

News Department.

From Papers by R. M. S. America, March 31.

In the House of Commons on Monday the 25th, Sir C. Wood stated that it was intended to establish an effective blockade of the Russian ports in the Baltic and White Seas as soon as those ports were open.

The Right Hon. Bart. also informed the house that Lord Dundonald's intention for capturing the Russian strongholds had been submitted to the Admiralty, and inquiries made concerning it, "but under the circumstances it would not be discreet to publish what they meant to do."

Lord Cantlin, the Postmaster-General, says the Government are so conscious of the injury inflicted on the Australian colonies by the withdrawal of the mail service, that, notwithstanding the exigencies of the war, they are in treaty with parties most likely to be able to supply the deficiency.

In the House of Commons, Tuesday, 27th of March, Mr. Phipps proposed an address to the Queen, praying that in the negotiations for peace the reconstitution of Poland should be sought for.

The rest of the evening was taken up with a debate on the motion of Major Reed for a select committee, to inquire into the present mode of appointment in the army. The speeches were a repetition of those on Viscount Goderich's motion for doing away with the system of purchase. The motion was seconded by Captain Scobell, a naval officer, but opposed by all the military men, except the mover, who spoke.

Early in the evening, 27th March, Mr. Roebuck stated that the Sebastopol committee would lay upon the table the evidence taken by them up to their last day of sitting before Easter, and he hoped the committee would conclude its labors shortly after Easter.

NEWFOUNDLAND.

The Premier, replying to criticisms upon the Colonial-office by Mr. Roebuck, assured the house on Tuesday that the Government intend to keep faith with the colony of Newfoundland. Steps have been taken, said Lord Palmerston, to fulfil the promise made by the Duke of Newcastle, and elections have been ordered with the view of effecting an enlargement of the popular assembly; and the nomination of those who are to constitute the Second Chamber will be deferred until the representative body is chosen. Mr. Roebuck gave notice that on an early day he would present a petition from the Assembly of Newfoundland, and would upon that occasion take the sense of the house upon the propositions contained in the petition.

We believe that, as at present arranged, the fleet, under the command-in-chief of Rear Admiral the Hon. R. S. Dundas, C.B., will leave Spithead for the Baltic on Monday next, the 2nd of April.

The advanced squadron, under the orders of Capt. R. B. Watson, C.B., left the Downs on Wednesday for the Baltic. The squadron consisted of the Impregnable, 51, screw, Capt. Watson; Euryalus, 51, screw, Capt. Ramsay; Arrogant, 47, screw, Capt. Yelverton; Cossack, 29, screw, Capt. Fanshawe; Tartar, 20, screw, Capt. Dunlop; Esk, 20, screw, Capt. Birch; Conflict, 8, screw, Commander Brown; Desperate, 8, screw, Commander White; Archer, 15, screw, Capt. Heathcote.

Lord Dundonald is about to communicate to "the wise and energetic ally of her Majesty," his plans by which he proposes "speedily, certainly, and cheaply, to surmount obstacles which our gallant, persevering, and costly armies and fleets have failed to accomplish." In the same letter the noble lord talks of our "five-fold decimated army." What does his lordship mean?

Mr. C. H. Darling, late Governor of the Cape, has been appointed Governor of Newfoundland, vice Mr. Kerr Brille Hamilton, appointed Governor-in-Chief of the Leeward Islands. Upon this appointment the Record remarks that "Mr. Hamilton is an excellent man, decidedly attached to the evangelical portion of our church, and his removal from a colony like Newfoundland is much to be regretted."

RUSSIA.

This week we have several important documents from St. Petersburg, all declaring in favour of peace, and a positive resistance to dishonour. We give them in the order they arrived. On the 7th the Emperor Alexander II. received the diplomatic body and delivered an address remarkable for its energy. His Imperial Majesty said—

"I am persuaded, gentlemen, that all your Courts feel sincere sorrow at the misfortune which has befallen us; I have already received proofs of it from all sides; they have greatly moved me, and I stated yesterday to the Ministers of Prussia and Austria how much I appreciated them. I solemnly declare here before you, gentlemen, that I remain faithful to all the sentiments of my father, and that I will persevere in the line of political principles which served as a rule to my uncle the Emperor Alexander, and to my father. These principles are those of the Holy Alliance. But, if that Alliance no longer exists, it is certainly not the fault of my father. His intentions were always upright and loyal; and if recently they were misunderstood by some persons, I do not doubt that God and history will do him justice. I am ready to contribute to a good understanding on the conditions which he accepted. Let us him, I desire peace, and wish to see the evils of war terminated, but if the conditions proposed by your Government do not lead

to a result honourable for us, then, gentlemen, at the head of my faithful Russia, I will combat with the whole nation, and I will perish sooner than yield. As to my personal sentiments for your Sovereign [here the Emperor addressed Baron de Werther, Minister of France] they have not varied; I have gratefully recalled the fraternal affection and friendship which his Majesty the King always had for my father, and I told you yesterday how grateful I am to him for it. I am deeply sensible of the kind words which the Emperor has caused to be transmitted to me on this occasion. [This was addressed to Count Esterhazy, Minister of Austria.] His Majesty cannot doubt the sincere affection which my father entertained for him at an epoch which he himself has recalled by the order of the day addressed to his army. Be kind enough, gentlemen, to communicate my words to your respective Courts."

In a letter direct from St. Petersburg, dated the 9th March, a striking passage from another speech is reported:—

"The deputation of the nobility having presented themselves, in order to render an account to his Majesty of the election of the chiefs of the militia, were harangued with much warmth. The discourse terminated thus:—"I solemnly declare that I will not give up a single inch of Russian territory to our enemies. I will take good care to prevent their penetrating further on the soil of our country; and never, never—may my hand wither first!—will I affix my signature to a treaty which shall bring the slightest dishonour on the national honour." These words were spoken with a tone and energy of vehemence which excited among all present the most rapturous applause."

The funeral of the Emperor took place on the 11th inst. A letter from St. Petersburg, giving an account of the ceremony, says:—

"I cannot describe to you the anxiety of the people to render the last homage to him whom they were accustomed to consider as a demi-god, and as, at a later period, charged by the Divinity to combat for the holy orthodox religion and holy Russia. Everywhere, as the body passed, the spectators made the sign of the cross, and most of them when they knelt down, touched the earth with their forehead, weeping bitterly. At the different churches the procession halted, and the various ranks of the clergy paid homage to the ashes of the chief of the Orthodox Russian Church. Prayers for divine mercy to the soul of the deceased were offered up in every place of worship; and Nicholas himself was called on, as chief of the Church, to address prayers to God to give force to Russia to combat with success for her rights and her territory. Cannon continued to fire until the coffin reached the Cathedral of Paul and Peter. The service for the dead of the Greek-Russian Church was then celebrated, and salvoes fired by the troops, announced the end of the ceremony. The evening was far advanced before the crowds of people who had assembled to witness the ceremony ceased to fill the streets. In addition to the thunder of artillery, the roll of the muffled drums and the sound of military music playing funeral marches were to be heard. The death of the Czar has produced a certain degree of agitation, which our Government, autocratic as it is, has not been able to prevent. The ceremony displayed a character of magnificence and grandeur worthy of the deceased Czar. Everything passed off in good order."

The Telegraphic news from the Crimea is contradictory, though the news of some important movement may be daily anticipated, we do not imagine the events, recorded in the following despatches, the latest received, deserve to be so classed. The *Moniteur* of yesterday publishes the following:—

"Constantinople, March 19.—In the night between the 15th and 16th inst, the French troops carried a line of ambuscades occupied by the enemy's sharpshooters: at the same time the Russians made a sortie on our extreme left, which was vigorously repulsed. They had fifty men put hors de combat and withdrew in disorder."

"Marseilles, Monday, March 26.—The *Thalor*, which left Constantinople on the 15th, and the *Euphrate*, which left Constantinople on the 19th, have arrived. Letters from the Crimea, of the 17th, announced that Omar Pacha arrived at the camp of the allies on the 12th. On the 13th the Russians opened the fire of their batteries on the heights of Balaklava. The English, assisted by General Vinoy, routed them. On the 17th the Russians attacked the whole line of the allies, and were driven back with great loss."

"Vienna, Monday.—Advices from Odessa of the 21st, state that the Russians in spite of repeated attacks, maintained the position they had taken on Mount Sapouna on the 24th of February, from which their guns play on the French lines of attack and upon part of the camp."

"Berlin, Wednesday, March 21.—Advices from St. Petersburg of this day's date state that the following despatch had been received from General Canrobert, in which the state is that, in forty-eight hours from the time at which he wrote, the bombardment of Sebastopol would commence."

"The *Post* of Monday published the following:—

"Paris, March 25.—The Government have just received a telegraphic despatch from General Canrobert, in which the state is that, in forty-eight hours from the time at which he wrote, the bombardment of Sebastopol would commence."

A Vienna despatch reports the death of Prince Menschikoff from typhus fever, but with the addition that it "requires confirmation."

THE CONGRESS AT VIENNA.—The impression appears to be universal, not only in this country, but on the Continent, that the Western Powers have agreed to recede from their first demand on Russia, that the fortress of Sebastopol should be razed to the ground. A fear is gaining ground that all our boasting—all our dearly-bought alliances—all our sacrifices of money and men—are coming to a sorry and unprofitable result. It is felt, by a kind of instinct, which seldom misleads a whole people, that we are on the eve of some shameful compromise—some hollow, inadequate, and patched-up peace. The French government journals have already begun to affirm that the Western Powers are not seeking to destroy Sebastopol. The *Constitutionnel* writes:—"The destruction of Sebastopol no longer figures in the number of the stipulations of the Allies relative to the Black Sea, for the reason that the siege of which this place has been the object, has never been considered otherwise than a means, and not as an end, by the Western Powers. What they pursue in common in the Black Sea with their fleet and army is not the ruin nor the capture of a military port—it is the reduction of the forces which Russia has maintained in these parts." The intelligence comes from so many quarters, that we find it difficult to persuade ourselves that the statement is groundless. If it be true, France and England have forever dishonoured themselves; and notwithstanding the loss of nearly 50,000 men, and an expenditure of £20,000,000, have only, in reality, left matters just as they found them. If Sebastopol is to be spared, Russia will neither be humbled nor hurt; and the peace which will follow will be a hollow as well as dishonourable peace.

A despatch from Vienna says:—"The political horizon has again become gloomy. The first Conference on the third point, was not satisfactory. Although the Western Powers do not insist on raising the fortifications of Sebastopol, they propose other conditions that are not agreeable to Russia. Operations on the Stock Exchange by great capitalists, generally understood to have access to reliable sources of information, are cited in corroboration of the rumour. The partisans of Government attempt to vindicate the concession by attributing it to an artful political stratagem. Its extremely moderate proposals of France and England they allege, are dictated by the conviction that Russia will not accept them; that its inveterately aggressive propensities will be thus more unequivocally exposed, and that Austria will then have no excuse left for refusing to throw its sword into the scale. English statesmen have never gained any thing by playing such a wily game as is here attributed to our present rulers."

Another report says:—"We believe we are correct in stating that the Third of the Four Points having come under the consideration of the Congress of Vienna, and the plenipotentiaries having exchanged their ideas upon this important condition, it has been found by them necessary to communicate with their various Governments, and especially with St. Petersburg, in consequence of the inability of the plenipotentiaries to reconcile their respective instructions." The Third Point stipulates for the entrance of Turkey into the European family, and for the limitation of the preponderance of Russia in the Black Sea. While waiting, the Congress will, probably, continue to meet, and we may suppose, will pursue the study of the First and Second Points, which have not been accepted, as it has been erroneously stated; but merely acknowledged as to their general bearing. They have yet to be canvassed in all their difficult details, and this, if ever it be come to, will be a work of many weeks."

A despatch dated "Wjborg, Tuesday," prepares us for the opening of the Baltic.—

"The Great Belt is open at the north, south, and east; also from Knudshoved to Slipshaven. Concern is still icebound. The Sound ice is broken up on the Swedish side. Elanora is open, and ships have arrived. Ice still remains between Ilven and the Danish coast. Kiel harbor is partially open; Buck quits.—A storm from the north-west is rapidly dissipating the ice."

A small Sardinian squadron is to sail from Genoa for the Black Sea, under Commodore Dinegro. The English steamers to convey the troops are expected. In order to be able to leave a margin for non-effectiveness, the King will send 17,000 instead of 15,000 men to the Crimea.

Selim Pacha, who was killed in the Russian attack on Eupatoria, was the single Mameluk who escaped the slaughter by Mehemet Ali at Cairo in 1811; he made his horse leap the parapet of the wall of the court where his companions were butchered, and Mehemet Ali was so pleased with this daring exhibited that he spared Selim.

INDIA.

Hyder Khan, as representative of Dost Mahomed, has arrived at Jellalabad, on his way to Peshawar to negotiate with the Chief Commissioner. Lord Dalhousie has gone to the Neilgherries. The condition of Oude becomes daily more deplorable. The export of tea from Foochee has reached this season twenty-six millions of pounds.

CHINA.

The French had again attacked Shanghai, and been repulsed with loss by the rebels. The country round Canton is in the hands of the rebels. Our correspondent at the last moment received another despatch from Shanghai, which stated that the French commander had again attacked the rebels, and had suffered other reverses.