

time for meditation, no time for prayer. In the midst of activity, of life and energy, in the tumult of daring and strife, suddenly the blow is given, equipped is the "silver cord," broken is the golden bowl." "The dust returns to the earth, as it was, and the Spirit unto God who gave it" (Eccles. xii. 7). And then, again, pause and behold that field where the victory has been gained, yea, even whilst the magic word "victory" is still sounding in our ears: ye that sad spectacle of the dead and the dying, whose mingled remains of our brave countrymen, whose cries of anguish from the wounded, are these things a cheap price to pay for a victory? Should we think so, if any whom we dearly loved, a brother, a son, or a husband, were among them? Beloved God is the God of battles. It is true; for he ordered all the events of men; but far more is he the God of peace. It is peace that he delights in, not war. He is "the Author of peace, and Lover of concord;" and the title of his dearly beloved Son is that of "the Prince of peace." Or think, once more, how the nation's rejoicings will be mingled with the weeping of multitudes, how the garb of mourning will sadly, sadly contrast with the emblems of joy, yea, and how many will be deprived of their stay and dependence; and, in addition to their sudden shock of grief, the widow and the orphan have also want and penury staring them in the face. When we reflect on these things, and they are by no means all the miseries entailed by war, shall we not say that war, even though attended with victory, is still a judgment?

"And yet, beloved, we have been for generations spared the more grievous part of such judgement. The Almighty has not said in our case, 'Sword, go through the land' (Ezek. xiv. 17). If he were to do so, then should we be called upon to realize to the full the weight of his infliction. Lust and rapine and violence, the demons of hell let loose to spoil the smiling scenes of earth, hearths desolated, our villages smoking ruins, men drunk with fury and excess—these would be the things that then would meet our eyes; from such we have been mercifully spared. But then Christians know that in Christ all men are brothers, that his blood was shed in order that all of every nation, language, and tongue should be redeemed and purchased as a holy brotherhood in him; and they cannot, therefore, think of such things being enacted, such atrocities inflicted anywhere, without feeling pain and commiseration for the sufferers.

"I have said, my brethren, that a soldier has but to do his duty, which is to obey those that are set over him. And from this I would fain draw one or two practical remarks in conclusion.

"Soldiers of the cross, be ye then more diligent at your posts. The enemies of your country, that would take from you your promised inheritance, your eternal home, are on the alert. Be ye therefore on the alert likewise. Your great Leader and Captain is one in whom ye may well have confidence. God will give you the victory through him. He himself has trampled on and bruised the head of the serpent, the devil. He has passed through the grave and gates of death. Glorified humanity in his person sits at the right hand of Power and Majesty, ever ready to assist those who strive to follow in his steps. In his word he addresses you: in his gospel he cheers you on. You also, if you choose heartily and with all your strength to follow whither he leads, he will bring to himself, 'for the battle is not yours, but God's', i. e., you are not left to yourselves, to your unaided strength, but God himself fights for you. God himself, even our Lord Jesus Christ, gives you His grace, which 'is sufficient for you.' He helps you, provided, i. e., you help yourselves; otherwise there would be no more a victory here than there would be an earthly victory to an idle and negligent army. Help then yourselves, 'use all diligence'; and then, rely upon it, he will help you. He will redeem you from death, he will ransom you from the grave, he will destroy the power of the evil one; for, 'O death (he has said), I will be thy plagues. O grave I will be thy destruction.' 'Death shall be swallowed up in victory,' and he robbed of all its terror.

"Choose then, ye, let us all choose that better part which shall not be taken from us."

News Department.

From Papers by R. M. S. Curzon, Jan. 3.

LOUIS POLEON'S SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF THE FRENCH CHAMBERS.

"Messieurs les Représentants,
 "Messieurs les Députés,
 "Since your last meeting great deeds have been accomplished. The appeal which I made to the country

to defray the expenses of the war was so well responded to, that the result has surpassed my hopes. In the Baltic, as in the Black Sea, our arms have been victorious. Two great battles have added renown to our standard. The intimacy of our relations with England has been brilliantly attested. The English Parliament has voted thanks to our Generals and to our soldiers. A great empire, made young again by the chivalrous sentiments of its Sovereign, has detached itself from the Power which for forty years has dominated the independence of Europe. The Emperor of Austria has concluded a treaty—defensive to-day, offensive perhaps, to-morrow—which unites his cause with that of France and England.

"Thus, gentlemen, as the war is prolonged the number of our allies increases, and the ties already formed become closer. For what ties are, in fact, more secure than the names of victories shared by the two armies and recalling a common glory, the same anxieties and the same hopes agitating the two countries, and the same aims and the same intentions animating the two Governments in all parts of the globe? Thus the alliance with England is not the effect of a mere passing interest or of political expediency, but it is the union of two powerful nations associated for the triumph of a cause in which for more than a century their own greatness, the interests of civilization, and the liberty of Europe are at the same time involved. Join me then, on this solemn occasion in thanking here, and in the name of France the Parliament for its cordial and warm demonstration, and the English army and its esteemed chief for their valiant co-operation. Next year, should peace not be established, I hope to obtain the assistance of that Germany whose union and prosperity we desire.

"I am happy in paying a just tribute of praise to the army and the fleet, who, by their devotion and discipline, in the south as in France, have nobly answered my expectations. The army of the East has hitherto borne and overcome everything—disease, fire, tempest, and privation, a city conspicuously revictualled, defended by a formidable artillery on land and sea, and two hostile armies superior to us in numbers, have been powerless to weaken its courage, or subdue its spirit. Each man nobly did his duty, from the marshal who seemed to have forced death to wait till he had conquered, to the private soldier or sailor whose last cry in expiring was a prayer for France, and a wish for the elect of his country. Let us, then, together proclaim that the army and the fleet have deserved well of the country.

"War, it is true, brings with it cruel sacrifices, yet everything bids me push it on with vigour, and for this purpose I count upon your assistance. The army at present consists of 518,000 soldiers and 118,000 horses and the navy of 62,000 sailors afloat. It is indispensably necessary to keep this force in an effective state; and to fill up the vacancies occasioned by the annual discharges and by the war. I shall ask of you, as I did last year, a levy of 150,000 men. A law will be brought before you for ameliorating the position of soldiers re-enlisting without increasing the expense: it will be of immense advantage to increase the number of veteran soldiers in the army, and to allow in future the weight of the conscription to be diminished. I hope that this law will soon meet with your approval.

"I shall demand of you authority to conclude a new national loan. Although this measure will increase the public debt, we must not forget that by the conversion of the Rentes the interest of the debt has been reduced by 2 1/4 millions. The object of my efforts is to place the expenditure on a level with the receipts, and the ordinary budget to be presented to you will be found in equilibrium, while the resources of the loan will suffice to meet the demands of the war.

"You will see with pleasure that our revenues have not diminished, that industrial enterprise is sustained, that all the great works of public utility are continued, and that Providence has graciously given us a harvest sufficient for our wants. The Government, nevertheless, does not close its eyes to the uneasiness caused by the dearth of provisions, but has taken every measure in its power to prevent and lighten this uneasiness, and has founded in several places new elements of work.

"The contest which is going on, restrained as it is by moderation and justice, although it causes the heart to beat, has caused so little alarm to the commercial interest, that the different parts of the globe will soon bring together here all the fruits of peace.

"Foreigners cannot but be struck with the remarkable spectacle of a country which, sustained on the divine protection, sustains with courage a war at 600 leagues from its frontiers, and which develops with

equal ardour its internal riches—a country where war does not prevent agriculture and industry from prospering, nor the arts from flourishing, and where the genius of the nation shows itself in everything which can bring glory to France."

The correspondent of the *Courrier de Marseille*, in a letter dated the 18th of December from Constantinople, says:—

"You have doubtless learnt that Omar Pacha has received orders to go in person to the Crimea with 80,000 men. There is no longer any doubt of the fact, which has given rise to commentaries not always favourable to the Turkish generalissimo. The precise destination of the Ottoman troops is not yet known. It is difficult to believe that Omar Pacha has consented to go to Sebastopol with a subordinate command. It is more probably intended to throw an army upon Eupatoria, and endeavour to intercept the communications with Perikop. . . . From the 10th to November to the 14th of December 25,000 English and French troops have traversed the Bosphorus. The care bestowed by the French upon their reinforcements and their transports is incredible. They hesitate at nothing in order to make everything arrive at the right moment and in abundance. Besides their immense navy steam fleet, another fleet of commercial steamers, chartered for the service of the army, is in constant motion. By excess of precaution the French Superintendance has just put into requisition one of the finest frigates of the Ottoman navy; and so complete has been the requisition that the Turkish name has disappeared from her stern to make way for that of Aina, and, to complete the metamorphosis, a French crew has been put on board. Verily, none but Frenchmen would have found the way to turn our allies the Turks to such good advantage."

The *Courrier de Marseilles* publishes the following from before Sebastopol, dated the 12th:—

"The Russians have made two sorties against the French batteries. The first was in the evening of Sunday, the 10th, at about half-past eight. Though it was very dark and stormy—in fact, the wind blew like a hurricane. The enemy in very strong force left Sebastopol by the garden battery, which is in face of the most advanced works of the French. Favoured by the darkness, the Russians approached to within 40 yards of the French batteries. An alarm was immediately given; but before our troops were ready the Russians arrived, and some of them even climbed up the parapets of the batteries. The surprise was, however, only momentary. Such of the Russians as succeeded in entering our works were killed, and the French, 700 or 800 in number, left on the enemy with the bayonet. The Russians, terrified by the impetuosity of our soldiers, fled as fast as they could, leaving behind a great number of men, who were killed, or made prisoners. The French pursued them to the walls of the town. All the forts immediately opened fire to protect their retreat, but the French, perfectly sheltered by the irregularities of the ground, were not touched. At about one o'clock in the same night the second sortie was made. Strong detachments of Russian infantry attempted to dislodge the French from the positions in which they were in ambush. On their approach, the latter, retiring in the greatest silence, dispersed amongst the ruins not far from the ambuscade. The Russians advanced, and not feeling our soldiers, believed that they had returned to their camp, but all at once the French opened on them a murderous fire of musketry. The enemy, so cruelly surprised was obliged to beat a retreat, and to retire to the town in the most complete disorder. It was a *scène qui parlait*. All the batteries at the place then fired on the French, and with such vigour that the heavens seemed on fire, and the earth shook. In these attacks the French had not more than 50 men *hors de combat*; the loss of the Russians must have been 300 at least. Our troops have placed the cannon which they have just received in their third parallel, and they are ready to open fire with 100 guns, amongst which are a good many mortars of a large calibre. We are now waiting until the English are ready. The state of the roads has delayed them. The French took their precautions before the arrival of the bad weather, and constructed a good military road from Khiva to their camp. By means of it they have been able to obtain ammunition and provisions at any hour. The English, unfortunately, had less foresight; but their allies went to their aid, and laboured day and night to construct a magnificent road from Balaklava to the camp. They hesitated then their horses and carts to convey the English artillery.

In another letter of the 13th we read:—"The Rus-