

FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE.

FRANCE.

General Weddell's return to Paris as Prussian Envoy has been countermanded, and Colonel Oberg, an attaché, has also been recalled, indicating that the negotiations are closed.

In expectation of her Majesty Queen Victoria's visit to Paris, the Emperor has ordered the Elysee Imperial, to be magnificently fitted up for her reception. This palace, which used to be called the Elysee Bourbon, has lately been greatly enlarged and beautified. It was here Napoleon the First spent his last days in Paris. It became the first residence of his first nephew and heir, Louis Napoleon, after his election to the Presidency of the Republic. The Empress Eugenie and her mother occupied the palace for some days before the marriage ceremony was solemnized at Notre Dame. The advantage of a good-sized pleasure garden in the midst of a city is, besides, no slight recommendation to the Empress who is known to be exceedingly fond of flowers.

The *Journal des Debats* of Tuesday contends that the peace of Vienna will be honorable and satisfactory if it can be said that in less than six months France and England have destroyed the Russian preponderance in the Black Sea, forced her to evacuate her own territory, and have compelled her to accept the conditions proclaimed before the war as necessary to peace. If, as regards the future, they can so fortify Turkey and dispose their own forces so that Russia can never successfully attack Turkey without facing the fleets and armies of the west, the safety of the East will be permanently secured.

RUSSIA.

RUSSIAN PREPARATIONS FOR WAR.—A letter from Odessa of the 16th of March, appears in the *New Munich Gazette*. It says:—

"The cavalry corps concentrated around Odessa under the orders of General Schabelski, is exclusively composed of dragoons, to the number, it is said, of 12,000. It has received orders to proceed immediately to the Crimea, and a part of the corps left yesterday. The seventh army corps, stationed at present in Bessarabia, will be placed under the orders of General Luders, who will fix his headquarters at Bender.

"According to reports received at Vienna, and there held worthy of credit, Sebastopol is provisioned for three months. The garrison is only 12,000 strong, but may easily be reinforced, whilst the bulk of the army, under the immediate command of General Osten Sacken, numbers 40,000 men at the Belbec. The Russians have cut down all the trees in the district behind Inkerman, and behind the trees they have, during the winter, constructed entrenchments and batteries in excellent position. Prince Gortschikoff intends, it is said, to operate from Perekop and Simpheropol against Eupatoria at the head of 60,000 men."

Several North German papers in the enjoyment of Russian inspirations state that the arrival of Prince Gortschikoff in the Crimea is to be almost immediately followed by an enterprise of some magnitude to be executed against the allies under his personal leading. Jenikale and Kertch are being fortified on an extensive scale, the reconnaissances lately made by an English and a French vessel along the coast of the straits of Kertch having suggested the possibility of those places being speedily attacked. The general conviction of all persons acquainted with the localities and the nature of the troops stationed in the Crimea coincides in assuming that the activity of the Turks at Eupatoria will be confined to threatening the Russian communications, via Perekop, without their attempting anything like an advance against Simpheropol.

GERMAN POWERS.

A despatch from Berlin, Friday, states that the Russian party is predominant there, and that Prussia will likely throw herself into the arms of the Czar in case of an unfavorable result to the Conference.

The consideration of the third point would be the first subject before the Conference, and public opinion was pretty nearly equally divided as to the final result.

WAR IN THE EAST.

There had been a succession of sanguinary conflicts between the French and Russians before Sebastopol of rifle ambuscade parties, with varying success. The latest battle took place on the 23rd March, when 300 men were placed hors de combat.

In the north we learn that the approaches to Abo, Helsingfors, and every town on the coast from Wiborg up to Tornea, have been rendered impassable by the sinking of vessels in the sailing channel; in Abo and Bjorneborg and other towns the inhabitants have formed themselves into sharpshooter corps. On the southern coast of the Baltic the conviction is general, that Riga will be the first point attacked in the coming Baltic campaign. On the sea side vessels and large blocks of stone are being sunk at the entrance to the bay, so that the shallowest-going craft shall not be able to pass Dunamunde. At the further end of the bay there have been several heavy armed batteries erected, in a semi-circular form. On the land side a fortified camp is being formed, capable of containing two divisions of Russian troops. The Baltic army, that was understood to have been intended by the late Emperor to be brought up to 100,000 men, is now stated to be about to be raised to 140,000 men.

A letter in the *Courrier de Marseilles*, dated Kamiesch, 17th March, says:—

"The Russians are throwing up new works of defence opposite the Victoria redoubt, which is now occupied by the 9th French division. From this redoubt

rockets are every evening fired, into the town and must do considerable damage. During the last armistice for burying the dead a Russian officer said to one of our staff officers, 'You fire rockets; those fireworks amuse us.' 'Well,' replied the officer, 'it is an amusement we can procure often and gratis.' We keep our promise; the rockets we send differ certainly in some respects from those used as fireworks, as each rocket carries twenty pounds of powder, with it, which explodes and sets fire to everything it comes in contact with.

"The army receives reinforcements every day. Since the commencement of the month more than 5,000 horses or mules have been landed. The artillery and baggage waggons are completely remounted.

"The English army is also in a much better condition; its light division consists of ten regiments, each of 500 effective men. Its naval brigade works at the redoubts. Its sanitary condition is excellent.

"This change must be attributed not to the weather alone, which is less severe, but to all the hygienic measures taken in their camp, as also in the Turkish camp. The carcasses of the horses which lined the road from Balaklava to the camp have disappeared. The dead are also buried with great care, and to prevent the danger from putrid miasma quicklime has been thrown over the bodies. This is an excellent measure and it is a pity it was not thought of before, as the ground is very rich in chalk.

"The enemy have not resumed their night sorties, which have never succeeded. They are making their defences bristle with cannon at all the vulnerable points, and fire immense masses of projectiles, which fly over our parapets and do us very little harm.—The day upon which the signal is given we shall reply to them with the music of 400 cannon, each provided with 900 rounds. All the echoes of the Black Sea will resound to it."

General Canrobert has sent a despatch to his Government, dated 29th March, in which he states that the French and English armies will assume the offensive on the 3rd April on all points. A pitched battle will most likely precede a general assault on Sebastopol.

MARSEILLES, APRIL 4.—Accounts from Constantinople of the 26th March, state that all the ships of the Allies in the Bosphorus had been ordered, and had sailed to the Crimea. All the troops encamped round the Bay of Kameisch had received directions to take up positions nearer to Sebastopol.

AUSTRALIA.

The Melbourne *Argus* of the 17th of January has the following relative to the late disturbances:—

"No further disturbance has occurred at Ballarat, nor has insubordination in an active form been exhibited at any of the other gold fields. Meetings have been held at Bendigo and elsewhere, for the purpose of expressing sympathy with the men of Ballarat (as they are called), and for agitating in favor of the prisoners arrested on a charge of high treason.—These meetings have passed off peaceably, a result due chiefly to the more prudent conduct of the authorities at Bendigo than at Ballarat.

The Paris correspondent of the *London Catholic Standard*, gives an interesting description of the *Maison des Missions Etrangères*, which yearly furnishes the Church with so many heroes and martyrs.

Among the various congregations which are authorized by the Holy Father to do God's work among the heathen, none is more important, or has been more successful than the congregation *Des Missions Etrangères*, which has its *Maison-mère* in this city, at No. 125, Rue de Bac. At the risk of noticing what may be well known to your readers, I would observe the great advantage which the authority, bestowed by Our Lord upon the successors of St. Peter, confers upon the missionary labors of the Church. Not only do the different Protestant sects labor to counteract one another, but the English National Church itself has rival societies, of which the main object is to exclude one another. The first object of the Home and Colonial Missionary Society is to counterbalance the Pusseyism of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel; and there is little less jealousy between this last and the Church Missionary Society. But in the Catholic Church every congregation has its sphere appointed, and the dioceses which are in connection with one, are not intruded upon by another. I believe the actions of the Jesuits to be an exception, for as it is against the rule of St. Ignatius that his disciples should become Bishops, they are called in as auxiliaries into any diocese, without giving rise to jealousy. But with this exception, each Missionary Bishop is supported by the clergy of his own congregation. The congregation *Des Missions Etrangères* has in relation with it 20 Bishops, 417 Priests, of whom 184 are European, the rest taken from the Aborigines. The Christians, who constitute the Churches which it has formed, are in number 587,340; it has the care of 19 Missions, three of which are in India, the rest among the various nations which speak Chinese. Its managers have nothing to do with raising funds, this work is discharged by committees, which have their headquarters at Lyons and Paris to collect the sums, which are divided among the various missionary congregations. The collection is made in a very unostentatious manner, mainly through the officers of the Church; and a very small sum consequently is expended in the cost of collecting. I believe there are societies enough in England, in which the expense of collecting consumes one-tenth or one-twelfth of the gross receipts; whereas, according to the *compte rendu*, in the *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, it would seem that the sums expended in Catholic missions are collected at the expense of about one hundred and fortieth of the whole.

But I must come to the *Maison des Missions Etrangères*, where its missionaries are educated, which contains at present about eighty students. No difficulty is found in recruiting their ranks, though it is well known that they go out, never to return—though they have perpetually before them the prospect of a violent, cruel death. For the most remarkable feature in the institution is what is called *Salle des Martyres*, an apartment in which are preserved the relics of those glorious combatants who have furnished the last ac-

cession to "the noble army of Martyrs." I have seen nothing in this or any other city to compare in interest with this *Salle des Martyres*. When we visit the catacombs of the Eternal City, we feel too far separated from the illustrious dead to sympathize entirely with their circumstances. But who can look at the remains of Monsignor Borie, who was martyred in Cochinchina, the 24th November, 1838; or see the picture of the tortures inflicted on the Venerable Cornay, the year before, or on Marchand the year following, without remembering his own employments at the same period, and contrasting them with the heroic achievements of these, our more-favored fellow servants? It was just the time, said a convert, with whom I visited the place, when I was attending meetings at Exeter Hall, and hearing that the Papists lived without God in the world. And while this was going on, above 100 Catholics were martyred for confessing Christ in Corea, and 70 in China. Nor has Our Lord failed to witness their acceptance; already at this season of the year the apartment which contains their relics is decked with a bouquet of flowers, which has been sent by a lady, who publicly acknowledges that she owes her life to the intercession of the 70 martyrs. If what I write should fall into the hands of any Protestant reader, let him explain why their intercession is not as likely to be effectual as that of the 40 martyrs whose acts are recorded by St. Augustin. That which gives wonderful interest to this apartment are the pictures of scenes in the lives of these martyrs, which have been executed in China, and sent home by these native Christians. The very simplicity of delineations adds to the life and reality of the representations. There too you may see the instruments of torture which were employed. At one end of the room is a *cangue*, a wooden instrument, about six feet in length, and two feet in width, which is secured like a portable pair of stocks about the neck of a prisoner, and of which he is compelled to support the weight. The one which is to be seen was borne by Monsignor Borie; it was obtained by the Christians after his martyrdom, and sent over to Europe. In one of the cases is a red cloth, which a picture on the walls explains to be the identical cloth upon which Cornay was extended when he was hewn to pieces.

It may be thought that such sights are not fitted to encourage other missionaries, and that in Cochinchina at all events, *nolo episcopari* may become a truth. Such is not found to be the case here. On the contrary, it is the daily rule that the students visit the *Salle des Martyres* the last thing every evening, and make it the place of their final meditations and prayer. They are thus brought up in the feeling that they have to brave the same perils, and to die one after another on the field of battle. The return of a missionary is very rare, even though accounted for, as in the case of M. Huc, who had been a member of the Congregation of Lazarists, by bodily infirmities. The feeling is encouraged by the manner in which the missionaries are sent out, as I saw it last Sunday evening. After the offering of a litany, in the private chapel of the Institution, the three who were to leave next day were addressed by one of its directors, and reminded of the supports and difficulties of their work. They were then ranged before the altar. A psalm was chanted, and afterwards a French canticle of a very appropriate character. During the chanting, all the men went up, one after another, to the departing priests, and, after kneeling down and kissing their feet, in token of reverence to their exalted work, took leave of them with the kiss of peace. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and make known glad tidings of good things."

THE PRISON OF SS. PETER AND PAUL.

(From Harper's Magazine.)

In the afternoon I strolled over to the Capitol. Near the foot of the hill, on the side toward the Forum, and nearly opposite to the remains of the Temple of Concord, there is a little church consecrated to St. Joseph and St. Peter. I had passed it a hundred times, but some how or other had never been in it before. But that afternoon there was a crowd about it, and a constant moving in and out, as if there were something more than usual to be seen. I joined the in-goers, and in a few moments found myself in the midst of a throng of men and women, chiefly peasants and people of the lower classes, who were kneeling before the altar. I was decidedly out of place, and was upon the point of stealing quietly out again, when I saw some of them rise, and crossing themselves, go down a stairway at the side. I followed them. A few steps brought us into a square chapel, with an altar richly decked and illuminated with immense wax tapers. Here, too, there were other worshippers praying, and some on the outside looking through a doorway that led directly into the Forum. I now remembered that there were two churches here, and that this was St. Peter's, built, as tradition said, directly over the prison where St. Peter and Paul had been confined just before their martyrdom. I was now determined to see it all. Through the open door I could see the first shadows of evening sinking gently upon the Forum. The music from the chapel above came down upon me in mellow strains, mingling with the whispered prayer of the suppliants at the altar. There was devotion in the atmosphere. I had merely come out for a quiet evening walk, and now found myself yielding for the first time to the Christian associations of Rome.

Another flight of steps brought me to the first prison, a square room, built of large blocks of tufa, vaulted, cold, and grave-like, as a Roman prison should be. On one side were the remains of a doorway that led to the "Steps of Groans," where the bodies of criminals used to be thrown after execution. In the middle of the floor was an opening just large enough for a body to pass through it. Through this prisoners were lowered down to the executioner, who stood ready to seize and strangle them in the dungeon beneath. I shuddered as I looked down into the darkness. Modern piety has cut through the floor, and made a narrow stairway to the lower prison. It is but a few steps and you stand in the chamber of death; a low vaulted room, square, and of the same massive blocks of tufa with the prison above, but smaller, colder, and with darkness and the silence of the grave on its walls. It was built by Servius Tullius, and is often mentioned in the annals of Rome.

Here Jugurtha was thrown. The fiery monarch knew his victors too well to hope for mercy. "How cold are thy baths, Apollo!" he was heard to say as the chill air of the dungeon struck upon his frame still glowing with the fiery sun of Africa, and he was left in darkness and alone to the slow torture of starvation.

Others followed, but who or why, we know not till one day the consul, Cicero himself, brought a band of criminals to the prison door. The executioner descended into the lower prison, all ready for his fatal office; and one by one Roman nobles, men of ancient descent and illustrious names, but whose dark minds had nourished horrid hopes of devastation and slaughter, were lowered through that narrow opening. Did they shrink from the deadly grasp, and writhe and struggle against their fate? or did they yield themselves calmly up, and die with Roman fortitude? It is hard to die in open day, with earth and heaven smiling around you, and life looking freshly upon you from hundreds of human eyes; but how easy must even that seem when compared with the silence and solitude of a death like this!

And after many years the gloomy door was opened for two other prisoners, who were lowered through this same narrow opening, not indeed to die, but to wait for death. When the jailer had performed his task, and turned to go away, he heard their voices mingling in tones unlike any that he had ever heard from that place till then. Threats and execrations he had been used to; but there was something in the tender and earnest fervor of these men which moved him strangely. At noon he returned with food, and was thanked for this simple performance of a daily duty. At evening the same voices were heard—first in the sweet notes of a hymn of praise, and then in the fervent outpourings of an imprisoned Christian's prayer. Through the night he could hear them still; the strain lingered in his ears, stealing into his soul with a calm and soothing freshness, and awaking thoughts and hopes that he had never known before.

At last he descended into the dungeon, for an irresistible impulse seemed to throw him toward these strange beings, who could speak and sing so cheerfully in a place that filled every other soul with horror. And when they saw him they made haste to meet him, greeting him with the Christian's salutation—"Peace be with you." The Lord has chosen you to be a witness with us, of the marvels of his grace. Hasten, then, and bring your fellow keeper, that we may expound to you the doctrines of salvation." And when the two were seated at the apostles' feet, they were told how Christ had come to redeem the world, and build up a kingdom more glorious than Rome or Babylon. And as they listened their eyes were opened, and they believed, and prayed that they might be baptized. Then Peter touched the floor with his right hand, and behold a fountain rose up from the rock, filling the dungeon with the light and music of its waters. And they knelt down and were baptized there; and when the day came in which their teachers were to die, they too acknowledged that they were Christians, and received, like them, the crown of martyrdom.

That fountain is still there, its waters welling forth as pure and limpid as if no taint of earth had ever mingled with their current. Their birth-place in the dark recesses of the hill is not darker than the spot in which they came out on their errand of mercy. The sun and moon have never shone upon them. They have never reflected the soft light of the stars, or felt the breath of the air of heaven. Rising and flowing in mystery, they still keep their course unchanged ever filling their fountain without overflowing it, and passing away again to depths as mysterious as those from whence they came.

THE MAGNET AND COLD.—History informs us that many of the countries of Europe which now possesses very mild winters, at one time experienced severe cold at this season of the year. The Tiber, at Rome, was often frozen over, and snow at one time lay for forty days in that city. The Euxine sea was frozen over every winter during the time of Ovid, and the rivers Rhine and Rhone used to be frozen so deep that the ice sustained loaded waggons. The waters of the Tiber, Rhine and Rhone, now flow freely every winter; ice is unknown in Rome, and the waves of the Euxine dash their wintry foam uncrystallized upon the rocks. Some have ascribed these climatic changes to agriculture; the cutting down of dense forests, the exposure of the upturned soil to the summer's sun, and the draining of great marshes. We do not believe that such great changes could have been produced on the climate of any country by agriculture, and we are certain that no such theory can account for the contrary change of climate—from warm to cold winters—which history tells us has taken place in other countries than those named. Greenland received its name from the emerald herbage which once clothed its valleys and mountains; and its east coast which is now inaccessible on account of perpetual ice heaped upon its shores, was in the eleventh century, the seat of flourishing Scandinavian colonies all trace of which is now lost. Cold Labrador was named Vinland by the Northmen who visited it in A.D. 1000, and were charmed with its then mild climate.

The cause of these changes is an important inquiry. A pamphlet by John Murray, civil engineer, has recently been published in London, in which he endeavors to attribute these changes of climate to the changeable position of the magnetic poles. The magnetic variation or declination of the needle is well known. At the present time it amounts in London to about 23° west north, while in 1659 the line of no variation passed through England, and then moved gradually west until 1816. In that year a great removal of ice took place on the coast of Greenland; hence it is inferred that the cold meridian, which now passes through Canada, and Siberia, may at one time have passed through Italy, and that if the magnetic meridian returns, as it is now doing, to its old lines in Europe, Rome may once more see her Tiber frozen over, and the merry Rhinelander drive his team on the ice of his classic river. Whether the changes of climate mentioned have been caused by the change of the magnetic meridian or not, we have but too few facts before us at present to decide conclusively; but the idea once spread abroad will soon lead to such investigations, as will no doubt remove every obscurity, and settle the question.—*Scientific American*.

* At Rome, which is one degree farther North than New York, years sometimes pass, without the mercury sinking to the freezing point; yet Juvenal and other writers speak of the Tiber being frozen over in their day.