

"should never have thought," he said, "that you would be so alarmed by a little harmless snake."
 "Who could have supposed it!" cried Ernestine, applauding her father's words. "We are different sort of people here."
 "It is impossible to change one's nature," I replied.
 "Nature!" replied Ernestine; "what do you know about nature? For Heaven's sake hold your tongue."
 This was really too rude. I was on the point of making a sharp reply, when I saw Oken extend her hand towards the reptile's cage.
 (To be concluded in our next.)

Correspondence.

To the Editor of the Examiner.

Sir—I perceive by some remarks in your paper of the 25th instant, that you intend offering some suggestions to our Legislature prior to their assembly, and would beg to lead you to reflect upon the bad policy of taxing the materials used in shipbuilding. A trade that, irrespective of its advantages or disadvantages to those directly concerned in it, is undoubtedly of great benefit to the people generally. First—it induces many young men to remain that would otherwise leave the Island in search of employment elsewhere that without shipbuilding could not be found at home, and gives partial employment to many who are in want of such assistance. Second—it makes a home market for all the various agricultural and other products of the Island, many of which could not otherwise find a market, and all are undoubtedly increased in value and demand. Third—it gives value to the forest. Fourth—the consumption of imported goods, and therefore the Revenue is greatly increased by shipbuilding, without counting any of the materials used in building or rigging.

In New Brunswick, and I think also in Nova Scotia, iron, rope, canvass, windlass gear, and all articles used in shipbuilding, are imported free of duty, while on this Island the above articles are taxed from 2 to 5 per cent. It is therefore clear that builders on this Island cannot compete with the New Brunswick builders on equal terms. Surely that is wrong.

There is also another reason for making iron free: it is used in the manufacture, within the Island, of agricultural and other industrial implements; and I submit that the raw material for these purposes ought not to be taxed. It may be objected that it is unsafe to make any abatement in the impost duties, lest the revenue should suffer; but it does not appear to me that the difference would be felt, and even if it should, would it not be better to increase the duties on other imported goods, and let all articles be free that are imported to be again exported, with largely increased value derived from the natural resources of the country. Again it may be said that much of these materials would be used on vessels intended to remain under Island ownership for our own coasting trade, and therefore not to be exported. I do not think this objection will be urged by those who know how much of our carrying trade is done by Americans and Nova Scotians; and who must therefore recognise the propriety of removing discouraging taxes, so as to enable our own people to compete with them on fair terms.

NOBODY.

THE EXAMINER.

CHARLOTTETOWN, FEBRUARY 11, 1856.

ARRIVAL OF THE ENGLISH MAIL.

The English Mail arrived here at a late hour on Monday night last. The news from the seat of war is unimportant. The rumours regarding Peace appear to have been somewhat more active in England than on any previous occasion since the commencement of the war, it being confidently affirmed that Russia manifests a disposition to embrace the propositions of the Allies. But the rumours of a peaceful disposition on the part of the Czar appear to take their rise in the Austrian and Prussian Courts, and we have just as little faith in them as we have in the Court of St. Petersburg. Russia will never conclude a war, in every aspect of which she has been signally worsted, so long as she can command men and money to carry it on; and one campaign could never exhaust the resources, in these respects, of so huge an empire as that of Russia. We suspect, therefore, that the rumours of peace are circulated with the view of lulling the Allies into a false security, and to give the enemy time to make gigantic preparations for the next campaign. We have no apprehension, however, that the Allies will be so easily deceived.

The Colonial and United States mails arrived here on Thursday night last.

THE WAR IN THE EAST.

(From the London News of the World, January 20.)

THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS.

It is utterly impossible, from the fragmentary and conflicting statements which daily reach us from the various courts of Europe, to form any accurate idea of what the actual state of things at present is in reference to the negotiations for peace. The Russian reply to the Austrian proposal has certainly been forwarded to Vienna; but of the exact nature of that reply we are still completely in the dark. The Belgian Nord, which speaks only in the interests of Russia, tells us that the Court of St. Petersburg accepts, in principle, the proposals submitted by Count Valentin Esterhazy, and adds, "The Imperial Cabinet of Russia does not introduce therein any modifications of significance; it refuses the territorial cession demanded in Bessarabia; it consents to the exchange of the territories respectively occupied by the belligerents." That is to say, Russia will surrender nothing upon the Danube, but will consent to abandon her recent conquest at Kars and in Turkish Armenia in exchange for the restoration of Sebastopol and the Crimea. Will Austria, which has no interests in Asia, but a very deep interest in the freedom of the navigation of the Danube, consider this a modification of no significance? If the statement made by the Nord be correct, it is obvious that Russia, offended at the part which Austria has taken in these transactions, will now only consent to treat for peace upon terms which would be more prejudicial to Austria than to any other Power involved in the controversy. Who will say that such a result to the feeble, vacillating, and half-hearted policy of the Court of Vienna is undeserved? But what does Austria say to this answer from St. Petersburg? The Berlin telegrapher (speaking from what authority we know not) tells us, that "Count Buol has rejected the counterproposals of the Imperial Cabinet of Russia without discussion." Indeed! Has Austria at last found courage to act with so much decision? Then she is, of course, prepared to cast her lot in with the Allies, and to take up arms to compel the Czar to conform to the conditions she has prescribed. Steady, steady; not quite so fast. The same telegraph from which he have quoted tells us, that at the moment at which Count Buol rejected the Russian counterproposals without discussion, he made two distinct intimations—one to Prince Gortschakoff, the Russian Minister at Vienna, and the other to the Cabinets of London and Paris. To the Russian Minister he announced the probability of a speedy rupture of diplomatic relations between the Courts of

St. Petersburg and Vienna; to the Cabinets of London and Paris he notified that although the diplomatic relations between Austria and Russia would cease, Austria would not take the field this year. Here, then, we have a full confirmation of the shallow and preposterous character of the vaunted Austrian ultimatum. Her terms are rejected with contempt; but she has not the courage to sustain them. She will "cut" the Power which insults her; but she won't fight. She will exchange no more words with Russia; but she won't draw her sword with the Allies. What an attitude of dignity!

But let us hear what Austria herself says upon the present posture of affairs. The Austrian Correspondence, a semi-official organ of the Court of Vienna, states that "the reply from Russia appeared conciliatory, and marked by peaceful sentiments. Still the reply did not contain a sufficient admission to the propositions of the Cabinet of Vienna, which expressed the final decision of the Allied Powers on the subject of the guarantees for peace. Difficulties, therefore, still appear to be opposed to the belief that the desired object has been attained. England, it is said, will not give way from the verbal tenor of the propositions sent to St. Petersburg. Should that power persist in rejecting any modification, the Cabinet of Vienna will withdraw its Ambassador from St. Petersburg, and will make propositions to Frankfurt to have the support of the confederation against Russia." From this it will be seen that Austria artfully endeavours to make it appear that England is the sole obstruction to a further consideration of pacific propositions, and that it will be only owing to England's persistence in rejecting any modification of the terms already proposed, that Austria will go the length of withdrawing her Ambassador from St. Petersburg. No reference, whatever, is made to France; but the inference to be drawn from this Austrian semi-official statement is that France, but for England's obstinacy, would not be unwilling to listen to a modification of the proposals which Russia has rejected. We believe this to be a willful misrepresentation of the fact; and the only motive we can assign to it is a traitorous desire on the part of Austria, even at the moment that she is professing an adhesion to the cause of the Allies, to sow the seeds of mistrust and difference between the Cabinets of London and Paris. Austria dreads Russia, but she does not love England and France. Heretofore she has been playing fast and loose with all. By-and-by she will find herself scouted by all. When that day comes, let her look to her own.

PROSPECTS OF PEACE.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE PROPOSITIONS OF THE ALLIES BY RUSSIA. The Times of Thursday, in a second edition, publishes the following:—

VIENNA, WEDNESDAY, 10 P.M.

"Russia has unconditionally accepted the propositions of the allies. This is authentic." A third edition of the Morning Post of Thursday says that her Majesty's Government have received the following telegraphic despatch from Sir Hamilton Seymour:— "The Russian Government accept the Austrian proposals as a basis for negotiation."

TEXT OF THE PROPOSITIONS SUBMITTED TO RUSSIA.

The Independence Belge publishes the following as the text of the propositions submitted to Russia by Count Esterhazy:—

I.—THE DANUBIAN PRINCIPALITIES.

"Complete abolition of the Russian protectorate. The Danubian Principalities shall receive an organisation conforming to their wishes, their necessities, and their interests; and this new organisation, respecting which the population itself shall be consulted, shall be recognised by the contracting Powers and sanctioned by the Sultan as emanating from his Sovereign initiative. No State shall have power under any pretext whatsoever, under any form of Protectorate, to intermeddle in questions of the internal administration of the Principalities. The latter will adopt a definite permanent system called for by their geographical position, and no obstacle shall be interposed to prevent them from fortifying their territory for their own security as they see fit against all foreign aggression.

"In exchange for the fortified positions and territory occupied by the Allied Armies, Russia consents to a rectification of her frontier with European Turkey. The frontier will leave the environs of Chotym [in Bessarabia], following the line of the heights stretching in a south-east direction, and terminate at Lake Salyzk. The line of this rectification shall be definitively regulated by general treaty, and the conceded territory shall return to the Principalities and the suzerainty of the Porte.

II.—THE DANUBE.

"The freedom of the Danube and of the mouths of the river shall be efficaciously assured by the institutions or European international law, in which the contracting Powers shall be equally represented; excepting the particular positions of owners of the soil on the banks, which will be regulated upon the principles established respecting river navigation by the treaty of the Congress of Vienna. Each of the contracting Powers shall have the right to station one or two light vessels at the mouths of the river, in order to insure the observance of the regulations relative to the freedom of the Danube.

III.—NEUTRALISATION OF THE BLACK SEA.

"This sea shall be opened to merchant vessels; closed to ships of war. Consequently naval arsenals will neither be created nor preserved. The protection of the commercial and maritime interests of all nations shall be assured in the respective ports in the Black Sea by the establishment of institutions conforming to international law and ancient usages in this matter. The two coast-bordered Powers mutually engage to keep up only the number of light vessels, of a stipulated strength, necessary for the coasting service. This convention, concluded separately between the two Powers, shall form a part of the general treaty as an annex after having been approved of by the contracting parties. This separate convention shall neither be annulled nor modified without the assent of the subscribers to the general treaty. The closing of the straits shall admit an exception in favour of the stationary vessels mentioned in the preceding article.

IV.—CHRISTIAN SUBJECTS OF THE PORTE.

"The immunities of the Rayah subjects of the Porte will be established without injury to the independence or the dignity of the Sultan's crown. As deliberations are taking place between Austria, France, Great Britain, and the Sublime Porte, in order to assure to the Christian subjects of the Sultan their religious and political rights, Russia shall be invited, on the conclusion of peace, to associate herself with them.

"V.—The belligerent Powers reserve the right which belongs to them to produce, in the interest of Europe, some special conditions besides the four guarantees."

ADVANCE OF THE RUSSIANS.

According to intelligence of the 7th inst., from Constantinople, the Russian advanced posts were within three hours' march of Erzeroum.

NOCTURNAL SURPRISE BY FRENCH TROOPS.

The Invalide Russe publishes a telegraphic despatch from Prince Gortschakoff. The Prince says that a party of French, wearing white cloaks (probably that they might not be so readily perceived in the snow), advanced by night and surprised Baidar. They bayoneted the outposts, but retreated

when the Russian reserves came up. The Russian loss was three killed and three wounded.

OMAR PASHA'S DISASTROUS RETREAT.

ZIEWIE, DEC. 13.—It is with a feeling of no little regret that, after the lapse of a fortnight, I am compelled to date this letter from the same place as my last. The gleam of sunshine which then induced a hope of finer weather proved treacherous, and we have until within the last two days been deluged with rain. Rather than relinquish without an effort the object which he had hoped to attain when he undertook the campaign, Omar Pasha determined to attempt to force his way over a flooded country, and across several mountain torrents, to Kutais. On the morning of the 21 the army received orders to march in the middle of a tremendous storm, and succeeded upon the following day in crossing the Ekoura, over which river Skender Pasha had constructed a footbridge with considerable ingenuity, but which was nevertheless almost immediately afterwards carried away. We then pushed on over roads knee-deep in mud, frequently delayed by rivalets, which had swollen into deep rivers and swept away the temporary bridges which had been put up to supply the place of those destroyed by the Russians, and ultimately camped upon plains watered by the Skeniscal. These were partially flooded, and it was with some difficulty that spots were found upon which to pitch the tents where the water was not more than two inches deep. Here the troops remained lying in mud and water for four days, with nothing to live on but a short supply of biscuit. The stream, which is one of the most considerable tributaries of the Rhion, and which always runs a volume of water, was about 200 yards broad, and its impetuous and turbid current was whirling down huge trees as if they had been walking-sticks undermining great portions of the bank, here and there overflowing the adjacent country, and altogether presenting an aspect which put any hope of finding a ford within three or four days out of the question. Meantime the rivers in the rear had continued to rise, and the line of communication was temporarily intercepted. The position of the army under these circumstances was becoming in the last degree critical. Some of the regiments had altogether run out of provisions, and the unfortunate soldiers, who have not received pay for nearly a year, were buying biscuit from their more fortunate comrades at 10 paras a piece. The fact that the troops in some of the brigades were not so well supplied with provisions as those in others is to be attributed to a want of proper arrangements on the part of the generals commanding. The state of the weather, however, would have rendered a retreat necessary, even if such had not been the case, since the hardship and exposure which the men had been undergoing began seriously to affect their health, and it became apparent to Omar Pasha that to linger longer in so unsuitable a locality would seriously imperil his whole army. He, therefore, reluctantly gave the orders to retire three days ago, and with heavy hearts we turned our backs upon the Russians. The Princess Dadian had hitherto wisely determined to remain in her mountains until she had witnessed the upshot of the campaign; it is now pretty certain that she will not at present enter into negotiations with any Power hostile to Russia.

WINTER QUARTERS.—SKIRMISHES WITH PRINCE GREGORY.—BRAVERY OF TURKISH VILLAGERS.

REDOUT-KALEH, DEC. 20.—The terrific storms of the last week have obliged all the steamers to get under way and seek at Batoum that shelter which the open roadstead here does not afford. The army has gone into winter quarters at Choloni, four miles to the rear of Ziewie, where the formation of the country offers great natural advantages of position. Omar Pasha has established himself here for the present, and is engaged in completing his winter commissariat arrangements. Meanwhile the enemy has not been idle. Finding that it was useless attempting to harass the main body of the army, Prince Gregory (the brother of the Princess Dadian), at the head of about 500 Georgian and Imerian militia, surrounded Sugdidi and forcing the unfortunate inhabitants of the neighbouring villages to take up arms, under threat of burning down their houses in case of refusal, he led an armed mob into the town in the middle of the night, and surprised an unfortunate garrison of 180 Turkish soldiers, who had been left there invalided. Three or four of these were killed, and 32 taken prisoners in their beds, before the alarm had thoroughly aroused the remainder. These assembled hastily in the square before the Princess's palace, and not only offered a stout resistance, but charged their numerous enemy, who crowded the narrow streets, with such determination that they killed 60 of them, among whom were eight boys, and utterly routed the whole force; after which they barricaded themselves in the palace, a messenger was despatched to Omar Pasha, asking for relief, at the same time assuring him they were provisioned and prepared for a long resistance. Gregory finding it was hopeless to attempt to dislodge these brave men, turned his arms against a Mingrelian Bey who had taken up arms with the Turks, and obliged him to fortify himself with his retainers in his romantic fortress, which crowns a hill-top, in regular feudal style. He, too, has applied for assistance, and Skender Pasha was sent to the relief of both parties. That enterprising General, getting information of the presence of the enemy within a few miles of the camp, went out to meet them with a regiment of cavalry and a battalion of rifles under Colonel Ballard; placing the rifles in ambush he advanced with his cavalry upon Prince Gregory. Seeing the small force which was opposed to him the Prince charged the cavalry, which retreated until the enemy was fairly in the trap, when the order was given to fire, and a storm of Minie bullets emptied a hundred saddles on the spot; the remainder precipitately took to their heels. Skender Pasha then proceeded to Sugdidi. This summary chastisement will, doubtless, produce a wholesome effect upon the enemy, but it is more difficult to know how the people of the country are to be treated. Their position is most unfortunate. Forced on the one hand by the brother of their Sovereign at the point of the sword to take up arms against the Turks, subject on the other to the immediate vengeance of these (the present possessors of the country) if they are caught with arms, they see no means of escape from the dilemma in which they are placed, and which involves the destruction of all they hold dear to them.

THE RUSSIAN HOSPITALS.

The Superior, Frau von St. —, a Sister of Mercy, says:—We packed our cars closely with all kinds of things for the wounded—bread, shirts, trousers, bandages, lint, Klukva, water, wine, morphine, powders, castor-oil, and some red wine that I had kept for a special occasion, and which I found very seasonable both for officers and men. All we could take with us we took to Mackenzie. The sisters who are appointed to wait on the officers, and nurse them, speak with tears of their grateful conduct. Many among them have mortal wounds; it was hard to approach their beds and console them with hopes of life. Believe me, your soul melts with pity within you as you do so. One officer has his shoulder splintered with a rifle ball, which then passed into his left side, where it remained; it is impossible to take it out, and he suffers so dreadfully that his cries are distracting. He is only 26 years old, a beautiful young man, and a good Christian. He prays with great fervour. When the strong pains come on he entreats us piteously to help him, as if we could. I brought our best surgeons to him, but all gave me for answer, "Impossible." At last the poor sufferer learned his sentence and prepared himself for death like a Christian. One sister does not leave him; her nursing and sympathy appear to do him good. Mourning and sad is all this to see.

Another officer had a contusion on his head, and his elbow was completely shattered; the sisters told me a good deal about him, but I wished to look into his case with my own eyes, and went to him. I found him sitting; he asked me my name; I told him, and he immediately begged me to second a favour he asked of Count Vielhorsky. He has had three brothers, so they were four in all. One fell in the Caucasus, another here, and two are now severely wounded; they have an aged mother, who lives in great poverty. Before the battle he had prayed and said to himself—"My first wound is for the Emperor—the second for my mother." He received a strong contusion, did not mind it; but rushed at the enemy's battery. Then it was that he had his elbow crushed; the wound is said to be a mortal one. He begged with tears Count Vielhorsky to get a pension settled on his old mother—he spoke to him so touchingly, that the Count himself was moved to tears and promised to do his best. The filial love and care of the young man is beautiful; nor can we hear him without emotion praying for the welfare of our exalted protectress. The Russian soldier is unique. With joy do we bend the knee and thank God for keeping up the courage and fortitude of our brave fellows. Our hearts expand when we hear how resignedly they endure every kind of torture, and say in the most exasperating moment—"Sweet sister, we fought like men!" Then racked with pain, they give a sharp groan, but exclaim directly after—"It is nothing, I can bear it, perhaps it will go off!" Such words rend the soul, yet your breast dares not heave, and for their sakes you check the almost resistless fountain of your tears. For Emperor and Fatherland they shed willingly their blood, and die in the hope that God will help the Russian people, and curb their foes. You can scarcely imagine what a variety of scenes occur; at times you weep, you gaze on the wounds, and a few moments after you laugh. For instance: I stepped up to a stretcher just laid on the ground, and asked the wounded man if he would not like to drink, handing him something to drink at the same time, he begged me to bind up the wound in his side. I asked—"My friend, are you shot through the body?" "Yes," he answered. I stooped over him to search for the wound, and was so horrified that I almost shrieked, for the wound suddenly burst open. When he saw the wound himself, he said, with the greatest calmness—"The wound is good! Don't trouble yourself about binding it up—such wounds don't heal!" "Alas! How did I feel! I looked him in the face; it was as placid as that of a sleeping child, and something holy played over his features. I asked him if he would like to see a clergyman? He said he should; and he took the sacrament. Peacefully he lay where he was, and said, low—"Dear mother, do not leave me!" If I could have given my life for his, I would have done it cheerfully. Not to lose sight of him, I kept coming back to him; at length they carried him away, and I did not know where to. While binding and dressing in a distant tent, I found my poor sufferer again. He rejoiced greatly to see me, raised himself a little, and begged me to lean over him. I knelt down and asked, "What do you wish, my friend?" He answered, "Mother, let me kiss your forehead." With that he took hold of my head and kissed it, saying, "That was my first, but now take my soldier's blessing before my death." And he blessed me with the sign of the cross. I was greatly affected, and received with deep faith the blessing of such a man. My tears overpowered me; he gazed on me and said, "Mother, why do you cry? You regret us? We die for Christ's sake, and you see we are all glad." At the same instant I hear laughing, and a voice cries behind me, "Mother sister!" I turn round and ask, "Who calls?" A voice answers, "A roast pig!" I was amazed, and all the patients laughed. Then a truly horrible sight revealed itself to these eyes; head, face, all was black, and so charred, so swollen, that it looked one mass. The arms, too, were shockingly mutilated and burnt. I asked him how he got burnt so, and he said a chest full of cartridges had exploded close to him. I began to dress him, made a mask for his face, and he so cheered all the rest with his stories, that even those who were severely wounded were astonished at him; my poor friend himself smiled; he actually helped me himself, too, to put the lint right while I was dressing his wounds. The burnt artilleryman asked for something sour to drink. I ran off to our earthen tub (zemlanka), and in less than a quarter of an hour was back again, but he had just died. The other soldier did not die before night, and retained his senses to the last.

A CRIMEAN SOLDIER'S EXPERIENCE.

A private, who some years ago ran away from his friends and enlisted, through his passion for military habits, lately returned from the Crimea, after having been in the battles of Alma and Inkermann, and in Scutari hospital, has paid a visit to his friends, and among other details he gives the following account of a very narrow escape he met with at the battle of Inkermann. He says: "A big surly-looking Russian, to whom I had to look up (the narrator being a good-sized fellow), ran towards me with the intention of bayoneting me, when I made a movement sideways, so that the bayonet passed under my arm, or between my arm and my body, and the Russian came up with such violence that he knocked me down and fell upon me, while the bayonet pierced the ground. I then, fearing he would produce a knife to despatch me, clasped my arms round him, and held him with such grasp that I never shall forget, while my comrade despatched him with the point of his bayonet. The Russian's blood ran down me before I relinquished my hold." Another time, speaking of the horrible situation he was in one cold night, when he was on picket duty, he says: "We packed the dead bodies of the Russians four abreast, to form a wall to keep the wind off." The narrator was wounded by a splinter, or piece of iron from a shell, which lay hissing some time near him, and which burst while he was in the act of reloading his rifle at one of the enemy, whom he shot, who was taking deliberate aim at him from the parapet, about 150 yards distant. He was wounded again in a sortie of the enemy, while he was on duty in the trenches; his opponent then endeavoured to bayonet him, when he struck his weapon so that it pierced his thigh, in which it remained till his comrade, whose attention was attracted, gave the finishing shot, and he was thus providentially preserved.

RUSSIAN SPIES IN SEBASTOPOL.

The Invalide Russe publishes an extract from Prince Gortschakoff's diary of operations, from the 5th to the 16th of December. It says:—"In this space of time nothing particular has occurred in the Crimea, except some reconnaissances and out-post skirmishes. Thus, to ascertain as far as possible the position and works of the enemy on the south side of Sebastopol, a sloop and three boats, under the command of Lieut. Dolgoff, were sent on the night between the 5th and 6th December towards the South Bay (between the town and the Karabelnaia suburb). That bold officer, leaving the boats which brought him between the Paul battery and the Woronzoff roads and quay, landed near the crane, accompanied by Ensign Oskolkoff, Quartermaster Stepanoff, and the pilot Mixkailoff. Thence he advanced as far as the docks; but at a short distance from the wood-yard he came upon a corps de garde of the enemy sitting round a fire, whereupon he returned to the sloop. Another attempt to land at the centre of the bridge of the South Bay also failed. After these two attempts our men took the direction of the New Admiralty, and landed near the Marson Caranage. They came upon a sentinel, whom Quartermaster Stepanoff felled to the ground, but a general alarm was spread among the enemy, and they were compelled to beat a retreat. They limited themselves to a reconnaissance of the side of the bay."