

follow answered, 'I reckon I've paid my place. I'll smoke as much as I darn please, and all Hell sha'n't stop me no how.' With that he looked dangerous, and rolled his eyes round as fiercely as a rattlesnake. It was evident he had no objection to a quarrel, and that, if it occurred, it was likely to lead to a deadly struggle. The young man who had spoken to him shrank back and was silent. Clay felt his gallantry aroused. He considered for a moment whether he should interfere, but experienced a natural reluctance to draw upon himself the brutal violence of his gigantic adversary. In that lawless country, he knew his life might be sacrificed unavenged. He knew himself physically unequal to the contest, and he thought, after all, it was not his business Quixotically to take up another man's quarrel. Feeling pity for the insulted, and disgust towards the insulter, he determined to take no notice; when, very quietly indeed, the cloaked figure in the corner assumed an upright position, and the mantle was suffered to fall from it without effort or excitement. The small but sinewy frame of a man, plainly dressed in a tight-buttoned frock-coat, with nothing remarkable about his appearance, was seen, and a pair of bright grey eyes sought the fierce optics of the ferocious Kentuckian. Without a word, this 'lay figure' passed his hand under his collar at the back of his neck, and slowly and deliberately pulled forth a long, extremely long, and glittering knife from its sheath in that singular place. 'Stranger,' he said, 'my name is Colonel James Bowie, well known in Arkansas and Louisiana, and if you don't put that cigar out of the window in a quarter of a minute, I'll put this knife through your bowels, as sure as death.' Clay said he never forgot in after life the expression of the Colonel's eyes at that moment. The predominant impression made upon him was the certainty of the threat being fulfilled, and apparently the same conviction impressed itself ere long upon the offender. During two or three seconds his eye met that of Bowie. His was the weaker, and he quailed. With a curse, he tore the cigar from between his teeth, and flung it, scowling but downcast, out of the coach window. Upon this, Colonel James Bowie as deliberately replaced his long knife in its eccentric hiding place, and, without saying a word to any one else, or even vouchsafing a glance at any one, refolded his cloak around him, and did not utter another syllable to the end of the journey.—*New Quarterly Review.*

MANCHESTER MEN AT THEIR BOOKS.

WHAT NOW, is the kind of reading favoured by these people? My Lord Tomnoddy, lounging on the club sofa, refuses to believe it, when he is told that these brave people, meaning to work with their heads as well as their hands, use books that are taken by them from the Manchester Free Lending Library in the proportions following:—In literature—including poetry and fiction, essays, literary history, and encyclopædias—each volume is read, on an average, fifteen times a year. Works upon theology and philosophy are next in request; in that class each work has been read, on an average, nine times. In history and biography every work has had an average of eight readers; the scientific works have had an average of seven reading species; and each work on law, politics, or commerce may, in the same way, be said to have been borrowed twice. Scientific and other books borrowed by working men, that bear upon their trades, are studied carefully, epitomes are sometimes made by them at home; and one or two have been, or are being, bodily copied into household manuscript. There is a fine earnestness about all this.

In a word, the imagination, even in Manchester, refuses to be crushed. The pleasure book most read during the first six months after the library opened was the Arabian Nights. The weary warehousemen, mill hands, and shopkeepers spent their evenings with Haroun al Raschid. The next best books for them, after the Arabian Nights, appear to have been Ivanhoe, Robinson Crusoe, and the Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders. The historical works most favored have been those most dealing in adventure and excitement. Histories of Napoleon have been somewhat more in demand than even the Arabian Nights. Lives of Wellington and Nelson were, respectively, about half as much in request, but very popular,—slightly more popular indeed, than that very well read book of amusement, Gulliver's travels. Narratives of the battle of Waterloo were in yet greater demand, though still in less request than accounts of Napoleon. Next in popularity to the lives of Napoleon—and there is one man in Manchester who has even read Alison's History straight through—is a volume entitled Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea. That volume was issued 215 times in six months. Almost equally popular was Mr Cumming's account of his hunting adventures among lions and hippopotamuses in South Africa. Less in request but much demanded—next, in fact, in the order of popularity amongst books of this class—have been Macaulay's History, Layard's Nineveh, and Two Years before the Mast.

The Politician.

THE BRITISH PRESS.

From the London Times.

PERSIA.

The most important intelligence, however, which we have received from the East to-day concerns our relations with Persia. A quarrel had arisen between the British Chargé d'Affaires at Teheran and the Persian Court with reference to the affairs of one HADJI ABDUL KERIM, a native of Candahar, protected by the British Government. This person, who is a man of great wealth, has demands upon the Persian Government, on the other hand, claimed him as its own subject, liable to all such exactions as it might please the SHAH to put upon him, and at length refused with so much insolence to grant the redress which the case required, that the British Chargé d'Affaires, Mr Taylor Thompson, was compelled to suspend diplomatic relations with the Ministers of the Shah. The effect of this spirited measure was prompt and effectual. Within a very short time the Persian Government showed its readiness to comply with his demands, and to restore friendly relations with England. The tables were completely turned on Prince Dolgorouki, the Russian Minister, and although he threatened the Shah of Persia with the supreme displeasure of the Czar, his master, and exerted every means to restore Russian influence the British Chargé d'Affaires remains, for the present, master of the field. Mr Thompson appears to deserve great credit for his firm and judicious conduct in this emergency, but the effects were not confined to our own relations with Persia. Difficulties had arisen, as is well known, between that country and Turkey; the two States were on the brink of war, and it was said that Persian troops were preparing to march under a Russian officer to attack the Turks in Armenia. Fortunately, the settlement of the dispute with England seems to have included an arrangement with the Porte for the Turkish Minister at Teheran has received positive assurances from the Sudder Azim, or First Minister of the Shah that no movements of troops hostile to the Ottoman empire will be made by Persia, and that the forces concentrated in the northern provinces of the kingdom are placed there solely to watch the progress of events, and to prevent internal disturbance. Thus far, then, the Russian Government has failed in its designs upon Persia, and in the attempt to convert that country into a source of annoyance to the British empire in India, or of additional danger to Turkey. A fresh Russian mission is said to be on its way to Teheran, and it will, no doubt, require incessant vigilance to resist the effect of all the bribes and intimidation at its disposal; but upon the whole, the Persians seem to be aware that they have more both to hope and to fear from England than from any Northern Power, and the moment would be well chosen to give greater importance to the British mission in that country, where the embassies sent in the early part of this century laid the foundation of a long and useful alliance. For the present, however, the difficulties which seemed to threaten us in that quarter are at an end.

From the London Morning Chronicle.

THE WAR IN THE EAST.

A telegraph despatch from Vienna, which we publish elsewhere, affords a significant intimation of the mode in which the Czar had received the notification of the French and English governments that their fleets had been ordered to occupy the Black Sea.—Advices have reached the Austrian capital from St. Petersburg, of the 8th inst., announcing preliminary indications of a rupture with the Western Powers, and of the recall of the imperial ambassadors from Paris and London; and as it was known that the official announcement of the intended entry of the fleets into the Euxine would reach the Russian capital in the course of the first week of January, it is obvious that the warlike disposition stated to be displayed at St. Petersburg is the direct result of the decisive step taken by the allies. There can, therefore, be little doubt that the Emperor, after having treated the remonstrances of united Europe with contempt, has definitively resolved on defying the arms of England and France, and that he will resent the firm and vigorous attitude of the Western Powers by a direct rupture, if not by a declaration of war. In the meanwhile, the progress of events in the principalities is ominously suggestive of the perils which the aggressors' obstinacy and violence are bringing upon himself and on his country. Further information is, no doubt, still necessary, before an accurate estimate can be formed of the probable consequences which may result from the recent operations on the Danube. A despatch of the 15th, from Orsova—a place in the immediate neighbourhood of the scene of action—states that the Russians still occupied their

position at Csitate, within nine or ten miles of Kalafat. Other accounts, however, represent the victory of the Turkish army as already complete; and it is positively stated that, after the last battle, the Russians were in full retreat on Krajova. The apparent discrepancy may not improbably arise from the circumstance that Csitate is not situated on the direct route from Kalafat to Krajova. To arrive at Matzaczey, the retreating army would be compelled to approach Omar Pasha's lines, so as to interpose its main body between the Turks and the position of Csitate. It is at least certain, however, that a heavy blow has been dealt against the invader. An admitted loss of 5,000 killed and wounded implies a still more serious disaster; and it is scarcely possible that the Russian Generals can now think themselves strong enough to attempt to maintain their footing in Lesser Wallachia. The local insurrection will relieve Omar Pasha from the necessity of employing his troops in disquieting the enemy's retreat, but it is not improbable that he may have already taken steps for a second and still more decisive attack. Although, prior to the battle of Csitate, no information from the principalities had been allowed to pass to the west of Vienna, the accounts which have been received from Constantinople, confirmed by fragmentary statements in the German papers, prove that the Ottoman army had, in the middle of December, obtained important successes in the country between the Schyl and the Aluia. According to the Swabian Mercury, as quoted by our Paris correspondent, General Dennenberg's left wing was completely defeated at Karakul—a position the importance of which we have several times pointed out, commanding as it does the communication from Bucharest to Kalafat. This victory, whatever may have been its nature, has been cautiously suppressed by the Russian officials who superintended the transmission of news; but it seems probable that it may have formed an essential part of the series of operations which have ended for the present, in the battle of Csitate. A Turkish detachment occupying Karakul would, as compared with an enemy at Krajova, be not only nearer to Bucharest, but to Widdén also; and it may have been in consequence of this flank movement that General Aurep, inclining to his right, took up his position at Csitate. It is even stated with some probability, that the force which attacked the Russian lines was not drawn from the garrison of Kalafat, but that it was the division which had crossed the Danube at Rakova or Nicopol, and advanced to the scene of action from the south-east. If this conjectural view of the operations should prove to be well founded, the position of the Russian army in Lesser Wallachia must be desperate. Omar Pasha would, in that case, have already placed himself between the enemy and their headquarters at Bucharest; while the Turkish forces at Widdén and Kalafat, no longer compelled to act on the defensive, would be available for a decisive movement, by which the Russians would be enclosed between two fires. By this time, moreover, the Danube may probably be frozen over, so that the Turks can advance or retire at pleasure, without any impediment from the enemy's fortifications on the left bank. There is reason to believe that the Ottoman forces are, on all parts of the line, numerically superior to their opponents; and it does not appear that General Osten-Sacken has yet arrived to restore the balance. Moreover, there is now an uninterrupted passage for reinforcements from Constantinople to Verna. The national enthusiasm cannot fail to be powerfully stimulated by the late brilliant successes, which have proved that Turkish troops are capable of contending, on more than equal terms, with their opponents, and that the generals in command are as skillful in forming their plans as they are daring in carrying them out. Nor must it be forgotten that every advantage which is gained by the Ottoman arms directly contributes, like the decided steps taken by the allied fleets in entering the Black Sea, to strengthen the Sultan's government at home, by allaying popular irritation and restoring public confidence.

We learn from our Constantinople correspondent that, almost simultaneously with the arrival of the orders for the occupation of the Euxine by the fleets of England and France, the late transitory ebullition had completely subsided; and the recent victories in Lesser Wallachia will equally serve to reassure the popular mind and to guarantee the maintenance of tranquillity. Even the most obstinate admirers of Russia may, perhaps, at last comprehend the reasons which prevented the Emperor Nicholas from assailing Turkey in 1848 and 1849. An Army such as that which has defeated the enemy at Olteniza and at Csitate would have been more than competent to turn the fortune of the Hungarian campaign, and to provide an opportunity for a Polish insurrection. It is to her own strength and courage, not to the forbearance of hostile potentates, that Turkey owes her continued existence and her present successes. If the Czar were wise, he would eagerly profit by the moderation of the proposals to

which the Porte assented before it had received tidings of the victories of Kalafat. We published yesterday the modifications introduced at Constantinople into the note prepared by Lord de Redcliffe, and adopted by his colleagues. It is in the amended form that the project has been sanctioned by the Conference at Vienna; but there is no portion of the document, as it stands, which affords any reasonable ground of complaint to Russia. The assent given by the representatives of the Four Powers to the changes suggested by the Turkish Ministry is a sufficient answer to the objections which have been urged in England against a compromise which never purported to be a triumph. It may be true that the restoration of the *status quo ante bellum* is not the most desirable result of all the efforts which have been made by Turkey and her allies; but a state which is unjustly assailed is often content to feel the aggression, without hoping to be compensated for the sacrifices which may have been demanded from it. Every new attempt at negotiation has been professedly a farther extension of the time allowed to the Court of St. Petersburg for the acceptance of the original proposals of the Porte. The more dangerous concessions involved in the first Vienna note have been definitely withdrawn, but England and France have once more induced Turkey to offer all that Russia had, before the mission of Prince Menschikoff, a right to ask. Candid critics of diplomatic transactions will understand that, up to the beginning of December, no basis had been established for a demand of concessions on the part of Russia. The question was one, not of justice, but of strength and success; and it was necessary to limit the punishment of the offender to the failure of the act of violence which had been attempted. The ambassadors, nevertheless, so far consulted the just susceptibility of Turkey as to abstain from urging the literal renewal of the treaties, or the conclusion of a distinct compact with the Five Powers, with reference to the administrative reforms to be introduced. It is now proposed that the renewal of the treaties "shall be with special reference to the integrity and independence of Turkey."

In other words the settlements of Kainardji and of Adrianople are to form the basis of the new arrangement; but the clauses which afforded Russia excuses for repeated vexatious interference are to be modified or omitted. It may be incidentally remarked that none of the diplomatists concerned appear to have thought of the modern heretical doctrine, that treaties can survive a war. The only question is, whether the renewal is allowed to be requisite, shall be absolute or conditional. The changes introduced into the note, though in themselves just and desirable, will certainly not have rendered it more acceptable at St. Petersburg; but it would be an error to suppose that the acceptance or rejection of the project would, in any case, depend on a minute scrutiny of its clauses. The Emperor will desire war or peace as the one or the other may flatter his passions or suit his interests. Every skirmish in which the Turkish troops prove their soldierly qualities—every new step in the steady resistance of the Western Powers to Russian aggrandisement—forms an additional reason for peace; yet it may be overruled by impulses of revenge or ambition. There can now be little doubt that the imperial mind is, for the time, inaccessible to considerations of prudence and wisdom; but it is certain that Russia has no chance of gaining a foot of additional territory in Europe; and the Allied fleets afford a security against the acquisition in Asia of any compensation for the disappointment.

From the London Morning Post.

It appears that at Constantinople, on the entrance of the combined fleets, M. de Bruck and M. de Wildenbruck drew up a written remonstrance with regard to that act of the Western Powers. We have, however, the satisfaction of understanding, we believe on good grounds, that the cabinets of Berlin and Vienna have blamed the indiscretion of their ambassadors, and disavowed the document which their representative have drawn up, and that, whatever representations they may have made in consequence of the movements of the fleets, have been verbal and "official." The signature of a new protocol by the Four Powers, with a full acknowledge of the active measures adopted by England and France, is the best proof of the consistent cooperation of the great state of Europe. There is now no longer time for half measures, and the powers must at once choose the parts they are to play in the event of a war, of which the character will wholly depend upon the German States. We cannot but believe that they will pursue the course which is pointed out to them, not only by right and justice but by a regard for their own safety; for were they to side with Russia, they would have to pay a severe penalty, since they have to pay a severe penalty, since they would, with their own hands, light up the fires of revolution and anarchy. Feelings of mistaken gratitude, or too sanguine friendship, cannot weigh against the terrors of civil