

RUSSIA WAS NOT READY FOR WAR.

The reports received from several correspondents of the Times who are in a position to supply accurate information enable us to advance a step towards penetration of the customary veil of mystery which enshrouds the proceedings of Russian armies in the field.

Until evidence is given to disprove the very complete and remarkable summary of the Russian forces east of Lake Baikal, sent by the Pekin correspondent of the Times on Jan. 21, the estimate of numbers therein given holds the field. Reckoning up the available troops of all arms the correspondent placed the total strength on the data given at 150,000 men and 266 guns. His telegram must be regarded as a tour de force in the art of military intelligence, and as a model of accurate and concise reporting. A critical examination of the very complete details sent in this remarkable telegram only serves to confirm its accuracy at almost every point.

It includes the whole of the troops of the First and Second Siberian Army Corps and of the Kwantung military district, besides fortress troops, frontier guards and other forces not included in the larger units now present in East Asia.

The names and numbers and the normal garrisons of all these troops are known in England, and all information concerning them can therefore be rigorously checked. The telegram in question, contains proof that account has been taken of the latest changes in Russian military organization in the Far East, since it enumerates regiments which have only been formed during the last few weeks on the strength of forces of quite recent date.

We are also enabled for the first time to ascertain which army corps in the West is being drawn upon for reinforcements. Of four regiments names, Nos. 123, 122, 139 and 140, the first two belong to the Tenth Russian Army Corps of the Kharkoff district, and the remainder to the Seventeenth or Moscow Army Corps. Whether the remaining units of these corps are under orders or on the move eastward there is at present nothing to show.

Besides these regiments of the active army there are, it would appear, sixteen battalions of reserve infantry in Manchuria. It is probable but it is not quite certain that these belong to the First Siberian Reserve Brigade, whose headquarters are at Chita. The Times correspondent very properly remarks that the numbers he gives "represent the full war strength" and take no account of waste. The numbers, in point of fact, accurately represent the war strengths which are credited to Russian units by the best and latest information at disposal. The Russian troops in East Asia are always nominally on a war footing, and it may be added that for some time past companies of infantry have been drawn from European garrisons and sent east to complete effectives.

Many considerations arise from a close study of this information. It would appear that out of 266 field guns only thirty-six are of the new quick-firing pattern. This statement may be compared with the announcement that has been made, on the faith of German reports of Russian origin, that the whole of the artillery to be employed against Japan "is now armed with quick-firing guns." Both the Russians and the Japanese artillery are at present in the stage of transition, and nothing is more difficult than to secure accurate information of the progress of the re-arming of a foreign artillery.

The new pattern 3-inch quick firing Russian field gun is in process of manufacture, and the exact number of batteries issued to the troops is not known. The same remark applies to the new Arisaka quick-firing field gun of Japan, at present under construction at the Osaka arsenal. It is, however, probable that each side will make superhuman efforts to bring the largest number of these new guns into the field, and this fact may account for the rumors of the movements of Russian batteries from garrisons like Lodz, on the German frontier, which would naturally have been the first to receive the new material so long as there was no danger of war in the East.

We must remember, however, that a wholesale change in the artillery armament entails the transport not only of the new guns, but of the ammunition columns and parks. Even when such change is effected, the old personnel must either be replaced or

trained in the efficient use of the new material, and, whether one solution or the other is preferred, it is a work requiring time.

The technical details made public respecting these two models are at present insufficient to enable us to institute a close comparison or to draw any final conclusions, but it would seem that the new Russian gun has a greater initial velocity and a longer range, and can fire with more rapidity. In the older classes of field guns the Russians also seem to have the advantage, and in case of war the first dual of the rival gunners will be watched with an interest not untainted with anxiety by the friends of Japan.

The information of the Pekin correspondent of the Times differs somewhat from that given by other authorities in relation to frontier troops, or, to give them the more correct Russian title, "defensive guards." The Pekin correspondent of the Times places the frontier guard infantry at 13,371 and the cavalry at fifty-five squadrons, presumably Cossack sotnias, which at war strength would give nearly 10,000 men; adding the six batteries of frontier guard artillery we should find a total of between 22,000 and 25,000 men told off for the guard of the line of communications along the railway. On the last occasion when an accurate estimate was made by a competent observer the figures were 24,000, but it was believed that a steady increase of these numbers was taking place, and that it was intended to raise them to 80,000.

It may also be noticed that the five Cossack voiskos in East Asia, presuming all classes liable to serve are called out, can supply 60,000 men and nearly 50,000 troops horses, certain categories of the reserve and of the opotchenie, or landstrum, in non-Cossack territories would also give an additional number to be drawn upon in case of emergency, without calling up fresh troops from the West.

One of the points of greatest interest in the Pekin telegram is the proof it appears to afford that a smaller number of Russian troops has been despatched from the West than has been believed. Confirmation of this is given by the Times correspondent on the Russian side, whose letter of Jan. 12 from Kharlar an important station on the Manchurian railway, makes it clear that he has so far found little evidence of special preparation for war; and he states that he learns on excellent authority that only 15,000 men have passed eastward since June last, and several thousand time-expired men have been sent home. All this gives the measure of the amount of reliance that can be placed on statements which have been made in the Continental press respecting the flow of Russian troops eastward and serves to confirm the impression that Russia has neither desired nor intended to make war. It is clearly her interest to avoid war at almost any cost until the railway round Lake Baikal is completed, the Port Arthur docks built, and the battleships now on the stocks in the Baltic made ready for sea. When these things are done, the whole conditions of a struggle with Japan for supremacy in the East will become radically altered.

So far as concerns communication by land, the strangulation of Lake Baikal is a serious disadvantage for Russia. The Times correspondent in Manchuria states that two steamers are now running across the lake, the largest making seven voyages, or fourteen crossings, in two days. He tells us that the railway around the lake will not be completed until 1905, or a year later than Russian calculations had anticipated, and he adds that by the combined means of sledges and steamers some 750 tons of stores can be conveyed across the lake in twenty-four hours. From this he concludes that eight train-loads can be taken across the lake every day, and that this figure represents the maximum capacity of the traffic on the line of communication at this important point. It is a liberal estimate, and it may be observed that it only applies to the next three months, and is conditional upon the unlikely event of both sledge and steam traffic continuing without interruption.

The question requires a little further elucidation. The break in the

Trans-Siberian at Lake Baikal is the greatest blot in the Russian military position in the East. A railway is under construction around the southern end of the lake, but so far it has only reached Tonkhol, whence it is a two hours' journey to the eastern shore.

The railway enterprise encounters many difficulties; it requires the piercing of nineteen tunnels through the spurs of the lofty mountains which fall abruptly to the shores of the lake, and Russian engineers have very little experience in making tunnels and are not adepts in this branch of railway work. There are, besides, many broad and deep marshes to be spanned, and the plant necessary for this purpose will require many construction trains to be devoted to its transport if the work is to be carried on concurrently with the supply and reinforcement of the army in the East. We learned what it meant in the Sudan to continue work on a railway and yet keep an army of only 20,000 men at the front supplied. The Russian numbers are ten times greater; the Russian difficulties are therefore greater, even though the Trans-Siberian is, on the whole, more solid than the desert railway of 1898. Lake Baikal is 400 miles in length and is usually frozen over for several months in the winter, the first serious frost having occurred this year on January 2. The ice generally increases to a thickness of three feet, and though a steam ice breaker, the Ledokol, is able to break through ice of moderate thickness, heavy frosts is liable to cause steam traffic to be suspended.

During the months of February, March and April the traffic is almost exclusively by sledge; it is at this moment that the circulation of the Russian roads in the East reaches its maximum, and so long as Baikal remains hard frozen it is rather an advantage than the reverse. But the lake is subject to severe ice has become firmly set it becomes storms, and if these occur before the hammock, and the traffic by means of sledges is often delayed. In early spring and in autumn the greatest difficulties arise, since the ice is too weak to bear sledges, and yet strong enough to impede navigation except by specially constructed craft. With the melting of the ice the Russians are thrown back upon their steamers and when this moment arrives the French General staff calculates that only two trainloads can be despatched each way in twenty-four hours.

The calculation of the Japanese staff is that six trains a day can be sent east every twenty-four hours under wholly favorable circumstances, but they believe that four trains a day are more likely to represent the fact. The report that dynamite has been discovered in the masonry of bridges of the line, and that other preparations have been made to destroy the railway may be true or false. In any case the insecurity of the railway is plain, and the necessity for breaking it up must have long ago occurred to the Japanese Staff. One must, however, differentiate between the Trans-Siberian and the so-called East China railways of Russia. The methods used in the construction of the latter sections were a distinct advance upon those employed in the Siberian line. There was less corruption and fraud, more honesty, and consequently more solidity in construction. For these reasons one must calculate that for all local railway transport in the triangle Port Arthur-Kharbin-Vladivostok, it should be possible to despatch twelve to fifteen trains a day at an average speed of twenty miles an hour, and that so long as these railways remain intact they should play a most important role in enabling Russia to meet a Japanese attack or to transfer Russian forces from one flank of the front of strategic importance to the other.—London Times.

Slaughter of Statesmen

Our foremost public men are dropping into the grave before their time. They are simply working themselves to death. The whole earth is convulsed, and a dozen men control the awful play of its titanic forces. The ex-Premier of Italy died of sheer exhaustion the other day. The ex-Premier of France is a hopeless physical wreck, Chamberlain is a dying man. Two of the strongest men in Irish politics have been compelled to exile themselves in order to find rest for their shattered nerves. The foremost politician in this country died the other day completely broken down by political activity. The storm and stress of statesmanship is becoming fatal to the public men of our day, and there will have to be something like "a trace of the Devil" or we shall be stripped of our great diplomats in a short while.

These men are ridden to death by a double ambition. Nations are in the race for commercial supremacy, and all the ambitions of the past are now bent to serve this one devouring greed of gold. No one cares for military glory now. Armies are now advanced agents of commercial thrift. The arts and sciences are sent to the kitchen and will be rated hereafter only on their qualities as bread-winners. Politics is free-bootery, pure and simple.—Western Watchman.

Churches Destroyed By Fire.

A Chicago correspondent of the Catholic Union and Times, in referring to the destruction by fire of two churches, briefly reported in these columns a week ago, furnishes the following additional details of the fires, and the efforts being now made to rebuild. He says: Two diocesan churches have been totally destroyed by fire within a fortnight. Neither had insurance to cover the value of the buildings. Sacred Heart Church at Palos, an out-mission of Sag Bridge, was a fine stone building erected in 1865. It was totally destroyed by fire of unknown origin two weeks ago. The congregation have already subscribed four thousand dollars towards the erection of a new church, and work will begin at once. The second Church to burn was the Church of St. Francis of Assisi, one of the oldest German churches in the city.

While flames were devouring St. Francis' German Catholic Church, West 12th street and Newbury avenue, Monday afternoon, and a few moments before the great clime of bells fell in with a crash, the mother of the pastor of the Church, Mrs. Theresa Thiele, aged and blind, was rescued from the basement of the burning structure, where she had groped her way and fallen unconscious, overcome by the smoke.

Friction in the automatic clock in the tower of the church is thought to have caused the fire, which was discovered by the janitor. In the delay by the firemen in reaching the building, the fire had spread without resistance in the spire, and it toppled into the street, and the building was a mass of flames when the engines arrived. When the fire reached the lower portion of the Church, it was learned that Mrs. Thiele was still in the building, and blind and infirm, she was unable to get out without assistance. Two men volunteered to enter the structure through the basement, and had only taken a few steps in the darkness and smoke when they stumbled over her unconscious body. She revived in a short time, apparently unharmed.

Father Thiele succeeded in saving the altar service but that was all. The loss to the building, which was valued at \$85,000, was total. The church was insured for only \$31,000. The parish house, which adjoins the Church did not take fire, but owing to the many streams of water directed against it, it is much damaged by water.

This Church observed the fiftieth anniversary of its dedication last August. The congregation is the pioneer German Catholic body on the West Side, having dedicated its first edifice August 15, 1851. In 1863 the Church was destroyed. Rev. Denis M. Thiele has been pastor since 1893. He is a brother to Rev. Aloisius Thiele, the representative of the Germans in Archbishop Quigley's council.

AN IMPORTANT WITNESS.

It was in a country police-court, and the lawyer on one side had occasion to refer to a dead man whose evidence, had he lived, would have been important. "The defunct," the lawyer said, "would have corroborated me in this, your worship"; or "The defunct, may it please the court would, were he here"; or "It is notorious that the defunct declared frequently, your worship, and so on. Whenever these references to the dead man were made, indignant objections came from the lawyer on the other side. The words, "the defunct" in fact, always caused a squabble, and it was to be observed that in this squabble one of the magistrates—a self-made man—had from the beginning been disposed to take part. He frowned and shook his head in reprobation a great deal, and finally he said, impatiently: "What's the use of talkin' so much about this chap you call 'the defunct'? Can't you bring him here and let him speak for himself?" The lawyer's dead, your worship," the lawyer interposed, hastily. The magistrate looked mollified. "Oh! that alters the case," he said.

Washington's Birthday at St. Laurent College

(By An Occasional Correspondent.)

Washington's Birthday is one of those days that will never die in St. Laurent College. It is a day on which the American heart gives vent to great outbursts of patriotic enthusiasm in honor of him whose memory we hold dear; a day when the true national greatness of the American Republic manifests itself even in its infant sons, celebrating their country's glories in an alien land; a day when our greatest boast, after "I am a Christian," must be "I am an American citizen."

Hand in hand together, the American and Canadian students celebrated the day with all possible pomp and splendor. The feature of the celebration was the entertainment that was given in the Academic Hall by the Kottophos Minstrels, a body whose musical and entertaining abilities have long been known to acquaintances of St. Laurent. Each dark faced minstrel was superb in his respective role, and conjointly they worked to preserve untarnished the golden diadem of victory of St. Patrick's Literary and Dramatic Association.

At 7.30 o'clock the doors of the theatre were thrown open to the Reverend Faculty, students and invited guests.

At their entrance the College orchestra, of wide renown, struck up the inspiring strains of one of our national airs, "The Star Spangled Banner." Soon the curtain rose and revealed to an admiring audience a stage so tastefully decorated as to elicit a round of enthusiastic applause. The orator of the occasion was Mr. Francis Fullam, and of him comment must needs be made. His speech was grand and inspiring in thought and well delivered. So patriotic was his oration that several times he was forced to stop until the thunders of applause had died away.

The following was the musical programme of the evening:

Part I.

Grand Chorus:—"When Mr. Pickwick Leads His Own Brigade." Vocal Solos:—"Kiss Yourself Good-bye," Mr. George Kane; "Bedelia," Mr. Adolphus Filiom; "The Man in the Overalls," Mr. Horace Gelineau; "Sammy," Mr. Cornelius Maher; "Under Southern Skies," Mr. Michael

Doherty; "Ninon's Father Doesn't Seem to Mind," Mr. John Dineen; "Courage," Mr. Aloisius McGarry; "A Little Attie But It's Home Sweet Home," Mr. Charles Sullivan; "He May Get Over it, but He'll Never Look the Same," Mr. J. L. Kennedy.

Part II.

Banjo Solo, with piano accompaniment—"Moonlight on the Mississippi," Minstrels. Characteristic Dance, Mr. Jas. Gallagher. Heidelberg, Quartet.

Mr. George Kane easily had control of the audience's risibility both by his solo and original manner in delivering his jokes. Mr. Filiom's solo, the popular "Bedelia," was well rendered, and well received. Mr. Doherty is too well known as a singer to need any additional words of praise from the critic. "The Man in the Overalls," by Mr. Horace Gelineau formed a very pleasing number of the programme. Mr. Dineen, of old repute as a fun-maker, even surpassed former records, and Mr. McGarry's solo, "Courage," was one of the musical features of the evening. Charles Sullivan upheld his old reputation in the song "Just a Little Attie, but it's Home Sweet Home." Mr. Kennedy, the director of the minstrels, closed this part of the programme with a very amusing solo some of which was original and showed to the full our director's ability. Probably the palm must, however, be awarded to Mr. Cornelius Maher, who has many times before appeared before the footlights and has always left a lasting impression.

Dancing, buck and wing, and characteristic jigs formed the first number of the second part of the programme. Then old Southern songs and a darkey scene, "Moonlight on the Mississippi," closed a most amusing and entertaining soiree.

Thus passed Washington's Birthday—a day to be remembered as long as the memory of Washington remains first in American hearts.

J. R. M.

SERMONIZING OF A SCIENTIST.

(By an Occasional Contributor.)

According to a London Catholic Journal, Sir William Ramsey, speaking, one Sunday afternoon recently, at the Alhambra, said: "We scientific men have faith, in the laws of nature and the constancy of its action. We have hope that we shall live to discover much yet and gain a greater insight into thinking the thoughts of God. I have mentioned faith and hope, but the Apostles names another important virtue—charity, and I think you will agree that, fascinating as the exercises of faith and hope is in science, still more important is the exercise of charity." Now the Catholic newspaper in question adds this comment:

"This last passage of Sir William's lecture was listened to in profound silence, and at the close he was loudly cheered." About the cheering at the close of the lecture we can say nothing—quite possibly it was an expression of appreciation of the whole effort. But as far as this special passage having been listened to in silence, we are not surprised. The audience would certainly need to be both silent and recollected in order to grasp the significance of what would seem, on the surface, to be a very deep and important remark—but which, when analyzed, is shallow and meaningless. There can be no objection to Sir William preaching charity, nor in his imitating the Apostle in giving charity a higher place than faith on hope. But we fail to see the applicability of this sermonizing by a scientist. We understand that he has faith in nature and her laws, and hope that he yet may learn more about them; but when does the charity come in? If he had

been talking about faith in God and hope of eternal salvation we could see the pertinancy of dwelling upon charity. But there is very little charity in nature, or in nature's laws or in cold science, or in ought that is purely materialistic. When a man, supposed to be learned, begins to talk about "thinking the thoughts of God," we begin to have grave doubts as to his scientific attainments or the logical turn of his mind. To say that by means of science one could expand to a sufficient degree to be able to think the thoughts of God, is as absurd as to say that by the power of human science the finite mind can be made to grasp the infinite.

A Surgeon's Unique Monument

The New York Eye and Ear Infirmary has in operation a department known as the Du Bois Pavilion the only endowed pavilion of the institution. It is named after Dr. Abram Du Bois, who for fifty years was a surgeon and director of the institution. He left a legacy of \$80,000 for the institution, which endowed the pavilion. The endowment is in memory of Katherine Brinkerhoff Du Bois, and \$25,000 was given by William A. Du Bois, Matthew B. Du Bois and Catherine Du Bois, making a total of \$75,000. To support this pavilion William A. Du Bois has further given \$30,000 which makes a permanent fund for the infirmary.

This is the only endowment that the infirmary has, which allows, to a certain extent, the work among the poor to be carried on. To-day the officials of the infirmary, in making the endowment public, stated that the institution receives no money from either the city or State, and relies entirely for support upon the voluntary subscriptions of the public.