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THE POSITION OF THE RUSSIAN ARMY.

A correspondent of the London Telegraph, writing from the Turkish lines at Plevna, and who is the only one who has looked over the ground from the Turkish side says:—

"The Russian position in front of Plevna is, in my judgment, desperately compromised. Their intrenchments are being formed on bad ground, and lie easily open to attack in front, flank or rear. They have, indeed, plenty of cavalry, and are still pretty strong in infantry, but the men are seriously demoralized; and, from what I have seen, Osman Pasha could hold his position against double the number of Russians who are now besieging them, even with his communications interrupted as at present."

THE RESTORATION OF THE HIERARCHY IN SCOTLAND.

The Catholics of Scotland are soon to be blessed with having a Hierarchy of their own. We learn from the Nation that:—

The restoration of the hierarchy in Scotland promises soon to be an accomplished fact. The main details have already been settled. The new episcopal bench will consist of an archbishop and five suffragans. The titles will be taken from ancient sees. The Archbishop of St. Andrew's will have his residence in Edinburgh, and the seats of the other sees will be Aberdeen, Lismore, Glasgow, and Moray. We may note here that in England further ecclesiastical changes of a similar character have become necessary. The diocese of South-west has been found too extensive for one bishop to superintend. It is, therefore, to be divided into two, Portsmouth becoming the seat of a new diocese. The plans for the cathedral in this latter town are on a scale of magnificence.

GENERAL TODLEBEN.

A correspondent at the seat of war writes of the famous Russian Engineer in the following terms:—

General Todleben, who though nominally the chief of the staff of Prince Charles of Roumania, is really the commander of the troops besieging Plevna, is, doubtless, the greatest military engineer of modern times. It was his skill that compelled the allies to sit down before Sebastopol a whole twelvemonth, and actually dig their way into that great fortress. His coming to the Crimea was not relished by the Russian commander, and, as his instructions were of an unofficial character—he was desired to inspect and report upon the defences of Sebastopol for the private information of the Czar—it was hinted to him that his departure would give no offence. He remained, however, and so strengthened the fortress that, though it fell eventually, it made a long and memorable resistance to a fierce, unrelenting siege. He is now sixty years of age, having been born at Mitau, in Courland, in 1818. He is a graduate of the Imperial School of Engineers at St. Petersburg, and has passed his life in the service.

HOME RULE CONFERENCE.

The Home Rule M. P.'s meet in conference in the City Hall Dublin, on the 9th inst. This conference of the Home Rule M. P.'s is but the precursor of the National Conference which is shortly to meet in Dublin. At that meeting the important question of Obstruction or no Obstruction will be decided. Probably a medium course will be adopted; the do-nothings will be censured and the policy of "Obstruction" will be partially endorsed. The Ulster Examiner says:—

The Conference of the Home Rule members took place in Dublin on Tuesday, and was presided over by Mr. M. Brooks, the member for Dublin. There was a lengthy discussion, in which Mr. Butt, Mr. McCarthy, Mr. O'Connor Power, and Mr. Parnell took part before the proceedings became regularly formal—a result attained by Mr. Shaw proposing for adoption a series of resolutions which in substance pledged the party to consult together and carry out a united line of policy on all questions affecting the interest of Ireland and on imperial questions of importance. These resolutions were unanimously adopted, but some of the members do not appear to attach much importance to them. The resolutions of the Conference leaves matters precisely as they were, all those things having been thoroughly understood previously. Mr. Parnell thought the resolutions should have been submitted for approval to a National Conference.

MR. BUTT.

Meanwhile preparations are made to guard against the proposed Conference being of an unrepresentative character. The Conference is to take place some day between the 16th of December and the 20th of January next. A special telegram to the Ulster Examiner says:—

At a meeting of the Council of the Home Rule League, held to-day, the following notice of motion for the 11th inst., was forwarded by Mr. Butt:—"That a Conference of Home Rulers be convened under the sanction of this League, for the purpose of deliberating upon the present position and prospects of the Home Rule cause, and the best means of forwarding that cause. Admission to the Conference to be by ticket, and the following to be entitled as of right to admission:—All Home Rule members of Parliament, the two nominators of every Home Rule member or candidate at the general

election or at any subsequent election, all members of the Home Rule League. Tickets to be given to persons of the following classes:—Clergymen of every religious denomination, magistrates, members of Corporations, Town Commissioners, Poor Law Guardians, persons who have been at any time members of the original Home Rule Association or of the Home Rule League. The Conference to assemble upon the 18th December, 1877, and 20th January, 1878, upon such day as a committee shall fix on, twenty-one days' notice to be given."

CHURCH AND STATE IN PRUSSIA.

Prince Bismarck having failed to make the Catholic priests abandon God, is, it appears, resolved to try harsher measures than the Falk law. The Tablet says:—

Prince Bismarck is said to have told Signor Oriani, the President of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, at their recent interview, that the next conclave must bring the quarrel between the Church and the State in Germany to an end, and if a new Pope will not listen to reason, the Civil Power must have recourse to more effectual measures of repression. That is to say, we suppose, that the exercise of the Catholic religion would be made formally, instead of, as now, virtually illegal. But it is hard to see how in these days a more overt persecution than the present one could be set on foot, and certainly what has been done can scarcely be said to have answered. We learn that in the diocese of Posen twenty-one priests have held a meeting, and refused to recognize or hold any communication with the last parish priest intruded by the State, and although another priest has just been arrested as he came out of church, and cast into prison for "illegal exercise of ecclesiastical functions" in a vacant parish, the Government has utterly failed in its attempt to frighten the clergy into acquiescence in its usurpations. The Germania states that out of ten thousand priests only twenty in all have submitted to the Falk Laws, and concludes that the struggle of the State against the Church is manifestly hopeless.

THE POSSIBILITY OF RUSSIAN SUCCESS.

The Times thinks that after all Russians sure to win in the end, if the combatants are not interfered with. With this opinion every student of the war must agree:—

While it is not difficult to see the causes of Russian failure, it is very easy to exaggerate them. They show that the nation will not conquer by means of any perfect system of any brilliant qualities in its commanders; but the fact remains that Russia possesses enormous strength in comparison with Turkey. Poor as she is by the side of France or England, she is rich when measured by Turkish standards. Her superior civilization will give her in the long run a far larger command of intellectual instruments. Above all, she is incomparably stronger in the number of her people. The longer the war lasts, the better will her position tend to become, while Turkey is likely to have her chief advantages at the outset. If the Czar's Government were to abandon the struggle before unmistakably defeating Turkey, it would lose in Asia as well as Europe that military reputation which is prizes more even than material prosperity. It will be less disposed to draw back now that its military position is improving. The retreat of Mehmet Ali has removed the only immediate danger of a crushing disaster. Meanwhile her troops occupy an admirable position, placed as they are like a wedge between the Turkish forces. A single General of capacity on the Russian side might quickly turn on the course of events, and even the incapacity of the Grand Dukes cannot altogether neutralise the advantage which the invading army will gradually and increasingly draw from its superior supplies of men.

CONDENSED FORAGE FOR CAVALRY.

The less troops have to carry in dead weight the more effective they become. The condensed "extract of beef" used by the Germans contributed, in its way, to make them more effective troops than their French foes. Now we hear of "condensed forage for cavalry." A war correspondent writes:—

Since the beginning of the present war, three large manufactories have been established in Russia—namely, one in St. Petersburg, under the direction of a German officer, Colonel Varneke; the second in Moscow, and the third in Ekaterinobol— for the preparation of condensed forage for the use of the cavalry of the Russian army in the valley of the Danube. In the establishment at St. Petersburg there are five large ovens, capable, altogether, of turning out thirty thousand pounds of the prepared food in the twenty-four hours. The food itself—the valve and utility of which was tested last winter and in the spring of the present year in a long series of experiments—is composed of oatmeal, pea-flour, rye-meal and ground linseed; there being in every hundred parts of the mixture from thirty to forty parts of the first, from thirty to thirty-three parts of the second, from ten to twenty of the third, and from fifteen to twenty of the last named substance, a small quantity of salt being also added. The constituents are kneaded together in large wooden troughs, the dough being afterward rolled out in a cake about as thick as a man's finger, and cut into biscuits of three and a half inches in diameter. These are then dried in the ovens and finally strung on wires for convenience of transport. Twenty-six or twenty-eight of these small biscuits weigh four pounds, and this quantity forms a single ration for a horse, containing, it is stated, as much nutriment as would be afforded by twenty pounds of oats, and this in about one-fifth of the bulk of the latter. Already, according to the Invalide Russe the manufactory in St. Petersburg alone has forwarded five hundred thousand of these rations to the theatre of war in the south, and is still preparing them in large numbers.

A NEW DANGER TO ENGLAND.

The Economist thinks that a new danger will arise against the influence of England in the event of Turkey coming out of the contest, in which she is now engaged, victorious. The Economist says:—

A common opinion is that England will be somehow the better for the present extraordinary revival of Turkey. If the Turks should really succeed in repelling the Russian invasion, it will be by virtue of that element among them that most despises the veneer of Western civilization which the travelled and diplomatic Turk possesses, and is most determined to govern the Empire on the principles, and in the spirit of a Mahomedan revival. What these principles are everybody knows or may know. What has not been so well known of late years is the permanence of these principles in a large section of Turkish subjects. The reappearance on the European stage of a nation animated by a deep religious enthusiasm, and that enthusiasm one which makes its soldiers "distinctly expectant of an instant entrance into Paradise" if they fall in battle against the infidel, could hardly be a matter of indifference to any one of the Great Powers. But it would be an event of very special and serious significance to England. It is, at least, possible that the first evidence of this Turkish revival would be a religious revolution, which would place an enthusiastic Mahomedan on the throne of the Caliph, and give many millions of English subjects a spiritual head whose strongest feelings would be contempt and detestation of England. It would be a singular commentary on much that has been said and written against Russia during the past year, if her defeat should bring us face to face with an Indian rebellion, originating in Turkish intrigues, stimulated by Mahomedan enthusiasm, and looking to subjection to the successor of the Caliph, as its sufficient earthly reward.

AN EX-KING BECOMING A MONK.

From the throne to the cloister is a gigantic stride. History, however, affords a few such incidents, and Royalty has before this donned the cope and sandals of a Monks attire. The Paris correspondent of the Dublin Freeman's Journal tells us that, in this respect, history is about to repeat itself, and that an ex-king is about to become a Monk. Here is what he says:—

It is announced on authority I cannot doubt that the second son of Victor Emmanuel, Prince Amadeo, ex-king of Spain, is about to enter into Holy Orders. His heart has been sorely afflicted by the death of his beloved consort, and he has since devoted himself with ardour to works of piety and religious observances. A great deal of his time has been passed in prayer in the gloomy vault of the House of Savoy where the coffin of the deceased princess is laid; and it has probably occurred to the young man that protracted grief is not without selfishness, and that he may best heal the wounds of bruised affection by a life of self-denial and of a sacrifice and good-doing to his fellow-creatures, as a simple member of the holy ministry. Rumor runs before events in these days; therefore they say the prince-priest will not long remain uncovered with the sash and hat. But it is unlikely that he should enter the priesthood with such views, and still less likely that his father's son will be selected, without long contrition and many years of a devoted and pious life for a seat amongst the eminent fathers of the Church. Prince Amadeo's demand for ordination will be the first instalment of the sincere repentance of the ambitious, though not schismatic, House of Savoy.—Paris correspondent of Freeman's.

THE CATHOLIC PRESS IN EUROPE.

A distinguished Catholic journalist of Wurzburg, in Bavaria, has published a very interesting pamphlet entitled "The Catholic Press in Europe in 1877":—

Looking over it we see at once how Catholic journalism has developed and spread wherever the Kulturkampf has raged most violently. There are 398 Catholic journals published in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, having an aggregate circulation of 1,218,908 copies, or one copy for every twenty five inhabitants. They are divided as follows: Austria has eighty seven journals, with a circulation of 143,800; Prussia, 140, with 379,900 circulation; Bavaria, seventy-seven journals, having 383,300; Switzerland, fifty-three, having 138,900; Saxony, three, and 1,700; Wurtemberg, eleven, and 42,700; Baden, twelve, and 69,400; Alsace-Lorraine, one with 10,000; Hesse, twelve, with 77,500; Oldenburg, one with 800, and Hamburg one with 700. Thus we see that Prussia counts for thirty-five per cent. of the whole number, Austria for twenty-five, Bavaria, nineteen, Switzerland fourteen, Baden and Hesse three, Wurtemberg two and three-fourths, and the remainder one-fourth. Comparing these figures with the population we find that there is one copy of a paper to every three inhabitants in Hesse; one of the eight in Switzerland, one to forty-three in Saxony, and one to one hundred and six in Austria. Thus we see that the nominally most Catholic country in Germany has the smallest proportion of distinctively Catholic journals, and that persecution seems to have no other effect than to enliven the faith of the people and make them have recourse to their able journals for instruction, information, consolation and advice.

HOW CATHOLICITY IS DYING OUT.

The London Univers tell us that:— Catholicity has been, according to the general run of newspapers, dying out ever since Henry VIII. started a religion of his own, and forced it upon the people of this country. Certainly all that humanly could do in opposition to God, has been done to extirpate Catholicity; but with what re-

sult? Let us take the reign of Pius IX., alone. According to statistics published in the continental press his Holiness had founded 29 metropolitan churches, 130 episcopal chairs, 4 chairs nullius diocesis, 3 apostolic delegations, 83 apostolic vicarages and 15 apostolic prefectures. In Europe at the present time there are altogether 535 bishops and archbishops, either immediately subject to the Papal See or suffragans of metropolitan churches; in America, 72; in Africa, 11; in Asia, 10; and in Australia and Polynesia, 21. Of religious orders there are 43; of monastic orders, 15; and of mendicant orders, 14. Thirteen States are represented at the Vatican, namely, France, Austria, Spain, Bavaria, Belgium, Brazil, Chili, Peru, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Portugal, Paraguay and, finally, the principality of Monaco. On the other hand, the Pope is represented abroad by apostolic nuncios, delegates or charges d'affaires in Paris, Vienna, Madrid, Lisbon, Munich, Brussels, the Hague; by an apostolic internuncio in Brazil, who is also delegate for the States of Paraguay, Bolivia, Chili, and the Argentine Republic; and by a single apostolic delegate for the States of San Francisco, Hayti and Venezuela, while a similar appointment for the States of Central America, Columbia, and Peru is at the present moment vacant. This does not look like dying out. Compared with it, what an insignificant thing Protestantism is.

A DREADFUL PIT.

The correspondent of the London Daily News obtained a view of the interior of the redoubt which the Russians took at Plevna, and which the Turks afterwards retook. The visit took place in the interval:—

The interior of this large work was piled up not only with the dead, but with the wounded, forming one ghastly, undistinguishable mass of dead and living bodies, the wounded being as little heeded as the dead. The fire had hindered the doctors from coming up to attend to the wounded, and the same cause had kept back the wounded-bearers. There were not even comrades to moisten the lips of their fellow-soldiers or to give them a word of consolation. There they lie writhing and groaning. I think some attempt might have been made, at whatever risk, to aid these poor fellows, for they were the gallant men who, twenty-four hours before had so valiantly and successfully struggled for the conquest of that long uncaptured redoubt, and it was sad to see them dying without any attempt being made to attend to them. I could fill pages with a description of this harrowing scene and others near it which I witnessed, but the task would be equally a strain on my own nerves and those of your readers. I am aware that Colonel Welleley, the English military attaché, having visited this redoubt, and witnessed the spectacle it presented, spoke of it to a Roumanian officer, who explained that the doctors were obliged to take cases in the order of their occurrence, and since the Roumanians had suffered not a little two days before, the doctors had still not been released from their attention upon those early cases. In the centre of the redoubt is a kind of traverse, and a curious covered corridor runs around it. In this I imagine the Turks sought protection from the shells which fell into it uninterruptedly for so many days before its capture. An incessant rain of bullets poured over the work as I made my way over the bodies on the ground.

A NEW RAILROAD IN BULGARIA.

Military engineers do not stop at trifles. We hear that a railway 186 miles long is now in progress for the conveyance of the Russian troops. A contemporary says:—

To secure them in their present position before Plevna it is said the Russians are resolved on building a railway 186 miles in length, to build huts for 150,000 men, and hospitals for 15,000. The magnitude of this task can scarcely be appreciated in a country like our own where facilities exist for railway construction unknown in the occupied territory, and where skilled labour is abundant and mechanical appliances have been brought to a high state of perfection. That timber is not abundant in the country may be gathered from the fact that the Powers friendly to Russia have applied to the Porte for permission to convey timber across the Danube to build hospitals for the wounded, under the Geneva Convention, a permission which the Porte has refused. At present there is only one line of railway from Russia to Bucharest, and along this the whole supplies of the army must be transported. It has been calculated that a single line of the length of the length of the one now used has carrying capacity for an army of one hundred thousand men, but not for more. When it is considered that in addition to the munitions of war, provisions and other military stores, this railway will now be called upon to convey a great part of the rails and materials necessary to the building of another railway 180 miles in length, the proposed scheme seems well nigh impracticable. In winter the frosts are so severe that the Danube is frozen over nearly every year, and if the railway is not completed before the rigours of the season set in, it will be impossible to build it. The time is already so limited that we scarcely see how it can be achieved.

A DREADFUL FIRE.

Here is a graphic account of how soldiers go down before the dreadful fire of breech loaders. It is from the pen of a war correspondent of the Daily News:—

I will describe the Loftcha attack first. As soon as the movement began I went to the top of the ridge, and saw the Russians advancing in heavy masses of close column of battalions. The Turks, held in perfect discipline, reserved their fire till the leading masses of the foe drew near enough for it to tell with deadliest effect. Then opened above the heads of the defenders in the trenches a more than ever terrific cannonade, under which the Russians were seen to desperately quicken their step, advancing in open order, while their men were falling

singly and in groups all over the fiery field. Now also quickened the dreadful roll of the Turkish infantry fire, bursting forth from the redoubts and the intrenchments, to which the Russians could make but a scattered reply, hurrying as they were up hill. While these volleys swept backwards and forwards all along the trenches, the assaults went down by hundreds; but fast as they advanced files thus melted away, swarms of fresh men could be seen pouring up from the rear. They only yeted to feed, however, the awful harvest of death; yet, still pushing forward, with a certainly admirable devotion, the mass of them at last appeared to be gaining ground. At three o'clock the ferocious combat reached its culminating point, for stoutly as the Russians tried to hold their conquest, they were at last hurled out bodily beyond rampart and trench, doing the utmost that courage permitted, but utterly unable to resist the indomitable resolve of the Osmanlis. About this time also two fresh battalions of our side came up in the rear of the wood, and when the bugles sounded clear above the thunder of the battle the notes of the Turkish charge—that never-to-be-forgotten cry of "Allah!"—echoed again along our line, and Osman's men sweeping forward at the top of their speed, thrust down the hill the last throgs of the lingering Russian resistance.

"RETREAT" OF PROTESTANT CLERGYMEN.

That Ritualism is progressing there can be no doubt. The "Retreat" of the Protestant Clergymen, near Dublin, is the latest proof of this. This "Retreat" has caused much talk. The Protestant Clergymen held a meeting over it, and some of them roundly condemned this "feeble imitation of Romanism"—this thin edge of the wedge of "Monkeries and Monastries, and the whole paraphernalia by the Church of Rome." Here is what the Dublin correspondent of the London Tablet says of it:—

"The 'Retreat' of a section of the Protestant clergy of the diocese of Dublin, has created considerable commotion in various other sections of the Protestant clergy both here and throughout the country. As it was the first 'retreat' ever given in Dublin or in Ireland since the Protestant Church tried its miserable task of fixing itself amongst our people, a few particulars of it may not be uninteresting to your readers. The 'happy thought' of it originated in the mind of a son of Dr. Trench, the Protestant Archbishop of Dublin, and the project is said to have received the warm approval of the Archbishop himself.

Then there was a meeting of the Protestant clergymen at which there was a lively time. But the correspondent continues:—

In a comparatively quiet interval a Rev. Mr. Davidson got a few minutes' calm to say a word or two of his own experiences of the retreat. 'We rose,' he said, 'every morning a little after six o'clock; we went into the chapel, or drawing-room, as the case was. We had prayers, and from a quarter past seven to half-past seven we had private preparations for the Communion; then we had breakfast at a quarter past eight; at a quarter past nine the usual morning prayer; then, I think, at ten o'clock, we went in for the first address, and there were prayers specially suited for the subject. We then sang upon our knees the hymn in the Ordination Service, 'Come Holy Ghost, our souls inspire'; and then there was an address, of which we took notes, followed by a period of meditation on the address. At 12 o'clock there was another short address. At one o'clock dinner (and I may mention that we got four meals a day, and the best of feeding. Some people said we were fasting). We had recreation until three o'clock, that is to say we had nothing to do with the retreat.' A clergyman here asked, 'Was there a vow of silence?' To which Mr. Davidson answered, 'Certainly not'; and proceeded, 'At three o'clock there was another short address; at half-past five, service; six, tea; seven, another service and another address, and a short service before retiring to rest for the night; supper at nine, bed at ten.' In reply to other inquiries, Mr. Davidson said there was 'no such thing in the retreat as a confession of sin.' After a fresh storm of irreverent chaff and disorder a Rev. Mr. Large claimed a hearing, and having got it, said, 'he had very strong claims on the meeting, for he was a very strong Protestant, and yet he was at the Retreat. He thanked God for it.' A Rev. Mr. Latham jeeringly asked Mr. Large, were there 'ornaments' at the retreat, and was brought to task by Mr. Stokes, who said it was exceedingly unusual for one young clergyman to be bantering another in this profane way. It was seen that by this time the meeting had thinned down to more than half its original dimensions, and a proposal to adjourn for two months was rejected in favor of a motion to adjourn to the following Tuesday. The comments of the Protestant Press indicated the shame and confusion which the proceedings of the day before created in Protestant ranks. The adjourned meeting came off on the day appointed, and was a contemptible display. Not more than seventeen clergymen were present, and they were all of them of the section—Orange and Low Church to a degree—where name are always identified with every organization, meeting, or 'demonstration' that contemplates the lowest purpose of proselytism and insult to Irish Catholics.

HEROISM OF SHOBELOFF.

Shobloff swam the Danube on horseback to show it could be done, and has had five horses shot under him during this campaign. During one of his reconnoissances near Plevna he came in view of a delicious spring of water, apparently inaccessible, however, because of the ball of Turkish bullets that pattered round it. The soldiers shrank back from facing almost certain death, till Shobloff dismounted, leisurely walked to the fountain, drank freely of its waters, and bathed his face and hands. Stung by this implied taunt the soldiers rushed forward to shield him; Shobloff ordered them under arrest for leaving their ranks; and calmly walked back.