

resources for a tremendous final struggle. The defences of Sebastopol appear at last to be complete. For some days past no additions have been made to the tremendous range of earthworks which surround the town. On our side also we have but little to do in the way of trench work. All the banks and covered ways to the new batteries at Inkermann have been entirely completed, and with the addition of a few more guns and supplies of shell, would be ready for action. The most advanced of these latter works—that which commands the north of the harbor and forts—is abandoned, at least for the present. The reason assigned for this step is that the battery would be utterly untenable against the fire of the northern forts and outworks of St. Sivernia. It is a pity that this discovery was not made before an immense deal of time and trouble had been fruitlessly wasted in constructing the battery. All in the camp imagined that it was advanced too far, and therefore liable to be cut off by any well-managed sortie; but no one for a moment suspected that it had actually been constructed in such a position as to lay it open to a destructive cross-fire from the enemy. Yet such has been the case, and the work is now abandoned. On the night of the 27th the Russian picquet made a bold dash, and favored by their superior numbers, and the effects of a kind of surprise, succeeded for a moment in driving in a picquet of the French. On attempting to follow up this success, and pursue our Allies drove back the enemy with a loss of some thirty or forty men. In this skirmish the French sharpshooters greatly distinguished themselves. Yesterday morning the picquet was relieved as usual. After leaving the Ovens they keep among the ruins for some hundred yards, until the covered way is gained. In so doing they are completely sheltered from the enemy's batteries, though all the picquet has to pass within about two hundred yards of an old house quite close to the Russian lines, though not occupied by them. Yesterday the picquet was passing it as usual, when, to their utter astonishment, one whole wall of the house fell to the ground, unmasking as it did so a party of Russian artillerymen and one gun already laid and pointed. Had the Russians fired instantly our picquet would undoubtedly have suffered considerable loss. As it was, a second's delay took place—quite sufficient to allow our men time to throw themselves on their faces as a match was applied to the gun, and a heavy charge of grape whistled over them harmless. The enemy attempted to load, but the alarm had been given; and so close a fire of musketry was kept up from the "Ovens" and the picquet on all who approached the gun, that the Russians, after losing several men, gave up the attempt, and retired. With this our fellows were content; capturing the gun was out of the question, as a cross fire from the Russian works commanded the approaches to the place. During yesterday two or three shots from the English and French batteries dismounted the gun, and destroyed the remains of the house too effectually ever to permit of another being concealed there. The brigade of Guards has received a reinforcement of 600 fresh men within the last fortnight, yet now the whole effective strength of the three regiments is, I believe, only 1,150. Had not the reinforcement arrived, this, which was the finest brigade in the service, would have mustered about 500 serviceable men. In other corps the mortality has been even greater. It will now, I suppose, be said that it never could have been foreseen that our men, being always wet and cold, and living entirely on salt pork and biscuit, would get scurvy, though it was spoken of everywhere as a thing which must occur, even as late as the end of October last. Here we are now at the commencement of January, with the scurvy rife among us and nothing done. £20,000 judiciously expended in the purchase of fresh meat and vegetables two months ago would have kept our troops healthy. Now it will require nearly £100,000, and even with this our loss from the want of these timely preventatives will be little short of 10,000 men.

PROGRESS OF THE SIEGE.—The *Times* mentions, as a singular fact, to be discovered only in the fifth month of the campaign, that the Russians use a military road to the Crimea, constructed some time back across the shallows of the Putrid Sea. All the plans for occupying the Isthmus of Perekop with a view of sealing up the Crimea would therefore have been perfectly useless. The *Wanderer* has a telegraphic despatch, of the 10th, from Kischeneff, in which it is said that Prince Menschikoff urgently demands that reinforcements to the amount of 40,000 men may be sent him. In accordance with this request, 35,000 foot have been sent from Bessarabia, and 5,000 horse from Uman, a district in the Crimea. The correspondent of the *Morning Post* gives the following as the numerical state of the British forces on the 1st January: Sergeants, 2,191; drummers, 656; rank and file, 88,085. Total, 40,932. Of this number there are at the present time sick and wounded, Sergeants, 565; drummers, 107; rank and file, 12,747. Total, 13,419. The writer says that there were plenty of provisions in store and on board ship in Balaklava. The cavalry are daily employed in getting them up, but the journey to the camp requires two days. The troops were daily without a bit of meat, in consequence of the difficulties of transport. Scurvy had made its appearance; only once or twice a month did the troops get fresh provisions. The deaths were at the rate of 300. On the 31st December, the French were short of rations.

BALAKLAVA, Jan. 1.—Nothing can equal the confusion of the mass of consignments of warm clothing, blankets, hutting materials, stoves, charcoal, forage, barrels of beef and pork, all jumbled into one heterogeneous mass. Boards and timber are issued to the regiments. This is for the purpose of making hospitals in the camp. Officers and men are all allowed roofing, &c., for the walls of huts, which they may have built, but the question arises, how are

they to get it up? Only by carrying it up on their backs. Some baggage horses have been landed lately, but still those are not sufficient. Two Greek priests have been arrested at Eupatoria, with a proclamation from Menschikoff to the inhabitants, ordering them to burn the town. The *Presse* has a despatch of the *Athina Semlin*, from Constantinople, in which it is said that in one of their sorties the Russians captured 18 Englishmen, three of whom were officers. There had been a tremendous storm at Kamiesch, Balaklava.

AN ATTACK UPON THE CITADEL.—We have the opinion of two eye-witnesses as to the prospect of the attack which the Allies are believed to be meditating against Sebastopol. Here is the verdict of a Regimental Officer:—As for Sebastopol, I have nothing to say about it, but that it is as safely Russian as ever; for miles it seems nothing but one vast battery bristling with cannon. The houses are loopholed for musketry and the windows taken out, and sand-bags put in, while every street is swept by a gun at its head, and Menschikoff says, that before we get it we shall pay such a price for it, as will make us wish we never had it; that is, supposing (which he thinks quite impossible) we ever do get it. Our guns have been silent; "shut up" we call it; for a month past; what is brewing, if anything, we know not, and the feeling here is that certain people having made a "botch" of the whole affair, are puzzled now what to do with it.

The *Morning Herald* correspondent is scarcely a whit more sanguine:—The enemy, in the meantime, is strengthening his defences, not wherever they are weak, for there are none so; but wherever art can make them stronger. I believe, if the French wished, they could destroy the town; but I do not believe they could destroy the batteries and earthworks, unless by mining. With the capture, or rather the destruction of the south side all our difficulties really commence. The north side is about ten times as strong as the south, which it commands, and any army engaged in its investment will, from the nature of the ground, be much more exposed to attacks from a relieving force from without. To invest the north side we should require to occupy the country as far as the River Katchka, as the River Belbek, which is nearest to Sebastopol, is entirely commanded by the outworks of Saint Sivernia and Star Forts. In case of such an attack, the right of our positions must rest on Katchka, and our left on the north of the Valley of Inkermann. These two positions could be strongly entrenched; but the ground in the rear is so favorable to the attack of the enemy that we should require a covering army of some strength to protect operations in that quarter. However, the Allies have ample time to make all their preparations for this attack, as we cannot now do it until we have captured the south side, a contingency which is not likely to arise for a month or so yet.

THE PEST HOUSES AT SCUTARI.—Some horrible scenes are described by the *Times* correspondent at Scutari:—

SCUTARI, JAN. 4.—Since the date of my last letter about 1,000 more sick have been brought down here from the Crimea. One transport steamer after another arrives with her sad freight, and anchors in the Bosphorus a short way off the hospitals. I can give you no idea of the effect which these huge ships produce upon the mind as they lie silently at their moorings, and hour after hour, when the weather permits, the exhausted victims of war are landed from them. It is one of those spectacles which by its protracted painfulness haunts a man's imagination and memory against his will. To think that the British soldier—such as we know him at home—should be brought so low, not by the hand of the enemy, but by the excessive hardships to which he has been exposed, and the inadequacy of our army in the point of numbers for the mighty task which it has undertaken! In the hospitals here, and the fresh accessions which each day witnesses to their already overcrowded wards, the truth comes out with terrible reality. With 20,000 men, imperfectly organised in many respects for such a service, we have taken upon ourselves as much as our brave allies with 60,000 men thoroughly equipped and provided. Human strength has its limits, and if you tax it beyond a certain point even that of the British soldier will give way. All the sympathy of the nation at home, all the practical manifestations thereof now on the seas, will not avert this inexorable result, which any man of the most ordinary perception may see worked out here with the accuracy of a mathematical demonstration. Of the 4,000 now in hospital, three-fourths at least are suffering from causes which a less ambitious share in the siege operations and greater attention to the material wants of an army placed in such circumstances, must have vastly mitigated. It will wring the heart of England to hear how her sick soldiers suffer; but what will we say to such blundering as this? Rice was urgently wanted a short time ago in the Crimea—probably as a change of diet requisite for the health of the troops—a ship was sent down expressly for it to Constantinople, and I am told, on authority which I cannot doubt, that in the hold of this vessel, unknown to the authorities, lay one-half the amount of the article thus sought for. Certain it is that unless decisive steps are taken, at once nothing can check the progressive increase in the rate of mortality here, which I regret to say is going on with alarming rapidity. On New Year's Day the number of burials was 40, on the 2nd, 41, and on the 3rd, 64, making, in three days, a total of 145, of whom two were officers. The ward orderlies begin to be carried off as well as the patients, under their care, and several of the medical officers are seriously ill. Among the deaths will be noticed that of Mr. Ward, the purveyor, by cholera. His wife also has been attacked by it, and yesterday evening was not expected to survive her husband. The great accumulation of dysenteric and diarrhoeal cases seems, notwithstanding every effort at ventila-

tion, to have thoroughly impregnated the entire atmosphere of the hospital—wounds almost refuse to heal in it. The healthy become affected like the sick, and the heavy smell of pestilence can be perceived outside the very walls. Yesterday morning there were in the hospitals here 3,984 sick non-commissioned officers and privates, and 50 sick officers.

SIR HOWARD DOUGLAS ON THE CONDUCT OF THE WAR.—General Sir Howard Douglas (than whom there is no higher military authority living) in a supplementary chapter to the new edition of his work on "Naval Gunnery," reviews the whole campaign up to the present date, and on "strictly scientific principles" reviews the operations in the Crimea. He says that Alma was a worthless victory—may, a mischievous one; and he shows the reason why, namely:—"In laying siege to Sebastopol, it may safely be asserted that the most advantageous point of attack was the northern side; there the ground is most elevated, and the large octagonal work on its summit is its citadel and the key of the place. This taken, the Telegraph and Wasp batteries on the northern heights, Fort Constantine and the forts below being commanded and attacked in reverse, must have soon fallen; while the town, docks, arsenal, and barracks on the south side of the harbor would be at the mercy of the allies, who by the fire of their batteries might have entirely destroyed them all; whereas, by attacking the place from the south, the enemy holding the northern heights, although the works on the crest of the southern heights should be breached and taken, the town, the body of the place, with its docks and arsenals, will not be tenable by the besiegers till the great work on the northern side, and all its defensive dependencies shall be taken; and these, no doubt, will be greatly strengthened before the Allies are in a condition to direct their attacks against them. The flank march of the whole army to the south abandoned at once to the enemy a perfectly free communication between the place to be besieged and the army of observation in the field, and left open their line of operation from the base of Perekop; it disclosed the alarming fact, that from the want of sufficient force Sebastopol could not be invested on every side; that the most advantageous point of attack was not to be attacked but turned; that the enemy's communication with the strongest portion of the town its citadel, its keep, and the key of the whole position was to be left open to him, and that instead of besieging Sebastopol, the Allied army was only to attack an entrenched position on the southern heights, supported in its rear by the strongest feature and the most formidable works of the place, and open to receive succor of reinforcements to any extent; also that the attack of the place was to be carried on without a covering army, distinct from the besieging force, to protect it from being disturbed in its operations by the enemy in the field, who was thus left in direct and immediate communication with a *tele* which he might support with all his force. The flank march of the whole army to the south was, therefore, an error in strategical science, imposed of necessity upon the allied commanders by want of numerical strength to render the attack on Sebastopol safe and successful; and such an error can only be justified by the absolute inability of the army to fulfil the conditions on which the siege of a fortress with a large army of observation in the field can be successful. Such a place need not and will not capitulate, attacked as it is, however successfully that attack may be. The garrison cannot be captured; since after making the most determined resistance, it may retire to the northern heights, or it may evacuate the place altogether, and unite itself with the army already in the field, after having rendered the town uninhabitable, and destroyed all the warlike stores it contains."

The harbor of Balaklava is now like the basin of the London Docks, so crowded is it with shipping of all kinds; and from every one of these vessels, at all times of the day, supplies are being constantly landed. Along a flat, dirty causeway, rather beneath the level of the harbor, are boats and barges of all kinds, laden with biscuit, barrels of beef, pork, rum, bales of winter clothing, siege guns, boxes of Minié ammunition, piles of shell, trusses of hay, and sacks of barley and potatoes. These are landed in the wet, and stacked in the mud, until all the provisions that will spoil are sufficiently impregnated with both to be fit for issuing to the men. The motley crowd that is perpetually wading about among these piles of uneatable eatables is something beyond description. The very ragged, gaunt, hungry-looking men, with matted beard and mustachios, features grimed with dirt, and torn great coats stiff with successive layers of mud—these men whose whole appearance speaks toil and suffering, and who instantly remind you of the very lowest and most impoverished class of Irish peasantry—are the picked soldiers from our different foot regiments, strong men selected to carry up provisions for the rest of the camp. Mixed with these are about 200 horsemen, whose lank, feeble steeds, covered with huge raws, seem barely able to move about with their riders through the thick, tenacious mud. The horsemen themselves are all pretty much alike—that is, they are all ragged and all muddy, yet on examining these men closely you perceive that some have dingy brass helmets on their heads, others the small Scotch cap of the "Greys," the remnants of red trousers indicate a Hussar; while a head-dress curiously misshapen discovers a Lancer. From all these facts you suddenly rush to the conclusion that the queer-looking *cortège* is cavalry, or, rather, all that remains of the nine fine regiments which two months ago landed in the Crimea. Yes, the 1st Royal Dragoons, the Scots Greys, the 5th Dragoon Guards, the 6th Enniskillen Dragoons, the 17th Lancers, the 4th Light Dragoons, the 8th Hussars, the 13th Light Dragoons, and 11th Hussars—that formerly had an effective strength of some 2,600 sabres, cannot now among them all mount 200 men in a

state fit for even temporary service. The Scots Greys are, numerically, the strongest regiment out here. It mounts 70 men, out of which only about 25 men and horses are fit for service in the field. For some three or four weeks past we have known that our cavalry, as an arm of the service, was no more; but still, out of compliment, it was spoken of as a division; and was, therefore, on the whole, a pleasant fiction to believe in. But now all our cherished fancies are destroyed—the term "cavalry" has no significance; the 15 or 20 men remaining out of each regiment are all formed into one corps, and used in carrying biscuit up to the camp. Each soldier leads one horse, which is always such a mass of bones, sores, and general dilapidations, as would excite the indignation of that most polite of philanthropists, the secretary of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The led horse carries one bag of biscuit, and frequently is unable to bear this weight (80lb.) more than half the distance to the camp, when they fall and get rid of two burdens—their lives and their biscuits—together. Among these cavalry stalk all kind of officers, some mounted, some on foot. The rough, heavy-looking men in tarpaulin coats, sou'wester caps, and high boots are generally officers in the Guards. The very seedy-looking individuals, in dilapidated garments, with breadbags tied round their legs, are officers from the naval brigade. The mounted men, who most resemble shipwrecked mariners, who have stranded somewhere on a mud bank and waded through it to the shore, are cavalry officers. Among these motley characters, gentlemen walk about with greatcoats made out of their blankets by the simple process of cutting holes in them for their arms. These garments, though primitive-looking, are warm, and to attain that desideratum there is nothing one would not wear in the Crimea.

IRISH INTELLIGENCE.

CONVERSIONS.—On the 6th inst., Miss Bingham, the daughter of the late Mr. Wm. Bingham, solemnly abjured the errors of Protestantism, and was received into the Catholic fold, by the Rev. P. Malone, at the town chapel, Belmullet. Miss Bingham's two sisters were previously received into the Catholic Church, breaking through the strongest ties of earthly affections. Also the following who belonged to the horde of Erris proselytisers have been lately admitted into the one fold by the same pastor:—Anthony Bell and family, Andrew Deane, and family, Edward King and family, Corcoran and family, and some others, who all, with one accord, lamented that fatal hour when despite the sting of conscience, they sold the precious gem of faith for the paltry pound of fowl and the fleshpots of Pharaoh.—*Corres. of Tablet.*

The late Invented Miss Lyons of Limerick, has bequeathed £3000 to her native parish, Croom; for the purpose of endowing Catholic schools for the education of the poor.

THE MAYNOOTH COMMISSION.—It is understood that the report of the Commissioners who held an inquiry into the affairs of Maynooth College is now ready for presentation to parliament.

The *Dublin Evening Post* states, on the authority of communications from Rome, that two separate lay deputations, connected with Irish ecclesiastical affairs, have appeared at Propaganda. Both were equally unsuccessful. One of the letters, in giving an account of this curious lay deputation, says:—"After Mr. Lucas had gone through his case of complaint, which was listened to with profound attention, Monsignor Barnabo, secretary of propoganda, with his characteristic blandness, expressed surprise at what he had heard—intimated that Dr. Cullen was a cherished child of the church, intimately known at Rome, and in whom, from long experience, the most unbounded confidence was placed, whilst it appeared most strange that fault had been found with his Grace's proceedings by those only in whom there was nothing like experience to warrant the placing of any confidence, because whatever was known of their antecedents led to a prudent reserve in regard to their ill considered and random invectives."

A SAMPLE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT.—The English people are told marvels about the spread of Protestantism, in Ireland: and their funds subsidise an army of proselytisers, Scripture readers, supernumerary parsons, with occasionally a visit from the legion of the hundred but here is a small tale that contains a great fact. The *Limerick Examiner* tells us that:—"At Meelick, in the county of Clare, only a short distance from this city, there is a Protestant parish church, the congregation of which consists of one policeman from an adjacent station, and the clerk! If any one should disbelieve our statement, let him go and see with his own eyes." This is something like the state of Ireland in the days of Swift, or like that described by Sir Jonah Barrington, when the "loan of a congregation" was a symptom of amity between the priest and parson. Think of a Protestant Church in Ireland, in the year of our Lord, 1855, with a policeman for a congregation, and dearly beloved Roger, to cry "Amen!" And yet there are many such "Meelicks" in Ireland as that described by our contemporary, which return rich revenues to the fortunate men who are said to religiously govern them; whilst the poor priest must be content with what he can get, and the chapel perhaps has mud floor and a leaky roof, and is all the time too scant for the number of worshippers who besiege its doors. Verily, this is justice to Ireland.—*Galway Vindicator.*

Mr. W. S. O'Brien has taken a house at No. 76, Boulevard de Waterloo, Brussels; his eldest son, who recently distinguished himself in Trinity College, Dublin, and Mrs. Smith O'Brien and family, are with him.

THE BEEFST MUNICIPAL COUNCIL.—The *Belfast Mercury* broadly announces that the Belfast corporation has failed to meet its engagements, and states that, unless some spirited members of the body come forward to save the town from the consequences of its public reputation for "capacity," the course usual to merchants under such circumstances must be submitted to. Our contemporary adds that a circular has been issued by the council to its creditors, but does not give any further details than that all the Belfast creditors are secured. This, should it prove correct, is a strange finale for the municipality of the most practical town in Ireland.