

both the French and English sides of the town a suburb of broken-down white-washed cottages, the roofs gone, the doors off, and the windows out, has been left standing in detached masses at a certain distance from the batteries, but gaps have been made in them so that they may not obscure the fire of the batteries. The image of misery presented by these suburbs is very striking—in some instances the havoc has been committed by our shot, and the houses all round to the rear of the Flagstaff Battery, opposite the French, have been blown into rubbish and mounds of beams and mortar. The advanced works which the Russians left on the advance of our allies still remain, and it is hard to say whether there are any guns in them or not, but they are commanded so completely by the works in their rear that it would be impossible to hold them, and at present they would afford a good cover to the Russians, while the latter could fire through the embrasures of the old works with far greater ease than the enemy could get at them. The Russians managed their withdrawal very well. They threw up their new earthworks behind the cover of the suburb; when they were finished, they withdrew their men from the outer line, blew down and destroyed the cover of the houses, and opened fire from their second line of batteries. Their supply of gabions seems inexhaustible—in fact, they have got all the brushwood of the hills of the South Crimea at their disposal. In front of the huge mounds thrown up by the Russians, foreshortened by the distance, so as to appear part of them, are the French trenches—mounds of earth lined with gabions, which look like fine matting. These lines run parallel to those of the enemy. The nearest parallel is not armed with cannon, but is lined with riflemen. Zigzags and covered ways—that is, trenches cut at angles from one parallel to the other—lead down from trench to trench. The troops inside walk about securely, if not comfortably. The covering parties, with their arms piled, sit round their little fires, and smoke and enjoy their coffee, while the working parties, spade in hand, continue the never ending labors of the siege, filling gabions here, sloping and thickening the parapets, there, repairing embrasures, and clearing out the fosses. Where we should have a thin sergeant's guard at this work the French can afford a strong company. There was no general firing to-day, but a large mortar inside the Russian lines towards the sea, projected a huge bomb into the air every half minute or so across a hill in front of it, to annoy a working party who were engaged in throwing up a new approach towards the Quarantine Fort. A column of white smoke rushing up into the air expands into concentric rings—then follows the heavy dull report, like the beat of some giant drum, and then comes the shrill scream of the shell as it describes its fatal curve, and descends with prodigious velocity, increasing rapidly every instant till it explodes with the peculiar noise of "a blast" just as it reaches the ground. At least it ought to do so, but to day I watched the shells one after another, and only two out of three burst properly, though the range and flight were beautifully accurate. The Russian fuses are bad, but their artillerymen are not to be excelled when their practice is undisturbed. It was interesting—just as the man of pleasure in *Lucretius* liked to see the sea rage when he was not on board ship—to look at the shell dropping, and to see our active little allies scampering away to their cover and adjusting themselves to the closest possible connexion with mother earth, till the hurrying mass had gone by them. Any man with moderate confidence and experience may despise round shot at long ranges, if he only sees the guns from which they are discharged. Well, we won't say despise exactly, but at all events "evade." But a shell is a diabolical invention which no one can regard as it approaches without a certain degree of misgiving that a triangular piece of jagged iron may be whizzing through his internal economy at the shortest possible notice afterwards. If it is sent from a gun it fizzes and roars through the air, and sends its fragments before it, the "cone of dispersion," which is the neat phrase used by the learned militant to imply the direction of the bits of shell (or its contents, when it is filled with bullets, &c.), being in the direction the shell has taken from the gun, and the fragments being propelled with a portion of the velocity of the shell at the moment of explosion. If it be discharged from a mortar it whistles gently and delicately, giving a squeak and a roar now and then as it rises to its greatest elevation, and then rushing downward with a shriller whistle towards the point aimed at. If it explodes on arriving at that point its fragments are projected all around, and are propelled merely by the force of the bursting charge. A man behind a bomb or at the side of it is just as likely to be hit as a man before it when it bursts in that way; whereas the pieces of a shell from a gun in nearly every instance fly forward, so that a person behind it, or outside the limits of "the cone of dispersion," is safe. Unless the shell or bomb bursts in front of a body of men in the air a very considerable degree of safety may be attained by the men throwing themselves flat on the ground, inasmuch as the pieces of a shell which bursts on the earth fly upwards from the point where they encounter the maximum of resistance. Of course, if a bomb bursts over a man on the ground, or if a shell explodes in the air in front of a man, there is no great safety gained by his throwing himself down beyond the consequent reduction of the amount of vertical exposure. This stupid little digression is all apropos of the conduct of our allies which I have just mentioned, and is made in order to explain the rationale of their proceedings. It is rather an unpleasant reflection, whenever one is discussing the range of a missile, and is perhaps in the act of exclaiming "There's a splendid shot," that it may have carried misery and sorrow into some happy household. The smoke clears away—the men get up—they gather round one who moves not, or who is ranked with mortal agony; they bear him away; a mere black speck and a few shovelful of mud mark for a little time the resting place of the poor soldier, whose wife, or mother, or children, or sisters are left destitute of all solace, save memory and the sympathy of their country. One such little speck I watched to-day, and saw quietly deposited on the ground inside the trench. Who will let the inmates of that desolate cottage in Picardy, or Gascony, or Anjou know of their bereavement? However, there goes another shell, and it does nothing but knock up a cloud of snow and dust. There is no use in looking more towards the left; the black, cold sea alone is there, with its bleak horizon of cloud, a mass of masts, in Kamiesch, and a couple of vigilant steamers, like two great eyes, staring into the harbor of Sebastopol, keeping watch and ward over the fleet inside. We descended the hill slope towards Upton's house, now occupied by a strong picket of the French, under the

command of a couple of officers. We should have been able to put a sergeant's guard there, at the outside. A wagon train was waiting there with its cargo of ammunition: here the ground is strewn with incredible quantities of shot fired at the commencement of the siege. As we advance to the first French trench near the place where their batteries were "snuffed out" on the 17th of October, the plain is covered with hundreds of tons of these iron missiles, and one can trace the direction of the fire of each gun by observing the regular lines in which they are lying.—The Russians never fire now, even on considerable parties, and let killers reap as much gape-seed as they like, unless they are actually in the nearest approaches. So we had another halt, and a long look into and over the French trenches, from a little mound in the rear. From this position one can see the heights over Inkerkermann, the plateau towards the Belbek, the north side, the flank of the military town opposite the English, our own left attack, and the rear of the redoubtable Tower of Malakhof. The first thing that struck one was the enormous preparations on the north side, extending from the sea behind Fort Constantine far away to the right behind Inkerkermann towards the Belbek. The trenches, batteries, earthworks, and redoubts all about the citadel (the North Fort) are on an astonishing scale of magnitude, and indicate an intention on the part of the Russians to fall back on the north side when we occupy the south side of the place. Major-General Jones is said to have declared the position was not so strong as he expected to find it from the accounts he had heard, but is only to the eye of a practised engineer that any signs of weakness present themselves, for the earth is furrowed as far almost as the eye can reach by enormous banks, pierced with embrasures. The heights over the sea bristle with low batteries, with the guns couchant and just peering over the face of the cliffs. Vast as these works are, the Russians are busy at strengthening them. Not less than 3,000 men could have been employed to-day on the ground about the citadel. One could see the staff officers riding about and directing the labours of the men, or forming into groups, and warning themselves round the camp fires. About 3 o'clock three strong bodies of cavalry came down towards the fort, as if they had been in the direction of the Alma or Katcha. They halted for a time, and then resumed their march to the camp over Inkerkermann. In this direction also the enemy were busily working, and their cantonments were easily perceptible, with the men moving about in them. At the rear of the Round Tower, however, the greatest energy was displayed, and a strong party of men were at work on new batteries between it and the ruined suburb on the commanding hill on which Malakhof stands. Our men on the left attack seemed snug enough, and well covered with their splendid works; in front of them, on the slopes, were men, French and English, scattered all over the hill side, grubbing for roots for fuel; and further on, in front, little puffs of smoke marked the pits of the riflemen on both sides, from which the ceaseless crack of the Minié and Liège smote the ear; but the great guns were all silent, and scarcely one was fired on the right during the day; even Inkerkermann and its spiteful batteries being voiceless, for a wonder. As one of the officers now began to rub his nose and ears with snow, and to swear they were frostbitten, and as we all felt very cold, we discontinued our reconnaissance, and returned to the camp.

THE YEAR 1855.

Each succeeding new year always opens in a doubtful manner, full of hopes and fears for the future. But few years, perhaps, have worn so threatening an aspect in the very beginning as the present, when Europe is absorbed in the one thought of the discords which torment her, and the disasters which threaten her! Whilst nations and governments are wavering between hope and fear, commerce is retarded, literature and science have become mute, or they are employed only in composing new songs and in inventing instruments of death; while Mazzini, with ferocious joy, cries out, "The war between Princes has begun, the Holy Alliance is dissolved. If the wars of the governments is not rapidly followed by the war of the nations, democracy may resign herself to bear the name of an unquiet and useless agitator, nor presume to call herself a foundress of revolutions." (*Del dovere d'agire Mazzini*). So far Mazzini. And that this is no idle talk, is sufficiently proved by the triumphant insurrection in Spain, the gathering of the conspirators in Switzerland, the repeated attempts in Piedmont, the triumph of democracy in Denmark, and the warlike invitations contained in the semi-official papers of the day, the flatterers, if not to say the fore-runners, of the Mazzinian delirium. But the wretches who desired the destruction of the world, well knew that the sword is powerless, and they trembled when society freed itself from their grasp, through the fidelity of its armies, and turned to the Church as the oracle of truth, and the authority to which every will must submit. At the time of peace and order there was a sincere alliance between the temporal and spiritual power, political jealousies ceased, and even heretical governments began to feel that there could be no security where popular ideas are not under the direction of spiritual authority. But let us see how long this peace endured. Hardly had the last danger been escaped, when the storm burst forth in Baden, followed by the various disturbances which summoned more than one Bishop to the feet of kings in so many parts of Northern Germany. In Piedmont and Switzerland, error is audacious in all its attacks upon the Church. How many bishops, priests, and religious, whose salutary influence was so often invoked to maintain order in times of disturbance, are now in exile in foreign lands; some shut up in prisons, to sigh, not for liberty, but for their trial; others turned out of their houses, deprived of their property; others enrolled in the army, with a musket on their shoulder; and, perchance, one of them is found wandering on the road in misery and starvation, a piece of stolen money is thrown to him, that his conscience and honor may be defiled when he satisfies his hunger. And though, in other countries, the Jansenistical hatred against the authority of the Church does not prevail so openly, every effort is made by the party which abuses the liberty of the press to hinder the restoration of the just principles of religion and order. And certainly it was not without reason that the *Ami de la Religion* lately called the attention of its readers to this "renewal of the persecutions against the Church." But for all this shall we say that all is falling to ruin? Heaven forbid that we should dissuade the possibility of a brighter future, which, like the rainbow after the de-

luge, the Immaculate Virgin seems to announce to us. It is an old belief amongst Catholics, that after the Definition lately pronounced in the Vatican, will ensue a time of peace, predicted by the blessed Apostle, Leonard of Port Maurice, who thus wrote in one of his letters:—
"Let us pray that the Holy Spirit may inspire our Lord the Pope, to undertake with fervor a work of such importance (the Definition of the Immaculate Conception), on which depends the peace of the whole world; for it is most certain that if so great an honor is paid to our Sovereign Lady, there will be at once an universal peace. Oh, what a great blessing! But from this ray of light must come down from on high; and if this does not come, it is a sign that the time decreed by Providence has not yet arrived, and we must have patience to see the world so embroiled."
We must candidly confess that we do not think it impossible that such a sudden metamorphosis may take place. May we not deduce this from the fact of the accession of Austrian and German forces to the Oriental army, which was first published when the now defined Dogma was discussed in sacred and solemn consistories in Rome? And who could be surprised if the Russian Autocrat, seeing such a gigantic accession to the league, were to make spontaneous overtures for peace, before he is forced to do so?
If a league could be formed among the European Powers to oppose a material barrier to the irruption from the north which has threatened to deluge Europe, we might hope for the restoration of that universal order, after which the Czar Alexander yearned when under the influence of a certain Christian piety; but the European princes now fully understand the impossibility of a determined Christianity without the influence of a determining authority.
We should appear credulous if we attempted to persuade our readers that the whole society of Europe has returned to Catholicism. But we are not mistaken in asserting that there is an immense difference between the present epoch and the time of the Holy Alliance. We may have doubts as to the future; but no one can deny that the Church has regained much of her former influence. This influence is the more remarkable when contrasted with the futile efforts of her enemies. The tempests which threatened to destroy the new hierarchies of England and Holland, were immediately calmed at the sound of that voice which the seas and winds obey. Even Great Britain herself, associated in the interests of Catholic France, has not only suspended all hostility against the clergy; but, moved by the sufferings of her wounded soldiers, she has been constrained to implore the assistance of Catholic Charity. An Anglican prelate has not hesitated to attribute this charity to the corruption of error. This confession of the impotence of his church to produce those heroic sacrifices which are made by Catholic Sisters will surely be a cause of numerous conversions among those whose sufferings on their bed of pain are soothed by the balm of superhuman love.
If, therefore, the equilibrium of Europe be one day restored by new treaties of universal peace, it is not unreasonable to hope that the Catholic element will hold a larger place than in the rationalistic Congress of 1815. Threats and promises, fears and hopes for the future, are mingled together in the bosom of the opening new year; and the earnest study of all wise men should be, to turn to good these portentous prognostics. Thus may we hope that the peace of this new year will be true and lasting—that peace for which the weary world sighs, which has been announced to us by the Immaculate Virgin, which our armies are seeking to secure by force of arms, our princes by treaties, and our people by prayers; but which can never be eternally true and solid unless it be founded on the internal basis of truth and justice.—*Civita Cattolica*.

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