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NEWS BY THE ENGLISH MAIL.

From the European Times, April 14.

Respecting the Vienna Conference, all is uncertainty. A metropolitan contemporary, which, notwithstanding its fashionable tendencies and its Conservative politics, is supposed to speak through the inspiration of the Prime Minister—for when he was at the head of the Foreign-office, he bestowed an important foreign appointment on the then editor,—declares, in its impression of Thursday, that there is still a chance of peace resulting from the Conference, although the chance is a weak one. This authority, which is evidently well-informed on the subject, declares that, during the forthcoming visit of the French Emperor and Empress, the news of peace or the necessity of an European war of great vigour and uncertain duration will be received at the English Court, and the extreme limit which the journal in question fixes for the receipt of this intelligence is the 20th instant, but it may possibly arrive on the 17th or 18th. The ninth Conference met on Easter Monday, and we are told that it was short and unsatisfactory. The shortness of the sitting is no proof that the result was unsatisfactory, for we are told in the same breath that the final instructions of Prince Gortschakoff had not reached Vienna from St. Petersburg, which would account for an early breaking up of the meeting of the diplomatists. If we might hazard a conjecture, we should say that all parties were awaiting the arrival of decisive news from Sebastopol and that the Russian Court had instructed its representatives at Vienna to pursue a foreshadowed policy contingent upon the character of that news. There was evidently time enough, in the interval of the adjournment of the Conference before Easter, and its meeting on Monday last, to put Prince Gortschakoff in the fullest possession of the views of his Government—if indeed, he had not known them previously. The most gratifying assurance in the article to which we have referred is the explicit statement as to the good understanding which continues to prevail between Austria and the Western Powers respecting which serious doubts have been expressed in several well-informed quarters. It is added that, if peace be not restored by the Conference which is now sitting in the Austrian capital, the Emperor Francis Joseph will immediately declare war against Russia, and will push the war with a vigour the most likely to obtain, with the least sacrifice of time, the ultimate object of the allies. On the other hand the same authority assures us, that the King of Prussia has written an imploring letter to the Czar, telling him, if peace be frustrated by unnecessary obstacles, Germany will take part with the Western Powers, and thus complete the isolation of Prussia. If these are veritable statements, they augur well for the future; but certainly, Russia shows no symptoms of acting upon them, if we may judge by the extent of her preparations for carrying on the war. For the forthcoming campaign in the Baltic, she is girding her loins; has prepared 300 gunboats completely armed and provisioned; is concentrating 120,000 troops in the Baltic provinces, and is dividing her maritime strength between Cronstadt, Sweaborg, and Revel. So at least say the most recent letters from Warsaw; but these preparations were doubtless arranged long anterior to the present date, with a view of making the most desperate resistance in the event of the war continuing.

A very important article has appeared in the *Moniteur* during the present week, and, appearing in the recognized organ of the French Government, the statement has necessarily attracted considerable attention. This article is an elaborate exposition of the operations of the Western Powers—a military critique, in fact on the events which have arisen out of the war, done in a very enlightened spirit, with an evident view to an influence on public opinion both at home and abroad. The head of the French nation evidently deemed some formal explanation necessary, to satisfy his own subjects, respecting the present position and the future prospects of the allied armies in the Crimea, and the subject is entered upon by the *Moniteur* in a tone, which must satisfy all reasonable expectations, although there are weak points in the article which military critics might successfully pull to pieces. The acts of the commanders are criticised not in an ungenerous, but certainly not in a complimentary strain, for mistakes are confessed by the official organ, which throws an air of ingenuousness over the whole production.

What we have often shown is here apparent,—namely, that the skill of the Russian engineers has proved more than a match for their rivals, the allies; and a branch of science, in which the Western Powers were supposed to be pre-eminent has been still better studied by the foe. The influence of the late Emperor Nicholas on his time and people was strikingly demonstrated in the fact, that scientific skill of all kinds, and more especially military engineering, always found, during his reign, encouragement and a home in Russia,—and against the talent thus exported from Western Europe we have now to contend. How this article in the official organ will please our versatile neighbours we have not very ample means of knowing, for the French press exists only in name, and the English correspondents in Paris cannot afford to be too communicative on points which may displease the Government; but the more sanguine and erratic portion of the French people cannot fail to draw unfavourable comparisons between the military genius of the hero of the first empire and those upon whom has devolved the task of conducting the existing war. As regards the world at large, the article in the *Moniteur* will be to the advantage of Louis Napoleon, for it exhibits him and his Government in a pleasing and satisfactory light. It cannot, at least, fail to increase his popularity in this country.

We are weary of narrating the events before Sebastopol, and the public must participate in our feelings. This dissatisfaction is everywhere on the increase. The accounts which come to hand from the Crimea are so tantalizing and so illusory, that all speculation is useless. We learn that the troops are in excellent health, that the weather is extremely fine, that the railway from Balaklava to the camp is on the point of completion, and that something decisive may be shortly expected, the old story; but respecting this "something" which is to happen we are left in the dark. The telegraphic advices are to the 5th, and, if we are to judge by the opinions which prevail at home, the siege is more likely to be raised, than to be persevered with—a lamentable commentary on the strategic skill of the commanders. 10,000 Egyptian troops had been sent to Eupatoria, and Omar Pacha, we learn, occupies two villages about half-a-league from that place. A truce of three hours had been given to permit the belligerents to bury their dead, when it was found that the French and the Russians had suffered severely in the night attack. The Russians are now declared, to have had at least 2000 men put *hors de combat* by that affray. Lord Raglan's despatches, which were so highly praised at the opening of the autumn campaign, have now sunk to the merest commonplace, and had it not been for the ample communications of the special correspondents of the daily press, and from the interesting sketches in the private letters, our information from the seat of war would have been too scanty to warrant criticism. If the days of great statesmen are passed, as some assure us, those of great soldiers have evidently passed away also. The Russians deny, that Prince Menschikoff is dead; but they admit that he is seriously ill. Retributive justice has overtaken the primary cause of this war—the Emperor Nicholas, and his tool, this arrogant Prince Menschikoff, is evidently bending his steps towards the tomb. Indeed, if the Tartar accounts are to be credited, he has already reached it. But the war does not disappear like the instruments which provoked it. In the course of another week, we may be enabled to guage its probable duration.

THE BATTLE BEFORE SEBASTOPOL.

The arrival of the Simois from Constantinople at Marseilles confirms the statement that a skirmish or engagement of more than ordinary importance had been fought under the walls of Sebastopol on the night of the 22d of March. The English lost Colonel Kelly, of the 34th; Captain Browne, of the 7th; and Captain Vicars of the 97th. Two other officers were wounded, and one is missing. The French lost 300 in killed, wounded and missing. The French set fire to Sebastopol in two quarters, on the 23d, with rockets. Between 11 and 12 o'clock at night, columns of Russian infantry came suddenly upon the men in our advanced trenches, and rushed in upon them on the right with the bayonet. When they were first discerned, they were close at hand, and on being challenged, they replied with the universal shibboleth "Bone Franciz." In another moment they were bayoneting our men, who had barely time to snatch their arms and defend themselves. The attack seems to have been general along the line. At half-past 8 o'clock the French batteries began to shell the town, while their rockets were poured every five minutes in streams into the place. At 10 o'clock, our sentries in advance of Chapman's attack gave notice that the Russians were assembled in front of the works. The 20th, 21st, and the 57th Regiments were in the trenches on the left attack, and they were, to a certain extent prepared for the assault of the enemy. About the same time, the French on the right of our right attack, which is separated from the left attack by a deep ravine, were assailed. As our allies were hardly pressed, orders were given to advance the troops in a portion of the trenches, consisting of a part of the Light Division, to their support. On the left attack, the Russians, advancing with impetuosity through a weak part of the defence, turned the third parallel, and took it in reverse. They killed and wounded some of our men, and had advanced to the second parallel, when our covering party and the men in the trenches of the batteries came down upon them and drove them over the works after a sharp conflict. The 20th Regiment lost 2 men killed, 6 wounded badly, and 3 missing. The 57th lost 3 killed, 5 wounded and 18 missing. The 21st lost 3 killed, 5 wounded, and 1 missing. These are the returns so far as they can be ascertained, but it is probable that some of the missing men will turn up, as these regiments have not yet come out of the trenches. On the right, the attack was more serious and sudden. Our men had been ordered out to the support of the French from one part of their lines, and while they were away, the Russians came up to the flank of the works, and took them in reverse so that they had to fight their way back to get to their position. The gallant old 7th Fusileers had to run the gauntlet of a large body of the enemy, whom they drove back *à la fourchette*. One brave young fellow, Mr. Cavendish Browne, of the 7th was killed. Two or three musket balls passed through his body. The 24th Regiment had an enormous force to contend against, and as their brave Col. Kelly was leading them in, he was shot down, and carried off by the enemy. His dead body was found outside the trenches. The 77th behaved most gallantly, and the 97th proved themselves worthy of their position in the glorious old Light Division. In the midst of the fight, Major Gordon of the Royal Engineers displayed that cool courage and presence of mind which never forsakes him. With a little switch in his hand, he encouraged the men to defend the trenches, and, standing upon the top of the parapet, all unarmed as he was, he hurled down stones on the Russians. He was struck by a ball which passed through the lower part of his arm, and, from the same or from a different musket, at the same time, he received a bullet through the shoulder. We are all rejoiced, that he is not dangerously wounded, and that the army will not long be deprived of his services. After an hour's fight the enemy were driven back, but we have to deplore the loss of the following officers, killed, wounded, or missing:—Colonel Kelly, 34th Regiment, killed; Lieutenant Jordan, 97th Regiment, killed; Capt. Cavendish Browne, 7th Regiment, killed; Lieutenant Vicars, 97th Regiment, wounded; Capt. Montague, Royal Engineers, missing; and Major Gordon, Royal Engineers, wounded. Two Greek or Albanian chiefs, in full costume, who seem to have led on the Russians, were among the killed. The town was set on fire in two places towards the west; a part of it—at least one large house—was burning till twelve o'clock the next day. Lord Raglan visited Sir John Campbell, and afterwards went through the trenches. The bodies of twelve men and of one officer remain in the trenches of our left attack. The hill sides below the Round Tower and the Mamelon are covered with their dead, mingled with the bodies of the French. A Zouave officer is distinguishable on the slope, close up to the abattis of the Round Tower, where the gallant soldier fell, as he led on his men in pursuit of the Russians.

More heroic conduct of our solddiers—recapture of the Mortar Battery from the Russians.

Camp before Sebastopol, March 26.

The affair of Thursday night and Friday morning last was not so serious for us as was at first imagined. Our loss, in instead of being nearly 100 killed, wounded, and missing, did not amount to much more than half that number. When the Mortar Battery was carried by an enormous force of enemy, they held it for about 15 minutes, and were dislodged by a handful of men, who displayed the utmost gallantry and daring. Our men do not relish night fighting. They would sooner meet 10,000 Russians by day than 2,000 in the dark, but the circumstances attending this act evince the greatest coolness and bravery on the part of the men and officers engaged in it. At the time the heavy fire between the French and Russians was going on, a portion of the 90th Regiment were employed on fatigue-duty on the right of the new advanced works on our right attack. They were in the act of returning to their posts in the Gordon Battery, just at the moment the heavy firing on the right had ceased, when a scattered irregular fusilade commenced in the dark on the left of their position close to the Mortar Battery. Captain Vaughton, who commanded the party of the 90th, ordered his men to advance along the covered way to the works. They moved up in double time, and found the Russians in complete possession of the Mortar Battery. The 90th Regiment at once opened as heavy a fire of musketry as they possibly could upon the enemy, who returned it, but the coolness and steadiness of our men were giving us the advantage, when an alarm was given that our men were firing on the French; but the mistake was speedily discovered by the enemy's fire being poured in with more deadly effect, and the small party of the 90th were thrown into great confusion. Captain Vaughton, at this moment shouted, "Men of the 90th follow me!" and Sergeant Henry Clarke, Sergeant Brittle, a sergeant of the 7th Fusileers, about 14 men of the 90th, and a few of the 7th dashed out of the confused ranks, and rushed right into the Mortar-Battery. In a few moments these brave fellows drove the enemy beyond the first traverse, and at the narrow way leading into the second traverse they made a stand and opened a heavy flanking fire on the parapet, over which the Russians were making determined efforts to come upon them. The narrow pass was meantime defended by the sergeants and a few men, delivering fire as fast as they could load right into the Russians, who gradually began to give way. With a loud "hurrah" the gallant little band sprang with the bayonet upon the enemy, who at once precipitately retired over the parapet, followed by our rifle balls, which were poured in upon them incessantly till every round in the men's pouches was expended. In order to keep up the fire, the men groped about among the dead Russians and exhausted all the cartridges they could find in the enemy's pouches. At the first charge at the Mortar Battery the Russian leader, who wore an Albanian costume, and whose gallantry was most conspicuous, fell dead. As an act of justice, the names of the officers and men of the party of the 90th Regiment, whose conduct was distinguished in this affair, should be recorded. They are—Clarke, Brittle, and Essex (sergeants), Carruthers, severely wounded (corporal), Fare, Walsh, Nicholson (wounded), and Nash. Captain Vaughton received a severe contusion in the affair. The courage displayed by Captain Cavendish Browne, of the 7th, in another part of the works was most conspicuous. He was severely wounded at the commencement of the attack, but he refused to go to the rear, though nearly fainting from loss of blood. He led on his men, encouraging them by voice and gesture, to the front. When his body was found, it lay far in advance of our line, with three balls in the chest. It is not known, how many Albanian chiefs there were with the Russians, but certainly the two who were killed led them on with intrepidity and ferocious courage. One of them, who struggled into the