

HASZARD'S GAZETTE, DECEMBER 6.

did not feel himself strong enough to repress an evil which had grown to such an extent; for could he even have removed all the officials suspected of being accessible to bribes, where could he have found guarantees for the honesty of the new ones that would have replaced them? A centralized government is always an expensive government to remunerate fairly the legions of officials, would cause a constant deficit in the imperial budget; he, therefore, did not interfere with the extortions of office. But Nicholas has a temper different from that of Alexander; he sees in the corruptibility of his officials a powerful check upon his authority, since he is aware, that even his slaves are apt to bought for a bribe by those who ought to execute them. The corruption of the officials is the only proof that even the power of the czar is not unlimited—he is unable to purify his administration. And this system of bribery does not stop with the lower ranks of official hierarchy, nor is it uprooted by the severity of Nicholas who generally shows no mercy, when a gross case of corruption is brought under his notice. Even the chiefs of the departments, the senators, and the most renowned generals of the army, can be bought, and are often bought. Soon after the Hungarian campaign, three of the generals who distinguished themselves—amongst them General Saxe, the most treacherous soldier of the Russian Empire, whose personal bravery is beyond praise—were disgraced for pilfering, and for conniving at the misappropriation of the commissaries.

THE SEA STONES OF RUSSIA.

Much disappointment, and not a little discontent, have been felt and expressed at the non-accomplishment of any great deed of naval daring by the magnificent fleet which entered the Baltic in March last, and is now again resuming its anchorage in the ports of England and France. In the estimation of most people, Sir Charles Napier comes home with little credit and no glory. After the striking success which attended the assault upon Bomarsund, it was argued, and not without a fair show of reason, that a similar attack upon Cronstadt or Helsingfors would be equally successful. Subsequent experience, however, forces us to believe, that the conclusion so hastily and impatiently drawn was not a correct one. We have lately seen that the heaviest fire which our Black Sea fleet could bring to bear against the Russian stone walls, at the entrance to the harbour of Sebastopol, was comparatively ineffectual. Some damage was unquestionably done to the open works of the enemy which were exposed to the shower of shells projected from the fleet, and in those works many guns were dismounted, and many men killed; but the cascaded batteries appear to have successfully withheld every endeavour that our ships could make to breach them. The only effect of the five hours' fire of the fleet upon the walls of Fort Constantine, was to give them the appearance of being "pock-marked." Our shot, in no instance had penetrated to a depth of more than twelve or eighteen inches in walls that are of twelve feet thickness. On the other hand, our ships suffered very materially from the red-hot balls which the batteries thickly poured upon them, and several of them were repeatedly obliged to haul off from the fight to subdue the flames which had been kindled about them. We see, then, that the stone walls of Russia are not so meagre as to be despised as the easy reduction of Bomarsund would have led us to conclude.

The fact is, that there were certain conditions connected with the site of Bomarsund, which do not exist in the case of day other of the great Russian marine fortresses. Bomarsund was built upon the brink of a channel deep enough to allow ships of the heaviest burden to lie immediately beneath its walls. An enemy intending to attack Bomarsund from the sea, could bring ships of the largest size, and metal of the heaviest calibre, to bear upon its batteries, within a range of 100 yards. It was not so at Sebastopol, neither would it be the case at Helsingfors or Cronstadt. Each of those fortresses is erected upon a shore so shallow as to be perfectly inaccessible to ships of any burden, except at a distance of 2,000 or 3,000 yards. Sir Edmund Lyons, it is true, contrived by an act of consummate daring to bring the Agamemnon within 700 yards of Fort Constantine, but in doing so, he exposed himself to extreme peril, and his example could only be followed by a single frigate, and a very few of the screw-ships of lighter draft of water. The Britons and the heavier ships of the fleet were unable to approach nearer than 2,000 yards. At Cronstadt and Helsingfors the shores are equally shallow. Now, if the example of Bomarsund is to be taken as an instance of what may be accomplished by a fleet firing against stone walls at a short range, it is but just that the example of Fort Constantine, at Sebastopol, should be recorded as a proof of how little can be effected at a long range. The walls of Bomarsund crumble to powder beneath the broadside of Admiral Claude at 500 yards range, but the walls of Fort Constantine were only "pock-marked" by the fire of Sir Edmund Lyons at 700 yards, and were scarcely scratched by the shot of the Britannia at 3,000 yards. It is obvious, then, that the superiority of a ship's broadside over a stone fortress ashore, is wholly dependent upon closeness of range. A stone battery, by firing red-hot balls, may set a ship in flames at a distance of 8,000 yards, but the broadside of a ship at such a range are proved to be wholly powerless against granite walls. Now that these facts have been clearly ascertained, we certainly ought to feel more reconciled, than we have hitherto exhibited a disposition to be, with the non-performance of the Baltic fleet. After the experience recently gained at Sebastopol, it must be difficult for any man of sound mind to resist the conclusion that Sir Charles Napier would have acted with the utmost rashness, if he had risked the stupendous ship under his command in an encounter with stone fortresses, which it was physically impossible for him to approach nearer than 1,500 or 2,000 yards. The same excuse cannot, however, be made for the Government. They were forewarned, when the fleet was sent to sail for the Baltic in March last, that heavy ships would be of but little or no use in operating against the enemy in that sea. They were warned, again, that the only effective mode of dealing with the enemy's fortresses, and of getting at his fleet, would be by means of gun-boats, and of iron-clad vessels drawing little water. Sir Charles Napier himself had scarcely reached the Baltic, before he made an urgent demand to be supplied with boats and vessels of that description. But none were furnished to him; and all the summer long he has been left to sail about the broadest seas unquesitiously of the biggest, finest ships in the world, but almost every one of which was wholly and ridiculously unfit for the particular service to be performed. Whether Sir

Charles, at the age to which he has now attained, is the finest man in the world to command a fleet, which, whenever it shall come into action, must fight under conditions with which he, as a member of the old regime, is but little acquainted, is a question into which we shall not enter. But when he is measured for the little he accomplished during the past summer, we find, in honest belief, that we think the blame rests, not with him, but with the Government.

We cannot yet decide whether the deficiencies of the past year in gun-boats and floating batteries, are to be wholly归功于 the new officials, which were appointed in the course of the year, or that they are to be attributed to the carelessness of the old regime, in not having provided for the safety of the navy. The people of England naturally will not patiently submit to the acquisition of further evidence in the prosecution of the war, unless they receive an assurance, that Cronstadt, early in the spring, shall be subjected to the same doom as that which is now impending upon Sebastopol.

THESE DIVINE WORDS ARE IN THE BIBLE:

LORD PALMERSTON'S PLAN.

The Palatine has presided with the genius of Aberdeen, and the president of the Council has been to Bristol to encourage literary aspirants in writing a new History of England. The Home Secretary engages in lecturing the peasantry upon their bad habits, and setting forth a plan for their correction. Of these lights of the Administration, the last we think the most highly of. Lord Aberdeen repeats an old story, and Lord John Russell makes an unprofitable new one; but Lord Palmerston applies himself to the eradication of evils that are at the root of the sin and suffering with which society is afflicted; and with an eloquence and enthusiasm that only require perseverance to ensure success. The Home Secretary's speech at Ramsey is worth ten thousand such elaborate preachers as the Premier has delivered at Aberdeen and such lamentations for history as Lord John Russell has made at Bristol. The subject is honest, but everybody can understand and feel its force. We may pray for peace, but shall not ensure it, unless the spirit of peace is in the nation's heart; and that can not be, whilst the morals are corrupt and a man's home is not his chief resort, and his wife and children the chief objects of his care. Lord John Russell may get a man with the wisdom of all the historians combined, and his own to boot, to supply the literary desiderata he points out; but books will do nothing, if men themselves are demoralized; and the drinking and smoking propensities of the poor are undermining all the moral that exist, and defying all the powers of the preacher. The pipe and the pot may be pronounced an old English emblem; but the abuse of that enjoyment occasions nine-tenths of the existing misery, vice and crime. Nine-tenths of the pauperism which we have to support may be traced to an excess in the enjoyment of beer and tobacco. The criminals, for whose prosecution and punishment we are taxed to provide a fund, took their first degrees under the pipe and pot. "All children are good; it is a bad education and bad association in early life that corrupt the minds of men." This is the doctrine Lord Palmerston laid down; and if its truth be admitted (as it needs must be), the progress of movement in accordance therewith will be acknowledged. "All the good qualities of human nature—the qualities of mind and of heart—everything that tends to dignify our species and to enable men to distinguish themselves in the condition in which they have been placed—these qualities have been sown broadcast over the human race, are abundantly dispersed among the humblest classes as they are among the highest classes of the land." The child born in the palace is constituted mentally and bodily the same as the child born in the cottage; and the latter may occupy, in afterlife, an honourable position as the prince. But the poor man's child is too often neglected. The father is selfish, and spends the chief part of his earnings upon himself; the wife has work in order to support the family, and as soon as possible the child is sent out to earn a little. He returns from work to a home of wretchedness, a den of ravening father, perhaps, and a cursing mother. He stays no longer at home than he can help. He shifts for himself, and too often in the worst of ways. "It is the duty of all parents," said Lord Palmerston, "to see that their children are well and properly educated; that they are early instructed, not merely in book learning, in reading and writing, and in acquirements of that kind, but instructed in the principles which indicate a difference between right and wrong, and that they are taught the principles of religion, and their duty towards God and man. 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