the Russians had received a reinforcement by the arrival of Gen. Chasseloup's division, which was 12,000 strong. This force is stated to have reached the camp of Sebastopol. The English and Piedmontese camps had also received more troops. The enemy had erected batteries in his rear, on the north side of Sebastopol, anticipating the possibility of the allies landing a force and attacking in that direction the garrison which holds Fort Constantine. Sir Edmund Lyons, it was believed, would remain at Hamiesch in the Royal Albert. The fleet will probably be employed in contemplated operations.

General Simpson.—General Sir James Simpson late Commander in Chief of her Majesty's forces in the Crimea, arrived in London on Sunday night, 25th inst., Sir James went, on Monday morning, to the War Department, in Whitehall, but, Lord Panmure being absent, he immediately left and proceeded to the United Service Club, in Pall Hall, where he was cordially welcomed by the officers who had the good fortune to be present. We have much pleasure in stating that, in appearance, the gallant General seems to have suffered from the effects of the Climate of the Crimea. On leaving the United Service Club, the gallant soldier was recognized by the few passers by, whose salutations he acknowledged.

Correspondence from Constantinople states that Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe has protested energetically against the late arrest of Colonel Turr by the Austrian Commander at Buchrarst. The Porte also has expressed itself to the Austrian Minister at Constantinople as deeply aggrieved by this outrage, seeing that the Turkish territory was the scene, and that the officer arrested is attached to an allied army, the individual members of which, by virtue of a treaty have the right to circulate throughout the Sultan's dominions. The *Ost Deutsche Post* says, that on the 30th ult, Colonel Turr was in prison at Kronstadt, and that a Colonel of War had pronounced his sentence of death.

PIEDMONT AND TUSCANY.

By the mediatory influence of France and England, the point in dispute between Sardinia and Tuscany has been adjusted.

The Colonelcy of the Eight Hussars.—The Earl of Lucan has been gazetted to the Colonelcy of the 8th Royal Irish Light Dragoons or Hussars, vacant by the recent demise of Lieut-Gen. Sir John Brown. The Colonelcy (a sinecure) is worth about £1,100 per annum. He of course, being a General officer, cannot command the regement, that duty devolving upon the Lieut. Colonel' or commanding officer. On entering upon the receipts of the regiment the noble lord will have to give up his pay as General officer, viz., £1 5s per diem. Lord Lucan, now in his 56th year, entered the service when but 16 years of age. He has, consequently, been in it close upon 40 years. The Earl of Cardigan, his brother-in-law, is three years his senior in point of age, but more than double that period his junior in regard to service.

Sir Archibald Alison has received a letter from Sir Colin Campbell, stating that, owing to his leaving for the Crimea in a few days, he will not be able to come to Scotland.