

General Intelligence.

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AUSTRIA.—The Prince Regent of Prussia arrived at Toplitz on the evening of the 23th, and was received at the railway terminus by the Emperor of Austria. Baron Von Werther, the Prussian Ambassador at Vienna, and other diplomatists, were present.

The Paris *Pays* gives a report that a treaty between Austria and Prussia preceded the conference at Toplitz.

Belgium.—The Belgian Chamber of Deputies have presented an address to the King, congratulating him upon the completion of the twenty-ninth year of his reign. The address attracted attention from the fact that it condemns, in strong terms, the aggressive policy of France, and indirectly appeals to Europe for protection against French designs. The address was adopted unanimously and enthusiastically.

FRANCE.—Letters from Paris state that Lord Palmerston's speech on the national defence had created great sensation. Some writers go so far as to say there was serious alarm regarding the maintenance of peace between the two nations. The Emperor, at the eleventh hour, put off his contemplated visit to the camp at Chalons.

The Bourse had been depressed, but on the 23th there was a partial recovery, rents closing at 68½.

A correspondent of the London *Herald* states that all the naval officers on furlough have been ordered to report themselves without delay.

The Naval Reserve, called out by the French fleet in the Mediterranean, is to be twenty sail of the line. Military preparations are going on unflaggingly. The Syrian expedition is stated to 25,000 men, besides artillery and cavalry.

Rome.—Letters from Rome say that the Pope refuses to adopt any measures recommended by the French Ambassador, and declares, if the proposed changes are forced upon him, he will abandon his States.

Fears are entertained that Garibaldi might suddenly appear on Papal territory.

NAPLES AND SICILY.—Naples has ordered the withdrawal of all her troops from Sicily. Garibaldi has captured Melazzo.

The King of Sardinia has received the Neapolitan Ambassadors, and it is reported that the Sardinian Government has consented to support, by its influence, Garibaldi's proposal for a six months' truce between Naples and him. The King had resolved to send an autograph letter to Garibaldi, requesting him not to attack the continental possessions of the King of Naples. The London *Times*, in alluding to this attempted armistice, says, "Garibaldi is not a man to retrace his steps, and it is generally believed that the King of Naples will, before many weeks, increase his list of exiled Italian princes."

The *Opinion Nationale* has received by telegraph the following important news from Messina, under date of July 13:—(On the 14th, Garibaldi, at the head of 3,000 men, effected a junction with Medici. On the next day, the 15th, General Bosco, with 4,000 men and three guns, sallied forth from Messina, marching in the direction of Barcellona. A battle and an attack on Messina seem, therefore, imminent. The French consulate at Messina is crowded with people, who ask to take refuge on board the steam-frigate *Decartes*. The Consul has protested against any bombardment of the town until sufficient time has elapsed for foreigners to leave it.

The Naples correspondence of the *Press* says that when the *Vulcano* deserted, the King's ships refused to go in pursuit of her.

The official *Journal* of Sicily, of the 4th ult., publishes a private letter, which has fallen into the hands of the Government, addressed by the Pope to Monsignor Papardo, Bishop of Sinope, in *partibus*, and apostolical administrator of the Church of Messina. The *Journal*, after denouncing the tone of this letter in the strongest terms, as "insulting to the cause of Christ," adds:—In Sicily, at the time of her revolution of the Vespers, five centuries ago, a similar misuse of Christian language proved useless to the predecessors of the present Pontiff. Sicily prostrates herself before the altar with the faith of her fathers, not only to derive from it the sacred virtue of magnanimous sacrifices, but sentiments of patriotism and the love of liberty.

HUNGARY.—On the occasion of a torch-light procession for the Superintendent Szakacs, at Pesth, on the 20th ult., which had been arranged notwithstanding its prohibition by the police, a crowd assembled. It was dispersed by the interference of the military. Several arrests were made, but no person wounded. Tranquility was restored before midnight.

SYRIA.—Mail advices from Syria are to July 7th. The state of affairs is still serious. The Druses and Bedouins, in returning to Kouran, passed through Damascus, and proposed a general massacre of Christians to Abdel Kader, who refused to countenance it. The inhabitants, however, became accomplices in the murders of the Christians which took place. It is also confirmed that some Turkish soldiers assisted the assassins.—Notwithstanding the rumoured protest of the Porte, preparations for the expedition were progressing in France on a grand scale.—It is asserted by the Paris *Constitutionnel* that a perfectly good understanding prevailed on the question between France and England; but the Paris correspondent of the London *Times* positively asserts that there is no such thing as perfect accord. France demanded to act in the East as the delegate of all the Great Powers. England offered no opposition to delegated action, provided Austria was to have part in it; and to this France, probably at the instigation of Russia, demurred.—The order for the embarkation of French troops was suspended for the present.—Two Sardinian war vessels were sent to the coast of Syria.—It is reported that the Viceroy of Egypt had placed troops at the disposal of the Sultan, to punish the Druses.—Russian letters say that great excitement prevailed against the Turks, on account of the massacres.—The Paris *Constitutionnel* says the expedition prepared by France will, as a matter of necessity, be carried out, and an early departure may be expected. The part of France will be rather that of occupation than intervention.

By the "AUSTRALASIAN."—The *Moniteur* says that letters from Beyrout contain details respecting the horrible massacres at Dheir-el-Kamar, and pointing out the odious conduct of the Turkish authorities and of the

Governor of Beyrout. Eleven thousand French troops have gone to Syria, together with 2,500 English troops, and a fleet of ships were also going. Abdel Kader is spoken of as Governor of Syria. A reported official telegram announces the conclusion of the treaty between the Maronites and the Druses, but it lacks confirmation.

THE MASSACRE IN SYRIA.

One of these terrible civil conflagrations which from time to time desolate the provinces of Western Asia has broken out, and thousands of human beings have been ruthlessly slaughtered. The papers have given the harrowing details, and we have reason to believe that the full extent of the mischief is not even yet understood. The districts lying between the mountains of Lebanon and the Mediterranean are inhabited chiefly by the Druses and the Maronites. The Druses mostly occupy the southern, and the Maronites the northern portions of this territory. The Druses are a brave and hardy race of mountaineers, and are supposed to be about a hundred thousand in number. They are represented as a cunning and crafty people, hospitable in their habits, but very clannish. On many accounts they are a remarkable race; but little is known of their origin, and not much of their religion. So reserved are they on this latter point, that no one has been able to ascertain precisely what they believe. Such of their books as have fallen into the hands of Europeans throw very little light upon the subject. They are said to be Monotheists, and to believe in the transmigration of souls. The mysteries of their creed are only divulged to their Akals or wise men, who are not numerous; the immense majority belong to the Djehhals or ignorant men, who know nothing of their religion and attend no place of worship, but pay great reverence to the Akals. These latter meet on stated occasions, in a simple building called a khalond, which is usually erected upon an eminence; what rites are then and there performed is unknown, but it is said that they worship the image of a calf. In all probability their religion is a compound of Judaism, Christianity, Paganism, and Mahomedanism. This strange and wild tribe now suddenly appears upon the stage, and in the spirit of their traditional hatred of the Christian name, carry slaughter and destruction wherever they go. Well armed and fierce, accompanied by Kurds and other savages, and connived at by some of the Turkish authorities, the Druses have committed crimes which outrage humanity. The Maronites, the chief sufferers in this catastrophe, probably amount to two hundred thousand, or to twice the number of their enemies. In appearance, habits, and dress, the Maronites resemble the Arabs, and speak their language, except in their religious services, in which they still use the Syriac. Although descended from the ancient Syrians, they acknowledge the Pope, and of all Papists are regarded as the most bigoted and fanatical. Their adhesion to Rome is not very ancient, and they are permitted to have a separate Church establishment, and to retain various rites and doctrines which differ from those of the Latin Churches. For example, the clergy are allowed to marry before they are ordained, and they have a patriarch of their own. They appear to be characterized by a certain spirit of independence and courage, but they are for the most part very ignorant and superstitious.

Formerly the Druses were the most powerful, but the accession of some of the leading men to the Maronites turned the scale, and for some time these have gained the ascendancy in various ways. The rivalry and jealousy of these tribes seems not to have been distasteful to their Turkish masters, who have taken advantage of the circumstance to keep them both under subjection. Had they been united against their Mahomedan lords, they might perhaps ere this have successfully asserted their independence. But their old feuds have been cherished, and they have come into collision in a terrible manner. It would seem as if the Druses had determined for some cause to avenge themselves upon their neighbors, and that their sanguinary invasion was unexpected and unprepared for. In their fury the destroyers have respected neither sex nor age, and delicate women, feeble infants, and decrepit old men have perished at their hand. Not only the Maronites, but members of the Greek Church, of the Latin Church, and others have more or less suffered. "At Sidon and at Dheir-el-Kamar the Protestant Missionaries were refused guards for their houses, and at both places the Turkish troops and authorities either directly took part against, or refused to defend, the Christians." It is painfully evident that the Turkish Government are verily guilty in this matter; and one writer says they "have called into being a devil which they cannot now get rid of. In their fanatical haste to strike a blow at, and, if possible, crush for ever, the Christian population of Lebanon, they invoked secretly the help of the Druses, knowing that they could not themselves act openly as they wished, having the eyes of Europe upon them."

So such an extent has this storm raged, that hundreds of villages and some towns have been destroyed, and many thousands of the population who have escaped the sword, are wandering without food or shelter. At Zahleh, the last stronghold of the Christians, a thousand were murdered. At Beyrout a positive panic prevailed, and the Christian population was fleeing in every direction. The population of Aleppo was said to be in a state of consternation, and the terror had reached Jerusalem itself. In Damascus five hundred Christians had been butchered. The full tide of misery seems to have set in upon this unhappy land, and God only knows how or when it will end.

The efforts of Romish and Protestant missionaries have produced a feeling of suspicion in the minds of Mahomedans especially, who are enraged at the progress of the Gospel. They, moreover, view with jealousy the rising and spreading influence of Christian powers in those countries where they were once, or are now, supreme. They are not disposed to yield without a struggle; and Jeddo, Cawnporo, and Zahleh, all breathe the same spirit and tell the same sad tale. Of all these outbursts the last is beyond dispute the most serious and ominous. It affects the members of so many Churches, and the subjects of so many countries, that nearly all the great Christian powers are interested. England, France, Russia, and Austria are alike affected, and unanimously interfere. America is perhaps too distant to take active steps. It is a grave affair, and none can tell to what it may grow. If the Christian Governments should proclaim the Turkish "sick man" unfit to govern countries which he cannot or will not control, a new crusade may wrest the realms of Western Asia from his grasp, and we may live to see the kingdom of Solomon under Christian sway. We fear to anticipate,