Latest News!

THE WAR.

(From Wilmer's European Times.)

We announced last week, in a late edition, the fall of Kinburn, the surrender of the garrison, its transference to Constantinople, and the taking of a large quantity of stores and ammunition. This has been followed by a characteristic movement on the part of the Russians—the blowing up of Otchakoff on the following day; but the Russian commander telegraphs to his government, that the allies have since made an unsuccessful attempt to pass up the Bug and Dnieper. Nevertheless, it is evident, that affairs are approaching to a crisis, and Prince Gortschakoff feels that the game is up, and that he must beat a precipitate retreat from the Crimea. Every hour in which he retains possession of the north of Sebastopol adds to his perils. We see it stated, that his prolonged defence of the place may be attributed rather to pride than to policy,—a desire to preserve, even for a short time, and at enormous risks, the prestige of Holy Russia. "There is a natural feeling of pride and defiance on the part of the Russians, in showing how completely they had provided for their retreat, and how bold a front the remnant of the defenders of Sebastopol can exhibit to her captors. There is also a motive of policy in breaking the fall of Russia as much as possible, and giving the public mind of Europe time to pause, before the startling news of the fall of the fortress and the confession of defeat implied only too clearly in the evacuation of the fortress. There may, besides, probably be another reason, in the difficulty of moving an army disorganized and dispirited by a long succession of terrible hardships, and a shattering defeat, at a time of the year when the scarcity of water renders a retreat across the steppes, even without the presence of an enemy, an operation of the utmost danger and difficulty." To us there appears to be a good deal of force in the first two reasons assigned, and very little in the last. With regard to the hardships which her soldiery may have to endure, Russia is the last Power to bestow a thought upon the subject. She has shown herself ready to sacrifice anything to preserve the notion of her invincibility, and to sustain the delusion, the loss of human life appears to have been a consideration not worth entertaining. The Earl of Ellesmere, in his lecture on the war,—to which we have briefly referred in another article,—states, that he has had it from excellent sources, that since the commencement of hostilities, the Russians have lost at least 400,000 men, and although he believes this estimate to be rather overcharged, he knows they have lost more than 300,000. This loss, compared with that of the allies, is ruinous, and we mention it as a proof of the recklessness of human suffering, which the Czar's generals have displayed since the opening of the campaign. So that, while we attach considerable importance to the policy foreshadowed in the first part of the extract we have given, we are a little incredulous respecting the more humane and considerate view set forth in the last part. But, be that as it may, the longer the retreat is delayed, the more difficult it will become, for the allies are hemming in the enemy on all sides, and a retrograde movement with any reasonable chance of success will be an operation attended with enormous risks. In fact, the position of the Russians at the present moment, and the tactics of the Allies, render probable either a total defeat of the former in the event of a battle, or what is still more likely, a surrender of the entire force under Gortschakoff. It is stated, that, feeling his position to be most critical, the Russian Generalissimo has telegraphed to St. Petersburg for instructions how to act, and that Generals Benkendorff and Hackelburg have been sent to the Crimea to confer and advise with him. As this last statement comes through Berlin, it may be worthy of attention.

According to letters from St. Petersburg, the Emperor Alexander's mind is becoming affected. He has grown exceedingly religious since his troops have been every where beaten, and he prays the whole day, invoking Providence to accord to him a victory. It is likewise stated that his train includes more priests than generals.

DESPATCHES FROM ADMIRAL LYONS.

Off the Mouth of the Dnieper, 17th Oct. 1855

The three forts on the Kinburn Spit, mounting upwards of 70 guns, and garrisoned by 1,500 men, under General Kokonovitch, have this day capitulated to the Allied Forces. The day before yesterday a flotilla of gunvessels forced the entrance into the Dnieper, and the Allied troops landed on the Spit to the southward of the forts; thus, by their simultaneous operation, the retreat of the garrisons and the arrival of reinforcements were effectually cut off, so that the forts being bombarded to-day by the mortar-vessels, gun-vessels, and French floating batteries, and being closely cannonaded by the steam line-of battle ships and frigates (having only 26. of water under their keels,) were soon obliged to surrender. The casualties in the fleets were very few, but the enemy had 45 killed and 130 wounded. A steam squadron, under the orders of Rear-Admirals Stewart and Pellion, lie at anchor in the Dnieper, and command the entrance to Nicholaieff and Kherson. The Forts are occupied by the Allied Troops. The prisoners will be sent to Constantinople immediately.

FRENCH OFFICIAL DESPATCHES

Marshal Pelissier has forwarded to the Minister of War the following communication, dated Sebastopol, Oct. 24:—

"I have received from General Bazain his report of the capture of Kinburn. The Anglo-French division of the army has actively contributed to the success of the allied squadron. Having being landed on the peninsula about 5 kilometres from the fortress, it took up its position, and in the night of the 16th opened the trenches at 800 metres from the works. When the fleet commenced its heavy fire on the 17th, two companies of Chasseurs, under cover at a distance of 400 metres from the batteries, were able to keep up a fusilade on the Russian artillerymen at their guns. The field artillery also played an effective part in the operation. We have taken 1,420 prisoners, including General Koiasovitch and 40 officers, with 174 pieces of cannon and a quantity of ammunition and stores. We are now in full occupation of an important position. Such are the results to the allies of this successful expedition. The Russians have rendered this success complete by themselves blowing up the fortifications of Otchakoff on the 18th. I send you the standard, with the arms of Russia which floated over the walls of Kinburn."

The Minister of Marine has received from Admiral Bruat the following despatch dated Kinburn, Oct. 17:—

"On the morning of the 14th of October the squadron left the roadstead of Odessa as soon as the heavy easterly winds, which had checked their operations since the 8th of October, had ceased. In the evening of the same day, they anchored off Kinburn. In the night four French gunboats—the Tiraileuse, Stridente, Meutriere, and Mutine—sent by Rear-Admiral Pellion, under the orders of Lieut. Allemand, of the Cacique, sailed with five English gunboats through the pass of Otchakoff, and entered the Dnieper. The next day Oct. 15, at daybreak, the troops were landed at about 4,500 metres from the place to the south of it. In the afternoon the bomb-ketches opened their fire; but they were obliged to suspend it when night fell, on account of the swells, which rendered the aim uncertain. The entire day of the 16th was nearly lost for us, as the winds had veered round to the south-west. The troops were occupied in entrenching themselves, and making reconnaissances towards the south. The gunboats in the Dnieper were alone able to annoy the place. The wind having shifted to the north during the night, we were engaged early in the morning, Admiral Lyons, and myself, in causing to be put into execution the plan of attack arranged on the previous evening, agreeably to the soundings taken by Captain Spratt, of the Spitfire, and Lieutenant Clone, of the Brandon, assisted by Messrs. Ploix and Manen, hydrographic engineers. At 20 minutes past 9 the three floating batteries, the Devastation, Lava, and Tonante, opened their fire. The success they obtained on this day has answered all the hopes of the Emperor. The rampart they battered presented very speedily and on several points practicable breaches. The French and Englishmortar vessels opened their fire at 45 minutes past 9. Their aim, rectified by the signals of the paddle steamers, was most admirably directed. I attribute to them in a great measure the quick surrender of the place. The five French gunboats, the Grenade, Faeche, Mitraille, Flamme, and Alarme, sustained by six English gunboats, took up their positions nearly at the same time as the mortar vessels. Their aim ricochetted very advantageously the open batteries (*a barbette*), which were contending against the floating batteries. As soon as the firing of the place had slackened, our gunboats advanced, at the signal given by the Captain of the Grenade, M. Jaureguiberry, to the line formed by the floating batteries. They were accompanied in this movement by the English gunboats. Precisely at noon, the ships, followed by the frigates, corvettes, and paddle-steamers, got up steam. The ships formed on a front line; they cast anchor, and lay with their broadsides to the forts at a distance of 1,600 metres in 2½ feet of water. At the same moment, six English frigates commanded by Rear-Admiral Stewart, and three French frigates under the orders of Rear-Admiral Pellion, Asmodee, Cacique, and Sane, made for the pass of Otschakow, in order to take the forts of Kinburn in the rear. The English ship, the Hannibal, advanced to the middle of this pass. Generals Bazaine and Spencer brought up their riflemen and field-pieces to about 400 metres from the place. These bold manœuvres and the imposing front presented by the nine French and English ships, broadsides on and bowsprit to stern, thundering with all their guns, had a decisive effect. At thirty-five minutes past one, observing that the fort of Kinburn fired no longer, although the northern works continued still to make use of the mortars, Admiral Lyons and myself thought it right to respect the courage of the brave fellows we were fighting against; consequently we made the signal to cease firing, and hoisted the flag of truce, sending a French boat and an English one on shore. The forts accepted the capitulation offered. The garrison left the place with honors of war and gave themselves up as prisoners. Our troops occupy all the Russian works. The capitulation stipulated that the place should be given up to us in the state it was then in. We take possession, therefore, of the enemy's stores and munitions. Admiral Lyons and myself are sending the surgeons of the two squadrons to tend the Russian wounded, numbering about eighty. The number of prisoners is from twelve to fifteen hundred. *We are going to occupy ourselves with forming here a solid establishment.*

THE RUSSIAN POSITION IN THE CRIMEA.

BERLIN, October 24.—It is reported, that Prince Gortschakoff has represented to the Emperor Alexander that there are great difficulties in his present position, and asking for instructions as to whether he shall risk a decisive battle or evacuate the Crimea. The Emperor has thereupon sent Generals Benkencoff and Hackelburg to the Crimea to make a personal inspection, and upon their report future movements depend. Rumour adds that the Czar has sprained his foot in the most serious manner, and is obliged to keep his room.

The *Moniteur* says:—"General Bosquet, Melinet, and Trochu, whose wounds are in a fair way of being healed, embarked on the 18th of October, in order to return to France. Their state of health is satisfactory."

It is confidently affirmed that Perekop will be besieged. A corps of 30,000 men, it is stated, is to be disembarked to the north of Perekop, while another corps is to be placed before the fortress, to invest it on the other side.

General Simpson is coming home, not, it is asserted, because of the clamour which has been raised against him by the press, but because the command was originally forced upon him against his will, and that he has insisted upon being relieved of it. If, as is alleged his successor be General Codrington, this statement of the case is probably the correct one, for all the errors which are fastened upon General Simpson were equally shared by the officer who is named to fill his place.

PRINCE GORTSCHAKOFF'S DESPATCH.

ST. PETERSBURG, OCT. 18.—The fortress of Kinburn resisted the Allies by a very heavy fire up to the 17th. At noon on that day the fire ceased, and at 3 p. m. the enemy (the Allies) entered the place.

Up to the 17th, there was nothing new in the Crimea.

[The fall of Kinburn will facilitate an entrance into the estuary of the Dnieper; but the guns of Otchakoff still remain overhauling the channel, although not so effectively as the guns of Kinburn. An Odessa letter writer asserts, on the authority of a talkative official, that the enemy has rendered the passage between Kinburn and Otchakoff impracticable, by resorting to his old expedient of sinking large stones and fragments of rock in the channel. In the same way the mouth of the Boug has been filled up, except a narrow passage by sunk vessels and stones. These statements, if true, are, to some degree, exponents of the fear which the enemy entertains of a visit from the Allies to Nicolaieff. The destruction of Kinburn uncovers the road to Aleshki, Berislay, and Perekop, between which and the Allies there are only the great natural obstacles of the country. Whatever may be the use which will be made of the possession of Kinburn, it is certain that Prince Gortschakoff will not hear with indifference that that fortress has so rapidly succumbed to the Allies. By this success we have opened to ourselves a path into an important district of Southern Russia, and indulge a reasonable hope of penetrating to the building arsenal of the Russian fleet. We have also placed a tourniquet over two more of the arteries of Russian commerce, and materially augmented the difficulties caused by our blockade. The position of Kinburn is well supplied with wood and water, and, from the peculiar structure of the isthmus, admits of being defended by our gunboats against any force that is likely to be brought against it. Here, then, is another lodgment effected on the sacred soil of Russia, another guarantee that peace shall not be made, except on conditions fully carrying out the just and reasonable objects of the Western Powers, and another blow struck at that communication with the interior, by which the Russian army in the Crimea has hitherto been so wonderfully supported. We have gained much, and may without overweening or presumptuous confidence reasonably expect that we are about to gain still more.]

DESCRIPTION OF KINBURN.

The waters of the Bug and the Dnieper debouch into the sea by a single branch. After forming a lake, where they blend, the two rivers flow together, between Otschakoff on the north, and Kinburn on the south, through a narrow channel of variable depth (15 feet the minimum), much nearer Kinburn than Otschakoff. Otschakoff, on the right shore, is built on the top of a cliff of middling height, advancing in an acute angle straight to the south, and throwing out a low flat on which rises a fort of Genoese origin, in a very dilapidated state. A battery of nine guns of large calibre, recently erected on the cliff, outside the channel, taking it in enfilade, but at a long range, completes the defence of this side, without presenting any serious obstacles. It is on the left shore, on the tongue of sand formed by the alluvial deposits of the two rivers, that the citadel of Kinburn is built, commanding the passage much nearer, as its guns act both outside and inside, constituting in a word the sole defence of the mouth of the Dnieper. The citadel of Kinburn is a hornwork of masonry, with earthen parapets, surrounded by a moat wherever it is not washed by the sea, containing barracks and other buildings, the roofs and chimneys of which are visible above the rampart. It is armed in all its faces, having one tier of guns covered and casemated, which tier is crowned by a battery *a barbette*, the whole possibly presenting some sixty guns, half of which sweep the sea outside, from the south-east to the north-north-west. Kinburn has the war-flag always flying, the sign of armament, and contains a garrison of two thousand men, not including the military colonists settled outside, in a village regularly built, to the south, and within range of the fort guns. Two fresh batteries were lately erected to the north-west of the fortress.