

## FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE.

## FRANCE.

The French Chambers were opened on Thursday, the 26th ult. by His Majesty, the Emperor, who delivered the following speech from the throne, which may be accepted as an exposé of the policy of our Ally. By the English Press, this speech has been warmly applauded, as a statesmanlike production:—  
 "Monsieurs les Sénateurs, Messieurs les Députés, Since your last meeting great deeds have been accomplished. The appeal which I made to the country to defray expenses of the war was so well responded to that the result has surpassed my hopes. In the Baltic, as in the Black Sea, our arms have been victorious. Two great battles have added renown to our standard. The intimacy of our relations with England has been brilliantly attested. The English Parliament has voted thanks to our generals and to our soldiers. A great empire made young again by the chivalrous sentiments of its Sovereign, has detached itself from the power which for forty years has menaced the independence of Europe. The Emperor of Austria has concluded a treaty—defensive to-day, offensive to-morrow—which unites his cause with that of France and England.

Thus, gentlemen, as the war is prolonged, the number of our allies increases, and the ties already formed become closer. For what ties are, in fact, more secure than the names of victories shared by the two armies and recalling a common glory, the same anxieties and the same hopes agitating the two countries, and the same aims and the same intentions animating the two Governments in all parts of the globe? Thus the alliance with England is not the effect of a mere passing interest of political expediency, but is the union of the two powerful nations associated for the triumph of a cause in which for more than a century their own greatness, the interest of civilisation, and the liberty of Europe are at the same time involved. Join me, then, on this solemn occasion, in thanking here, and in the name of France, the Parliament for its cordial and warm demonstration, and the English army and its esteemed chief for their valiant co-operation. Next year, should peace not be established, I hope to obtain the assistance of that Germany whose union and prosperity we desire.

I am happy in paying a just tribute of praise to the army and fleet, who, by their devotion and discipline, in the south as in France, have nobly answered my expectations. The army of the East has hitherto borne and overcome everything—disease, fire, tempest, and formidable artillery on land and sea, and two hostile armies superior to us in numbers, have been powerless to weaken its courage, or subdue its spirit. Each man nobly did his duty, from the marshal who seemed to have forced death to wait till he had conquered, to the private soldier or sailor whose last cry in expiring was a prayer for France, and cheer for the elect of his country. Let us, then, together proclaim that the army and the fleet have deserved well of the country.

War, it is true, brings with it cruel sacrifices, yet everything bids me push it on with vigor, and for this purpose I count upon your assistance. The army at present consists of 518,000 soldiers and 113,000 horses, and the navy of 62,000 sailors afloat. It is indispensably necessary to keep this force in an effective state; and to fill up the vacancies occasioned by the annual discharges and by the war, I shall ask of you, as I did last year, a levy of 140,000 men. A law will be brought before you for ameliorating the position of soldiers re-enlisting without increasing the expense; it will be of immense advantage to increase the number of veteran soldiers in the army, and to allow in future the weight of the conscription to be diminished. I hope that this law will soon meet with your approval.

I shall demand of you authority to conclude a new national loan. Although this measure will increase the public debt, we must not forget that by the conversion of the Rentes the interest of the debt has been reduced by 24 millions. The object of my efforts is to place the expenditure on a level with the receipts and the ordinary budget to be presented to you will be found in equilibrium, while the resources of the loan will suffice to meet the demands of the war.

You will see with pleasure that our revenues have not diminished, that industrial enterprise is sustained, that all the great works of public utility are continued, and that Providence has graciously given us a harvest sufficient for our wants. The Government nevertheless does not close its eye to the uneasiness caused by the dearth of provisions; but has taken every measure in its power to prevent and lighten this uneasiness, and has founded in several places new elements of work.

The contest which is going on, restrained as it is by moderation and justice, although it causes the heart to beat, has caused so little alarm to the commercial interest, that the different parts of the globe will soon bring together here all the fruits of peace.

For the future, I cannot but be struck with the remarkable spectacle of a country, which, counting on the divine protection, sustains with energy a war at 600 leagues from its frontiers, and which develops with equal ardor its internal riches—a country where war does not prevent agriculture and industry from prospering, nor the arts from flourishing, and where the genius of the nation shows itself in everything which can bring glory to France.

On the 27th, the Legislative body unanimously adopted the bill authorising the Minister of Finance to negotiate a new loan of 50,000,000 francs.—Two hundred and forty-one members were present when the bill was voted. On the evening of the 28th, the whole assembly met at the Tuilleries and presented the bill to the Emperor.

THE DEFENDER OF SEBASTOPOL. —The Paris correspondent of the *London Times* says:—It is not, I believe generally known that the officer who directs the engineering works of the defence of Sebastopol is a Frenchman—General Destrem. At the period of the treaty of Tilsit, after the celebrated interview of the rapt, constructed on the Niemen, it is known that not only between the Emperor Napoleon and Alexander the greatest cordiality prevailed, that also between the French and Russian officers who formed the suites of the monarchs. The feeling extended even to the soldiers of the two armies, and the days and nights were spent in feasting by those who had so lately been arrayed in mortal combat against each other. In this effusion of good will and friendship

the Emperor Alexander, who seemed so fascinated by the overpowering genius of Napoleon as even to neglect the interests of his unfortunate ally, the King of Prussia, begged, as a favor, that his imperial brother would permit a few young men of the Polytechnic School to enter the service of Russia. Napoleon at once consented, and selected four of the most distinguished pupils of that celebrated establishment, whom he presented to Alexander. The young officers had just issued from the school, each with a first class number in science. Their names were Bazaire, Faber, Potier, and Destrem. The first three died many years ago, and the last is the General of that name who has had so great a share in the construction of the fortifications of Cronstadt. He is spoken of as an engineer officer of the greatest merit, and what is rather rare, he has a remarkable talent for poetry, united to profound mathematical knowledge. He is the author of several beautiful compositions; but his best work is said to be a translation into French verse of the fables of the Russian Lafontaine, Kriloff.

## ITALY.

According to letters from Florence of the 19th Dec., Tuscany will soon be evacuated by the Austrian troops. The regiment of French dragoons that has been in Rome since 1849, is to be immediately withdrawn, and is not to be replaced.

The *London Times* commences an editorial, in its publication of the 28th, in these words:—

"We learn from our continental correspondence that the refugees who aim at directing from their own retreats the politics of Italy, have seized the occasion presented by the Russian war, to urge all Italians to immediate insurrection. The hour is said to be propitious, the opportunity inviting, the prospect hopeful, and the result secure."

## SPAIN.

M. Soulé has returned to Madrid where he was well received. The Spanish Cabinet are unanimous in their resolve not to part with Cuba; and though Spain has no cause to place any reliance on the good faith of the American Government, it is thought that the difficulties now existing between the two countries will be smoothed over for the time. M. Le Marquis D'Albaida, a leader of the Liberal party spoke strongly against the abandonment of Cuba, and expressed his personal and absolute repugnance, as well as that of the entire democratic party of Spain, for the policy of a Republic which holds slaves, and which only desires the acquisition of the island of Cuba to render harder still the servitude of the blacks. "Do you wish," he exclaims, "to put an end to these American pretensions? Abolish Slavery in our colonies!"

This, no doubt, is the true policy of Spain. If it cannot hold Cuba, it should at least make it worthless in the eyes of the American slave-holders by bequeathing to them together with that island, an interminable servile war.

## GERMAN POWERS.

Great expectations are formed upon the diplomatic re-union to have been held at Vienna on the 21st ult., and at which Prince Gortschakoff, was to meet the Representatives of Great Britain, France, Austria and Prussia. No decisive steps have followed the Treaty of the 2nd December, but something positive is anticipated from this conference of all the Powers.

## RUSSIA.

The Czar has issued orders to the effect that—whoever shall commit acts of cruelty to the wounded prisoners shall suffer death. Affairs look gloomy in St. Petersburg; a letter written from that City on the 17th ult., says:—

"The news of the treaty of the 2nd of December being signed, has caused a great cessation in our political circles, and together with the still dangerous state of the Empress, thrown a gloom over the Russian capital which it is difficult to describe. The Court is far from being in a humor to enjoy the festivities of the approaching Christmas, the aristocracy dare not give their usually brilliant balls and entertainments, the merchants find their commerce nearly ruined, the shopkeepers have no sale for their fancy goods and articles of luxury, and the prevailing fear of coming misfortunes extends down to the very lowest classes.

"Never did the Czar apply himself more vigorously to business than he does at the present moment, working daily for sixteen hours, for he knows very well that he has no one to rely on, and that his orders, however exigent, are never executed, unless he sees them done himself. The whole system of Russian bureaucracy is so rotten that no confidence can be placed in anybody, and no one is more conversant with this fact than the Emperor himself. The general opinion here is, that a war with all Europe is inevitable although a part of the nobles affect to believe that Austria will never be brought to draw the sword against Russia, and doubts are beginning to be seriously entertained whether it will be possible even for Prussia and the States of Germany to maintain any longer their one-sided neutrality.

"The last accounts from the Crimea are anything but encouraging. The army is decimated by disease, provisions are getting short, and in the present state of the roads there is no mode of sending supplies.—Great fears are entertained that Sebastopol will not be able to hold out much longer, and Menschikoff's flaming despatches, with his poetical descriptions of brilliant attacks and successful sorties, with the stereotyped loss of 'one man killed and wounded,' fail to inspire general belief any longer.

"That the nobility and mercantile classes devoutly wish for peace cannot be doubted for a moment, however unwilling they may be to clothe in words such an unpatriotic sentiment. It is only the peasants who still entertain any enthusiasm for the Czar. The new levy to be raised in March, of ten men to 1000 inhabitants, will drain the population of nearly

a million of men—on paper; for nobody seriously believes the possibility of raising such an army by an imperial ukase, it being well known that the Czar must first raise—the wind."

## THE CRIMEA.

The siege still drags its weary length along. A few sallies from the garrison have been vigorously repulsed, but little real progress has been made.—It is rumored that the garrison is about to withdraw the guns from the ramparts of the town, and to devote all its strength to the defence of the different forts. On the other hand, according to the *European Times*, the Allies have got some new and powerful batteries ready to open on the place, and a rumor prevailed that the bombardment would recommence on the 17th Dec., when all the new and powerful guns from both the English and French works, built and fortified recently with much care, and at a great sacrifice of the health and comforts of the men, would open fire simultaneously, and that the storming of the place would be made on the 19th; but these dates were probably fixed in ignorance of the exact time at which the forces of Omar Pacha would be fit to take the field. These forces were arriving in large numbers at Enpatorin, the first detachment of which consisted of 5,000 men—the veterans who had fought with such bravery on the Danube last summer, not the raw levies who fled in terror at Balaklava. With a force like this in the rear of the Russians, and a formidable army before the Sebastopol, the position of the Russian general will not be enviable. At all events, something decisive may be shortly expected, and, although New Year's Day is close at hand, it is not unlikely that the tidings of a great battle and a great victory may reach us about the advent of the coming year or shortly after. Certain it is that General Liprandi had retired from Balaklava, a movement which is regarded as an encouraging sign for the allies. Prince Menschikoff is said to be ill in Sebastopol, and the command has devolved on General Osten-Sacken.

The weather, it is gratifying to find, has improved. A letter written on the 12th says, "the changes of temperature are sudden. On the 8th we had ice; to-day is like a cloudy day in England. We are all waiting for events." The most desponding sign is the health of the troops, for, exposed to the winds and rains which had prevailed, the mortality was very great—as much as 60 and 90 per day of our own men, while the horses were dying in still greater numbers. But the worst had evidently passed, for a good deal of warm clothing had arrived, several cargoes of potatoes, and many little comforts which could not fail to be acceptable. A writer thus sketches our own men: "I could not help observing the conduct and manner of our fellows as they lay in the trenches, some fully impressed with their duty, and not the less better soldiers, read their prayer books with attention and seriousness; others swore and blasphemed in ordinary conversation, as they were wont to do; but their countenances were atrocious, and nothing better could have been expected; some slept on the cold ground, and some played cards, as if to pass time; others with round shot, ground their coffee and prepared a brew."

"STATE OF THE TROOPS."—"If any of our great geologists want to test the truth of their theories respecting the appearance of the primeval world, or are desirous of ascertaining what sort of view Noah might have had when he looked out of the ark from Ararat, they cannot do better than come out here at once. The whole plateau on which stands the camp before Sebastopol—the entire of the angle of land from Balaklava round to Kherson, and thence to the valley of Inkermann—is fitted at this moment for the reception and delectation of any number of ichthyosauri, sauri, and crocodiles—it is a vast black dreary wilderness of mud, dotted with little lochs of foul water, and seamed by dirty brownish and tawny-colored streams running down to and along the ravines. 'Chaos has come again,' or rather has just disappeared from the scene. A grand plateau of bog, varying in depth from a foot to two feet, extends from the valley of Inkermann to the sea at Balaklava. It is trodden into holes in every direction by the hoofs of mules, horses and camels.—It is scarred deeply by the wheels of carts and arabas, and the white tents dotting its surface, and a few white scattered farm-houses, and the snug quarters of Lord Raglan, contrast strongly with the black profound amid which they rear their straight outlines. All over its surface are strewn the carcasses of horses and miserable animals torn by dogs and snatched in mud. Vultures sweep over the mounds in flocks; carrion crows and 'birds of prey' obscene, hover their prey, menace the hideous dogs who are feasting below, or sit in gloomy dyspepsia with drooped head and dropping wing on the remnants of their banquet. It is over this ground, gained at last by great toil and exhaustion, and loss of life on the part of the starving beasts of burden, that man and horse have to struggle from Balaklava for some four or five miles with the hay and corn, the meat, the biscuit, the pork, which form the subsistence of our army. Every day this toil must be undergone, for we are fed indeed by daily bread, and only get half rations of it. Horses drop exhausted on the road, and their loads are removed and added to the burdens of the struggling survivors; then, after a few efforts to get out of their Slough of Despond, the poor brutes succumb and lie down to die in their graves. Men wade and plunge about, and stumble through the mud, with muttered imprecations, or sit down on a projecting stone, exhausted, pictures of dirt and woe unutterable. Sometimes on the route, the overworked and sickly soldier is seized with illness, and the sad aspect of a fellow-countryman dying before his eyes shocks every passer by—the more because aid is all but hopeless and impossible. There is a great deficiency of hospital marquees, and horrible as it is to

think of such a thing, it is no less true that, according to information received from no doubtful source, five men of a battalion of the Guards were found dead outside one of the tents within the last thirty hours."—*Cor. of the Times.*

THE CONDITION OF OUR TURKISH ALLIES IS, IF POSSIBLE, WORSE.—The mortality among the Turks has now assumed all the dimensions of a plague. Every sense was offended and shocked by the display, day after day, in the streets of processions of men bearing half covered corpses on litters at the busiest hour of the day; and Colonel Daveny at last gave orders, or rather granted permission, that the Turks should bury their dead on the hill-side, over the town. Yesterday, ere evening, upwards of seventy bodies were carried to their long home, and deposited in shallow graves, not above a few inches deep, and were left with a shovelful or two of earth and pebbles over them, as close together as they could be packed. To-day the same process is going on. I can count thirty-five bodies already on the ground, and it is early in the day; over the hill-side come men bearing more litters. As the result of such a mode of burial would be the outbreak of some all-destroying pestilence, the commandant of the place has ordered it to be discontinued, and the Turks must in future bury their dead outside the town in the valley, in graves four feet deep."

## A PEEP INTO SEBASTOPOL.

The correspondent of the *Morning Herald*, writing from the camp, on the 7th, thus describes the appearance of Sebastopol, and the condition of the Russian defences, as viewed from the Ovens:

Sebastopol is not in ruins, and what is more important still, the defences are four times stronger and more vigorous than the first day we opened fire. I know this statement may make my letters unpopular with a certain set, who will see nothing but victories and causes for gratulation in all we do; but nevertheless, it is only the truth, and I am confident that time will vindicate my assertion even in the eyes of the public.

To satisfy myself on this point beyond all possibility of doubt, I yesterday determined to visit the "Ovens," our most advanced picquet post, within 200 yards of the Russian batteries, and closely over looking the town and harbor. It is perfectly easy to approach this place now, for a covered way has been constructed to it, and both sides have, comparatively speaking, ceased firing for some time. I, therefore, got to the Ovens easily, and lying under shelter of a broken wall was enabled, with my glass, to survey the whole town minutely.

I confess I never saw the town under such favorable circumstances. Except now and then from an occasional Russian gun there was no smoke, and the sky being lowering and heavy, objects could be distinguished with unusual clearness. At the first glance I was led to suppose that the town had in reality been much injured, for all the little huts and storehouses connected with the dockyards were indeed in ruins. But, changing my point de vue for one more lofty, I was soon convinced of my mistake.

The real damage inflicted on the town of Sebastopol amounts to this—all the huts used by the dockyard laborers, and the Turkish part of the town, outside the walls, are nearly destroyed—that is, laid almost level with the earth. This quarter appears to be the only dirty and wretched part of Sebastopol—something of the same kind as our Ratcliff-highway. The walls are here and there marked with shot, but most unquestionably, as defences, they are still uninjured.

One large barrack inside the walls, against which our fire, as against a government building, has been particularly directed, is riddled in every part, and most of its roof destroyed. The same is the case with about sixty or seventy of the houses nearest to the walls, but beyond this nothing has been done. Had any of the principal mansions more to the centre of the town been injured, it would be easily seen, as most of them are detached, and all are white as snow, and instantly show a shot mark. The splendid structure which we call the "Parthenon"—the Government House—and, indeed, 19-20ths of the buildings show no trace of injury.

The streets which I could see, and which, of course, were those nearest to our batteries, were all in a most enviable state of cleanliness and good order. In these were numerous bodies of troops lounging about unconcernedly, with their muskets piled upon the pathways. Many civilians passed constantly to and fro, and now and then an ammunition wagon; but I saw no trace of either women or children, or other vehicles of the ordinary description.

Once during the time I was watching, three carts, laden either with sick or wounded—most probably the former—passed towards the north side of the town. None of the Russians appeared to take the least notice of their suffering comrades, so that one may not unreasonably argue that they are as used to death and misery as ourselves.

The only incident that appeared to move these "Muscovs" was the passage along the streets of an officer, evidently of high rank, when they all instantly stood to their arms and beat their drums while he passed, just as the French salute their generals. Who he was of course I was unable even to guess, but he certainly displayed a considerable amount of courage and coolness, as a few minutes after I saw him riding from battery to battery, attended by five or six officers on foot.

Near the walls on the south are the ruins of some building, which has evidently been burnt. This is the hospital in which so many of the Russian wounded unfortunately perished. Two or three more buildings near the dockyards are also blackened by fire, as if they had been "gutted," but the walls were too thick to permit the conflagration extending. Most of the houses in the Crimea—even peasants' cabins—are built with stone, and of extraordinary thickness, for the purpose of resisting the tremendous gales which sweep this part of the world in winter.—So much for the aspect of the town.

Of the earthworks round Sebastopol it is more difficult to speak with accuracy. So numerous are these defences that of them it is quite impossible to gain at once a near and extensive view. As far as I can judge from traversing nearly two-thirds of the allied lines, the enemy's batteries appeared generally in good working order.—Only in one or two instances were their embrasures masked—that is, closed up when a