

The following extract from a private letter received by last mail, may interest some of our readers, though it contains no news relating to the war:

"Agamemnon," Malta, Jan. 6th, 1856.

The *Agamemnon* arrived at Malta the day before Christmas, precisely two years since the occasion which has made this festive assembly in Beikos Bay. Our passage from the Piræus was unusually long and stormy; indeed for two days it blew a gale from the westward, and as we were not allowed to use steam, yet may suppose we did not make much in the way of speed. Genoa, however, at last to the coast of Sicily, we were well repaid by a glorious view of *Ætna*, and of the part of that beautiful island which stretches from Syracuse to its southern extremity. Since arriving, we have been and still are enjoying an extraordinary mix of doubt and uncertainty, as to whether we go to England or not. The fact is, that three years of constant hard work, with several bombardments, has so shaken the ship, that she requires a thorough overhaul. Now, if we are to sail to Malta, but one dock, that employed constantly by the pressing requirements of the gun-boats and transport service, the people in authority here say positively, they cannot take us in hand, and we must go to England. On the other side, Sir E. Lyons, who was here the other day on his way home, is exceedingly reticent to part with what he calls his chief supporter, and is equally determined that we remain; so the matter rests.

As we are included in the Admiral will carry his point, though perhaps I may be misled by my own wishes, which, however great may be the attraction for England, lead me on the broad principle of self-interest to desire that I complete my present year in Malta, and then giving me what I particularly wish, the next campaign season in the Black Sea. It is also to be considered that were we now to go home, the extensive repairs they would consider necessary might detain us beyond the present time for the winter in the Baltic. What a fate for the *Agamemnon*. It will be very easy, I think, to patch us up sufficiently to carry us well through the summer, and take us to England by the Christmas of next year; for after all there is little the matter even now, and with common care, would prevent our running for a long time to come. You will know our fate, before we do ourselves.

I enjoyed our stay at Stamboul very much, for as we lay close to the shore, up to the time that it was necessary for a few moments to reach in a caique any part either of the ancient or modern city. Each day of duty was dedicated to some new excursion in search of somewhat to interest or amuse us; at one time, a ride to that terrestrial paradise of the Stamboul Turks, the sweet waters of Europe, now of course deserted through the unseasonableness of out-door amusements; at another, a run over to Scutari, and so to that celebrated park of which, from which can be seen the richest panorama in the world, the Bosporus and Sea of Marmora even to Bujukdere; a walk along the ancient walls from the Golden Horn to the Sea of Marmora, with a visit to the castle of Severa. We were, perhaps, not the most interesting, and richest in high historical associations, but the sight of the Sultan in state going to the mosque on the occasion of a high festival, and attended by all the ladies of his court, superbly dressed in magnificent robes, was one which, from its almost barbaric splendour, with the interest attached to the declining monarch, must remain for a long time fresh in my recollection. We had, in an hour, while the Sultan remained in the mosque, ample opportunity of admiring the presence of the Indies to admiration; they truly were very beautiful, but less so, I think, than our own fair countrywomen in England. It was most remarkable to note the difference which little more than a year had made in the city and its inhabitants. Present influence, I am sorry to say, is paramount at court; but we have made ourselves to be thoroughly respected by our general deference to national prejudices—the extent and liberality of our commercial dealings. In fact, among the people, the preference of us to the French is very remarkable,

and was shown most unmistakably to myself on several occasions. We were a week at the Piræus, four days of which we spent in quarantine. This we employed in visiting by boat the islands looking upon the bay of Salamis. The weather was delightfully warm, and on one occasion, I picked a magnificent bunch of wild flowers, principally consisting of anemones, and a few tulips, and a high request in English hot-houses. I have preserved some of the bulbs, which I hope to send, if I do not take them to you.

It had been a matter of some doubt whether or not we should remain long in the Attic, to do practice, or to go to Athens; it was then with an unusual amount of pleasure, that I found myself free to wander where I would in a land sacred by so many associations, to whose genius we of these latter days owe no less a debt of lofty purity in art, and loftier thoughts in every branch of learning, but of which (the original impulse) even now we can but aspire to be distant and humble imitators. A very tolerable coach carried our party over the four miles of good road to the lofty purity in art, and loftier thoughts in every branch of learning, but of which (the original impulse) even now we can but aspire to be distant and humble imitators. A very tolerable coach carried our party over the four miles of good road to the lofty purity in art, and loftier thoughts in every branch of learning, but of which (the original impulse) even now we can but aspire to be distant and humble imitators.

We there obtained a guide, and at once started forth, eager to make the most of the short time left to us. I have done wrong in not first describing, the most interesting and grandest of the Acropolis. I was possessed with this feeling throughout, and although, save the Parthenon, and the adjacent temples, with those of Theseus, the Winds, and the few columns yet standing of Jupiter Olympus, little now remains of the physical grandeur of the Acropolis. I was possessed with this feeling throughout, and although, save the Parthenon, and the adjacent temples, with those of Theseus, the Winds, and the few columns yet standing of Jupiter Olympus, little now remains of the physical grandeur of the Acropolis. I was possessed with this feeling throughout, and although, save the Parthenon, and the adjacent temples, with those of Theseus, the Winds, and the few columns yet standing of Jupiter Olympus, little now remains of the physical grandeur of the Acropolis.

It was therefore, as you may suppose, with a degree of interest almost amounting to awe, that we entered the Parthenon, within its time-honoured precincts, and looked around us upon its many wonders of ancient art. They have all been more or less injured, but it was impossible for the least capable among us for appreciating such things, not to be struck with their manifold excellences. It is not the least part of these extraordinary productions, that nameless grace of form, that easy flow of drapery, so much lacked in most of our modern works, and which makes these all studies of all that is highest art. From the Theseus to Mars' Hill, or more properly the Areopagus, is but a few hundred paces on a slight ascent; arrived there, I knew that was standing on the very spot where the great Athenian addresses the "Men of Athens" in the words to all familiar, but which, in the full sight of the great temples of their triumphant gods, had proved so little avail. The Areopagus had a sort of rounded hill, about which could be seen the most noble statues, and on which were the marble seats of the judges who formed the ancient court.

News by last night's Mail.

LONDON, Friday.—The *Times* Paris correspondent writes, that private letters from St. Petersburg, dated 17th inst. state that the Czar has declared formally that the Austrian propositions were to be the basis of ulterior pacific negotiations, and for the present may be considered as true preliminaries of peace.

Among the diplomatic body and the court, peace was regarded as inevitable and the unconditional acceptance of the propositions had produced considerable sensation in that capital, with the exception of the officials. This sudden turn of pacific ideas was generally badly received, not merely by the old Moscow party, but also by the mass of the people. The popular fanaticism had been roused to such a pitch after the fall of Sebastopol, that at present it is a work of difficulty to make them accept a political arrangement as necessary or desirable for Europe. The public mind was greatly excited, and an outbreak would not be surprising.

The Vienna correspondent of the *Times* states that in that capital the most strenuous efforts are making to induce England not to insist on the disarming of the Russian fortresses on the Eastern shores of the Black Sea.

The chances of a speedy and pacific settlement are on the increase, and Austria's sincerity is as much questioned as on former occasions, but appearances are fair and straightforward.

The Czar has ordered his army in the Crimea to cease hostilities, without waiting for a formal armistice, although it is rumoured that an armistice will be agreed on for three months.

LATEST.—The *Daily News* of Saturday, on undoubted authority says that the preliminaries will be signed probably before Tuesday—certainly before the meeting of Parliament. An armistice will be concluded immediately after signing the preliminaries, and negotiation with the view of a final and comprehensive treaty, will be commenced immediately. It further states that it is the determination of the Allied Powers to exercise to the fullest extent the right reserved to them by the Austrian proposals to bring forward additional stipulations to the general interests of Europe.

Conferences had been held at Constantinople to adjust the first and fourth points relative to the Principalities.

The fighting continues on both sides of Sebastopol. The Allies had blown up two of the docks.

A deep fog had been dug and a parapet 12 feet high raised around the town of Kertch, and the defences of St. Paul's and Yenikale, within which the troops are huddled.

A rumour had reached the camp, that Gen. Wiedegate had been reinforced at Arbat, and meditated an attack across the ice.

The Russians had taken up their winter quarters at Simpheropol, and Backschierani and at Kingburn. They had 30,000 men between Petroski and Oriakoff, and fears were entertained of an attack on the fortress. The garrison had been reinforced. The flotilla was frozen in, but would aid in the defence.

All the officers of the Anglo-Turkish contingent are ordered to quit Constantinople and join their corps at Kertch.

Continuing on Jan. 10, state that Gen. Mouravieff, after having destroyed the advanced works of Kars, had left in the place and garrison about 1000 men well provisioned, and had gone toward Gumri with the bulk of his army.

It is stated and afterwards contradicted that Marshal Pishin, General Godard, and Omar Pasha had like Gen. Gortschakoff, received orders from their respective Governments, not to be obliged to sign. Such orders will not be sent till an armistice be nominally concluded. It is hoped that such armistice may be signed on or about the 2d February.

AFFAIRS IN THE CRIMEA.

Accounts from the Crimea to the 6th of Jan., mention no fact of the least importance. The cold was intense, and sea had frozen along the coast, and particularly in the ports of Czestach and Balacava, and in the roadstead of Sebastopol. The ice, however, soon disappears.—The men who suffered most were the porters and laborers recently arrived and not yet inured to the climate.

The cannonade from the north forts continued uninterrupted. It is remarkable that recently the Russians have fired shells into Sebastopol, whereas they formerly threw only bombs, hence it is inferred that they have received fresh supplies of material. The fire on the city does not much damage, but is directed with a sagacity that shows that they have accurate information of all the movements in the allied camp.

The Globe, the Palmerston organ, of Friday evening January 25th, announces in a leading article that the warlike preparations of the Government are proceeding as if no pacific intimation had been received within the last few hours. It says a requisition had been sent for transport accommodation for 4000 horses, or nearly 60,000 tons of shipping. Lord Palmerston will meet cordially the advances of peace, will carefully provide for a possible failure in diplomacy.

Kertch letters of Dec. 29th mention that although locked in the ice the garrisons of Kertch and Yenikale were doing nothing. Fuel was the only article at short.

UNITED STATES.

A message from the President endorsing the course of the Missouri invaders and condemning the Emigrant Aid Society has excited great indignation in many circles. We fear that the Kansas question will yet be a source of never-ending civil war. The settlers in the territory will consent to be ruled by the citizens of Missouri. If the latter should repeat their invasion, the free West will send men to help the settlers.—Then comes the tug of war. Nothing can prevent this fearful struggle so far as we can see, but the timely intervention of Congress against the Missourians.—*Herold and Journal*.

HASARD'S GAZETTE.

Wednesday, February 20, 1856.

The *Courier* arrived with the Colonial and American Mails last night about 10 o'clock. The British Mail Steamer had not arrived in Halifax on Saturday. No doubt the weather in the Gulf of Mexico had retarded the passage of the week previous, had a protracted passage of nearly fourteen days, which proves that the vessel she was at sea was far from being in the best of health. Her arrival after her trial trip from the Clyde to Liverpool, that she would have made the run in seven or eight days. The *Colon*, an English steamer from Liverpool on the 23d Jan. had been in the *Persia* and no tidings had been heard for after being out three weeks; a steamer would be sent in search of her. We have no later news than the Telegraphic despatch published in our last, but we have the details of the papers which all tend to confirm the peace rumors, the most interesting items we have copied in to day's paper.

The House of Assembly has been hitherto engaged in the usual routine business of appointing committees, and incidental to the management of the Session the Treasurer and Collector of Impost accounts have been presented. A resolution to revise the License Laws was passed the House, and the following very important one with reference to Schools was moved by Hon. Mr. Warburton and agreed to.

Resolved, That a Committee of seven members be appointed to report by Bill or otherwise, on the expediency of making provision for School-teachers in the Free Education Act, when the same are teaching from continued sickness or old age.

Should any measure of interest general or local be mooted we shall endeavor to present our readers with everything relative thereto.