

FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE.

FRANCE.

THREATENED PROSECUTION OF COUNT DE MONTALEMBERT.

Some curious incidents have occurred in the Legislative Corps, not, however, at the public sitting. It seems that M. de Montalembert, who has lately had rather an unpleasant "passage of arms," with M. Dupin, published another letter to this rather inconstant politician, which contained certain expressions regarded as offensive to the members of the Lower Chambers; the supporters of a Government "which decreed the confiscation of the Orleans property" were described in terms by no means respectful—in fact, so little respectful that the President of the Chamber considered that they should not be passed over in silence. About 40 or 50 deputies met yesterday in the saloons of the President's mansion, which is close to the Chamber, to decide on some mode of marking their displeasure. At that meeting, the conduct of M. Montalembert was criticised very sharply, and M. Billault is reported to have said that the "insults" offered to the representation of the country should not be allowed to pass uncensored or unpunished.

On Tuesday the bureaux of the Legislative Assembly terminated the nomination of a committee, on the application made to prosecute Count de Montalembert for publishing a letter, in which he was considered to have used insulting language with respect to the Emperor, and tending to hatred of the government. M. de Montalembert was warmly defended by his friends, though the expressions of his letter were, in general, much blamed.

It appears from later accounts that a majority of the commission named to report on the proposition of the Attorney-General to prosecute M. de Montalembert are opposed to that prosecution, so that the affair will most likely terminate there. The reason alleged for that decision is that, as M. de Montalembert solemnly denied all knowledge of, or participation in, that publication, it is not expedient to follow the matter up. The publication constitutes the offence, and if having taken place contrary to the will, or at least without the knowledge of the party, there is no ground to go on.

Should the prosecution take place, it will be greatly to be deplored, as it will be likely to seriously injure the government in public estimation. Should M. de Montalembert be condemned, he could be sentenced to five years' imprisonment and 10,000*l.* fine.

PERFIDY OF THE CZAR.—The *Moniteur* of Thursday closes a short article, with reference to the "secret correspondence," in the following emphatic and official language:—

"As to the government of the Emperor Napoleon, there is but one observation to make upon the studied endeavor of Russia to leave it out of the question in her plans of territorial remodification—which is, that Russia came back to the French Government after having failed in London, and that France, in her turn, had to decline advances more or less direct, which are not without resemblance to those which were first made to England."

The College of Jesuits at St. Etienne, which was closed some weeks ago by decree, has been authorised to recommence its labors. It appears that the Cardinal Archbishop of Lyons and the deputies of the department interested themselves in its fate.

PRUSSIA.

On the 18th March, M. Manteuffel made his expected application to the Chamber for a loan of 30 million Prussian dollars, and in doing so declared distinctly that Prussia would avoid war, preserve an independent attitude, and stand ready to protect German interests. Prussia, he said, does not disclaim her share in the Vienna note, but her sword will not be drawn except to defend German interests. The King's government had come to an understanding with the Austrian cabinet on that subject, and would yield to no pressure from any quarter.

AUSTRIA.

Austria is quietly arming upon an extensive scale. Scarcely a day passes without transports of troops to the south-eastern frontier. The public press very naturally does not advert to these dislocations of the military forces—nevertheless, the public is fully aware that great preparations are being made by the Government in anticipation of the most serious eventualities.

The *Austrian Correspondence* confirms the perfect agreement between the Vienna and Berlin cabinets. The interests (it says) which Austria must protect are identical with the interests of Germany. If all Germany is firmly united, no power on earth dare dispute its perfect liberty of future action, which will be decisive for the welfare of Europe.

An offensive and defensive alliance between Austria and Prussia is spoken of.

REJECTION OF THE "ULTIMATISSIMUM."—Telegraphic despatches of Friday from Vienna announce the rejection by the Emperor of Russia of the so-called *ultimatissimum* of the western powers, which peremptorily requires the evacuation of the principalities by the 30th of April, and a definitive answer within six days after the receipt of these despatches. The Emperor's reply is said to be short, dry, and most disdainful.

ROME.

A letter from Rome of the 5th ult., in the *Messenger di Modena*, states that it is the intention of the commander-in-chief of the French forces at Rome to establish an entrenched camp near Civita Vecchia, with a view to fortify that place on the land side, and that a preliminary survey has already been made with that view by the French engineers.

A letter from Turin of March 10th in the *Indépendance Belge* says:—

"His Holiness the Pope has just received a letter from the Sultan, in which the chief of Islamism expresses himself with great good will towards the Chief of Catholicity, and assures him that the Catholic subjects of Turkey shall enjoy liberty and his protection in the exercise of their worship. This letter was brought to the Holy Father by M. de Kerckhove, chargé d'affaires of Turkey in Belgium. As you may easily suppose, this letter has only augmented the very favorable dispositions which already existed in the court of Rome towards Turkey."

THE BALTIC.

A despatch dated Copenhagen, March 20th, informs us that "Sir Charles Napier arrived to-day in the Valorous steam-frigate. The rest of the British fleet are in Wingo Bay."

The fleet in Cronstadt harbor, which is affirmed to amount to 325 vessels, engages the whole attention of the Russian Minister of marine. Everything would seem to indicate that the Government is preparing for a terrific struggle. All the plans and arrangements for the war are, of course, kept profoundly secret; but erroneous reports are often intentionally set afloat by the authorities in reference to these subjects. On the 2d ult. the Grand Duke Constantine inspected the fleet at Helsingfors. The Emperor was expected to arrive at Helsingfors in a fortnight. The Gulfs of Bothnia and Finland are still covered with ice. No fewer than 30,000 Russians are employed in cutting a channel from Cronstadt to Sweaborg. It is earnestly to be hoped, meantime, that great exertions will be made to hasten the arrival of every vessel that England and France can send forth. Nor will it be prudent to make light of their adversaries. If met upon the open sea, the allied ships might give a good and speedy account of their opponents; but it is probable that they will be employed against land batteries of extraordinary strength; and this, with every difficulty of intricate navigation and capricious weather. It is known also, that the Russian Government is working with sleepless energy at increasing the strength of its land defences, and that the whole of the corps of guards and grenadiers, amounting each to 60,000 effectives, with 224 field pieces, have marched to garrison all those points most liable to assault. British sailors will, doubtless, do their duty nobly, but they must expect fierce and deadly resistance, and that from a force far outnumbering their own in ships and weight of metal.

RUSSIA AND TURKEY.

On the 8th ult., a four hours' conference was held between the English and French ambassadors and Redschid Pasha, touching the convention between the western powers and Turkey.

The chief points are:—

1. The Porte engages never to negotiate with Russia without the intervention of the western powers.
2. Amelioration of the condition of the Christians. A separate treaty is annexed, for the following four points:—
 1. Abolition of the poll tax (haratash).
 2. Right of Christians to be admitted as witnesses in judicial proceedings.
 3. Right to hold landed property, without distinction of nationality or religion.
 4. The civil rights of the Christians admitted in the army and the civil service.

The Russians in the principalities are receiving great reinforcements. There are at present five divisions of infantry in the principalities, and the sixth is entering and 18,000 cavalry.

Intelligence received from the principalities announce that the Russians express a determination of entering Bulgaria as early as possible in the ensuing spring.

It was reported at Bucharest on the 17th that the Austrian consul had declared that if the Russians passed the Danube the Austrians would pass the Carpathians, in order to occupy Wallachia.

The destination of the English and French forces is to be left to the decision of the Sultan.

The *Chronicle's* Paris correspondent has received Constantinople letters which represent the attitude of the Greek population in the Ottoman dominions as threatening, as regards the power of the Sultan.

Two frigates, English and French, have been despatched from the Buxine to the mouth of the Danube, which they were directed to enter under any contingency, so as to stop the stockading manœuvre of the Russians in that quarter.

THE "SECRET COMMUNICATION."

The publication of the "secret and confidential" communications and conversations that passed a year ago, between the Emperor of Russia and the British Minister at St. Petersburg is the great event of this week; and the first question that the perusal of these remarkable State papers suggests is this—what infatuation could have caused the Czar to instruct the *St. Petersburg Journal* to violate confidence by alluding to the existence of documents that are so pre-eminently calculated to raise the British Government in the estimation of Europe, and to convict the Czar of the most sinister designs upon Turkey and the bitter hostility against France? It is impossible, after the publication which the Emperor of Russia has enforced, not to admit the honesty, the sincerity, and the good sense that has marked the conduct of the British Minister and the British Cabinet in this affair. The French nation, at all events, must now be satisfied that the British Government entertain no unfriendly views towards them, and is not actuated by any selfish policy in its conduct with reference to the affairs of the East. On the other hand she and Europe must be convinced of the tortuous, dexterous, selfish, and cunning course of Russian diplomacy, and of the duplicity of the bad man who now challenges the world to resist his ambitious designs. The secret papers consist altogether of 15 letters and memoranda. Their origin is itself curious, and shows the profound craft of the Muscovite. On the 9th of January, 1853,

the Grand Duchess Helen invited Sir Hamilton Seymour to an evening party, where he met the Czar, who treated him with marked attention, and ultimately drew him aside to sound his sentiments on Turkish affairs, and pave the way for more serious overtures. The Czar's felicitations on the appointment of the present Cabinet, were very warm; and, after some bye-play, he touched on Turkey, which he likened to a sick man—a metaphor he stuck to all through—and ultimately declared that if England and himself were of one mind as to the future arrangement of the Eastern question, he cared nothing about the opinions or feelings of the other Powers. He then threw out a hint also about the import which he attributed to the title of Napoleon the Third, which Sir H. Seymour professed to regard as of no material consequence, and wound up by intimating a wish for a further conversation in his own Cabinet. The second interview, thus proposed, took place on the 14th of January. On this occasion the Czar was more explicit, but as crafty as possible. He expatiated on the inevitable dissolution of the Turkish empire, the necessity of a good understanding between himself and England, disclaimed all ambitious designs himself, repudiated the "dreams of the Empress Catharine," talked of the already excessive bulk of the Russian Empire, which was more than a man could conveniently govern, hinted at the possibility of his being hereafter obliged to occupy Constantinople, but only as a temporary measure till the *dead man's* heritage was disposed of and declared that his views were identical with those of Austria. Throughout the interview Prussia was not so much as mentioned, and France, when alluded to, was spoken of with superb contempt. By desire of the Autocrat, these conversations were communicated to Lord John Russell, then Foreign Secretary. The third interview took place on the 20th of February at the palace of the Hereditary Grand Duchess when it was arranged that Sir H. Seymour should wait on the Czar the next day, to communicate to him Lord John Russell's despatch of the 9th of that month in answer to the British Envoy's first letter to his Lordship. At this fourth interview, which lasted an hour and twelve minutes, the Czar discussed the whole question in commenting on Lord John's despatch, which he professed, though evidently insincerely, to be mightily pleased with. On this occasion he spoke of the rapid approach of the dissolution of the "sick man"—denounced France for forcing the Dardanelles and obtaining concessions respecting the Holy Places,—accused Louis Napoleon of a design on Tunis, and for this end, of planning a quarrel between the Great Powers,—complained that England had encouraged France by not protesting against M. Lavalette's proceedings,—took credit to himself as the best friend of the Sultan, as evidenced by the conduct of Russia, during the Turco-Egyptian quarrel,—predicted the fall of the Porte either through a foreign war, or through intestine dissension between the old Mussulman party and the abettors of "superficial French Reforms," and then declared that he would not permit Russia or any other Power to seize on Constantinople, that he would not tolerate the restoration of the Byzantine Empire, or the extension of the Greek Kingdom, or the establishment of a great Christian State on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire, or the erection of several small Republics where such men as Kossuth or Mazzini might hold sway. When asked what he would tolerate, he hinted that England might help herself to Egypt and Candia, and that the Danubian Principalities might be incorporated with his own Empire. As to Austria, she was bound by solemn promise to support his views; and with respect to France, he cared not what course she might take, indeed, only a month before, he had offered the Sultan ample aid to repel French menaces. A few days after this interview, Sir Hamilton Seymour received from Count Nesselrode a memorandum prepared by the Czar himself in which he criticises Lord John Russell's despatch; and while professing to be delighted with that document, takes occasion to complain of England for leaning towards France at Constantinople, and of the silence and inaction of this country with reference to the dispute about the Holy Places. "Instead (says the Czar) of uniting herself with France against the just demands of Russia, let England avoid supporting, or even appearing to support, the resistance of Turkey" to the fair demands of Russia and Austria.

CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENTS IN RUSSIA AND ENGLAND.

(From the Tablet.)

One of the common accusations brought against Catholics is, that they hate constitutional governments; which, translated into common sense, means all kinds of governments, for there is no state or nation which has not its own constitution. Russia has a constitution quite as much as England or Belgium; and the oldest constitution is that of the States of the Church. Constitutional government means, in some people's

mouth, the Government of England only, and this is, in their estimation, the very best constitution that could be devised, combining, as we are told, the largest amount of personal liberty with the safety of the State. This is, no doubt, a very great gain, but there is no government in Europe which does not profess to aim at the same result, and that successfully too; for the problem everywhere is, how to avoid social anarchy. The Emperor of Russia allows his subjects all the liberty possible; he is responsible for the peace of the empire, and preserves it on the very same principles which we are accustomed to laud in England. Security to life and property in the first instance, and then personal liberty.

There are probably few persons out of Russia who will pretend that the constitution of that country is a model for any other people. There may be discontented Russians even in the very ante-chambers of the Czar; but the question comes to this, so far as a private individual is concerned, whether he would be worse off under Russian rule than he is under that of the immaculate Parliament of England. Russian officials are said to be corrupt, and the House of Commons is now investigating the "pure dealings of men who have made some of our laws. Russian judges are accessible to the arguments which proceed from a heavy purse; and yet in England we have seen judges decide most grave questions according to prejudices peculiar to themselves, while it is at the present moment an undecided question whether a particular judge has not obtained his place through a corrupt bargain. Another judge is said to have been reported to the House of Commons as having been guilty of bribery. This case, for the appointment was subsequent to the report, is analogous to the Russian practice of sending a corrupt official from one post to discharge the duties of another.

The Russian Government professes one religion, of which the Emperor is the Supreme Pontiff—just as it is in England. But, at the same time, all kinds of dissent from this religion is tolerated in one direction, and in many places the dissenters outnumber the professors of the State heresy. Meanwhile, they all agree in considering themselves united in belief, having a fundamental agreement of principle. They are all Orthodox Greeks. So, in England, we have seen dissenting from the Queen's public religion; but as all these sects proceed in one direction, nobody is troubled. The State religion, and the diverse heresies to which it has given birth, are all one as Protestants. Russia hates Catholicism—so does England. The State in both cases cares nothing about a man's profession, provided it tends to carry him away from Rome. Religious liberty is allowed in Russia, so also in England, and under the same conditions.

Russia and England have professed to tolerate the Catholic religion. The profession is on paper; probably that is all. The Emperor dislikes conversions; so does the English Parliament. An apostate Priest is welcome in both countries, and his bread is secured to him in Russia by the imperial charity; in England by popular contributions and preferment in the Establishment if his character be so clear as never to have been convicted of felony, or of very open and profligate wickedness. The popular subscriptions, however never fail him either in England or America.

Russia persecutes occasionally, and the heaviest form of it falls on Nuns. When the Emperor had scourged those of Minsk till death relieved some of them, he denied the whole history. Lord Aberdeen also exculpated him from the charge, and publicly proclaimed that the story was a fabrication. England sympathises with Russian despotism; and now the House of Commons is anxious to follow the Russian precedent. English Nuns are to be subjected to ill usage, dissimilar in kind, certainly, from the Russian treatment, but in substance very nearly alike. The Russian, being a barbarian, maltreated the physical frame; but the more civilised Anglo-Saxon, understanding better the theory of torture, proposes to vex and harass the soul. It is difficult to tell which Government entertains the greater hatred to Nuns. Both are probably incapable of making further progress in that particular evil.

Mr. Chambers pleads the safety of the State as his excuse for thus curtailing personal liberty. That is the defence of all tyrants for all their despotic proceedings, as well as Lord John Russell's excuse for not going on with his Reform Bill. We have no wish to say one word against the reason given, but we observe only that it is quite as prevalent in England as in Russia, and so far as the security of Catholic men and women are concerned, it is in principle not one whit better provided for in England than in Russia. Mr. Chambers, in this only unlike the Emperor, cannot of his own personal authority torture the poor Nuns, and we are, therefore, as a matter of fact, somewhat safer than we might be if we were in Russia.

It is probable that for matters of commerce and amassing of wealth, the English constitution is superior to that of Russia. But for all this grand benefit, the Catholic is still unable to say whether the end of his being is better served in England in sight of the House of Commons, than in the dominions of the Czar. Life is short to the longest liver, and at the end of it is death, the sole event in his life about what the true Catholic ought to be uneasy. If it can be shown that the English constitution offers him greater guarantees for the safe endurance of his last agony than that of Russia, well and good; if not, why then should he be perpetually taunted with disaffection to constitutional government in the Anglo-Saxon sense? The poor sailors now under the friendly care of Sir James Graham would be infinitely better off in their last moments, if they were on board the Russian ships. There they will find the Priest, who, though a heretic, would be useful at the point of death. The Catholic sailors and soldiers of the Czar have a chance given them at their last hour which the English government refuses to English and Irish Catholics, notwithstanding the boast of Emancipation.

We do not deny that for material comfort and worldly interest the English Government may be preferable to the Russian; what we contend for is, that it matters very little to us as Catholics whether we are born Russians or Saxons. Indeed, on the whole, despotic governments, such as Austria and France, behave with more justice to their Catholic subjects than the boasted constitutional governments of England, Belgium, and Piedmont. Belgium tyranny, under the cloak of liberalism, is rising to fabulous heights. Ladies are now fined in that land of liberty for collecting subscriptions for works of charity. The superb administration of the law treats them as beggars, and the Catholic members of Parliament are silent, being bound more or less to support a semi-infidel, semi-Catholic ministry, something similar to that of Lord Aberdeen's.