

RUSSIAN FLEET AT CRONSTADT.

The Allied fleet now extends from the London Shoals to the Tolboukin Light, thence far along the northern shore to the town of Cronstadt, and still the cry is "they come"—ship of the line and block ship, screw frigate and paddle, gun-boat and mortar-vessel, and now is the time that something might be attempted. Not that we are likely to go in and attack the forts, whatever might have been done last year. The difficulties are now very great, if not insurmountable. A range of submarine piling runs in one unbroken line from Lisi Ness to a point where the town is out of range. From this same Lisi Ness to Man-of-War Harbour a large portion of the Russian fleet lies moored. It consists of several line-of-battle ships, frigates, and corvettes; these are backed by a number of gun-boats, and, singular to say, twenty of them are propelled by steam-power. It is said the locomotives were taken off the railway for this purpose; but the factory at Cronstadt is fast making many more.

On the northern shore the most elaborate earth-works, now green with the vegetation of spring, protect it from any light attack in that direction; these have been constructed since last spring. In the regular channel above Riebank their best ships are lying ready for sea, with their ensigns and jacks blended with the flags of Cronstadt and Riebank. These of course, are so placed as to command the channel. On a fine day, the view is not a bad panorama. On either side of you stretches the dark yellow water from the Neva, the shores now verdant with spring and the stately pine, and dotted with many beautiful villas as far as the eye can reach. In the distance, the magnificent dome of St. Isaac's, and the gilded spires of the churches of St. Petersburg, may be seen clear against the faint blue sky, with the white sails of the Russian men-of-war boats gliding across them at intervals. Altogether the scene is a singular one. Here is an immense force, with the naval resources of three nations, in close proximity; and still so equally has the game been played, that neither side has scarcely fired a shot.

But the forts are the most magnificent objects in the picture. There they stand, the very personification of solidity, with guns frowning tier above tier; and so well are they kept in repair, that they look from this distance as if fresh from the builders' hands. This neatness in fortification appears to be quite a rage with them. Everything is arranged to catch the eye. But nature has done a great deal for the Russians both at Cronstadt and Sebastopol, and they have taken every advantage of what she has given them as a foundation for works of defence.

THE RUSSIAN PEASANTRY.

Colossal as the power of Russia may be considered, its has within its ample bosom all the elements of weakness. It has no *cor populi* and therefore is deficient in the most characteristic feature in national greatness.

This will be apparent, when it is taken into consideration that, with few exceptions, the peasants of Russia are slaves. They form two classes—peasants of the crown; and peasants belonging to individuals. The Emperor Nicholas has done much to lessen the evils of the former, and to render their manumission, as well as that of the latter class, more practicable. Yet the condition of both is still degrading and deplorable.

It is calculated that about a sixth part of the peasantry belong to the crown. Peasants belonging to individuals, are their property, as much as the cattle on their estate. The rent paid by the crown peasants is fixed; that paid by the private peasants is regulated by their means of getting money—or, in other words, it is a tax on their industry. There is no law to restrain the demands of the master—their time and labor are absolutely at his command. Some of the nobility send their slaves to St. Petersburg or Moscow, to be instructed in various trades; and then either employ them on their own estates, hire them out, sell them permission to exercise their trade, or dispose of them at an advanced price. Some of the Russian nobles have seventy thousand or one hundred thousand peasants—and from this fact, as may well be supposed, their wealth is immense, in whatever manner the labor of these slaves is employed. Women and children, as well as men, must labor for their master, for such pay as his caprice or means may dispose or enable him to give. Tithes are besides demanded out of whatever may remain in their hands. As soon as a child reaches the age of ten, its labor is required; and when he reaches fifteen, each male is obliged by law to labor three days in a week for his master. If the proprietor chooses to employ him on other days, he may—as for example in a manufactory; in this case, however, he finds him in food and clothing. In general, the master, instead of exacting the labor of a slave for the stated portion of the week, agrees to receive rent; and he is bound to furnish him with a house and a certain portion of land. The aged and infirm are provided with food, raiment, and lodging at his expense.

The master has the power of correcting his slaves by blows or imprisonment; but

the law—in such a country easily evaded—forbids the exercise of any great cruelty. No slave can quit his village, or—if he be a domestic slave,—his master's family, without a passport. Imprisonment, with hard labor, is the punishment of runaway slaves. A master may send his slave into the public workhouse, or into the army,—in the latter case, he sends one man less the next levy. No slave can be legally sold, except to a noble—but this law is frequently evaded. A slave may obtain his liberty by manumission, by purchase, or by serving in the army or navy.

It is, however consoling to reflect that, injurious as the state of the Peasantry may be to the higher feelings of our nature, it is not aggravated by poverty. Their houses—formed of whole trees,—are in tolerable repair, and well adapted to their habits. They sometimes, but not often, consist of two stories; the lower forms a store-room—in the upper one they dwell. A kind of ladder on the outside serves as a staircase. There is generally but one room in the habitable part. Their furniture seldom comprises more than a wooden table and benches fastened to the sides of the room, wooden platters, bowls, and spoons, and perhaps a large earthen pan to cook. Their diet is substantial, consisting of black rye-bread, eggs, salt fish, mushrooms, and bacon. They have also a favorite dish—both-potch of salt or fresh meat, groats, and rye-flour, seasoned with onions and garlic. Of this food they obtain plenty at a cheap rate. Their clothing however is dear. To clothe a Russian peasant or soldier costs nearly three times as much as in America; but their clothing is strong, and being made loose and wide, lasts longer. It is rare to see a Russian in rags, and their style of dress becomes them very well. As to their personal appearance, they may be described, as a large, coarse, hardy race—possessed of great bodily strength—rarely below the middle stature—strong-limbed—lean, but well built. Their mouths and eyes are small—their lips thin—their teeth even and white—their hair brown, reddish or flaxen—their beards strong and bushy. The complexion of the female peasantry is brunette. Some of them, as among other classes are extremely handsome. Both sexes are remarkably superstitious. Being deprived of education beyond that requisite sharpening of their instincts to render them more valuable as a property, they cling to old traditions with extraordinary tenacity—believe in ghosts, goblins, and every variety of supernatural phenomena.

Probably the most singular superstition in the world prevails in Moscow. The people of that city and for hundreds of miles around it, almost adore the Great Bell which lies at the foot of Ivan's Tower.

On festival days—which in the Greek calendar are remarkably numerous—they resort to the Great Bell as they would to a sanctuary.

The origin of this superstition is involved in obscurity; but as no people, however deeply they may be sunk in ignorance, are so insensible as to be altogether indifferent to the attractions of political and social liberty, the custom may probably be traced to a tradition connected with the bell, which has been preserved among the Russian peasantry for several generations.

This tradition, it appears, refers back to a period when the Russians enjoyed a condition approaching to that of pastoral simplicity. The alarm bell in a tower before the Kremlin, was brought from Novogorod, when that city was conquered in 1477. There it had been used as a signal for the people of that Republic to assemble, in the event of foreign danger or intestine tumult; and they regarded its removal to Moscow as the sure prelude to their departing liberty. Thenceforward the love of bells became quite a passion among the peasantry of Russia; and several of the Emperors, without paying much regard to the political sentiment involved in the matter, gratified their taste by the most liberal expenditure in this means to supply a substitute for the dearer strains of liberty.

THE PARIS EXHIBITION.—OPINION OF ENGLISH JURORS.—Attention is called by the English jurors now in Paris, to the extraordinary beauty and interest of the collection in the Paris Exhibition as a whole, now that it has attained its full proportions.

Disappointed with the half failure of the opening, too many of our countrymen have leaped the conclusion, that there is little to see in the Champs Elysees—a very false inference, and one which the jurors feel bound to oppose. They declare boldly in favour of "the superiority of the objects exhibited over those of 1851;" and they call the earnest attention of our artists, manufacturers, and workmen, to this fact. We can ourselves testify to the general truth of the assertion—though we might have to qualify it in some few particulars. —*London Athenaeum.*

REMARKABLE BALLOON ASCENSION.

THREE HUNDRED AND FIFTY MILES TRAVELLED IN FOUR HOURS.—Wm. D. Bannistler, of Adrian city, Michigan, ascended, on Friday afternoon, in a balloon, from that place, at 10½ in the morning, and descended, in Clarion county, Pennsylvania, 2½ in the afternoon, making the computed distance of three hundred and fifty miles in the extraordinary short time of four hours. This is his second trip, and an experimental one with a balloon of unusually large size. It is thirty feet in diameter, contains over six hundred yards of silk, and is capable of holding nineteen thousand cubic feet of gas. After his ascent to the distance of three miles and a half, the aeronaut struck the eastern current of air, which, he says, is continually blowing in the one direction. It carried him south of the Lakes, through Central Ohio. His intention was not to descend until dark, as he was above the rain clouds in the clear upper sky, but the excessive cold to which he was exposed brought on the accustomed drowsy sensation, which prevented him from properly managing his balloon. He was in that sleepy state when his "craft" anchored in a tree in Red Bank, having descended in consequence of the evaporation of gas.—The cold was so severe, that his feet were completely frozen.

WHAT IT COSTS TO BOMBARD A CITY.

That war is an expensive occupation the British Government and people are beginning to understand by means of augmented taxes, and the opening of the fire of the allies suggests a calculation as to the costs of the iron balls which have been thrown into Sebastopol by the five hundred cannon which have hurled them in what Gortschakoff called "an infernal fire." The accounts by the Asia represent that each of these guns fired one hundred and twenty rounds a day, which gives a total for the five hundred of sixty thousand rounds. This fire has been continued for thirteen days, making an aggregate of seven hundred and eighty thousand missiles rained upon the city.

The weight of shot fired from the guns of the allies varies probably from nineteen to one hundred and forty pounds, and of the shells from fifteen to one hundred and ten pounds—and forty-five pounds would probably be a low estimate for an average. This would give a daily delivery of iron to the Russians amounting to two million seven hundred thousand pounds, and a total for the thirteen days of thirty-five million one hundred thousand pounds—the prime cost of which, in the rough, at the average price of pig iron in England for the last year, was not less than three hundred and thirteen thousand three hundred and eighty dollars.—This is of course, without any regard to the enormous cost of transportation to the Crimea.

If the cannon balls fired from the allied lines during the thirteen days were rolled into rail bars, weighing sixty pounds to the yard, the bars would extend three hundred and thirty-two miles: or if laid as a railroad, would suffice as a single trackroad from New York to Albany, with all the necessary turn-outs.

The charge of powder for each gun would probably average about six pounds, which would show an expenditure for the thirteen days of four millions six hundred and eighty thousand pounds of powder. Such powder is worth here eighteen cents a pound, but in England would not probably, cost more than fifteen cents, at which price the powder cost seven hundred and two thousand dollars.—*American Paper.*

Why is a perfumer the wisest of men?—Because he never lacks scents.

TRIAL OF AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS AT THE FRENCH EXHIBITION.—Horace Greeley, Esq., Editor of the *N. Y. Tribune* attended a trial of Plows and Mowers on the 7th July last at Guingoen the "Imperial" College of Agriculture, some twenty-five miles west of Paris. He says—"A great number of Plows were taken from the Exhibition and tried here, and that of the Messrs. Howard, Bedford, England, was pronounced the most effective. I understood Mr. James Howard, one of the makers, to state that, as carefully tested by the dynamometer, on clover sod, being drawn by two smartly walking horses, it turned a furrow ten inches wide and six and a half deep, with a medium draft of only 183 pounds, or a little more than half its own weight. There are a good many men who could draw this plow at the gait, and almost any two men could easily do it. There was no plow entered from our country, (we have none in the Palace,) but one from Canada was tried and did good work. Most of the plows entered from the continent proved beneath a contempt, as was to be expected. Some of them required over quadruple the power to propel them that was exacted by the winner, and one from Austria, that was confidently bragged on before the trial, actually twisted around, broke off, and gave up the ghost, in light clover soil free from root or stone, and with but a single span of horses before it!

We all went out in the afternoon to a large clover-field, where a quiet cluster of the farmers of the vicinage had assembled to witness the operation of Mr. McCormick's Mower—one of the very few (I regret to say) Yankee farming implements on exhibition. There was no competition at this time, but the machine worked admirably, cutting very smoothly, closely and clearly, a swath five feet wide as fast as the span of horses drawing it could walk, and evidently making very moderate demands on their muscles. The ground was quite uneven, and at one place the grass was vigorously stamped down by the spectators, in order to test the machine under the most adverse circumstances. In this way some stalks were made to escape cutting, but the machine was no wise choked nor impeded. The most satisfactory feature of the performance was the entire abstinence of Mr. McCormick's agent, after the first round, leaving the machine to be operated entirely by French laborers who never saw it before that day. There was a very general and hearty manifestation of delight from the assembled farmers, and I trust that not this only but other American machines also will be tested again and put in competition with those of Europe, under the eye of a critical committee. If the Exhibition is to be anything better than a novel show, here is (in fact) its proper element.

A NEW WAY TO RAISE BEANS.—A gentleman in Seneca Falls, N. Y., last spring, planted some Lima beans. Not being provided with poles he supplied their place by planting in each hill sunflowers, trimming them up so that they served the purpose of poles. For a time all went on well, till, at length, the sunflower growing so much faster than the beans, the latter were absolutely drawn up by the roots.

VOLCANIC MUD PHENOMENON.—On the 19th ult., as the steamer *Tishomingo* was wending her way up the Ohio river, the officers and passengers on board of her beheld a remarkable upheaving of waters in the centre of the stream. When about seventy-five miles below Louisville, they beheld a dense body of mud and water, some thirty or forty feet in diameter, thrown up, somewhat after the manner of a fountain, to a height of fifteen feet. It rose and sunk several times.

TASTES DIFFER.—In a lecture on what he had seen abroad, Wendell Phillips observes:—

"In Italy you will see a man breaking up his land with two cows, and the root of a tree for a plow, while he is dressed in skins with the hair on. In Rome, Vienna and Dresden, if you hire a man to saw wood, he does not bring a horse along. He never had one, nor his father before him. He puts one end on the ground, and the other on his breast, and taking the wood in his hand, rubs it against the saw. It is a solemn fact that in Florence, a city filled with the triumph of art, there is not a single auger, and if a carpenter would bore a hole he does it with a red hot poker. This results not from the want of industry, but of sagacity of thought. The people are by no means idle. They toil early and late, men, women, and children, with an industry that shames labor saving Yankees. Thus he makes labor, and the poor must live. In Rome charcoal is principally used for fuel, and you will see a string of twenty mules bringing little sacks of it upon their back, when one mule could bring all of it in a cart. But the charcoal vender never had a cart, and so he keeps his mules and feeds them. This is from no want of industry, but there is no competition.

A VICTIM OF CONFIDENCE.—A fellow on the racetrack was staggering about with more liquor than he could carry. "Hallo! what's the matter now?" said a chap whom the inebriated individual had just run against. "Why—hic—why, the fact is, a lot of my friends have been betting liquor on the race to-day, and they have got me to hold the stakes."