

found; and whoever could not compass the possession of the sacred volume for himself had access to the monastic library, where the threadbare scholar was as welcome as the young noble; or, if he wished, he might satisfy his pious desire out of the great Bible placed in the church, and sometimes chained there, "to the end," as Bede says, "that all who desired to read any chapter in either Testament might be able at once to find what they desired;" or, if he had a mind to know more than he had heard or read in the church, he had but to turn his steps to the monastery school, for there a knowledge of Holy Writ formed the prominent branch of instruction for all, rich or poor, lord or vassal, who came to learn the lessons of wisdom at the feet of many a Gamaliel. And, many as were the names of persons and places famous in those times for Scriptural knowledge, we may be excused if we take some little of pride to ourselves for being able to say that first among the foremost were some of our own countrymen, and that our great schools of Armagh, Emly, Lismore, Clonard, and the rest of them, were resorted to from all parts by persons desirous to perfect themselves in sacred knowledge. Mediæval history supplies us with numerous illustrations of the state of Scriptural knowledge of those times. But there is one fact that goes to prove that the laity were not debarred the use of the Scripture, nor without the means of acquiring a knowledge of its contents; and it is the fact that, not to speak of the Latin, which was the language of learned Christendom between the fourth and fifteenth centuries, there were executed many translations of the Bible into the vernacular tongues of Europe—the Italian, the French, the Spanish, the Gaelic, the Gothic, the Anglo-Saxon, the English, the German, the Flemish, the Icelandic, the Swedish, the Polish, the Russian, and others besides. "The whole Bible," says Sir Thomas More, "was long before Wycliffe's days, by virtuous and well-learned men, translated into the English tongue, and by good and godly people, with devotion and soberness, well and reverently read." "It is not much above one hundred years," says Cramer, "since Scripture hath not been accustomed to be read in this realm; many hundred years before that it was translated and read in the Saxon's tongue; and when that language waxed old, and out of common usage, because folks should not lack the fruit of reading it, it was translated again into the newer language." In fact, it was the statute of the 33rd of Henry the Eighth that first prohibited the laity to read the Bible in English, enacting that "no women, not of gentle or noble birth, nor journeymen, artificers, or printers, should read the Bible or the New Testament in English, to themselves or others, openly or privately." The act of the 34th Henry the Eighth added other restrictions. Time would fail us were we to enter more fully into this most interesting subject. Enough has been said to vindicate the action of the Catholic Church in reference to the Bible. In the long lapse of ages, since first the Word of God was entrusted to her safe keeping, kingdoms rose and fell. Tide after tide of barbarism rolled over the face of Europe, each in its course doing its work of destruction, sweeping away not only the forms of past civilization, but even the vestiges of past ruin, just as one wave of the sea sweeps away all traces of that which went before it, and in its turn is lost itself as that which comes after it. But in the midst of all the surging flood, there stands all the while the spouse of Christ, with the eucharistic chalice, in one hand and the Bible in the other; and there she will stand, holding them aloft, to give light and life to her children in all ages to come. The motives which should bring us to the diligent study of the Scripture may be summed up in this much—it is the Word of God. Since it is such, we shall derive incomparably greater profit and pleasure from its perusal than from that of any other book, how excellent soever it may be. It is the best of all spiritual books—the bulwark of faith—the day-star of hope—a lamp to our feet—a treasure of heavenly and earthly wisdom. But, if we would profit by the perusal of the Holy Scripture, we must approach it in no spirit of mere idle curiosity, but as becomes a book so sacred, with the utmost reverence—with prayer, because we have need of some one to teach us its mysteries, its deep and hidden meaning, and that "one is your Master, Christ," who is accessible only by prayer—with a pure heart, because "blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God;" and if God, then the sense of God's Word also—with humility, because "God resisted the proud and giveth His grace to the humble;" and if, with humility, then with humble obedience to the Church, "the pillar and the ground of truth," to whom God has not only given the Scripture, but also His own Divine Spirit, and through His Spirit the true sense and meaning of the Scripture. Without this humble obedience to the Church the searches of the Scripture is sure to be lost, finding nothing but darkness and death, where he sought for light and life, and furnishing in himself, for the ten thousand time, a melancholy exemplification of the Apostle's words—"The unlearned and unstable wrestle with the Scriptures to their own destruction." "Let the student of the Scripture," says the great Bishop of Hippo, "reflect on these words of the Apostle—knowledge puffeth up; charity edifieth;" and, again, upon those words of Christ, "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart, that being rooted and founded in humble charity, we may be able to comprehend, with all the Saints, what is the breadth, and the length, and the height, and the depth—that is, the Cross of Christ." And, again, this same great Bishop says, there is no way to arrive at truth and heavenly wisdom but that which God himself has marked out for us—namely, humility, adding—"The first way is humility, the second humility, the third humility;" and, as often as you should ask, would say the same thing." Therefore, as, in eloquence, Demosthenes assigned, to deliver the first place, and the

second place, and the third place, so will, in regard to the wisdom of Christ, assign the first place, and the second place, and the third place, to humility, to teach which Our Lord was humbled in His birth, His life, His death. If we approach the perusal of the Holy Scripture in these dispositions, it will make us wise unto salvation. It is the Word of the living God.

At the close the Rev. lecturer was loudly and repeatedly applauded.

WAR PREPARATIONS.

(From the London Times, November 27th.) A Privy Council will be held this afternoon at Windsor Castle, chiefly for the purpose of ordering the meeting of Parliament on the 12th of next month for the despatch of business. The principal object of this early meeting, we believe to be the necessity of an act for enabling Government to send militia regiments to Gibraltar and the Mediterranean stations, to take the place of the regiments of the Line going on to the Crimea. Of the absolute necessity of such a measure, there can be no doubt. The troops now idle in the Mediterranean, where there is not the shadow of an enemy, are urgently required at that now famous promontory where the foremost Powers of the world are engaged in mortal combat, and where neither side will give way till it has exhausted its resources. We presume that any regiment of militia would just as soon spend the winter at Gibraltar, or Malta, or Corfu, as at a dull English town, in different barracks, and with the average allowance of frost, snow, and east winds. Very few of our readers will require to be told that no militia man will be obliged to go abroad against his will, inasmuch as he entered the service on the contrary understanding. An act of Parliament, however, is required before a single regiment of militia can be ordered to a foreign station, even if it has volunteered for the service. As to the general embodiment of the militia, which a contemporary has affected to doubt, we beg to repeat our statement that it is intended to embody all the militia regiments at a very early date, the precise order in which they are to be summoned depending on a variety of circumstances. It may be readily conceived that much has arisen during the eventful period of the recess to call for the assistance of Parliament, and we are quite sure that every member of the Legislature in his senses will come with the sincere and hearty determination to assist the Government, the army, and the nation by every means in his power; and to oppose no measure, no vote of money or men, no arrangement having for its object the vigorous prosecution of the war. Having drawn the sword and thrown away the scabbard in the face of a powerful and barbarous foe, and by the side of a noble ally, we must devote everything we possess in this world to the cause we have embraced; unless we would make up our minds to retire from the front rank of nations, and take our place we know not how far behind.

As Government is at length doing its utmost so far as regards the numerical strength of the reinforcements, and as the mobilisation of the militia is a confession of our comparative weakness in point of numbers; this is the occasion for a few remarks on other matters not less requisite to success. We don't profess to be a first-rate military Power. We have not more than two-thirds the population of France; while together with France we barely equal the population of Russia. Our navy, our commerce, our colonies, and other peculiar calls compete with the army for the services of our men, who, brave, hardy, and loyal as they are, nevertheless cannot be obtained in sufficient numbers for a contest in which numerical superiority is to decide. We cannot bring our men up for ever-in as great masses as the Czar can bring up his; and when the struggle recommences with more fury than ever next spring, we must lay our account for having to deal with larger masses than we met on the banks of the Alma or in the Valley of Inkermann. It must be considered that an English or a French soldier is a much more valuable article than a Russian; such, at least, is the appreciation at home, where we do not hear of a few thousand men put hors de combat with the same indifference, possibly as the Emperor of Russia. We cannot afford—or, at least, we don't afford—to mass 40,000 men in solid squares and drive them through the morning mist on the steady fire and unflinching bayonets of an unconquerable foe. We cannot even compare our numerical losses with those of the enemy, or set our one man killed or wounded to his two, or half-a-dozen. It may or may not be an inconvenient thing to the Emperor of Russia to lose 20,000 men in one day. All we know is, that it is a great calamity to ourselves—that is, to England and France—to lose a quarter of that number, and it is an object of the greatest national importance to avert the loss, and save our men, if possible, by any means that skill, money, and art can supply.

Then how are we to spare our men, and make them go as far as possible? How are we to make one Englishman count for half-a-dozen Russians? There ought to be no difficulty as to the reply. Our vast superiority in mechanical art is unquestionable. The Russians are, but imitators, ever on the watch, to pick up the inventions of their neighbors; and laboring under the want of a mechanical genius even where they copy in the most servile manner. We possess such means of mechanical production, such forges, laboratories, and workshops, as are not to be found in Russia; and we have classes of skilled workmen that no serfs could ever vie with. It is our plain duty then, to give our soldiers every mechanical assistance that art can procure. When this is the first thing to be done, what will be said of the lamentable fact, that the reinforcements now going out are armed with the common musket instead of the Minies,

which have been found so serviceable, and to which we chiefly owe the vast difference between our casualties and those of the foe on the 5th inst? The superiority of the Minie is no longer a question, and the sole reason why the troops going to the war are not armed with it, is that there are none to be got. The Birmingham people, who made such a furious and successful fight last year against the establishment of a Government factory for small arms in order to save their own monopoly, cannot make the new muskets fast enough, and at this terrible crisis of the national fortunes our soldiers are sent out with bad weapons. It is clear that the private manufacturers are not to be trusted where the national honor and safety are concerned, and that we must forthwith make ourselves independent of contractors and their workmen. But there is a good deal more to be done before we have exhausted the assistance of art or of our mechanical superiority. After the sacrifice of much valuable time, many beasts of burden and even some men, in the transport of heavy articles from Balaklava to the batteries, it is suggested that above nine-tenths might have been saved by the use of iron rails, a sufficiency of which might have done duty for ballast in a single transport, and which it would not have taken a week to lay down. Five hundred navies too, with their practical experience and their own tools, would have done the earthworks in less than half the time the soldiers and marines have been about them, and would have completed the defenses of our right flank in time to double the Russian loss and halve our own on the terrible 5th. Much more there is; that almost any respectable contractor would suggest, which would contribute to the great object of sparing the British soldier. At present we are simply competing in numbers and brute force against an enemy who has a super-abundance of them, and cares not how much he throws away, so long as he can reckon three of his savages to one British Grenadier. We must make that Grenadier stand for more than three savages; and the Dragoons for more than three Cosacks, if we would win the day, and not suffer a reverse, which may be England's first step in that decline and fall which historians tell us is the fate of all empires.

The London Economist has the following article on the climate of the Crimea, where our brave troops are now spending their Christmas and New Year's Day.

"At present it seems likely that the allied armies of France and England will winter in the Crimea. We presume they will occupy principally the southern skirt of the peninsula, situated to the south of the 45 deg. of latitude, and of course in the temperate part of Europe, about the latitude of Bordeaux, Milan and Venice.—Sheltered by hills from the prevalent north winds, and in the vicinity of the ocean, the southern part seems to enjoy a much warmer climate than the other places mentioned situated in the same parallel. At least it is not exposed to the extreme cold sometimes experienced at Milan and Venice. It is a land of vines and figs and melons. It is richly productive in wheat. Through fertile valleys run sparkling rivulets, fringed by narrow strips of woods. Simpheropol is described by a recent traveller as half-buried amidst luxuriant vegetation. Beneath it flows the Salghir through a lovely valley, in which orchards and gardens abound, containing every variety of fruit trees known in the temperate climates of Europe. The fields bear tobacco and Indian corn. Vineyards are abundant, and the wine of the Crimea, though not perhaps suitable to our taste, is well known in Russia. Another town, Bagtche Serai, the ancient capital, like Simpheropol, lies embowered amidst luxuriant vegetation. Not long since the Crimea has become a fashionable resort for the Russian nobility. The Emperor and the wealthier nobles have villas palaces along the narrow strip which borders on the ocean, and, being sheltered from the north winds, is extraordinarily fertile. It is impossible to suppose that a place enjoying a similar climate to that of Bordeaux, or still warmer, which, on account of its many charms, is chosen, like the south coast of England, as the favored residence of those who are free to dwell where they like, should not form excellent winter quarters for our soldiers.

"The single plausible objection to it we have seen, is that the Crimea, though favored by the Government, and peopled with colonists from various parts of Germany, has not increased in population, implying something deleterious in the climate. From the most ancient time it has had a succession of masters, none of whom had held it for a very long period, and none of whom, except the Tartar race, seem much to have flourished. The moral causes of depopulation may have been at all times, as now, more powerful than the physical causes of increase; and the many successive masters the Crimea has had, indicates rather moral than physical causes of decay. It is quite possible to stifle human prosperity, as well as plants and animals, by too much care. Individuals only exert themselves and thrive in freedom, and the tender care of the Czar seems as fatal to individual enterprise in the Crimea as formerly was the rude rapacity of the Turkish Pachas. We can infer nothing against the physical properties of the country from the decay of the people, for this seems the unavoidable result of a system which substitutes the Imperial will for the enterprise of numerous individuals. A German writer gives us this description of the Crimea:—

"The Crimea is one of the finest and most picturesque countries of the world. Its soil, particularly in the southern parts of the peninsula, where vegetation is truly tropical, is of an extraordinary fertility. The valleys, watered by numberless brooks and small rivers, are excellently cultivated, abounding in productive corn-fields and vineyards. Of the latter those near Sudak and Kooz give the best grapes. Apricots, peaches, cherries, plums, almonds, pomegranates, figs, pears, apples, and melons, are grown in gardens, whilst the open land yields considerable quantities of cereals, millet, tobacco, honey, wax, and silk. The breeding of horned cattle, horses, and sheep is of some importance; the latter yield the favorite small grey curly skins, known as Crimean lambskins. In the northern parts of the peninsula, on the other hand, both wood and water are scarce, and the soil is generally poor, brackish, and unfit for cultivation. Mr. McCulloch, in the late edition of his Geographical Dictionary, has a similar description.

The Crimea is divided into two distinct parts, one lying N. and the other S. of the river Salghir, which flows from W. to E., and is the only stream of any importance in the peninsula. The former consists almost entirely of vast plains, or steppes, destitute of trees, but covered with luxuriant pasture, except where they are interspersed with shallow salt lakes and marshes. The climate of this region is far from good; being cold and damp in winter, and oppressively hot and very unhealthy, in summer, particularly along the Putrid Sea. The aspect and climate of the other, or S. portion of the peninsula, are entirely different. It presents a succession of lofty mountains, picturesque ravines, chasms, and the most beautiful slopes and valleys. The mountains, formed of strata of calcareous rocks, stretch along the S. coast from Caffa, on the E., to Balaklava on the W. The Tchadyadag, or Tent mountain, the highest in the chain, rises to the height of about 5,110 feet above the level of the sea, and several of the other summits attain to a considerable elevation. The climate of the valleys, and of the slopes between the mountains and the sea, is said to be the most delicious that can be imagined; and, besides the common products, such as corn, flax, hemp, and tobacco, vines, olives, figs, trees, mulberry trees, pomegranates, oranges, &c., flourish in the greatest profusion. Pallas, Dr. Clarke, and others, have given the most glowing descriptions of this interesting region. According to Clarke, "If their exist a terrestrial paradise, it is to be found in the district intervening between Kutchukoy and Sudak, on the S. coast of the Crimea. Protected by encircling alps from every cold and blighting wind, and only open to those breezes which are wafted from the S., the inhabitants enjoy every advantage of climate and of situation. Continual streams of crystal water pour down from the mountains upon their gardens, where every species of fruit known in the rest of Europe, and many that are not, attain the highest perfection. Neither unwholesome exhalations, nor chilling winds, nor venomous insects, nor poisonous reptiles, nor hostile neighbors, infest this blessed territory. The life of its inhabitants resembles that of the golden age." The soil, like a hot-bed, rapidly puts forth such variety of spontaneous produce, that labor becomes merely an amusing exercise. Peace and plenty crown their board; while the repose they so much admire is only interrupted by harmless thunder, reverberating on rocks above them, or by the murmur of the waves on the beach below." (Clarke, ii. p. 252 8vo. ed.) But if this description be as faithful as it is eloquent, it will not certainly apply to any other portion of the Crimea, not even to the famous valley of Baidar.

"In no writer that we have met with is the southern part of it described as in any degree deleterious. We believe that the climate, like the soil, is extremely fine, and that nowhere could more healthy winter quarters be found for our troops."

IRISH INTELLIGENCE.

ROYAL IRISH VOLUNTEER RIFLES.—It is in contemplation to raise in Dublin and its vicinity a local force under the above denomination.

DIED.—At Forkhill, Armagh, Nov. 12th, the Rev. John Mooney, Catholic Curate.

DEATH OF SIR ARTHUR BROOKE, M.P.—We regret to state that Sir Arthur Brooke, who recently returned to his residence, in the county Fermanagh, from Germany, in improved health, was suddenly attacked on Monday with very alarming illness, which terminated fatally yesterday. Sir A. Brooke's loss will be severely felt by his tenants, to whom he was a kind and indulgent landlord. Sir Arthur represented the county Fermanagh in parliament for several years.—Fermanagh Mail.

The Roman correspondent of the Dublin Telegraph, among the items of interest communicated, thus writes of Bianconi's Memorial to O'Connell, now being completed by the eminent sculptor Benzi.—"Little is wanted for the completion of the memorial to O'Connell, the lower relief for which, representing the historic scene in the house of Parliament, with a variety of portrait heads, is entirely finished in marble. The upper, where appears Ireland mourning over an urn, consoled by an angel hovering above, is the portion now occupying the chisel, alike admirable for beauty of conception with other works of this gifted artist.

LETTER OF SMITH O'BRIEN.—The following letter from Mr. O'Brien appears in Galligan's Messenger (Paris) in reference to a statement which appeared in some of the Irish journals, and was extensively copied:—

Paris, Hotel Meurice, Nov. 23. "Sir—I have seen in your journal of to-day's date, an extract from the Limerick Chronicle, stating that the Irish friends of Mr. William Smith O'Brien have it in contemplation to solicit the influence of the Emperor of the French with our gracious Sovereign to remove all conditions from the royal pardon, which may be done (the paragraph adds) with perfect safety and propriety, as that gentleman has taken a final leave of political agitation for the remainder of his life. I know not whether this statement is as unfounded as many others respecting me, which have appeared in the newspapers during my absence from Europe; but, if it be well founded, I wish it to be known that such an application as that here contemplated has not been sanctioned, still less prompted by me. I prize beyond expression the sentiment which has induced a large portion of the Irish nation to evince anxiety for my return, and I feel deeply grateful for the sympathy which has been exhibited in the United States, the British Colonies and elsewhere, towards the Irish political exiles; but it does not seem consistent with the dignity of my country to solicit foreign intervention in our behalf. For my own part, I am not conscious that I have done anything which disentitles me from spending the remainder of my life in Ireland, which country is not only the home of my affections, but also the natural sphere of my duties; and I am convinced that sound policy as well as generous feeling dictates the promulgation, by the British Government, of a complete and general amnesty with regard to the proceedings of all those who were compromised in the insurrectionary movement of the year 1848.—I now find myself compelled to remove my family, in the middle of winter, from their cherished home in Ireland, and to seek for them a domicile in some foreign country. Such a lot, though preferable to imprisonment in Van Dieman's Land, naturally gives occasion for such solicitude. But I would rather remain for ever an exile from the land which I love than return thither under restrictions incompatible with my personal honor, or with the rights and duties of an Irish gentleman." (Signed) Wm. S. O'Brien.