

### A General Checkmated.

General H. Frey, inspector of the French troops in Madagascar, must be realizing the bitterness of that condition which Americans picturesquely describe as "feeling cheap." He has been caught red-handed in the act of conveying to Paris an historic stone upon which the inhabitants of the Seychelles have set their affections. There is a tinge of romance, as well as of meanness, about the story which comes from Mahé. The Seychelles, as everybody knows, are a group of 30 islands in the Indian Ocean, and are under the control of the Governor of Mauritius. Originally discovered by the Portuguese, who, according to their wont, neglected to make a beneficent use of their possession, the Seychelles were occupied by the French in 1742. About half a century later they were captured by a British ship, and, finally, at the peace of 1814, were assigned to Great Britain. The memory of this French occupation has, it seems, been preserved by a curious monument, consisting of a square of granite, upon which are carved a turtle, some *fleurs-de-lis* and the word "Seychelles." To the French creoles of the islands this stone was an object of historic veneration, while to the inhabitants generally it served the purpose of that sacred stone chair upon which our monarchs are crowned in Westminster, and around which tradition has spun so many fairy webs. Imagine, then, the consternation in which the whole thirty islands awoke one morning to learn that the stone was missing. In a less practical age the people of these delightful islands might have soothed themselves with some supernatural explanation flattering to their national vanity. The brutality of facts, however, destroyed all mystery concerning the Palladium. Like our immortal friend Mr. Pickwick, the eye of General Frey fell upon the stone, and, in his enthusiasm for antiquarian fame, he determined that the treasure must be at once deposited where it could be thoroughly investigated and understood. The Museum in Paris would no doubt have been its ultimate abiding place had not the General been betrayed by his accomplice. Having neither the honesty nor the courage of Mr. Pickwick, this modern French Ulysses persuaded the proprietor of the adjoining property to carry off the *pierrre de possession* in the night. Amid the salutes of an English admiral's flagship, the General sneaked off with his prize, but retribution overtook him the moment he reached Marseilles, and the Colonial Palladium will soon be restored to its anxious admirers in the far-off isles of the Indian Ocean.

### Marching in Austria.

In his last letter on the Austro-Hungarian manœuvres the military correspondent of the *Times* says: "I may perhaps be permitted, in concluding this series of letters, to reply certain inquiries which

they have elicited. The long marches accomplished by the infantry without straggling or with a very small percentage of casualties seem to have attracted attention. In answer to the question, 'How is it done?' I can only repeat my former statement that the root of the whole matter is in systematic training. The quality and make of the men's boots, as well as the fit of their valise equipment are certainly of importance, but it must be remembered that there were armies who could march just as well as the Austro-Hungarians of to-day, if not better, in days when the men were badly shod, laden with clumsy knapsack, and half strangled by a leather stock. To take some instances from the Peninsular campaigns. The Light Brigade is said by Napier to have made 62 miles in 26 hours on the march to Talavera, and later, in pursuit of Soult, the same battalions marched 40 miles in 19 hours over mountain roads, though here 'many men fell and died, convulsed, and frothing at the mouth.' The historian also records that before Salamanca Marmont's army covered 50 miles in 48 hours, and there are many other almost as remarkable achievements credited to both the English and the French. Nor do later wars show any falling off in this respect. In America, for instance, Sherman's army marched 190 miles in seven days, an average of over 27 miles a day, and Stonewall Jackson's army corps once did 60 miles in 40 hours. In 1866 the Prussian infantry traversed 25 miles a day for several days in succession, and marches of even greater length were by no means uncommon in 1870. I cannot help thinking, if a march of 20 miles in heavy marching order has come to be considered a remarkable feat, that the standard of endurance demanded

from the troops is much lower than heretofore. But this is by no means generally true. In France and Germany, as well as in Austro-Hungary, a march of 20 miles (32 kilomètres) is nothing abnormal, and a battalion that could not cover this distance for several days in succession would hardly be considered fit for service. Generals who are aware that 'battles are won by the legs' would scarcely be likely to report favorably on such a drag on all manœuvring. I may add that the boot worn by the Austro-Hungarian infantry seems in no respect superior to our own, and is probably not so good. The only good point I know about their method of fitting the men is that the lace-holes are not pierced before issue, and the soldier can thus fit his boot to his instep. The light boot with canvas uppers, which each man carries, is, however, a distinct advantage. It was much worn in the manœuvres, and very possibly many men who would otherwise have fallen out were enabled by this change of foot-gear to keep their places in the ranks. The pack, too, is certainly heavier than our own equipment, but it rides well, and does not appear to cause any unnecessary discomfort to the soldier."

The following letter, addressed to the Secretary of the Cyprus Company, Limited, fully bears out the statement we made months ago, when we intimated what the intention of the government was with regard to the garrison of Cyprus: "Downing street, September 10. Sir,—I am directed by the Marquis of Ripon to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 3rd instant, and to inform you that Her Majesty's government, for reasons of military convenience, contemplate withdrawing for the present the troops in Cyprus. Lord Ripon has, however, consulted the High Commissioner, and does not apprehend that there is any reason for anxiety in consequence of this action, and I am to add that you may rest assured that the step is entirely without political significance.—I am, sir, your obedient servant, R. H. MEADE."—*Army and Navy Gazette*.

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