

News Department

FROM LATEST ENGLISH PAPERS.

FAMINE PRICE OF WHEAT.—The price of wheat rose in Mark-lane on Monday from 3s. to 4s. a quarter above the prices of the previous Monday. On Friday last there was also a rising market, and the rise on that day was common both in home-grown and foreign wheat; but was rather conspicuous in the latter than in the former, in consequence of the very active demand which has now existed in our market for several consecutive market days for foreign wheat for Belgium and France. 'In floating cargoes in the week a considerable business has been done (says Mr. Mongredien in his circular); and the quantity of such offering has lately undergone considerable diminution.' The price of red wheat is now 69s. to 76s., and of white wheat 71s. to 83s. The average price of the week was 71s. 11d., and of the six weeks 72s. 5d.

NEW REFORM BILL.—Besides the boroughs to be wholly disfranchised as not having five hundred electors, proposed previous to Lord Palmerston's resignation, we have now a list of boroughs which lose one member, having two at present. They are as follows:—Barnstaple, Bedford, Berwick-on-Tweed, Bridgewater, Boston, Bridgenorth, Bridport, Bury (Lancashire), Bury St. Edmunds, Chichester, Grantham, Guildford, Hertford, Scarborough, Taunton, Wenlock, Wigan, Winchester, Leominster, Lewes, Lichfield, Maldon, Malton, Newark, Newport, (Isle of Wight), Penryn and Falmouth, Peterborough, Pontefract, Poole, Salisbury, Sandwich, Stamford, Truro, Warwick Weymouth, Windsor. The boroughs, not having 1,005 registered electors, are thirty-six.

MINISTERIAL MOVEMENT.—Previously to the meeting of the Cabinet yesterday, the heads of the war department assembled at the Chancellor of the Exchequer's in Downing-street. Among those present were the Commander-in-chief of the Army, Viscount Hardinge, with the Secretary at War, the Right Hon. S. Herbert; the First Lord of the Admiralty, Sir James Graham; and the Master-General of the Ordnance, Lord Raglan. This conference probably referred to the estimates, which, in the usual routine, are about to be submitted to the Cabinet Council for approval before the meeting of Parliament, or to the requisite preparations previous to a declaration of war against Russia.—At all events, the meeting of the distinguished personages above named with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, at this juncture, is significant.

Charles J. Marc, Esq., has this week forwarded £50 to Dr. Butter, £25 to the Rev. J. Hatchard, vicar of St. Andrew's, and £25 to the Rev. H. A. Greaves, vicar of Charles, for distribution among the poor of the borough at Christmas.—*Plymouth Mail.*

DEATH OF ADMIRAL DACRES.—We have to record the death of a gallant and distinguished flag officer, Vice Admiral James Richard Dacres, who died on the 4th Dec. at his residence, Fareham, Hants. He had seen a great deal of active and trying service. He commanded the old worn-out frigate *Guerriere* in her action with the U. S. ship *Constitution*, in the war of 1812, and was captured after a highly honorable defence. His last appointment was commander-in-chief at the Cape of Good Hope, in 1849. He was made Vice Admiral March 20, 1848.

MUNIFICENT LIBERALITY.—Mr. Peto has placed £2,000 annually at the disposal of the Baptist Missionary Society for the next year.

'On Thursday, the 13th inst., I had the satisfaction of consecrating the chapel of St. John on the confines of the parishes of St. Andrew and Port Royal. This beautiful little building, on a site probably higher than that of any Protestant Church in the Western world, is erected at an elevation of 4,000 feet above the sea, covering the central hills of the Blue Mountain range.—*Letter Bishop of Jamaica, Oct. 1853.*

FRANCE.

INSANITY FROM TABLE-TURNING.—*Galignani's Messenger* contains the following:—'We have noticed the letter of M. Victor Hennequin, the ex-representative of the people, announcing his intention of publishing a work, called 'Sauvons le Genre Humain, and in which he declared that it would make important revelations communicated to him by the 'Spirit of the Earth.' This work, which appeared several weeks ago, has been reviewed by several journalists, some of whom have naturally regarded it as the production of a disordered brain, whilst others have doubted the sincerity of the writer. Amongst the latter is the *Abeille de Bugy*. Its observations have called forth a letter from M. Hennequin which we subjoin.

Whilst he protests his sincerity and contends for his sanity, he reveals a lamentable fact, the insanity of his wife, under the same influence which, he says, has left him sane. The letter is as follows:—

'PARIS, DEC. 12.—Sir, you have sent me on 'Sauvons le Genre Humain,' an article the intention of which I must believe to be good, although my good faith is therein called in question, with a want of reflection which you will doubtless regret. The writing of my book, has been directed, not by the 'Spirit of the world,' but by the 'Spirit of the Earth,' which after having commenced its relations with me by the movements of tables and of hats, has endowed me with involuntary writing, and ended by insinuating its very idea into my brain. If you knew me, you would believe in my declaration alone: but as you do not know me, I will tell you that Madame Victor Hennequin, who took part in the origin of these communications, has had her nerves so shattered, that I have been obliged to place her in the house of Dr. Archambault, 162, Rue de Charonne, devoted to the treatment of cases of mental alienation. So painful a fact will sufficiently defend me against the accusation of having mystified the public, and you will comprehend my interest and my right, in demanding that this letter may be inserted in the earliest number of your journal. 'VICTOR HENNEQUIN.'

THE BALTIC.

THE BALTIC CLOSED.—The Baltic is or will immediately be frost bound; and on the strength of this the Czar has allowed a portion of the defensive force he was mustering on its coasts to go upon furlough till March. By this step he indicates his sense of where he is assailable. Had France and England, at the time when they despatched their naval squadrons to act in combination in the Levant, despatched others to threaten Cronstadt and St. Petersburg, they would have effected a diversion in favour of Turkey that might ere this have cleared the Danubian Provinces of invaders. The recent mustering of Russian troops around Revel, at Helingsfors, and in the islands at the mouth of the Gulf of Bothnia, show that Nicholas and his Ministers had their doubts of the extent to which the credulity or complaisance of the Western Governments could be played upon, and felt it necessary to guard their exposed point. But the dilatoriness of the diplomatists they have had to deal with has made their minds easy for a few months. For that period they are at liberty to concentrate all their attention on the war in the south.

SWEDEN.

TEMPERANCE IN SWEDEN.—A letter from Stockholm of the 7th says:—"From every point of Sweden petitions are pouring in, praying the King to propose to the Diet a bill to restrict the fabrication of brandy.—Amongst these petitions is one signed by 18,000 inhabitants of the province of Calmar, being the seventh part of the whole population of the province. It was presented by a deputation to the King, who replied in these words:—'It is with great satisfaction that I find the working classes alive to the disastrous consequences of too abundant a production of alcohol. I shall take into consideration the prayer of the petition, and shall propose measures to prevent the evils which might result to the country from so large a distillation of potable liquors as has been seen for some time past.'

RUSSIA.

HOW SOLDIERS ARE MADE IN RUSSIA.—Letters from St. Petersburg state that, on a recent occasion, the Czar, having remarked that the number of men raised among the serfs in the neighbourhood of St. Petersburg was smaller than in any part of his dominions, asked the reason. He was informed that the landowners round St. Petersburg were in the habit of permitting their serfs to take service in the capital on paying a portion of their wages to their masters: so that, in the point of fact, the majority of those registered in the neighbourhood were actually in the capital. Two days after, the gates of the city were closed, and a regular razzia was made on all the coachmen, footmen, &c., of St. Petersburg, a large proportion of whom were forthwith removed from their good places, and sent off to the army to fight the Turks.

CONSTANTINOPLE.

THE FLEET IN THE BOSPHORUS.—There are private letters from Beycos Bay, stating that all the force under the command of Vice-Admiral Dundas, C. B., remained there on the 4th instant, with the exception of the *Retribution*, 28, paddle frigate, Captain the Hon. H. Drummond; and *Fury*, 6, paddle-sloop, Commander Tatham, which had been sent to Sinope. The fleet was in first-rate health and spirits, and there was not an officer, man, or boy, who would not volunteer to cut out the cowardly Russian fleet at Sebastopol.

ABD-EL-KADER.—Abd-el-Kader lives a very retired life at Broussa in the bosom of his family, and occupies himself with the education of his children. His principal enjoyment in the day and through a part of the night is study and poetry, for which he has a decided penchant. He carefully avoids any noise, and Broussa pleases him so much as a place of residence that he has decided on purchasing a farm in the neighbourhood, in order to give employment to himself and the persons who compose his numerous suite. He is disgusted with grandeur, and now prefers to live retired and tranquil, and to enjoy on his new estate the pleasures of a country life and study. The conduct of the Emir is always in keeping with his noble character, and he allows no opportunity to escape of loudly proclaiming the generosity and greatness of mind of the Emperor of the French, and in his devotions he never fails to pray for the preservation of the life of him who restored him to liberty and repose. The Emir is expecting to receive from Damascus two magnificent horses of the famous Arab breed called Nedjdi, which are intended for the Emperor Napoleon, to whom they have been already offered and accepted by his Majesty.—*Journal de Constantinople.*

CHINA.

AMERICAN EXPEDITION TO JAPAN.—The vessels forming the bulk of this squadron still remain in these waters. We have the *Macedonian*, frigate, in our harbour. The *Powhatan*, steamer; the *Vandalia*, sloop; and the *Southampton*, store-ship, are at Cumsingmoon. The *Susquehanna*, and the *Supply*, store-ship are at Whampoa; and the *Mississippi*, steamer, to which vessel Commodore Perry lately removed his flag, is at Macao. The *Saratoga*, sloop, is at Shanghai, and the *Phymouth*, sloop, off the coast of Loochoo, where the whole fleet will rendezvous, it is said, some time in January, and proceed to Japan in the month following, where their imposing appearance must command a very civil reception. We imagine that there can hardly be a doubt that the commodore will be enabled to carry out the desire of his Government in establishing a treaty of commerce without having occasion to fire one single gun.—*Hong Kong Register.*

UNITED STATES.

CHAPLAINS IN CONGRESS.—We see by the papers that the Chaplains of both houses of Congress are Methodists. The Rev. Mr. Slicer, who for some years ago, was Chaplain of the Senate, has been elected to that office. He is represented as an active Politician, and has long resided at or near Washington.

The Chaplain of the House of Representatives is the Rev. Mr. Milburn, of whom the New York daily Times furnishes the following interesting account, which shows, that however it may be in the Senate, the appointment has been worthily conferred upon the Chaplain of the House:—

'Rev. Mr. Milburn, who is elected Chaplain of the House, is a man of different stamp, and was elected on other grounds. He is only about thirty years of age, of decided ability, eloquent in calling, and of amiable, excellent, and social character. For some years he has suffered from disease in his eyes, which renders him nearly blind. Some five or six years ago he was chosen Chaplain of the House, and gave universal satisfaction. The circumstances of his election at that time, as we have heard them narrated, were curious and creditable. He was travelling on one of the Western rivers in a steamboat, being upon one of his preaching circuits. He was but about twenty-two years of age, and seemed even younger. A great number of members of Congress were on board, on their way to Washington, and had drawn a good deal of attention to themselves by card-playing, drinking, and profanity. As Sunday came round, Mr. Milburn was asked to preach, which he did. In the course of his sermon, he addressed himself directly to the members of Congress, and rebuked them in the severest terms for the reproach their conduct was calculated to bring upon the country, in the eyes of the public at large, and enforced upon them the duty of remembering the responsibilities which rested upon them. He retired to his room, believing that he had offended them, fearful that he had overstepped the bounds of propriety, but conscious that he had discharged his duty. Soon afterwards a Committee, appointed by the members, called upon him, thanking him for his reproofs, solicited his acceptance of a purse of money they had made up, and asked permission to present his name as a candidate for Chaplain of the House of Representatives. His assent was given, and he was elected.

'We think we shall not be alone in the opinion that an election on such grounds and for such services is more creditable, both to Congress and to him, than one based upon partisan efforts, however serviceable they may have been.'