

prandi, which quitted the Tchernaya some eight or ten days ago. Nothing is more likely than that this force, prevented by the severity of the weather from proceeding towards Eupatoria, should have retraced their steps and gone into quarters in Sebastopol, not less for the purpose of securing the town than housing the troops against the terrible inclemency of the weather.

The French have considerably slackened in their fire upon the town since the date of my last letter. The reason alleged for this is, that such a comparatively trifling fire from 10 mortars, without producing any very important results, only leads the enemy to take measures to counteract the effects of a future bombardment. The English, it is said, are now in a position to support the fire of our allies, and only wait for favourable weather to commence the final attack. How far this may be true, I cannot venture to say, beyond that from many things which have come to my knowledge as to the state of our forces, I think it is, to say the very least, improbable. That a general assault may be attempted much earlier than any one here expects is quite possible, but if so it will only be done because the allied generals see they are losing men much faster from exposure and cold than ever they would do from an action with the enemy. At present, and I think for some weeks to come, we shall just remain as we are.

Since the last post and until the 16th, there has been an intense frost, which while it lasted, surpassed for its severity anything we have yet felt. During the day the thermometer seldom rose 18 deg., but with the night a keen wind swept over the snowy waste which froze the very blood of those exposed to it.—No terms I can use, were I to write for ever, would give your readers even a faint idea of what the sufferings of our troops have been and still are. Hundred are frost-bitten in the hands, feet, and face; the cholera is still among them, and scurvy and dysentery spread more and more each day. The men have no fires, the miserable stocks of roots and shrubs which used to enable them to get a warm drink are now quite exhausted, and no materials for fires of any kind are to be found in the camp. I am informed that for two whole days throughout the great mass of our lines not a fire was lit, though the mercury then nearly stood 20 deg. below freezing point. On each of these days, as if in mockery of their sufferings, the raw coffee beans were served out to the men as usual. No rations of firewood are served, of rations of tobacco, which the men would like almost as well.

Major Macdonald of the 89th, I am informed, was frozen to death in the trenches on the night of the 16th, and another gallant officer who fell into a deep snow drift, most narrowly escaped the same fate. Both in the nights of the 16th, 17th, and 18th, many of the men on sentry and on fatigue parties were numbed by cold in such a manner as to expire in a few hours afterwards. On the 17th, 14 men of the 46th were buried, the majority of the deaths being caused by the severity of the weather, and the 18th 10 more interred from the same cause. On the latter occasion the thaw had commenced, and the bodies of 4 of the 10 were discovered among the tents by the fact of their boots sticking out of the snow. I believe they were men who had been employed in fatigue parties, and who, becoming numbed and exhausted, sat down to rest on reaching their cantonments, and so perished miserably. During the continuance of this severe frost, all the men not actually on duty used to crowd into the tents, and by huddling together manage to keep themselves from actual frost bites. Of course the warmth of their bodies thawed the ground on which they sat into a mere puddle. The unfortunate men got saturated, and when on duty their close froze to their flesh in such a manner that on removing the stockings of some of the flesh was stripped off the feet in large pieces.

About one-fourth of the troops have their warm great coats; the rest are clad pretty much as they landed. This is the actual state of affairs on the 20th of January, and to this miserable picture I may add that two-thirds of the regimental hospitals are insufficiently supplied with medicines, and none that I am aware of have any medical comforts, even of the simplest kind. I learn that on the 18th a message was sent in from the 77th Regiment, to the gentlemen at Balaklava entrusted with the distribution of the Peel Fund for the relief of the soldiers, imploring medical comforts of any description, as the hospital was without even the most trifling stores. I know, also, that for two or three days past the medicine chest of the naval brigade has been almost entirely empty, though there are 80 patients among the seamen. Applications for medical stores have, I am told, been sent in to Balaklava, and the answer returned was, that there were none there. With such management and such exposure, the sickness among our troops augments each day. At the commencement of this week, 1,950 sick were sent in two days for passage to Scutari.—On the following day 900 more followed, and have been placed on board the Nubia, and on the 18th between 300 and 400 more came in, making a total of 3,000 men invaleded in the course of eight days. Besides this frightful amount of sickness the regimental hospital tents at camp are crowded; the hospital at Balaklava is crowded; and some 10 or 12 wooden huts

which are being run up on the slope of the hill, over the harbour, are filled as they are finished.

The Russian piquets round Balaklava have appeared unusually busy during the last few days and the force on the left of the Tchernays has been strengthened by the addition of some 3,500 or 4,000 men. These facts, coupled with the rumours of Liprandi's reinforcements, and the two visits of Lord Raglan, lead the general public here to imagine that something of importance is on the tapis. There is, however, but one answer to these conjectures—while the snow lasts, neither cavalry nor artillery can manœuvre, and during a thaw the whole ground is a mere marsh, and evolutions become more impossible than ever snow.

The Adelaide has arrived with the 82d Regiment on board. The 39th Regiment has left the Golden Fleece, and taken up the quarters at the head of the harbour, lately occupied by the 18th Royal Irish.

One of the vessels freighted with necessaries for the use of the troops, and all of which are to be sold at cost price, has now been in the harbour 10 days; but though all the articles on board are bitterly wanted, not one thing has yet been touched. The reason alleged for the dilatoriness is, that no non-commissioned officers have yet been "appointed" to superintend the sale, and for this cause all have to go without the little comforts which would soon be distributed throughout the camp by the sale of this vessel's cargo.

The Simla has arrived with a number of horses. The Trent was at Constantinople, and expected up here each day with 250 mules. These animals are worth any money to us in our present position. The Lion steamer has returned from a trip to a little below Odessa, where about 120 tons of hay were purchased from the country people. The Lady M'Naughten, sailing transport, has been sent from Balaklava to a little port near Perekop, where the inhabitants are willing to supply 300 oxen, and some sheep. I think the fact of the allies being able to purchase sheep and cattle near Perekop should at once put an end to all conjectures about the enemy being short of provisions. It is not likely that the Russian army is starving while the country people sell their supplies to us. Such a system, under the circumstances, would be preposterous even in England, where a man does as he likes with his own. How much more so, then, must it be in Russia, where the most arbitrary government in the world has only to claim and to take the property of any citizen.

P.S.—The Australian came into Balaklava last night laden with ordnance stores, and at the same time arrived the Emu, from Malta, with the 14th Regiment on board.

There is not the least sign of such a thing as the railway being extended this winter.

The authorities here seem quite determined that there shall only be mails when they wish. Lord Raglan's despatches never miss, though seldom the general mail goes unless there is good news to communicate.—Correspondent of the Morning Herald.

The Politician.

THE BRITISH PRESS.

From the London Times, January 30.

THE MISMANAGEMENT OF THE WAR.

It would tax the best historical student to produce a more complete case of political collapse than that which it is England's ill fate, sore cost, and, we had almost said, foul dishonour, to witness this day. The vast prestige of that naval and military organization which we have been nursing so sedulously for these forty years, at the cost of £15,000,000 a year, has gone with a touch at the moment of trial. We explain emphatically and at once, "the prestige of that organisation,"—for England has still what it had forty years ago, and four hundred years ago,—it has a hardy, industrious and generous race, that no enemy from within or without can with impunity provoke, and which will die ere it surrenders its soil, its rights, or its honour. But never was anything more rapid than the present renunciation of that huge imposture—our military system. In the fullest reliance on the native energies of the British people, and knowing that they need no fair disguises, and want the truth, and nothing but the truth, we say that the British army, as constituted and managed, is an utter failure.—At this moment the individual soldier is all that we have to depend upon, and of him we do not feel the smallest distrust. In the absolute wreck of the system the man comes out greater than ever. But never did opinion, after braving it out and blustering so long, give way so suddenly. * * * Lord John Russell says it is vain to effect disbelief, calls the accounts "horrible and heartrending," and says that a twelvemonth ago he would have thought the prediction of such disasters, produced by a distance of seven miles from a harbour in our possession, altogether fantastic and incredible. Mr Sidney Herbert proclaims the whole army, from the brigadiers to the privates, inexperienced, ignorant of their profession, and absolutely helpless when thrown on their own resources. The Duke of Newcastle gives up the whole medical

department as thoroughly ill organised and incapable, and pronounces the Commissariat as utterly unequal to the pressure thrown upon it. Mr Bernal Osborne denounces constitution of the staff, and declares that there will be no effectual reform in the army which does not commence with the Horse Guards. Sir George Grey adopts the apology of "inexperience," notwithstanding the fact of the selection of generals to manage the expedition having rested chiefly on their "experience," to the exclusion of activity, genius, and even success. * * * For the credit of credulity in this unbelieving age, there is one man, one only, who still believes in the War Department, the Medical Department, the Horse Guards, the Commissariat, Lord Raglan and his staff, and every official, from Dr. Andrew Smith down to the half-dozen successive harbour masters of Balaklava. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is the one man faithful found in an unbelieving age. With the eye of faith, and on the strength of some unknown arithmetical persuasion, he still sees 30,000 well found, well clothed, well fed British soldiers on the heights of Sebastopol, contending for the pleasure of a turn in the trenches, or a promenade to and from Balaklava, laden, for variety sake, with biscuit, 13-inch shells, casks of rum, and sections of wooden houses. Yet even Mr Gladstone, all-hoping, all-believing as he is—even he admits that there is much in the general arrangements that call for amendment, and that in some important particulars there is so much that is defective that the accounts are, as Lord John represented them, "horrible and heartrending." * * * But it is not on all these admissions, not on any parliamentary statements, that we would rest the case for inquiry. It is the fact that the management of the war has broken down, not in this or that department only, not temporarily, accidentally, or partially, but throughout, uniformly, from first to last, even to the very last date. Never was there so unvaried a story of failure, excepting only when it came to the rough uniformed tussle of man with man. * * * Such a uniformity of disaster on the one hand, and such comparative freedom on the other—such darkness all around and such light around the tents of the French—could not be accident. It is "inexplicable," and we do not see how any rational legislature could refuse to inquire into the reasons of a contrast which we have no right to ascribe to a miracle. The House of Commons has decided on that inquiry by a crushing majority, that will at least bring the whole weight of public opinion and feeling to bear on the management of the war; and to what further consequence we forbear now to anticipate.

From the Examiner, Jan. 22.

INQUIRY INTO THE MANAGEMENT OF THE EXPEDITION.

"A lie, a lie," is the ready answer to all charges of mismanagement in the Crimea, but something more than this easy contradiction is due to the public, to the authorities concerned, and to the character of the country. If a thousandth part of the mismanagement were charged against a union workhouse or a gaol, there would forthwith be a public inquiry into the facts, and the truth would be put beyond doubt one way or the other by the weight of evidence. Is blame due? and if due where due? should be the question. No one has a right in this case to be stolidly indifferent to unmerited obloquy—much less to accept it, for a false impression that the troops are suffering grievously, and that thousands have perished for want of care and proper management, is a cruelty to their relatives and friends, and a foul disgrace to their country in the eyes of the whole world. Long ere this, steps should have been taken to put the truth out of dispute or the shadow of a doubt, either by a commission of inquiry, or the personal inspection of a competent authority.—There are two War Ministers here at home, like the two kings of Brentford smelling at one nosegay, and one of them might surely be spared to see with his own eyes the state of the army before Sebastopol, and how its affairs are conducted. A month would have been well employed on such a mission, and the result would either have laid the foundation for a most important reformation or would have disabused the public mind misled by prevailing reports, and thus have relieved it of its anxieties and fears. This is not the occasion for the ministerial boast of being thick-skinned, and careless of injustice, for it is not only their repulse that is concerned, but the lives of thousands and the feelings of many thousands more to whom those lives are dear. The truth is due to the country, due to humanity, and the truth must appear in some form more substantial than mere contradiction. For official denials have lost credit with the public, who have found them untrustworthy in so many instances relating to the comforts and necessaries of the men, and the treatment of the sick. There has been no wilful untruth in these cases, but a misplaced reliance upon the execution of orders, the home authorities proposing and others disposing. A certain place is said to be paved with good intentions, and pre-eminently like it is Balaklava, the limbo of unsupplied supplies, the huge dead package office, where all wanted things lie rotting in cold obstruction. The excuse is that only one ship can be unloaded at a

time; but if private interests instead of public interests had been concerned, can any one doubt that the sides of the basin would have been scooped out, and wharves constructed? And Lord Raglan knew what the capabilities of Balaklava were when he made it the basis of his position, and chose it with the disadvantage of its very limited space of unloading, if he did not see the way of obviating that difficulty. All the consequent sufferings should therefore have been foreseen, and the much-vaunted march to the south was, in effect, a march into this slough of despond. Balaklava is literally the mouth of our army, and if the mouth be too small to feed the body, all the results have been the natural and necessary consequences of the choice of the port, supposing that the defect could not be remedied, which we exceedingly doubt. But that was not all; not only was the mouth too small for the body, but the throat soon became impracticable, the road as bad as the landing.—Yet the first reflection that must have occurred to any observer capable of reflection that must have been, what will be the condition of this road after a little wear, and with the first wet? What would be thought of the wits of any individual who selected a port for his merchandise without sufficient landing room, and who allowed the first winter rains to turn his road into an impassable quagmire? We must not be told there was no choice; there was choice, and the choice was made, and with it were also chosen all the necessary consequences and evils. If the eye of a needle be selected as the archway for a camel, it can be no wonder afterwards that the passage is somewhat too strait for the purpose. But when the bad choice was made for want of better, was there no help for it, supposing that the port did not allow of enlargement? We have borrowed of our generous allies—borrowed also the facilities of their well-ordered commodious harbour and landing? The interest was a common one in the supplies necessary to the health and efficiency of our troops.

Another excuse for the state to which the army is reduced is, that its strength has been overtaken in constructing and manning works which require the duty of every man in the trenches every other night at least, while the French do not take their turn oftener than once in nine days, or thereabouts. But this evil is like the capability of Balaklava. The consequence of the works too large for the troops should have been as much foreseen, as those of the port too small. And might not our allies have been fairly asked to take charge of the part of the lines which exceeded the strength of our army? If, instead of a separate command, the armies had been under one head, this is an arrangement which would have been made, as a matter of course, to equalise the duties; and the way to diminish the evils of a separate command is to act in all practicable cases as if it were undivided. When the armies were first disembarked, the English somewhat exceeded the French, and probably when they broke ground before Sebastopol the shares of the position were not unfairly assigned to the respective forces; but since then the French have doubled in number, while the English have dwindled and declined, and this fact equitably calls for a redistribution of the parts and readjustment of the toils. It is because the English army has been tasked beyond its strength in manning extensive works, that it has not had the men to spare for labours for the supply of its vital wants. For example could troops be employed in making a road from Balaklava while the trenches called for every man once at least in 24 hours, and sometimes oftener? And hence it is that stores have been sent to Balaklava, to lie there to about as much purpose as if they had been shot down a well, or into the sea. There has been a great scarcity of fuel to add the very worst suffering to the other privations of the troops, while coal fields abound at Heraclea, within a very easy distance by steam, but it has probably been objected that coals in depot at Balaklava would be almost as much out of reach of the army as coals at Newcastle, the means of transport for three short leagues being wanting. Vegetables, so essential to the health of the men, are not to be had though procurable within an easy distance by sea, and no doubt for the same reason. The coffee is still served out green, a cruel negligence for which there can be no pretext of excuse, after three months of complaint. The general diet is salt pork, which conduces to dysentery and other disorders of the bowels.

The huts have arrived, but do not find their way to the ground where their shelter is so much needed. Some of the warm clothing, the generous supply of which was so much wanted, has indeed been served out, but the men look on them with perfect contempt and disgust, and willingly exchange their whole stock of "winter clothing" for one comfortable bread-bag. * * * Something has been done towards the improved care of the sick, and more still remains to be done, but it is now certain that the representations which were stigmatised as malicious falsehoods were too well grounded. Lord Raglan has displaced one medical officer for neglect of duty, and censured another. This, so far as it goes, is right; but we should be glad to see some praise as well as blame, and that the meritorious services of medical officers do not escape notice more than their faults. Was a word of