

know well the kind of man he had to deal with, and proceeded at once to business, with an abruptness and candor wofully contrasting with the match-making chicanery and matrimonial circumlocutions of more modern times.

"Wat Ridenford," said he, on receiving the curt but hearty welcome of the old man, "you know me since I was a child. I have nothing but my castle and a few acres around it,—nothing else but my sword to help me, e. through the world: will you give me your daughter for a wife?"

"That I cannot tell," answered the plegmatic Wattie. "I have often said that the best and bravest man in Ormond only should get her. What do you say to that?"

"Nothing," answered John de Botiller, "nothing, only that I cannot understand it. I tell you what I have heard, that Gibbon of the Wood was here to day. To him, I suppose, you have given the same answer; but know, Wattie Stem-the-Stream, that as I have come—yes, come here for, I believe, the twelfth time, I am determined not to be put off with a riddle any longer." It was now he showed his knowledge of Wattie's character. "You must tell me what you mean," continued he. "If you do not, here is a level space before us; draw your sword, and you will soon see, that, if you were twice as good a man as you are, I'll whip the answer in a trice out of that old iron carcass of yours. Draw."

This was exactly what Wattie wanted, and what he was for a long time expecting from some one of the suitors for his daughter's hand. He now quietly stood up, and drew the heavy sword he usually carried by his side. With a grim smile of mingled approval and affection, he looked upon the splendid figure of the young castellan of Cnoc Graffon, as the latter stood opposite him, also with his drawn sword in hand, ready to begin the strange combat.

"The answer, the answer!" cried John de Botiller.

"Take that, instead," answered Wattie, making a playful cut of his sword at the young castellan, which, however, the latter avoided by a nimble bound in a backward direction. A sharp combat, half play, half earnest, ensued; the result of which was that Wattie was at last beaten back against the wall by his young antagonist.

"Yield, Wattie! yield, and give the answer!" exclaimed John de Botiller, as the old man planted his back against the wall, and stood warily on his defence. "Yield, yield!" continued he, dancing nimbly round, and making various playful lunges and slashes at the old man, at which the latter at length burst into a hearty and sonorous fit of laughter, and dropped the point of his sword with a mock grimace on his swarthy old countenance, in token of submission.

"The answer you shall have, by my father's head!" exclaimed Wattie, as he now planted himself upon the stone seat by the gateway, and invited the young horseman to take a seat beside him. "Here it is," continued he. "I have sworn that none but the best man in Ormond shall get my daughter for a wife; and you may be sure that Wattie Ridenford is not the man to break his oath. I will appoint a day on which the suitors can come to Tig-na-Sgiath, and try their prowess at every kind of exercise. On that day, if you come, you will get your chance; and, between us both," continued he, grasping the hand of the young castellan, and giving it a tremendous squeeze, "I wish you success; so, whatever happens by food or field, be home on the day appointed."

"It is enough," said John de Botiller, returning the friendly grasp of the old soldier. "I will be here; and, with Mary looking on me from the castle window, I hope to acquit myself so that I shall come off the winner of her fair hand."

With that he bade farewell to old Wattie, and rode away to Cnoc Graffon. This occurred on the evening of May-day; but, ere a fortnight was over, there was a storm raised in the land, which left but little time to the wooers of young Mary Ridenford to think on the day of trial, whatever time it might occur. The Earl of Essex had marched southwards, and laid siege to Cahir Castle. After several sallies and skirmishes between the belligerents, and a terrible cannonade from the batteries of Essex, the latter at length succeeded in taking possession of the fortress. Leaving a garrison behind him, he then marched into Desmond, fighting various battles as he proceeded.—Throughout the whole siege, John de Botiller and all the young men of the neighbourhood were, of course, employed in defending the castle; but now, when all was over, they began to think of the strange resolution the old Master of Tig-na-Sgiath had come to with regard to the disposal of the hand of his daughter.—They so importuned Wattie, that he at last fixed a day: and now, without the slightest consideration for the feelings of his daughter, although he loved her well he awaited its coming; thinking, of course, that the bravest soldier and most active man in the country, whoever he was, would make the best and fondest husband for Mary. But the latter did not agree with her father's notions on the matter. She loved the handsome young castellan of Cnoc Graffon, and was resolved to marry no one else, whoever the successful competitor might be on Midsummer Day; for that was the one appointed by Wattie for the trial between her wooers. Many an hour she sat and wept in her little chamber in the House of the Shield, thinking of the dangerous position she was in; and what must have been her grief and terror, when at last Midsummer Day came, and, though a numerous throng of competitors had arrived at the castle, there was still no appearance of John de Botiller! The latter, however, was a score of miles away at the time, acting as officer of the guard at Carrick Castle, where military discipline was enforced with such strictness that he did not dare to leave his post during the temporary absence of Lord Ormond.

Meanwhile the trial between the wooers at

the House of the Shield went on gloriously, Wattie Stem-the-Stream wading from time to time at the continued absence of the young castellan of Cnoc Graffon, whose suit he favored secretly. Several competitors had given in, as the day advanced; and, before noon was over, the contest, in every athletic trial, lay principally between Gibbon of the Wood, Donat Burke of Ruscoe, and Raymond Grace, the young Lord of Burnfort. Poor Donat Burke at last nearly fractured his knee, at the leaping of the bawn wall, and gave up the contest; so that, to all appearance, the hand of Mary Ridenford was destined in a short time to fall to the lot of either Raymond Grace or the sturdy Gibbon of the Wood, both of whom were engaged at a terrible bout of wrestling on the level bawn. At length Raymond went down; and, notwithstanding his various threats, that he would perill life and lands to gain the hand of Mary Ridenford, and a gratuitous one to the effect that he would have the heart's blood of any other man that would succeed in winning it, he very philosophically gave in at the proposal of the next and final trial, which was to be a deadly bout between himself and the formidable Gibbon, with broadsword, buckler, and skean.

And now Gibbon of the Wood boldly claimed the hand of poor Mary, who was at the moment, with bitter tears in her eyes, looking over the sloping plain beyond the Suir, expecting her lover to make his appearance. And he did appear at last, just as the fatal words were about being spoken by her father, that would make her the affianced wife of the dreaded Gibbon. Lord Ormond had returned to Carrick early that morning; and, when he heard the story from the young castellan of Cnoc Graffon, he laughed heartily, and gave the latter liberty to set off as fast as his good steed would carry him for the House of the Shield. There John de Botiller arrived at the time we have indicated; and a terrible contest commenced between him and the now enraged Gibbon, who did not give in till he had lost the two best fingers of his right hand, in the last trial with skean and broadsword.

And so John de Botiller won the hand of the lovely Mary Ridenford, and they were wedded shortly afterwards. But there were tears in her eyes soon after the marriage; for, two days afterwards, her young husband was forced to bid her farewell, and with as many men as he could muster, return to the banner of Lord Ormond, the eastern borders of whose territory were at the time in a state of war and trouble and continual tumult. Many a weary moon passed over poor Mary, as she sat in the turret window of her father's house, looking out over the wide plains for the return of her gallant husband; but he came not, for he was still taking part in the raids of Lord Ormond, on the far-off eastern borders. Many a time she looked upon her marriage-ring, and bathed it with tears, as she thought of the day on which John de Botiller had placed it on her finger.

And now the south-eastern borders began to come in for their share of the troubles. Wattie Stem-the-Stream and the other castellan of the neighborhood rose with their followers, and fell upon Cahir Castle; but, after a sharp contest with the garrison left behind by Essex, they were forced to retire from its walls. In consequence of this attack, the President of Munster sent Sir John Dowdall, a veteran soldier of the Queen, across the mountains from Youghal, to quiet the borders, and place a fresh garrison in Cahir Castle. Sir John executed his commission with a high and successful hand. He not only succeeded in throwing in the garrison, but he also laid siege to and took the whole chain of border towers, one after the other,—the stronghold of Tig-na-Sgiath included. It was thus that on a certain fine day the belligerent and dauntless Wattie found himself and his daughter, the young and sad wife of the castellan of Cnoc Graffon, close prisoners in the mighty, and at the time almost impregnable, fortress of Cahir. The father fretted and fumed at being thus rendered inactive, when so much was still to be done outside; but the daughter sat quietly in her lonely prison, and, looking on her bridal ring, day after day, still bathed it with many a bitter tear, as she thought of the grief her absent husband would feel when he heard of their woful state.

It is not to be supposed that the young castellan of Cnoc Graffon remained quiet when a secret messenger from the stout Wattie bore him the news. He immediately proceeded to James Galdie, the Earl of Ormond's brother, and with him concocted a plan for the capturing of the Castle of Cahir. At the head of about sixty chosen men, they marched across the country, and, without attracting the observation of the garrison, contrived to ensconce themselves opposite the walls of the castle, just as the shadows of night loomed down darkly upon plain and glen from the adjacent summits of the Gauly Mountains. They had brought with them a number of ladders; and, having crossed the drawbridge, in the dead silence of the night they began scaling the inner wall. Ere a dozen of them had gained the bawn inside, the garrison was aroused, and rushing out, sword and gun in hand, under Thomas Quayle, the castellan, a short and sharp struggle commenced between the two parties. Wattie Stem-the-Stream and his daughter were soon awakened in their prison chambers by the loud clashing of swords and the rattling of guns and potshots outside. And now the loud crash of a falconet, or small cannon, resounded from a tower overhead, followed by a strange, fearful, and rustling noise that seemed to tear the rocky walls of the prison chamber asunder, after which the young bride sat pale and terror-stricken for a moment, and then gave one wild and heart-piercing cry of anguish and despair.

"The ring! the ring!" she cried, holding out her hand towards her startled father.—"Ah, me! ah, me! it is broken; and I know but too well that my noble husband is slain."

The father took the trembling hand in his;

and, examining the bridal ring, found it cracked and almost falling off the finger of the poor young bride. Still the uproar continued outside, but in a short time it ceased.—The prison door at length opened, and James Galdie and a few men strode into the chamber with the news that they had taken the castle. At the moment the door was opened, Mary, with another wild cry, rushed out; and, when they searched for her a few moments afterwards, they found her by the wall, stretched beside the body of her gallant husband, who had fallen beneath the cannon ball from the tower above. They raised her; but she too was dead, and when they took her lily-white hand, and looked upon the ring, they found it whole and sound as ever,—a mysterious sign of her being reunited to her husband in the bridal day of death. They were laid side by side in the little chureyard; and many a traveller, as the seasons come and go, sits there and muses over the last resting-place of the brave John de Botiller and his loving wife.

JOTTINGS FROM THE SEAT OF WAR.

THE WINTER CAMPAIGN OF LE MANS.
(From a Military Correspondent of Times.)

Change lies in a hollow, with hills curving round it on two sides, north and west, in the direction of Le Mans. The French position was on the hills, and the German soldiers endeavoured to force their way upwards and onwards through the woods which clothed the steep sides. There were patches of snow-covered fields and a farm or two, but no open country fit for cavalry and artillery. The only chance of seeing anything was to climb a series of steep ladders into the little church tower of Change, so I went up there as soon as it was evident that there was no likelihood of winning a view from the top of the hill. The firing was incessant and well sustained, but it was chiefly from the ridges of the infantry. The French were in force, and ought to have advanced, sweeping away the small number of Germans opposed to them. But they were contented with holding the position. The brigades of the 3rd Corps were not strong enough to carry it, and the 10th Corps was still toiling along the slippery road leading north-west from La Chartre, on the Loire.

On this, as on other occasions, the Germans multiplied their numbers by audacity and quickness. They ran from hedge to hedge, and from tree to tree, never exposing themselves unnecessarily, yet always ready for a charge and hurrah when a chance presented itself. But classposts innumerable cracked in front, the mitrailleuses snarled from its cover, and the perpetually recurring thump of the Gatling was met on every path. These men can do wonders, they are madly brave, but they cannot do impossibilities, and on the 11th of January the 3d Corps failed to take the heights. General Alvensleben's face, whose Head-Quarters were established in a little house filled with wounded, wore an anxious and unsatisfied expression. His children were struggling against heavy odds, and falling wounded or dying in the snow, while the mournful wind sang dirges over them through the pine-trees. The junior members of the Staff sat during the morning in an outer room of the little house, having just enough space without pressing on the crowded bodies lying there. It was the little cafe of Change. Where French soldiers had lately sat and laughed a French soldier now lay dead, for there was no time to remove him. A young German, wounded in the stomach, lay on his side, and vomited blood incessantly, his countenance wearing that expression of anxiety and feeble wishfulness which proves that death is not far distant. Side by side, packed closely, they lay, all these agonizing human beings; but there was not a word of complaint. One poor lad had had two wounds dressed. He was shot through the right arm and right leg. Through the open door could be seen a French officer lying on a table. Major Andre, the sportsman, the buyer of some of the best English melchorses, was talking to him tenderly, and helping him to write a letter. So quiet all in that hut, and outside the sounds of fierce battle. I mounted and rode back along the line to see what was going on to the right. Within the space of a mile my horse fell three times on that icy road. Two batteries were sent down a cross-road to the right to support the 9th Corps in their attack on Champigne; but they had at that time no opening, so I returned to the little town. A general must not move far from the place whither reports are to be sent, and Alvensleben could find no spot within fair distance whence a view of the battle-field could be gained.

About half-past 3 I went up into the town, and sat there among rafters and dirt in the cruel cold, but was rewarded by the sight of the fighting among the trees and farms, and the distant attack of the 9th Corps on the range of hills above Champigne. Presently a French battery began to bombard the town with shrapnel, to little purpose, for there were few within it but the Staff and the wounded. They probably took the tower for their mark, as the battery was hardly within sight of the houses. The shells sang through the air and burst with a crash, making the old wooden spire quiver. But they never once hit it, though the range seemed to be not more than 1,600 or 1,700 yards. The long-shooting class-pot, aimed high, sent a few bullets whistling through the air. A man, far behind with the train in the road, was struck by one of the "lost bullets," as the Germans call them, coming from the hill on the right. The range cannot have been short of 1,600 yards. The fight continued till midnight, without any decisive result. The Germans were matched against overwhelming numbers, and the 10th Corps had not yet come up to give the necessary aid, being still kept back by the state of the roads.

Meanwhile the action on the main road was progressing. The 12th Brigade, 6th Division, 3d Corps, which had occupied Chateau d'Arches, hard by the main road, in the morning, then joined the rest of its corps, and it came to the turn of the 18th Division to carry the heights above Champigne, which tower above the road, not parallel to it, but converging from about a mile to the right of St. Hubert, coming close to the road not far from the river Huise in the direction of Le Mans. The hills are steep, and the end near St. Hubert is broken by three ravines. The Prince himself was at St. Hubert, and ordered the attack to be made, he moving near to watch it. A road from St. Hubert leads towards the right to Champigne, at the foot of the heights nearest to the advancing Prussians. One Brigade remained at St. Hubert. About four battalions marched along the main road towards Ypre, which lies in the rear of the heights and the river; nearly the same force took a road through the woods leading to the village of Champigne. The former force, spreading out into company columns, covered by skirmishers, went at the heights in the front with its left towards the river, and took the hills before it in gallant style. The other four battalions, or three with some Jagers, pushed through Champigne, and moved steadily at the flank of the hill. One battalion remained below in reserve; one company mounted the hill, upwards, onwards, strongly driving the enemy before them, over one elevation, down into the ravine, up again, always onwards, down and up again, striving to gain the flank of the French and assist their struggling friends who were attacking the hills in front. But on the last crest stood three mitrailleuses snarling defiance and causing even the Germans to recoil. The fire was terrible, for the mitrailleuse is not good to face when artillery cannot fire at it from long

range. The small force lay down to save themselves as well as they could. An eye-witness relates that when the company rose afterwards it was short of 12 men. The rest of the brigade cleared the lack of the heights.

Then Captain Mount, of the 11th Infantry, chose a small body of picked men, determined that the Prince should not see his commands left unfulfilled. Quietly they stole through the ravine, quietly gained the crest where the many hurled pieces stood snarling and belching forth volleys of bullets. The hill-side was so steep that the muzzles of the mitrailleuses could not be pointed low enough to meet them until the band of brave men had reached the summit. One moment's breath, and then with a wild hurrah they sprang forward. The degenerate sons of the old Gauls could not withstand the onset. They fled, were slain, or rendered themselves prisoners. The road was clear, the men on the other bank rose to their feet—all except the 13 who never rose more—and the heights commanding the Huise were in the hands of the Prussians. Not completely, however, until the next day. While Captain Mount and his chosen children stood beside the pieces they had taken, a Prussian battery opened upon them, not knowing of their gallant deed, and either here or a little later from the French he received a wound, "light" in the phraseology of soldiers, but heavy enough to hinder him from advancing further that day. He was lying quietly in a little hamlet on the heights, nameless in the map, when it was recaptured by the French, who held it through the night. They would have carried him off to sigh for liberty in vain, but a woman who had seen his gentleness to the French wounded caused him to lie on her bed and represented to her countrymen that his wound was dangerous, so that they also pitied him and let him lie. Night came, and the faithful few whom he had led so well consulted how they might rescue their captain. They moved silently out in the darkness and crept unperceived into the village where the worried French were taking their rest after the battle to renew the strength so needful for the morrow's work. The Prussian Kinder knew where their father lay, and stole quietly into the house with a stretcher which they had brought. "Here, Captain, now is your time." They set him on the canvas, and, seizing the poles with vigorous arms, slipped out as they had come, unperceived. Captain Mount was a free man again because his men loved him, and because he himself had shown clarity to the wounded. Such deeds as these throw a coloured halo round the horrors of war. Without them surely war would be impossible among civilized men!

By this time it must have been perceived by General Chanzy that his army was in sore peril, and perhaps the boastful Frenchman repented that he had flung defiance in the face of Prince Frederick Charles. Before him were the advancing troops of Germany; on his left the Duke of Mecklenburg was for ever pressing, driving his outstretched wing so closely to the body as to cripple his powers of motion; behind him was the Sarthe. Another day and his army would be taken as in a net. There was only one chance for him. He had his railways, while the roads were in such a state that the Prussians could hardly move on them. Not unwisely, he commenced at once the work of retreat. The German cavalry saw with bitter disappointment trains moving towards Sille, le Guillaume, Sable, and La Fleche, while they were prevented from cutting the iron way by the ice on the roads and the closeness of the country, intersected, like England, by numerous small hedges, gardens, and farm enclosures. So the French lines became weaker, while the Germans were strengthened by the arrival of the 10th Corps to support the 3d.

The night of the 11th was passed in some anxiety by General Alvensleben. When complimented in the evening on the behaviour of his men he remarked, "Yes, but I am not quite satisfied with what the 3d Corps has done." Not satisfied, when he had shown so bold a front that, as before Metz, the French must have believed they had a whole army before them! That night, the night of the 11th, was passed by the Staff of the 3d Corps lying on straw, all in one room at Change, after satisfying the cravings of hunger on a little cold meat which had been brought for luncheon. At a quarter to 7 in the morning an officer came suddenly into the room and said, "Gentlemen, there is an alarm." Where no one has removed a single article of clothing not much time is needed for the toilette. The frosty morning air supplies the place of a bath, and a breakfast of a little bread smeared with lard is acceptable when there is real hunger. The garden wall of the house was loop-holed and guarded by German soldiers; the firing was close and incessant, but it soon slackened, and the outposts were exchanged for Brigades marching forwards against the enemy. You know the result, the details of which must be reserved for another letter. After hard fighting, the 3d Corps and the 10th, which arrived after a long march, pushed the French into Le Mans. The streets and squares were the scene of bloody combats, but the town was won in the evening, and the two Corps passed the night in it. Altogether about 20,000 prisoners have been taken, as I told you by telegraph, six engines, and about 400 railway carriages filled with provisions, arms, and ammunition. The Army of the Loire is broken up, and Prince Frederick Charles entered Le Mans on the 13th, establishing his Head-Quarters at the Prefecture.

A letter published in the *Kölnische Zeitung* of the 13th is horribly suggestive of the international feeling engendered in this latter phase of the war. The writer is an artillery officer on service in the country overrun by Garibaldi and his franc-tireurs. There the character of the country, the comparative weakness of the German force, the comparative audacity of the French irregulars, have more than once resulted lately in surprises of out-lying parties of the landwehr. The battery to which the writer is attached seems to have been flying about the country in search of a foe who shelters in the vast forests and chooses his own time for fighting. The success with which he carries out his special form of warfare seems his chief crime in the eyes of the enemy. We are not surprised at the writer's intense irritation. He talks of being on duty from four in the morning to six or seven in the evening; labouring through snow, with feet frozen to the stirrups, with rigged clothes, fur boots, and a piece of frozen bread for all provision. The men opposed to him are not only franc-tireurs, but in a great measure Italian franc-tireurs, whom he holds to have no business there, and corps which give themselves such ostentatiously offensive names as the "Avengers." Nor can we wonder that he talks of a life-and-death struggle with no quarter given when they have the fortune to meet Garibaldi in a pitched battle. Yet, all allowances made, what must be the growing feeling in the German ranks and the German homes when, in an affectionate letter to his home circle, interspersed everywhere with "dear parents," a man parades in the most natural manner in the world all that are at best and at the most favourable point of view the atrocious necessities of war—when he indulges in threats that no necessity can justify. Menotti Garibaldi, with 3,000 the number he gives—surprises a village. The men—German officers are said to have been found with throats cut. Thirty men from these "robber-bands" are caught, not "red hand," but elsewhere and some days after compelled to dig their own graves, shot off hand, and flung into them. In another village a requisition party was surprised and suffered considerably. The Germans detached an avenging force they marched fifteen of the leading inhabitants of the village prisoners, and drew off that the place might be reduced to ashes. The French bands suddenly appeared in force, and the Germans had to

retire before their superior numbers. To-morrow, the writer promises for the comfort of his "dear parents," that they will be back there in sufficient force, when, to borrow his own words, only the babies in the cradle will be spared, every one else who can even carry a stick shall be shot.

The following carefully considered remarks about the siege of Paris, are taken from the *Pall Mall Gazette*:

The investment began on September 19, exactly four months ago to-day. On the following day General Ducrot, who commanded the regular troops in Paris, made a sortie with three divisions in the direction of Clamart, and lost seven guns and 3,000 prisoners. This was followed by similar sorties on the 23rd and 30th of September, 13th and 21st of October, all of which resulted in considerable loss to the French without other advantages than, perhaps, accustoming the young troops to the enemy's fire. On the 28th another sortie was made against Le Bourget with better success; the village was taken and held for two days; but on the 30th the second division of the Prussian guards—thirteen battalions, then less than 10,000 men—retook the village. The French had evidently made very poor use of the two days, during which they might have covered the massively built village into a fortress, and neglected to keep reserves at hand to support the defenders in time, otherwise such a moderate force could not have wrested the place from them.

After this effort there followed a month of quietness. Trochu evidently intended to improve the drill and discipline of his men before again risking great sorties, and very properly so. But, at the same time, he neglected to carry on that war of outpost, reconnaissance and patrol, of ambushes and surprises, which is now the regular occupation of the men on the French front round Paris—a kind of warfare then which none is more adapted to give young troops confidence in their officers and in themselves, and the habit of meeting the enemy with composure. Troops which have found out that in small bodies, in single sections, half companies or companies, they can surprise, defeat, or take prisoners similar small bodies of the enemy will soon learn to meet him battalion against battalion. Besides, they will thus learn what outpost duty really is, which many of them appeared to be ignorant of as late as December.

On the 28th of November, at last, was inaugurated that series of sorties which culminated in the grand sortie of the 30th of November across the Marne, and the advances of the whole eastern front of Paris. On the 2nd of December the Germans retook Bré and part of Champigne, and on the following day the French recrossed the Marne. As an attempt to break through the entrenched lines of circumvallation which the besiegers had thrown up, the attack completely failed; it had been carried out without the necessary energy. But it left in the hands of the French a considerable portion of hitherto debatable ground in front of their lines. A strip of ground about two miles in width, from Drancy to the Marne, near Neuilly, came into the Prussian's hands, a country completely commanded by the fire of the forts, covered with massively built villages, castles of defence, and possessing a fresh commanding position in the plateau of Avron. Here, then, was a chance of permanently enlarging the role of defence; from this ground, once well secured, a further advance might have been attempted, and either the line of the besiegers so much "bulged in" that a successful attack on their lines became possible, or that, by concentrating a strong force here, they were compelled to weaken their lines at other points, and thus facilitate a French attack. Well, this ground remained in the hands of the French for a full month. The Germans were compelled to erect siege batteries against Avron, and yet two days' fire from these batteries sufficed to drive the French from it; and Avron once lost, the other positions were also abandoned. Fresh attacks had indeed been made on the whole north-east and east front on the 21st; Le Bourget was left captured, Maison Blanche and Ville Evrard were taken; but all this vantage-ground was lost again the same night. The troops were left on the ground outside the forts, where they bivouacked at a temperature varying from nine to twenty-one degrees below freezing point, and were at last withdrawn under shelter because they naturally could not stand the exposure. The whole of this episode is more characteristic than any other of the want of decision and energy—the *mollesse*, we might almost say the *drowsiness*—with which this defence of Paris is conducted.

The Avron incident at last induced the Prussians to turn the investment into a real siege, and to make use of the siege artillery which, for unforeseen causes, had been provided. On the 30th of December the regular bombardment of the north-eastern and eastern forts commenced; on the 5th of January that of the southern forts. But have been continued without interruption, and of late have been accompanied by a bombardment of the town itself, which is a witness piece of cruelty. Nobody knows better than the staff at Versailles, and nobody has caused it oftener to be asserted in the press, that the bombardment of a town as extensive as Paris cannot hasten its surrender by one moment. The cannonade of the forts is being followed up by the opening of regular parallels, at least against Issy; we hear of the guns being moved into batteries nearer to the forts, and unless the defence acts on the offensive more unhesitatingly than hitherto, we may soon hear of actual damage being done to one or more forts.

Trochu, however, continues in his inactivity, masterly or otherwise. The few sorties made during the last few days appear to have been but too "platonically" as Trochu's accuser in the *Siech* calls the whole of them. We are told the soldiers refused to follow their officers. If so, this proves nothing but that they have lost all confidence in the supreme direction. And, indeed, we cannot resist the conclusion, that a change in the chief command of Paris has become a necessity. There is an indecision, a lethargy, a want of sustained energy in all the proceedings of this defence which cannot entirely be laid to the charge of the quality of the troops. That the positions held for a month, during which there occurred only about ten days of severe frost, were not properly entrenched, cannot be blamed upon any one but Trochu, whose business it was to see to its being done. And that month, too, was the critical point of the siege; at its close the question was to be decided which party, besiegers or besieged, would gain ground. Inactivity and indecision, not of the troops but of the commander-in-chief, have turned the scale against the besieged.

A correspondent writing from Paris on the 20th, gives the following account of the great sortie.—On the evening of Wednesday, the 18th, General Trochu left the Louvre for the citadel of Mont Valerien, from which as a central point, the coming operations were to be directed by him in person. They were to be entrusted to three different corps d'armee, under the commands respectively of Generals Vinoy, Belleme, and Ducrot, all of whom stopped at Mont Valerien, and were closeted with the Governor the night before the action. To Vinoy, a capable officer, was confided the conduct of the attack on the left, which was to be directed on Montretout from the vicinity of the Versailles railway; to Belleme, on the centre, starting from Courbevoie to the right rear of Mont Valerien as seen from Paris; and to Ducrot that on the right, towards Boull. Upwards of 100,000 troops, embracing the three sections of the service—Reguliers, Mobilis, and National Guards—aided by a strong artillery—300 guns—were comprised in the three corps d'armee. The line of front did not extend, as will be seen by referring to the map, quite four English miles across. The men of the National Guard were kept under arms