

News of the Week.

EUROPE.

Denmark.—The Danish Government has just sent a circular to the different states of Europe. In this circular the Danish government renews the declaration of its neutrality. Denmark persists in maintaining the position of a neutral power, and admits no engagement on its side in relation to the treaty concluded on the 21st November between Sweden and the Western Powers.

Russia.—The Emperor Alexander II. has ordered a special court to be formed at Kieff for trying captured Poles and Hungarians. The former are to be punished with death, the latter delivered to the Austrians for execution. So many Polish and Hungarian prisoners are taken, in irons, to Kieff, that no fewer than four judges, ten secretaries, and executioners innumerable, are continually employed in their condemnation.

Great activity in the arsenals, and great want of gold and silver money, are two facts most prominent in advices from St. Petersburg.

A private letter from St. Petersburg of the 29th ult., states that such is the activity of the overland transit that the rate of carriage had considerably fallen. The price of sulphur had diminished from £50 to £30 per ton; lead had also fallen in price; and such were the undisguised facilities afforded by Prussia that an expectation was entertained that such articles would very soon be nearly at peace prices. Even the Russians, as well they may, express astonishment at this state of things, and apprehend that such flagrant violation of neutrality may lead to a suppression of the entire traffic next spring.

Turkey.—At a military council held at Constantinople, and which was attended by Generals Larchey and Mansfield, the commanders of the French and English troops in that city, it has been decided that, in order to prevent Erzeroum falling in the hands of Gen. Mouravieff, all the disposable troops of Turkey shall be concentrated in the vicinity of the threatened town. Omar Pacha, too, has received orders to send on to Trebizond, as fast as they arrive at Soukoun Kaleh, the greater part of the battalions constituting the army under his command. The Turkish generalissimo, however, is in such disfavor on account of his alleged unskilful and dilatory movements for the relief of Kars, that it is thought very unlikely that he will be entrusted with the command of the Erzeroum army. It is very probable, however, that when the whole facts are better known and more calmly considered, the Turkish generalissimo will recover his popularity.

Eruption of Vesuvius.—A letter from Naples of the 28th ult. says—Vesuvius has been thundering, and a new mouth has been opened on the very top of the mountain, from whence lava is flowing out. At present all that can be seen is a vast column of smoke; but still the mountain is active, and menaces further demonstrations. Not far from Castellamare, too, I have observed an unusual agitation in the sea. There is always a considerable sulphurous exhalation in that site, but on passing a few days since the water was boiling as actively as I have ever witnessed it in a teakettle. The rocks in the neighbourhood also were covered with a thick sulphurous deposit.

The Savoy Gazette announces the discovery of an extensive mine of fossil coal at Vimines, near Chambéry.

The Journal de St. Petersburg announces the death of the Privy Councillor Labensky, of the Russian Foreign-office. To the pen of this gentleman the most able of Count Nesselrode's notes have been ascribed.

Letters from Vienna state that General Mouravieff is to take the command in the Crimea, where it is hoped the prestige of his success will be more useful to Russia than in Asia. A high command in the north of the empire is assigned to Prince Gortschakoff.

Mr. Ignatius Meyer has caused several trials of gold-washing to be made in different parts of the Danube, and it is reported that they have been attended with the best success. Samples of the gold that has been found have been submitted for analysis in the proper quarter.

Wrecks.—It appears from a statement compiled by the Shipping Gazette that one thousand seven hundred and ninety-nine (1799) vessels have been wrecked during the past year. Of these, 293 were wrecked in January, 164 in February, 149 in March, 109 in April, 98 in May, 83 in June, 70 in July, 109 in August, 103 in September, 179 in October, 253 in November, and 241 in December.

England prosecuting the War Alone.—The Paris Siecle taken up the question thrown up by the enemies of the alliance, as to what England would do in the insultingly-supposed case of desertion by France.—It has been said lately that England would be greatly embarrassed if France was to retire from the struggle, and were, after having saved the Mediterranean from Russian conquest to conclude a separate treaty. In the first instance, such conduct cannot even be supposed, for it would be against the history, the habits, and the genius of France. But it would be a grave error to believe that England, when isolated, would be impotent. Doubtless, in losing or all once, she would lose a support impossible to replace. But what could Russia do against her? Matters have greatly changed since the commencement of the war. What England has effected in three years is calculable; what she would attempt, if reduced to her own resources, would be beyond imagination. The

question of triumph has become for each Englishman the famous "to be or not to be" of the poet. Were our alliance to be severed, one of those implacable duels of which England has so often furnished an example would commence. And in that duel with Russia let it not for one moment be doubted the power of England would increase, her influence would augment for she alone would have saved liberty.

Christmas in the Crimea.—A correspondent writes, under date Balaklava, Dec. 24:—"It is to be hoped that all the grand folks in England are as well provided for Christmas as we in every department are here. It does one's heart good to see the grand preparations for the festival. Geese, turkeys, pigs, sheep and bullocks, are in great plenty, and it is a charming sight to see the steamer coming into Balaklava garnished all round with dead poultry, which is soon sold. The Earl of Durham has a string of geese hung round her. I am sorry, however, to say she lost on the voyage about 12 bullocks and 500 fowls. I fancy other vessels had lost the same in proportion, for yesterday, off Balaklava, I passed through quite a sea of dead poultry. By a vessel arrived from Kertch we hear that the sea in the neighbourhood is frozen over. The weather here is beautiful.—An American barque arrived here from New York, in 60 days, with a cargo of flour which cost there \$1-2 dollars the barrel. Flour was sold at Kadikoi shortly ago for £3 the barrel. The flour by the American is for the commissariat."

Destruction of Russian Docks.—Camp, Sebastopol, Dec. 24.—one of the five celebrated dry docks in the Karabelnaia, suburb of Sebastopol, was demolished by French engineers on Saturday last, the 22nd instant, at two p.m. by the explosion of mines. The destruction of the dock was fully accomplished, the blast having almost instantaneously reduced the massive fabric into a ruined and confused heap of stones.

The intention of destroying a portion of the docks was not known in camp until an early hour of the morning of the same day. The six companies of the 18th Royal Irish Regiment, which for the last month or five weeks have been quartered in the Karabelnaia, assisting in the necessary preparations for the destruction of the three docks in rear, and the part of the basin in charge of English engineers, were moved up at 5 a.m. before daylight. Their departure was thus unobserved by the enemy on the north side of the roadstead. It was considered prudent to march these men up to the camp, in case the Russians might think proper, after the explosion, to direct a heavy fire on the suburb, and to avoid all risk of casualties, should any of the buildings fall from the concussion. This movement was a sufficient intimation that the explosion of part of the docks was at hand, but in addition all servants of men on fatigue going into the town for wood were early in the morning stopped at the Redan, and subsequently a cordon of sentries was drawn around to prevent officers or any person from approaching within the neighbourhood of the docks where there was the slightest chance of danger from the explosion. As it turned out, however, these precautions proved unnecessary, for the mines were so laid that the effect of their explosion were confined to a very limited sphere of action.

The dock selected by the French engineers for demolition on this occasion was the one placed to the west of the lock through which vessels formerly entered into the great basin.—In addition to this dock, the French have to destroy another dry dock on the east side of the entrance lock, the lock itself, which, with its sides and foundation of cut masonry and magnificent floodgates, has the appearance of another dock, and half the basin. It is understood that the engineering operations are completed for the demolition of the whole of these structures, and that the object of demolishing one portion only was to test the accuracy of certain calculations with regard to the quantity of gunpowder necessary for effecting the desired result. The quantity actually employed is said to have been a little over 2000 pounds English, or 1000 French kilogrammes.

The French engineers have followed a somewhat different plan from the English engineers for the destruction of the docks. They have trusted principally to galleries carried across and beneath the bottom of the dock. They have also, however, parallel with each side, a horizontal gallery to blow out the foundation and lower part of each side wall. In the docks to be destroyed by the English, perpendicular shafts have been sunk at frequent intervals along the sides, for the purpose of blowing the whole of the sides inwards. Latterly also, galleries have been constructed beneath the foundation of the bottom of each dock, so that their demolition must be very effectual. Arrangements have been made for firing the English mines by a voltaic battery. The French mines on Saturday were fired by means of trains of laid gunpowder and fuses.

The report of the explosion was by no means loud. It was heard in camp, but was generally supposed to be the bursting of some of the Russian projectiles among the buildings of the town. Nearer to the scene of the explosion a tremendous agitation of the ground was felt, and this was followed by the peculiar compressed sound, more like the rumbling of distant thunder than the usual report of gunpowder fired from within metal, which always accompanies subterraneous discharges. Simultaneous with the noise of the blasting, the air over the situation of the dock became thickened with smoke, stones, and rubbish. A large quantity, among which were masses of considerable size, rose perpendicularly upwards, while at the same time a shower of masonry was hur-

led from each side upwards and curving towards the centre. The greater portion of these blocks and fragments of stone appeared to fall downwards into the vacant space of the dock; scarcely any were observed to fly far beyond its limits. A dense cloud of smoke filled and rested over the place of ruin, and this continued hanging over it for a considerable time, for there was no breeze to waft it away. No sooner had the explosion occurred, the crash of the falling masonry had scarcely died away from the ears, when the sharp reports of several shells about the docks and neighbouring buildings told that the enemy had been no unobservant spectator of the scene. They hoped to hit some of the troops, whom they suspected to be in the neighbourhood of the explosion, the nature of which they no doubt understood, but, as usual, fired without effecting any injury or causing casualty. It is remarkable how few casualties have taken place among the Sappers and Artillerymen, and in the six companies of the men of the 18th Regiment, who have been quartered in the Karabelnaia during the operations connected with the mining of the docks, notwithstanding the constant fire of the enemy. Until a short time ago, when a shell entered a company's cooking house, whence the men could not readily escape, and where, in consequence, several were wounded, not a casualty had occurred among the men of the 18th Regiment. The Russians appear to have the range of the principal points, and, moreover, seem to have men always on the look out, who make signal to the gunners in the batteries whenever a party of troops are observed moving in the town, for no sooner is a troop exposed to view than it is fired at. One principal source of security to our men is, of course, the number of stone buildings of the town; these not only intercept the missiles of the enemy as they fall towards the ground, but afford tolerable safe means of shelter when a well-directed shell falls too dangerously close not to be, if possible, avoided by hasty flight.

Report says that all the preparations will be completed for the demolition of the three docks to be destroyed by the English in the course of a week from the present date. The arrangements would have been for the large quantity of water which has found its way into the shafts and galleries excavated for the reception of the blasting powder. It appears that the reason for the water having entered so copiously into these excavations, while those connected with the French mines have remained dry, is their relative position with regard to the termination of the Karabelnaia ravine, between the Malakoff and Redan hills, and at a short distance from the Dockyard wall. The three docks in charge of the English are separated from the end of this ravine, where an enormous amount of water had collected, and formed an immense pond or reservoir, only by an artificial causeway, constructed at an enormous expense of labour by the Russians during the formation of the docks, and through this earth the water gradually percolated. Under ordinary circumstances the water of the middle or Karabelnaia ravine would drain through the soil and find its way to the Karabelnaia creek or harbour, and in this direction the water collected in the shafts has now had to be conducted, after much labour, by pumping and other means of drainage. It would have been more easy to have drained the shafts through the great basin, into which the three docks open; but this would probably have led to flooding a portion of the French works. When the time shall arrive for the destruction of the English portion of the docks it is hoped that their destruction will be as complete as that of the French dock already demolished, and if the three are demolished at the same instant the effect will be proportionably more striking. I have heard it stated that the floor of the dock just destroyed by the French engineers has not been so effectually and completely broken up as it was anticipated it would be by the explosion, but hardly believe that this can be ascertained while it remains encumbered with the ruined masonry at present heaped over its surface.

The weather has been much milder since the last mail left. During the daytime there has been a constant thaw, and it has only been after sunset that the temperature has reached the freezing point.—From the Daily News Correspondent.

India.—The Sindhian, of December 8, has the following:—"The intelligence from Herat is horrible: the whole of the Yar Mahomed's family, old and young, have been put to death, with the exception of the mother of the two princes, who were recently murdered by the Persian troops. Her life was spared with the view of extorting from her the treasure she was known to have possessed; but she was prepared for this, for on the murder of her two sons, she collected all her jewels and burnt them and allowed her slaves to distribute the spoils among themselves. She is now tortured with red hot irons to give up her wealth. We do not apprehend immediate hostilities unless the Persians advance beyond Herat."

The news from Candahar is of a very warlike nature. When the forces of Dost Mahomed and the Chandahar chief unite, it is calculated they will muster about 70,000 men, and about 80 guns.

The Shipping Trade.—We make the following extracts from the Circular of Messrs Seymour, Peacock, & Co:

London January 6, 1856.—There have been during the past year some very severe losses by shipwreck, and we doubt if the quantity of new tonnage coming forward will be able to keep pace with the requirements of our vastly increasing trade particularly of the smaller class of vessels from 200 to 300 tons. No doubt should peace happily take place in the spring

an immense number of screw steamers and sailing transports, at present employed in the Black Sea, will be thrown upon the market after bringing back the troops and equipment from the seat of war and thus fill up the gap, but we are of opinion that in such cases Freights can not go lower than at present, and that the shipowner will reap all the advantages of the natural reduction in seaman's wages, provisions and stores.

Our East India possessions since the introduction of railways, and from other causes, are beginning to pour forth in countless quantities their gigantic supplies to this country from all quarters, and this trade alone will swallow up the bulk of our large ships. We are glad to see that the difficulties and dangers of the Hooghly, and the crying evils existing in the Maritime department at Calcutta, are occupying the attention of the Indian government authorities for the benefit of the shipping interest. The Australian colonies, recovering from the certain effects of over speculation consequent upon opening up a new source of commerce, are now requiring a larger amount of tonnage every month. Our new relations with Siam will also shortly create a demand for shipping in that quarter.

We therefore look forward to a good demand for tonnage, under any political circumstances, at remunerative rates, and from all friendly parts of the world, and, although peace would be desirable, could it be obtained on the terms the nation has a right to demand, yet, in a local point of view, the loss to the British shipping interest in the Russian trade has scarcely been felt.

CANADA.

Georgian Bay Canal.—A meeting of the signers of the requisition to the Mayor on this subject was held in the Exchange, on Saturday forenoon, to prepare Resolutions to be submitted at the public meeting to-morrow. There were not many persons present, but considerable discussion arose in consequence of the desire expressed by the friends of the North Shore Railroad that the advancement of this project should be connected with the proposed Canal or Railway through the valley of the Ottawa. The following Resolutions were ultimately agreed to, as these which should be brought before the meeting to-morrow:—

1. That, in the opinion of this meeting, it is highly desirable that a direct communication through the valley of the Ottawa be opened, with the view of shortening the distance between Quebec and Montreal, and the Great Western Lakes.

2. That, with this view, this meeting pledges itself to co-operate with the citizens of Montreal and Ottawa in bringing this matter before the Governor in Council for immediate consideration and prompt action.

3. That the members for the City, County, and District of Quebec be requested to give their assistance in advancing this great project, of such vital importance to Eastern Canada.

4. That Messrs. — be a Committee, with power to add to their number, to petition the Governor in Council on the subject.

North Shore Railroad.—A Company in England will undertake the construction of the line from Ottawa City to Quebec on condition of receiving a grant of Wild Lands, say Three Million acres in the Ottawa valley, without further assistance from this Province.

Mr. Baby has we believe, received instructions to bring the matter before the Legislature; and in view of the immense benefits to be derived by this city as well as the localities traversed from so valuable a line as this will be successful.—Montreal Commercial Advertiser.

Saguenay Railway.—An advertisement in another column calls for tenders for the construction of the Quebec and Saguenay Railway. This looks like an earnest of progress, and shows a determination to proceed with the work at an early date. Nearly sufficient capital has been subscribed to construct the Road, —a plate rail track,—from Quebec to the Road-carter settlements. We are informed that the list of stockholders is daily increasing, and that it is expected, the Corporation will shortly afford some assistance to the project. All that now remains to be done in order to enable shareholders to elect new Directors, who will have power to construct the road, is to fulfill the conditions of the Charter by depositing the balance of the £5000 stock remaining unpaid.—Quebec Chronicle.

NEW BRUNSWICK.

The meeting of the citizens of St. John, on the subject of the Prohibitory Liquor Law, was held on Wednesday last, in front of the Court House. After the usual preliminaries, a motion condemnatory of the law was moved by the Hon. C. Simonds, seconded by W. Jack, Esq.; an amendment to the effect that the law deserved a trial, was thereupon moved by J. W. Lawrence, Esq. On the question being put by the Sheriff, he was unable to decide which was carried, and therefore dissolved the meeting. There were two or three thousand people present, and each party claims a majority.

This winter is very remarkable for the number of lectures that have been and are about to be delivered on various interesting and instructive subjects, for the benefit of young and old. Five or six courses are in progress—giving any one who is desirous of obtaining information in this way, an opportunity of doing so on four and sometimes five evening throughout the week. Thus this week, we have had Monday evening an interesting lecture at the Meehanic's Institute, on the present war, from J. H. Robilliard, Esquire. On Friday next, R. Foulis, Esq., will lecture on "Light," and on Monday