

A meeting of the Lancashire Presbytery was held at Manchester on Thursday, when it was resolved to consider the propriety of admitting organs into the places of worship connected with the United Presbyterian Church. After a long discussion, the following motion was carried by a majority of 15 to 5:—"The Presbytery are of opinion that the use of instrumental music for the purpose simply of leading the praises of the sanctuary is not contrary to any principle of law, either of the supreme or subordinate standards of this Church, and find that such use has already been practically sanctioned by various Presbyteries thereof; and, therefore, whilst they refrain from giving any recommendation to the congregations of the bounds to introduce organs, they would leave the mode of conducting their psalmody to the Christian wisdom and discretion of individual congregations."

SIR COLIN CAMPBELL.—The baggage and camp requirements of this distinguished man have left town for the Crimea. Sir Colin follows almost immediately.

RUSSIA.

The chief item of intelligence from the Crimea is the following despatch of General Pelissier, telegraphed to Paris:—

"Sebastopol, Dec. 8, 1 p.m.—I have received the following despatch from the General in command of the First Division of the 1st. Corps:

"A body of from 2,000 to 3,000 infantry, and about 400 or 500 horse, at daybreak this morning attacked Baga, Oarkusta, Skvaka. The enemy beat a retreat after a sharp fusillade, which lasted for an hour and a half. Some thirty prisoners were left in our hands, two of whom were officers. I am not aware of the number killed and wounded. Our loss is insignificant."

That Russia wants money is evidenced more ways than one. The Government has ordained that, to facilitate payments from the State treasury, the normal proportion of bullion to be held by the Bank against notes in circulation shall be diminished. At Hamburg, on Wednesday, a Russian loan of fifty millions of roubles (nearly £8,000,000) was issued at 82, bearing 5 per cent. interest. And at the same time it was reported that a money panic has commenced in Russia. At Moscow, Nishni-Novgorod, Astracan, and other places, bank-notes are refused. People are hiding money. At Berlin, on Tuesday, the house of Mendelssohn opened subscriptions for a new Russian Five per Cent. loan, at 86, "with but little success."

The *Cologne Gazette* publishes a letter, dated Odesa, Nov. 30, mentioning a large fire at the military settlements, from which the cavalry have just been drawn. Vast stores collected by the troopers for men and horses have been destroyed.

The correspondence from the camp comes down to the 4th of December. On the first of the month there was a fierce storm, inferior only to the fatal one of the 14th of November last year. The damage done was slight, serving only to teach new recruits to slacken the cords and tighten the pegs of their tents in wet weather. Some few huts were blown down. A day or two previously the diaries speak of the mud as being once more in the ascendant, and making the roads partially impracticable. The following passage from the pen of Mr. Russell one might take to be an extract from his correspondence of 1851. Writing on the mud of November 30, 1855, he says:—

"Literally and truly it is like glue, half boiled, and spread over the face of the earth for the depth of several feet. It is no joke for a soldier to see his sleeping-place, in hut or tent, covered with this nasty slime; but they cannot be kept clean. One step outside, and you are done for. The mud is lying in wait for you, and you just carry back as much on your feet as if you walked a mile. Carts stick immovably in the ground, or the wheels and axles fly into pieces from the strain of the horses and mules, which have led a wretched existence indeed ever since this weather began. As I write the air resounds with the noise of the blows inflicted on the head, sides, and legs of the miserable quadrupeds drawing fuel and stores from the Commissariat depot of the Division."

Wednesday Morning, Dec. 13.

Last night's *Gazette* publishes the following despatch from the Commander-in-Chief in the Crimea:—

"Sebastopol, Dec. 4.

"My Lord—The enemy continue to fire occasionally, and sometimes heavily, on parts of the town. They must have expended a considerable quantity of valuable ammunition without causing us any loss or inconvenience. The enclosed casualty return is the first of the sort I have had occasion to report to your Lordship. It may seem unimportant to refer to the state of

roads and weather here, but their condition affects the essential communications and well-being of the army. The winter broke in upon us suddenly on the 26th and 27th with snow, and has varied with gales and rain; and a very deep state of the ground has damaged all communications.

"Constant presence of labour, and constant attention are requisite, and being given to the road, which, from a peculiarity of soil and condition, was worked into holes, but which is, and will continue to be, of the greatest service to the army and its supplies.—I have, &c.,

W. J. COCHRAN, General Commanding."

The casualty return contains one name only, that of Captain Lord R. Browne, 7th Foot, slightly wounded, by the bursting of a shell in Sebastopol. Dr. Hall's report on the health of the army states that the largest amount of sickness is now among the Land Transport Corps—the last comers. The wet and cold weather has caused great increase in catarrhal affections; fever cases have diminished in number, but prove more than ordinarily fatal. The proportion of sick to well, at the date of the report, was 6.08, or exclusive of wounds, 4.90.

A despatch was also received yesterday at the Admiralty from Sir E. Lyons, in which the Admiral encloses a copy of a letter from Captain Sherard Osborn, of the *Vesuvius*, dated the 21th ultimo, stating that as the formation of ice had commenced in the Sea of Azoff, and as all chance of neutral vessels obtaining cargoes this year was at an end, he had withdrawn to Kertch with the squadron under his orders, after assuring himself that no merchant vessels remained in that sea. In transmitting this account of the closing scene of the year's service of the squadron, Sir E. Lyons says—

"I have so frequently had occasion to bring the merits of Captain Osborn under their lordships' notice, that it is perhaps unnecessary, on the present occasion, that I should say more than that he has maintained his high character up to the close of the service upon which he was employed for six months, and he brings under my favourable notice the gallant and zealous support he has received, from first to last, from the officers and men under his order."

We have little from the Continent this morning but Berlin rumours, and they are not worth much. The correspondent of the *Post* telegraphs—"It is stated that the English Government has demanded from the Court of Vienna an explanation of the motives which have induced it to reduce the Austrian army." The *Chronicle*, on the other hand, says—"It is rumoured that Austria is ready to become actively belligerent, in case of need, if the allies will consent to erect the Danubian Principalities into an independent State, with a prince of the Austrian Imperial family as chief."

A Paris message informs us that—"The Military Commission at St. Petersburg, to deliberate on the defence of the empire, has commenced its labours. Russian troops are marching in the direction of Bessarabia."

The *Daily News* prints the following:—

"Stockholm, Dec. 18.—The King has ratified a treaty with England and France. The two allied Powers guarantee the territorial integrity of Sweden, and the latter engages not to alienate any part of its territory to Russia. The high contracting parties engage to communicate, mutually and reciprocally, all propositions coming from Russia."

AUSTRIA.

Count Valentin Esterhazy left Vienna on Sunday, on his return to his embassy at St. Petersburg, the bearer, it is said, of the propositions for peace that have finally been agreed upon. They are given by the *Post* in a leading article of Monday, the day on which Prince Esterhazy's intended departure was telegraphed to London. After mentioning the facts, the article proceeds:—

It appears from this important despatch, says the *Post*, that Count Esterhazy, the Austrian Ambassador at St. Petersburg, was to leave Vienna on Sunday, for his Post, the bearer of the ultimatum which Austria has resolved to press upon the acceptance of the Czar:—

"The tenor of the contents is no secret. We have repeatedly alluded in this journal to the terms that must be required from Russia, to effect a peace that shall be safe and honourable. The annihilation of the maritime supremacy of Russia in the Black Sea, by the exclusion from its waters of all ships of war—by the dismantling of her fortresses on its coasts—and by the residence of consuls, who may certify that no purposes, but those of legitimate commerce are ever attempted to be compassed—would free Turkey from all

danger by sea from her great neighbour; whilst the utter renunciation of all rights of interference with the Sultan's dominion over his subjects, and of protectorate over the Danubian Principalities, together with the cession of a portion of Bessarabia, comprising the mouths of the Danube, will secure the Porto in undisputed possession of its European territorial rights. These conditions, when confirmed by material guarantee as well as by treaty, would solve the Eastern question. Other important terms, it is true, are demanded, such as that Bomarsund should not be rebuilt, but of these we do not wish to state more than that all is exactly and finally laid down. All the world knows that, in these matters, there are many crochets by which a subtle diplomacy may escape, and it may be suspected that Russia can now, as before, tamper with our demands and elude their objects. This cannot be. It has been provided against. Never was there a document so distinct and unmistakable as the paper which Count Esterhazy is bearing to St. Petersburg, and to it there are but two answers possible, namely, a positive refusal, or a positive acceptance. No evasive answer—no conditional acceptance—no counter-propositions—will be received. It is stated to be the intention of Austria, in the refusal of our ultimatum by the Czar, to withdraw her ambassador from St. Petersburg. It will probably take Count Esterhazy about five or six days to reach St. Petersburg, and if we may judge by precedent, some fourteen days will be allowed to the Emperor of Russia to consider his resolution, and to give his answer. This is no idle comedy, nor what of late has been its synonym, a vain negotiation. Austria urges upon Russia the only terms upon which she can obtain peace. If she can humble her pride, she may say 'Yes.' Then immediately follows an armistice and settlement. If, however, she cannot entirely and at once accept the bitter consequences of her own ambition and foolishness, then must she face the extraordinary force which will be brought to bear against her in the next campaign, and which, under Heaven, will certainly reduce her to a state of which the terrible necessities will make her yield to our terms. The Cabinet of St. Petersburg may not, however, see matters in this light."

The Vienna correspondent of the *Times* denies that the propositions are Austria's, but that she suggested to the Western Powers that it would be well for the four powers—France, England, Turkey and Austria—to settle the minimum of what Russia will have to accept before peace can be concluded. This has now been agreed upon, but not, says the Paris correspondent of the same journal, without some objection on the part of the English Government to the terms considered sufficient by the French. The King of Sardinia mediated, and, according to the same authority Lord Palmerston gave way. It is reported, on the other hand, that Count Nesselrode has declared that Russia will not make peace while a single foreign soldier remains on her territory. The *Presse d'Orient* mentions a similar anecdote as from a Russian Officer who came to the allied camp with a flag of truce:—"In his late visit to the Crimea, the Czar shed abundant tears at the sight of Sebastopol in ruins, and exclaimed, 'Henceforth peace is impossible!'"

TURKEY.

The fall of Kars, notified in our last week's Postscript, after being doubted by the *Times*, is confirmed by the *Invalide Russe*, which announces that it surrendered to General Mouravieff on the 26th of November; adding that—"The Muchir, Wassif Pacha, eight other Pachas, General Williams, and the entire garrison, are prisoners of war." The *Journal de Constantinople* of the 6th positively denied that Kars had fallen.

The park of artillery at Kars, when it surrendered, numbered 120 field pieces, and a few heavy siege-guns. The garrison is believed to be about 16,000 strong. The town itself is composed of mud huts and small dwelling-houses, and the inhabitants a poverty-stricken race. Its position in covering Erzeroum constitutes its importance. The defiles between Kars and Erzeroum are now held by the Russians.

Omar Pacha is said to be concentrating a basis for future operations on the coast from Redoubt Kaleh to Fort Nicholas, instead of marching on Kutais, as was reported. His plans may, perhaps, be considerably modified by the fall of Kars. Now that Kars has surrendered, the Ottoman army in Asia, independent of that acting under Omar Pacha, consists of a corps of 18,000 men under Voly Pacha; another of 8,000 under Selim Pacha; and a small force under Mustapha Pacha, which, when last heard of, was near Ouzougele.