

THE PARIS CONFERENCES.

(From The European Times.)

The most extraordinary pains have been taken to prevent the proceedings of the Conferences from transpiring. All the representatives of the several powers are said to have bound themselves to secrecy, as also the two secretaries who are in attendance. At the first meeting on Monday, when the Congress assembled at the hotel of the French minister for foreign affairs, the sitting, as we learn from the *Moniteur*, lasted from one o'clock until half-past four, and at their first interview an armistice was agreed upon, which will terminate on the last day of March, unless it be renewed in the interval. This armistice, according to some versions, was agreed upon readily, according to others, after considerable controversy; but the fact that it was resolved on the very first time the plenipotentiaries met, points to a pacific solution of the questions at issue. But the truce which is to last to the end of the month is confined to the land forces. The blockade is to be continued as usual, and the British fleet will shortly return to the Baltic, accompanied by gun and mortar boats sufficient, if well handled, to make the Czar tremble for the safety of his capital. The Conferences, it appears, are to be held three days a week,—on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and so little do the Parisian quidnuncs know of what has transpired or is occurring, that because the plenipotentiaries did not assemble on Tuesday, according to expectation, it was immediately conjectured that Count Orloff had found his instructions deficient, and had to telegraph to St. Petersburg for more definitive orders. There can be very little doubt that every imaginable phase of the questions which will be raised at this meeting has been looked at and decided upon before the Russian envoy left St. Petersburg.

For those who take no interest in diplomatic etiquette, it may be as well to state that the ambassadors of the several powers take their places at the Congress table in the alphabetical order of the countries which they represent, Count Walewski, the French Foreign Minister, acting as the President,—that Count Orloff, a fine, stately-looking man, above seventy, appears fifteen years younger,—that the curtains and furniture of the room where the ambassadors meet are of crimson satin, with an Aubusson carpet on the floor, and the walls sustain portraits of the French Emperor and Empress,—that the table at which they sit is round and covered with green cloth,—that the table of the two secretaries can be moved, when necessary, to the round table,—that a table is placed near the window for such of the plenipotentiaries as wish to write in private; and finally, that the labours of these great Ministers, met to settle the fate of empires and the destiny of millions of human beings, are interspersed with eating and drinking, music, and the other essentials and refinements of life. These miserable details are all that can be scraped together by the representatives of the press, French and English, in Paris; and the ponderous pomposity with which, in the absence of all real news, every trifle is related, is every amusing. But when facts are rare, fiction abounds; and some of the most intensely stupid rumours have been given forth respecting squabbles between the British Ministers in Paris, Lords Clarendon and Cowley, respecting precedence,—that the last-named nobleman claimed priority of presentation which was denied by the other,—that the dispute was referred to London, when Lord Cowley was told that Lord Clarendon was his superior,—that upon this the old gentleman became sulky, and refused to attend the French Foreign Minister's dinner,—and that, not to make the absence of the English Minister remarkable, the Turkish Envoy was advised to stay away. If the representatives of the British nation are capable of acting in this sapient manner, all we can say is, that Russian prospects are brightening, and that the "old comedy gentleman" in Downing-street is in his dotage.

In truth, nothing is known beyond the armistice, the eating and drinking, and the music, of what has occurred at the Conference. Perhaps this is well. We must wait with patience,—and the interest of all parties counsels an early decision. The presentation of Lord Clarendon to the Emperor before Baron Brunow was received was done advisedly, to mark the perfect identity of feeling between the Western nations. In this identity the hope of peace is centered. Whatever these Powers demand, Russia must concede, and has made up her mind to concede, or this Conference would not have assembled during the present year of grace. We have faith in Louis Napoleon's singleness of purpose. He has stood by us throughout, although at one time we had some misgivings as to his sincerity. It is said that in a recent interview with his cousin, Prince Napoleon, the Emperor dwelt upon the necessity of preserving the English alliance, and added that it was French hatred of England which destroyed

Napoleon the First. There may be as little truth in this statement as in the other gossip which floats at present in French society; but whether correct or otherwise, no doubt can exist that Louis Napoleon has acted upon it since the first moment he ascended the throne, and the occasions have been tempting from that time to the present to become weary of the alliance if it had not been considerably and conscientiously entered into.

THE POPE'S VISIT TO FRANCE.

The *Independence Belge* asserts that if the Pope (according to report) comes to France to baptise the Imperial infant, and crown the Emperor Napoleon, it will be contrary to the wishes of the Sacred College. It is believed that, in case of peace, a French army of occupation, consisting of 40,000 or 50,000 men, will remain in the East for a certain time. By an Imperial decree of Feb. 23, cotton wool for the manufactory of sail cloth is to be admitted into France free of duty. The recruitment of the Austrian army for this year is fixed at 80,000, which was the number last year.

SEBASTOPOL.

The *Gazette de St. Petersburg* contains a report from General Luders of the Russian military operations in the Crimea to February 4th. It alludes to the affair which occurred on the night of January 28, in the Bay of Sebastopol, when it is said, six boats attempted to pass the Russian guard vessel. The officer in charge gave the signal, and the batteries on the north side opened fire on the boats. The troops stood to their arms, and after a cannonade of half an hour, the boats retired. Another affair on the following night is also mentioned, on which occasion several boats belonging to the allies endeavoured to cut off a Russian boat which was rowing guard in the bay, but when the northern batteries had opened fire the boats had disappeared.

ITALY.

The *Opinione* of Turin, of the 25th mentions a slight agitation which, it appears, manifested itself a few days before among the soldiers of the Anglo-Italian Legion of Novara, in consequence of a rumour, spread by some malicious persons, of an insurrection having broken out at Milan, and of the forming of a legion there with better pay. The military authorities of Novara having taken proper precautions, no disturbance ensued.

The *Advisatore* of Milan announces that orders have been received there from Vienna by telegraph, to direct all the administrators of the property under sequestration belonging to exiles, to prepare their accounts, so as to be able to produce them at a moment's notice.

SPAIN.

MADRID, FEB. 26.—Tenders have been sent in for the Saragossa Railway. The Grand Central offers a reduction of 30,000 reals per kilometre. This is the best offer. The definitive adjudication is fixed for March 8th.

GREECE.

Spiro Mylios, who was one of the ministers of King Otho during the breach of neutrality by Greece, and who was placed on his trial for aiding the insurrection in Turkey with the money of the state, has been acquitted, to the great joy of the court of Athens.

THE OVERLAND MAIL.

MARSEILLES, Feb. 29.—The India and China mails arrived here this day at noon, and will be despatched at eight o'clock this evening for London.

FRANCE.

His Excellency the Turkish Plenipotentiary, Ali Pacha, is charged to present diadems, formed of brilliants, to the Empress Eugenie and Queen Victoria, in addition to a stud of horses sent by the Sultan to the Emperor of the French. The Sultan has also forwarded for the acceptance of his Imperial Majesty a magnificent sword, encased with precious stones.

The *Moniteur* publishes a decree ordering a census of the population of France to be taken, under the superintendence of the Mayors, during the course of the present year.

A private letter received in Marseilles from Cayenne, announces that a platina mine had been discovered in that colony, at Apronague, five days' journey from the gold mine of Arataye.

Accounts from Batoum state that the British Government has taken steps to exchange General Williams and the other English officers who were made prisoners at Kars.

NEARLY 900 men belonging to the Hampshire militia have volunteered into the line.

RECEPTION OF THE PEACE NEWS AT EUPATORIA.

—A letter from Eupatoria mentions the consternation into which the Tatar population of that place had been thrown by the news of the prospect of peace, which will probably expose them to the most retaliatory measures on the part of the Russians. It is the same in the valley of Baidar, at Kertch, and wherever the Allied armies have come into contact with the native population. Within 48 hours after the allies landed at Eupatoria, 35,000 Tatars, men, women, and children, with 10,000 horses, 4,000 or 5,000 carts, 150,000 sheep, and nearly 50,000 head of other cattle, came into Eupatoria where there were before not more than 12,000 inhabitants. Their object of course, was to fly from the Russians, whose vengeance, they feared from having received the allies in a friendly manner. From 3,000 to 4,000 young Tatars have since then engaged in the service of the allied armies as labourers and carmen. Scurvy, typhus, and cholera have carried off at least the half of the Tatars who had placed themselves under the immediate protection of the allies. Those who remain are generally of the class in better circumstances, and are consequently the most compromised. Russia will never forgive them, and feelings of humanity as well as of honour call on the allies to protect the inhabitants of a country which has just been subjected to invasion. The coasts of Anatolia are near, they are fertile and thinly peopled, and 20,000 Mussulman subjects the more would be for the Ottoman empire an element of riches more desirable and not less glorious than an extension of territory. It may be added that the Tatars, like all other oppressed races, surpass in activity, in intelligence, and in industry, the conquering party which for the last four centuries have reigned on the two shores of the Bosphorus.

THE AUSTRIAN GIFT TO THE EMPRESS OF THE FRENCH

The Empress of the French has received the order of the Star cross (Stern-Kreuz Orden) and a letter from the Empress-Mother, Caroline Augusta. When it was settled that Count Buel should go to Paris, his Majesty the Emperor wished to give his brother Monarch some striking proof of the high consideration in which he held him, and it was thought that this could not be better done than by treating his consort as if she had been of imperial or Royal descent. The "Stern Kreuz" is only worn by those ladies whose pedigree had during a long series of years been without spot or blemish, and it was resolved that this high order should be presented to the Empress of the French. In order that the impression produced on the Imperial pair might be the more agreeable, the badge of the order in brilliants was accompanied by a letter from the Empress Caroline Augusta, who is Protectress and Superior of the Institution, in which it is said that the attention has been shown 'in order to consolidate the intimate relations already subsisting between the two families.' The other parts of the letter were of little moment, but the passage quoted appears most significant, when it is considered that it was written at the express desire of the Emperor Francis Joseph.

A NEW KIND OF SLAVE TRADE.

—A letter from Callao (Peru) says:—"The only business transacted at present is the selling of Chinese slaves, landed from American and English ships. Language is inadequate to express the horrible condition of these miserable wretches. Stolen from their homes and families, smuggled on shipboard without their consent, on the passage treated like brutes, they are brought to this coast and sold to men who have no mercy, for a nominal term of eight years, although in some instances no term of service is mentioned. An American ship sailed from China with 605 Chinese, and landed 404—leaving 201 who either died or drowned themselves on the passage. The average price realized for this cargo of human flesh was \$250 per head. The horrors of the African slave trade in the palmiest days are nothing to be compared to this, for in other countries there are laws for the protection of the slaves; but here the master is clothed with absolute authority, and can govern his slaves as he sees fit."

The Newport Mercury states that two geese were dug out of a snow drift in that town a few days since, which had been without food for forty-two days. They were very thin of flesh, but quite lively.

EGYPT.

This year's grain crop will be short, owing to the limited rise in the Nile.