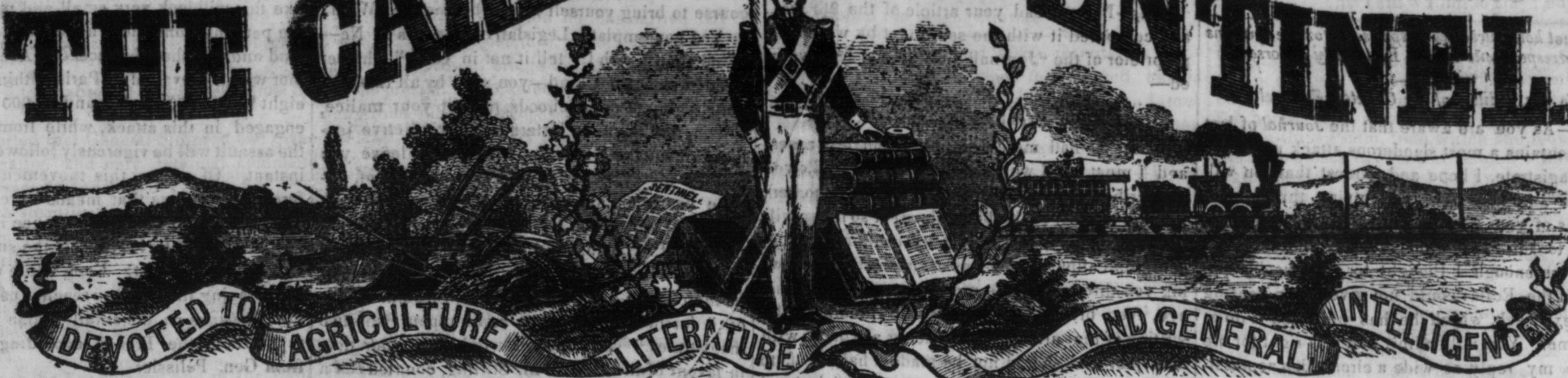


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RETROSPECT OF THE WAR.

[From the Colonial Presbyterian.]

After a long and happy peace the great powers of Europe are now waging a sanguinary and costly war. Since the passage of the Pruth, and the occupation of the Principalities, in July, 1853, more than half a million of lives have been sacrificed, and untold treasures squandered. During the short intervening period great battles have been fought, with varying success and disaster.—On 4th Oct., 1853, war was declared. Omar Pasha then occupied the line of the Danube, and successfully defended the Balkan. All eyes for months were turned to the gallant resistance of the Turks behind the entrenchments of Kalafat, and with surprise and admiration it was seen that Turkey was not yet effete. With the probability however, of a defeat of the Turkish army in prospect, which would have laid Bulgaria and Roumelia open to the Russians, it was necessary that something should be done, not merely to protect Constantinople, but to support the Allied fleets which had entered the Black Sea on the 5th Jan. The possibility of the seizure of the fortifications on the Dardanelles by Russia was a sufficient reason why the approaches to the seat of War should be protected, and the future line of operations covered from the possibility of attack. With this view works were erected to protect the entrance to the Dardanelles. The first divisions of the French and English armies landed at Gallipoli in March and April 1854. Meanwhile, Silistria was successfully defended by the Turks. The attacks on its earthen fortifications costing the Russians 18,000 men, with the destruction of their siege works. Prince Paskiewitch was compelled to raise the siege and retire behind the Pruth, thus changing the whole conduct of the war.

Up to this period the allied armies of France and England had been merely spectators of the conflict. It was considered inglorious, however useful their moral support may have been, thus to remain inactive. Sebastopol, with its strong fortresses, being the key of the Russian power in the Black Sea—ensconced behind with her fleet might at any time place Constantinople in her hands in the absence of the navies of France and England—all eyes were turned to the Crimea as the future scene of conflict. From Varna, on flat bottom boats, 37,000 English, and 23,000 French were landed on the 14th day of September last, who, six days after, defeated the whole force of Prince Menschikoff, in a position chosen, with the highest military skill. In three hours the heights of Alma, defended by batteries of heavy guns, were carried by the Allies, and it was already supposed that Sebastopol was as good as taken. The death of the French General occurring about this time retarded operations, and instead of an immediate attack the place was regularly invested. The rocky nature of the ground prevented progress. New works were opened on both sides—Sebastopol was bombarded without effect—the battles of Balacklava and Inkermans were fought. Then came Cholera, and winter, with its frosts and snows, and storms, and disasters, revealing the incapacity of rulers, presenting all the horrors which in measure always attend on war—leaving the allied army a mere skeleton,—the sword having slain its thousands, while famine and disease had slain their tens of thousands. In this state the remains of the noble army which a few months previously had left France, and England were required to work in the trenches, amid the intense cold of a Crimean winter, and to sustain assault after assault almost nightly made from the strong frowning fortress of Sebas-

topol. But spring came, and with it all the energies of the combatants were put forth—reinforcements raising the amount of the allied armies, including the Turks, to some 225,000 men were sent forward—Sebastopol was again and again bombarded—an assault was attempted and failed—and still after being now ten months besieged it stands a monument of strength. It may, indeed, be near its fall, but from day to day we have waited to hear the news of its ruin and so long in vain, that our faith in the capacities of England and France is beginning to fail—and we almost begin to fear that the summer may pass, the autumn glide away, and winter again visit us with the batteries of Sebastopol still frowning in sullen defiance upon the power of France and England.

Meanwhile, many of the great actors in the conflict are passing away. General St. Arnaud died after the first successes. Lord Raglan is now no more. Many a gallant officer has accompanied the tens of thousands who have passed to their last account. Other men, let us hope, of greater capacity fill the places of the dead—and the superseded. We trust that Pelissier and Simpson will fulfil the hopes entertained of their genius and prowess. Our armies may be courageous as lions, ready to dare and do what would be to others impossible, yet will their noble valor be thrown away, and their valuable blood shed in vain without that presiding genius which is always required to direct enterprises of such magnitude as that in which the Allies are now engaged.

The allies are engaged in an enterprise from which they cannot go back. The cause which induced its beginning still compels its continuance. It is no religious war in which the cross anomalously fights against itself for the present. The question is not simply shall Turkey be permitted to exist; but it is whether the great barrier to the preponderance of Russian power in Europe shall be taken away. Once possessed of Constantinople and the Black Sea, Russia might in a short time become as great a naval power as Great Britain. With her immense territories, and such a navy, there would be nothing to hinder her from becoming the head of a universal empire, of which France and England should be mere Provinces. The contest now waging is for the future liberties of Europe. No nice point of honour, no piece of fertile or barren territory, no religious question forms the ground of this contest, but it is, shall Europe, in time, and ere it be too late, resist the encroachments, which are meant by Russia to subvert the purposes of the subjugation of the Old world under her sway—perhaps also her ambition extends even to the westward, so far as is known by the nation of "the stripes and stars" would somewhat modify that unaccountable exultation which the "sons of Freedom" *par excellence* manifest when they hear of Russian success, and British failure. We do not think, at any rate, that it speaks well for our brother Jonathan that he is sometimes found indulging in the luxury of joy over the defeat of his friends who are fighting for what he professes to hold so dear. We sometimes indeed suspect that he is not so fond of liberty as he professes—that is for others. For himself it is well—but for negroes and the future of Europe—that is quite another affair. We would, however, put it to the Editors of newspapers in the United States who are guilty of such joy whether it would be better for the sake of appearances, and for the character of their country that they should conceal their exultation in the cause of the despot. If not, we shall begin to suspect brother Jonathan of tyranny, and

notwithstanding fourth of July celebrations, that he has sadly degenerated in principle since the days of Washington and Bunker's Hill. We might pardon an Irish papist for enmity to the British crown,—though, as was said to one who spoke hard against Purgatory—he may have gone further and fared worse—but that a true born American—that the Editor of the Tribune should, whether seduced by the almighty dollar, or other cause exult in the humiliation of Father-land is unaccountable from the perversity of the disposition displayed.

What is to be the result of the present contest,—how long the struggle is to continue—at what cost of men and treasure, are questions which we cannot solve. The prophecy of Ezekiel, regarding the Prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubai is to our vision too obscure to serve for any decisive announcement as to the issue of this particular war, though, without doubt, it shall all be fulfilled. We consider it better to wait the course of events, than gain the popularity of predicting the true or incur the ridicule of propounding what a few weeks may shew to be false. We take the advice of the angel to Daniel, when he would know the end of these things, "Go thy way Daniel for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end." J. B.

The *Constitutionnel* of the 14th contains a letter from the Crimea, truly interesting, and which we therefore give nearly entirely. The opinion of many military gentlemen is that these letters, if they are not actually written by General Regnault de St. Jean d'Angely, are at all events the works of those immediately around him, and are as it were inspired by him. Some of them are affirmed to be submitted to the Emperor, and even here and there slightly altered before publication; but this is admitted to be the case only on particular occasions. They are in general about the best French correspondence from the seat of war. The last letter is dated 'Camp before Sebastopol, 6th June,' and is as follows:—

"The newspapers we received from France within the last short time fill us with astonishment. They are full of plans of campaigns which we are not dreaming of here, and they interpret the various movements of the troops in a way that may give rise to false ideas in their reader's minds, and awake premature hopes that must afterwards turn to severe disappointments. We read incessantly of a campaign into the interior of the Crimea—of onward marches which are to force the Russians into a battle in the open country—and of attempts to cut off the communications between Sebastopol and Simpheropol, and to complete the investment of the fortress. The demonstration we made towards the Tchernaya, and the encampments we took on that river's bank, might naturally appear a commencement of the execution of the above plan, and may have contributed to accredit erroneous ideas. Let us return, however to the truth, which it is important to establish in such a manner as not to allow a misrepresentation of what was actually going on before Sebastopol. Since the day when General Pelissier took the command of the army, his ideas have left no room for a doubt. He has himself declared, in the most explicit way, that in his mind the siege must be followed up, and nothing but the siege only; that matters were too far advanced for us now to discontinue or even slacken our attacks; and that the best plan by much was to pursue the work already begun with invincible obstinacy. The newspapers we receive make the idea of a field campaign in the Crimea date from the 20th of May, that being, on the contrary, the date at which in fact every notion of the kind was put off, if not abandoned. The Kertch

expedition even was a mere accidental diversion, the results whereof were excellent, but which never, for as much as we in the army can tell, formed part of an entire plan of operations. If the attack of the 18th had succeeded, it is more than probable that simultaneous efforts would have been instantly directed against the Central and the Mast Bastions, and that also the observation corps of General Bosquet would have been changed to operate a diversion towards the Mackenzie platform, in order to reach the upper line of the Belbek.—We should then have recommenced executing the plan generally attributed to General Canrobert, but thought by General Pelissier to be premature, so long as, by hard knocks, the Mamelon, Vert and Malakoff Tower were not reduced and secured. I pass over all the eternal controversies to which in the camp the various plans of campaign, and movements executed or projected, merely give rise. This is without interest. * * * We have not lost a foot of the ground we conquered on the 7th June, nor has the enemy made even an attempt to retake it. Since then, on the 21st, Gen. Bosquet has been reinstated in the command of his old attacking columns. The siege has returned completely to its old position, unable to proceed a step forward now, unless by a positive assault. On the right hand the works are now in progress. Conferences take place between the different generals. Pending more definite operations, we make our road from the Mamelon Vert towards Malakoff, we prepare the batteries at the Ouvrages Blancs, and one at the point of Careening Bay, which will, it is to be hoped, keep the Russian steamers at a distance, and worry the Russian fleet; if it does not even sink some ships for them. This battery is however said to be of a most difficult execution. On their side the Russians are not inactive. You know how they work and dig the ground. They are constructing a *reduit* in front of the spot where our new battery is to be, and are solidifying all their works, establishing fresh defences, and, in a word, preparing every means of resistance. The Russian divisions on guard upon this side of the town were changed four days before the attack, and replaced by troops that had passed three months in refreshing and strengthening themselves on the Bank of Belbek. All our severely wounded are now sent to Constantinople; constant reinforcements arrive from France and Algeria. The health of the army, which had begun to cause some alarm on account of the appearance of numerous cases of cholera, has been most happily modified, and it is to be hoped this improvement will continue.—Do not forget either that we have here soldiers whose devotion, courage and patience are truly admirable. Do not, therefore, in France give way to discouragement. We have not succeeded; we shall be luckier another time. But I beseech you do not believe in the vast strategic movements that are invented on all sides. The Turks and Sardinians are reposing themselves in a charming country; the French cavalry is recruiting its horses.—From time to time you will hear of a slight diversion, but do not for that believe in any serious change. The siege is still the great pre-occupation of all the generals-in-chief; we could not march onward without leaving behind a very strong army corps to watch over the works, and this presents immense difficulties.

A Temperance Lecturer, descending of the essential and purifying qualities of cold water, remarked, as a knock down argument, that "when the world became so corrupt that the Lord could do nothing else with it, he was obliged to give it a thorough soaking in cold water." "Yes," replied a wag, "but it killed every damned sinner on the face of the earth."