

The Politician,

THE BRITISH PRESS.

From the London Weekly Times.
PROGRESS OF THE WAR.

The French Marshall and the British General commanding in the Crimea have ceased, as far as the public are concerned, to send any reports of their operations. We cannot suppose that the Allied Governments are allowed to suffer from the same destitution of intelligence, and we must surmise that Lord Panmure has discontinued his communications to the newspapers. General della Marmora issued in Sept. an order of the day condemnatory of newspaper correspondents, and warning all persons, military and civilian, attached to his force, that he will severely punish the author of letters to the newspapers should they become known to him. Since then a conference has been held on the subject between Marshall Pelissier and General Simpson, but their determination, if they came to any, has not been made public. As yet, the authorised correspondents of the newspapers have not been ordered out of the camp, and we are not aware that they have been placed under any restrictions. We discussed the relative merits of publicity and secrecy when the question was mooted, at the beginning of the year, and we need not return to the old arguments. Having regard to the immense services rendered by the press in making known the sufferings of our army in the Crimea, during the last winter, we are satisfied that the people of this country will not submit to be cut off from such a trustworthy source of intelligence. Had it remained with the commander-in-chief or the heads of the hospitals, our army might have wasted off the face of the earth, and the public have heard nothing about it until the news arrived of the final catastrophe. It is due to the newspaper exposures that prompt succours were sent out, and that private benevolence came to the aid of official apathy and incapacity. But entire secrecy is simply impossible. If the accredited correspondents of the newspapers were sent away, a flood of letters wanting authority and authentication, would be poured into the journals. Narratives so received would be coloured by private pique, or by sense of personal grievance, and they would have the further disadvantage of being for the most part written from a confined point of view. Is it necessary to ask which class of reports would be more satisfactory to the army and to the public? We can still receive our correspondence by the slow medium of the Mediterranean mail, but Lord Panmure, consults susceptibilities of the commanders by withholding the telegraphic despatches. The last piece of intelligence on the wires, announcing the cavalry engagement near Eusatorin, reached us through the *Moniteur*, and for a week we have not been favoured with a single line explanatory of that occurrence or relating any other. It is not expected or wished that Lord Panmure should make public the plans and intentions of the generals, or any information that could be of use to the enemy; but with this reserve, he ought to give to the country all the despatches he receives. Prince Gortschakoff is more communicative, and the most recent intelligence of the movements of the Allies has come through St. Petersburg. From him we have learned the arrival of the allied fleet before Odessa, but our own Government has done nothing to satisfy the natural anxiety of the public regarding an expedition which may be fraught with most important consequences.

Our letters from the camp came down to the 29th September. From the 9th to the 29th the Allies seem to have rested on their laurels and not to have attempted any serious operation. Whatever may have been the first intention of Prince Gortschakoff—and it is said by spies and deserters that he has made every preparation for a speedy retreat—he seemed bent on maintaining his position. The forts on the north side of Sebastopol harbour have been greatly strengthened. Long lines of earthworks have been thrown up, and sunk guns have been placed in a position to command the Karabelna suburb. Already the Russians had opened on the town, and the French were replying to them with interest from newly-erected mortar batteries. The Russians had the advantage of position, for on the north side the hills are more lofty than on the south, and rise more abruptly from the shore. The French on the other side have superior projectile power, and throw shells from their thirteen-inch mortars into the Star Fort, which crowns the highest ridge of the opposite line of mountain. They cause the enemy no inconsiderable annoyance and damage, while the Russians fire direct into the town it comparatively harmless. This practice will amuse the troops during the winter should no change take place in their position.

The allied army on the line of the Tchernaya has been inactive. The front has been strengthened, and the French have taken possession of the hills of Baidar, from which they have made reconnaissance on the Russian left at Aitodar, but it is believed without gaining much information. They saw picquets of Cossacks, who, according to their usual custom, retired before them, but they were unable to discover the line

which the Russians propose to defend. Our allies, however, were not idle. The country roads never very good, are impassable for heavy artillery in the winter, and the French were constructing a military road to Aitodar, which of course leads to the inference that an advance is contemplated in that direction. We have already noticed the removal of a large body of French troops to Eupatoria, but we are without a scrap of intelligence from that place, beyond Marshal Pelissier's report of a blow inflicted upon the Russian cavalry on the 29th of September. We are still unable to say whether the affair was a battle or a skirmish. Our correspondent in the Crimea mentions a report which goes to confirm our conjecture that the Russians were surprised. He says:—

There is a vague story going about that the French cavalry at Eupatoria, being out on duty lost their way in a fog and wandered about till they came abruptly upon the Russian troops established in their neighbourhood as a corps of observation, and gave them such a fright that they bolted off at once, leaving their stores and quantities of provisions behind them, which were destroyed by the French, who thereupon returned on their way rejoicing. In all our letters an opinion is expressed that the allies will make no attempt to dislodge the Russians this year. The plans of the generals are necessarily kept secret, but there are no appearances of preparations for moving the army. There was in the British camp, for a few days after the 9th of September, a great bustle of requisitions, reports on the capabilities of the Land Transport Corps, orders and counter-orders, which soon ceased, and our men remained where they were. Prince Gortschakoff's telegraphic messages came down to the 8th instant, but he reports no change in the disposition of the allied forces.

We have not changed our opinion of the danger of Prince Gortschakoff's position, although he resolved to hold and defend it. The allies seem to have thrown away one of these golden opportunities which, in war especially, when once lost, can never be regained. They were not prepared for success, and the attention of the generals having been so long concentrated upon a single object, they did not think of looking beyond it. This has been a vice of their tactics throughout the campaign. When the Mamelon hill was taken, a bold push would have carried them into the Malakoff works, which were actually entered by some of the French soldiers; but there were no reserves at hand to support them, and the absence of the military genius which is always ready to seize every advantage cost many thousand of lives on the 18th of June and the 8th September. In like manner they did not expect the speedy evacuation of Southern Sebastopol by Prince Gortschakoff. While he was drawing off his troops they were thinking of a fresh assault on the Redan, and the reduction of the inner defences. It was discovered during the night by the Highlanders that the Redan had been abandoned, but nothing was done on the information, and next morning when the Russian army were seen filing over the narrow bridge, no attempt was made to molest their retreat. The evil of a divided command, productive of hesitation from want of unity in opinion and resolve, is becoming apparent. We cannot doubt that after the fall of Sebastopol the allied commanders determined to attempt the expulsion of the Russians from the Crimea, but while they hesitated about the how, the when, and the where of their advance, the Russians had time to recover from their panic. The Russian general could not have met them with his defeated and dispirited troops, and he took measures for effecting his escape by a speedy retreat. A few days were enough to alter his plans. There are good reasons why he should not retire until compelled by the operations of the allies. So long as the Russians remain strongly posted in the Crimea they support their assertion that southern Sebastopol was abandoned in order that they might obtain a more favourable base of operations. Such was the tale invented by Prince Gortschakoff to revive the spirits of his troops, and by this time we have no doubt that it is believed. Delays have always favoured the Russians. By delay they will secure all the chances to be derived from negotiations during the winter. They will also obtain time for the arrival of fresh troops from the north, and for receiving large reinforcements with which to renew the struggle in the spring, if the allies do not intercept the route from Perekop. Delay has its advantages, but also its disadvantages. The Russians have a long line to guard, and they are threatened in flank and rear. By remaining in the Crimea during the winter they must run considerable risk of being isolated from their reserves outside the peninsula when the season for campaigning commences, while the sea will always remain open to the Allies.

Flour, Corn Meal, &c

JUST RECEIVED per Schooner MARY MARTHA from Quebec:
150 Bbls No. 1 SUPERFINE FLOUR,
100 do CORN MEAL,
15 do CAT MEAL,
12 do MESS PORK,
BURKE & NGONAN,
Quebec, 5th July, 1855.

News of the Week.

CHINA.

Desperate Battle in the China Sea, between the Pirates and the boats from the United States and British Men-of-War—Eight hundred Chinese killed.

From the Hong Kong Friend of China, Aug. 4.

H. M. S. S. Rattler mentioned in our last as having left, with Mr Caldwell on board, on a cruise in search of a fleet of Pirates, supposed by Mr Caldwell to have captured two lorchas and five junks of which he had the conveying in the Steamer Eaglet from Nowchow, returned to port Thursday afternoon. The Rattler went first to Maceao; thence to the mouth of the Broadway; away to the Sam-moon group and back again to Maceao. Information was there received of a piratical fleet being in the vicinity of Tylo.

Thither they proceeded, but in the attempt to overhaul a large junk supposed to be the flagship of a head man of a squadron of seventeen, four other vessels, two of which were the lorchas of the Eaglet's convoy, were allowed to get away, after being at the Rattler's mercy.—The Rattler, steaming between Tylo and Cowkok, had just sighted Kulan Eastern head, when it was found there was not sufficient water to go in further, and she had to return; the pirates in saucy bravado saluting the Rattler with their broadsides as she hove about. Yesterday afternoon, the Rattler again left, towing the Eaglet and two of the U. S. S. S. Powhatan's pinnaces. Warm work is anticipated.

From the Extra Sheet, Aug. 7.

The boats of the Rattler and Powhatan had a desperate encounter with pirates near Kulan on Saturday, and had 8 seamen and marines killed, and 15 or 16 wounded, some of them it is feared mortally. Captain Fellowes, Lieut. Orlando, and other officers were blown up in a junk, but fortunately but little hurt. 10 pirate junks were taken and destroyed, the greater portion of their crews having been killed; and seven prizes liberated, 5 of which belonged to the Eaglet's convoy; 16 of the smaller pirate junks escaped.

Friend of China Office,

Monday, August 6, 1855.

H. M. S. S. Rattler arrived back last evening from the cruise on which he started on Friday last, as mentioned in our Saturday's paper. We have been favored with the following particulars of the desperate service in which the Rattler was engaged. Towing the Eaglet and two launches and cutter from the Powhatan, she left Hong Kong about 3 P. M., the 3d instant, and at midnight anchored off the East end of Tylo. At 6 30 A. M. of Saturday, the Eaglet leaving the Rattler at anchor under charge of the master, Mr Clementi, and a few hands, steamed down the channel towards Kulan; but on opening the creek only one trading vessel could be seen, and the Eaglet then stood across to the opposite land, in an East-North-easterly direction, where a large fleet could be discerned. At about eight reached the entrance of a stream about a mile wide, and counted between thirty and forty large junks, some of which immediately commenced firing towards the steamer.

When the Eaglet started from the Rattler, it was under the expectation of landing at Kulan, to take the junks expected to be found there by attacking them simultaneously from the shore and the boats, and the expedition was organized in the following order:—Left Division—First launch with 12 pounder howitzer (Powhatan's) Lieut. Roland and 30 men—Pinnace (Rattler's) Lieuts. Wrey and Greer, and Mr Lomax (mate) and 14 men with some marines. Right Division—Cutter (Rattler's) in charge of Mr James, boatswain, 5 men and some marines. Second launch with 12 pounder howitzer (Powhatan's) Lieut. Pegram and 30 men. Right Flank—1st Cutter (Rattler's) Mr Brownsdon (purser) and 10 men, (beside marines.)

In rear Rattler's pinnace with 12 pounder howitzer, Powhatan's cutter, and Rattler's gig, with Capt. Fellowes and Mr Wilson, Assistant Surgeon, in board.

On board the Eaglet were Dr Patchard of H. M. S. Rattler, to attend to whatever casualties might occur, and Mr Pine, gunner (Rattler) in charge of the rocket department (Messrs. Benny and Roberts, engineers, Rattler assisting).

Shortly before making the entrance of the creek a larcha flying English colors was observed steering to the Eastward, and the Rattler's pinnace (with Lieuts. Wrey, Green and Mr Lomax), was detached with the Powhatan's cutter, under Mr McCaully, to cut her off—the attacking force being thus reduced to five boats and in all about one hundred men. As we have said, the pirates commenced firing before the Eaglet's progress was stopped by the shallowness of the water (9 feet) and no time was lost by the boats under Captain Fellowes in proceeding up toward the squadron—rockets from the Eaglet having the first effect in bringing the pirates to their senses—sails hoisting and cables cutting almost immediately; the whole fleet standing up the stream toward a small island, of which seven of the largest junks made a stand and belched out their broadsides on the advancing boats, fairly raking the whole channel.

Three quarters of an hour after casting off from the Eaglet the two most formidable of the large junks were boarded and carried by the Powhatan's launches, and other boats. A few men being left on board, the boats pushed on without delay toward the other large junks, which were then captured in detail. Follow-

ing onward, Captain Fellowes, with Assistant Surgeon Wilson, in the gig, got under the guns of a large junk, and was engaged for upward of ten minutes pouring in musketry, when Lieutenant Rolando with the Powhatan's first launch came up, and threw in heavy volleys—then giving three cheers, boarded.

A hand to hand fight of the most sanguinary description here took place, some of the crew flying below, others overboard; the sea appearing literally covered with Chinese heads and coconuts (the use of flinging the latter overboard before jumping themselves, showing some premeditation.) Captain Fellowes in his gig along side (some of the Rattler's marines being on board the junk forward) was just telling Lieut. Rolando of his fear that some of the desperadoes would blow the junk up, when an explosion took place, taking with it all on board and capsizing the Rattler's gig.

With much difficulty those of the Powhatan's launches crew remaining on board, succeeded in rescuing nine of their comrades and the Rattler's gig's crew; Captain Fellowes being hauled on board with his head bleeding from contusions by the falling spars. Lieut. Rolando was blown to some height into the air, and narrowly escaped death afterwards while swimming to his boat, by the descent of a crowd of spars from the falling stern of the burning blown up junk. Nine of the Powhatan's crew were taken out of the water variously wounded, (as shown in the schedule. Two were gone altogether, and one of the wounded died next day on board the Eaglet. Mr Wilson, assistant surgeon, lost his sword and box of surgical instruments by the capsizing of the gig. Captain Fellowes also, lost his sword and hat.

The only other severe casualty of the engagement occurred with the first cutter, under charge of Brownsdon paymaster. That officer had gallantly captured two junks, left a couple of men on each, and was about to board a third, when a shower of stink pots drove him and his men overboard; two men being then speared to death in the water, and a third drowned. The junk did not escape, however, and with nine others was destroyed by fire before Capt. Fellowes left.

It is hardly possible to speak of the gallantry of any particular individual, but we may remark in passing, that the cool, determined conduct of Mr. James, boatswain of H.M.S. Rattler, in charge of a cutter, as well as that of Lieutenant Pegram, commanding one of the Powhatan's launches, was most conspicuous. The order to the Rattler's pinnace with her first and second Lieutenants and Mr. Lomax on board, and to the Powhatan's cutter, with Mr. McCaully and Dr. Schriver was unfortunate for those officers—who were unable, after completing the service on which they were detached, to reach the battle field until the fight was well over.—Not but the task before them would have proved a serious affair had the lorcha turned out to be as it was supposed she was, a decoy and had shown fight.

Below will be found lists of the casualties.—The Eaglet having found three lorchas of which she before had the conveying, and being engaged by the masters of three other junks to escort them to Maceao, may not be looked for here till to-morrow. Altogether the junks destroyed, mounted it is supposed, a couple of hundred guns, mostly thirty-two and twenty-four pounders—(one was a sixty-eight.) Not less than eight hundred Chinese will have been killed by gunshot or sword wounds, or made to lose their lives by drowning. This, however, is only a third, though the cream, of the total number of junks first seen, the rest escaping into a large lagoon.

From English Papers to October 14.

EUROPE.

NEWS BY THE AFRICA AT HALIFAX.

PRUSSIA.—Electioneering.—The Liberal party in Prussia, or, as it is styled in higher circles, the Democratic Party, having hitherto refused, to acknowledge the validity of the existing law of Election, has nevertheless signified its intention to participate in the election of new members for the Chamber which is about to be formed. The Prussian Government has, in consequence, become somewhat alarmed, and has put forth some addresses pointing at the necessity of upholding Conservative opinions. At present the Liberals have carried their men.

RUSSIA.—Public feeling in St. Petersburg.—Since the Court quitted our capital, and the principal ministers accompanied the Emperor, there has been received here no news from the Crimea. Complete uncertainty and sadness prevail, and it is at St. Petersburg especially the boyards most manifest their discontent.—The absence of the high functionaries, civil and military, leaves the nobles at leisure to consider the difficulty in which Russia has been placed by the war. Hence their discouragement, which manifests itself openly in their works. The discontent, it is impossible to deny, has reached the lowest classes of the population, and the peasants are now seeking to escape the conscription. This is not all. A practice which has been rare in the Russian army is extending itself on a large scale. I mean the desertion of soldiers, which has become so marked that the Government has considered it necessary to adopt measures and apply penalties which are quite unusual against those who desert their colours.—Letter from St. Petersburg, (Sept 29).

New Rocket.—A Russian colonel of artillery named Konstantinoff, has invented a new kind of congreve rocket, at Revel, and the trial of its effects had proved satisfactory. It flies five-sevenths of a German mile, that is, of five English miles. A great quantity has been distributed there for use against the Allies. Revel is still being fortified.