

candles. The room was large and well furnished, and I looked round with some complacency.

'It is a capital house, from the garret to the cellar,' observed Stevens.

'It appears so,' I replied; 'everything seems very comfortable—very comfortable indeed.'

But, in spite of this asseveration, I did not exactly feel that it was very comfortable.

'And here is the library,' said Stevens, throwing open an adjacent door. The room looked awfully solemn in the partial illumination of our candles. 'And here,' said my companion, 'this is the drawing room—is it not handsome?—such an air of ancient respectability about it.'

'It is very handsome—all very handsome, Stevens; but the rooms are so ducedly large, I shall feel lost in them. I hope there is some small room facing the south, where I can make a snuggerly for myself.'

'Oh, to be sure,' said Stevens; 'there is everything in this house you can possibly want. Let me show you the principal bedrooms.—There! is not that a splendid staircase?'

It was all very splendid; but I thought there was a want of comfort and homeliness; but then, I am one of those people who, if suddenly placed in paradise, would feel strange and uncomfortable, and wish themselves back to earth again from the force of habit.

I will pass over all the details of the house and grounds, as they appeared to me the following morning under the influence of a bright sunshine. It is easy to picture a handsome old country residence, placed in the centre of a small but picturesque park; and let any one of moderate income say whether he would not feel especially fortunate if he suddenly found himself the possessor of such a place, endowed with the wherewithal to keep it up.

A BEAR HUNT IN THE OREGON.

The bear in question had been wounded and took shelter in a small coppice. The bush was instantly surrounded by horsemen, when the more bold and daring entered it on foot armed with gun, knife and tomahawk. Among the bush rangers on the present occasion was the chief of the Short Legs, who, while scrambling over some fallen timber, happened to stumble near where the wounded and enraged bear was concealed, but too close to be able to defend himself before the vicious animal got hold of him. At that moment I was not more than six paces from the chief, but could not get a chance of shooting; so I immediately called out for help, when several mustered round the spot. Availing ourselves of the doubtful alternative of killing her, even at the risk of killing the chief, we fired, and as good luck would have it, shot the animal and saved the man; then carrying the bear and wounded chief out of the bush, we laid both on the open ground. The sight of the chief was appalling. The scalp was torn from the crown of his head, down over the eyebrows. He was insensible, and for some time we all thought him dead; but after a short interval his pulse began to beat, and he gradually showed signs of returning animation. It was a curious and somewhat interesting scene to see the party approach to the spot where the accident happened. Not being able to get a chance of shooting, they threw their guns from them and could scarcely be restrained from rushing on the fierce animal with their knives only. The bear all the time kept looking first at one, then at another, and casting her fierce and flaming eyes around the whole of us, as if ready to make a spring at each; yet she never let go her hold of the chief. Seeing herself surrounded by so many enemies, she moved her head from one position to another, and these movements gave us an opportunity to kill her.—Travels in Oregon.

A DISAPPOINTED PAPA.

About once a week (so I was informed) the chief eunuch rushes into his royal presence, exclaiming, in great apparent joy, 'O lord of the world, a son is born unto you!'—Praise be to God! exclaims the happy king; 'which of my wives has been so highly honoured?' the eunuch names one of them, and the king rises in great haste to visit her and behold his new offspring. But suddenly cries and shrieks resound from the women's apartments. A band of females bursts into the room, shrieking and lamenting. 'O great king! a terrible demon suddenly appeared among us. He snatched your beautiful son out of the nurse's arms, and flew through the window with frightful noise.' And so the trick is repeated from week to week, and the poor fool continually laments over his lost children.—Taylor's Visit to India.

'It's a very solemn thing to be married,' said Aunt Bethany. 'Yes, but it's a great deal more solemn not to be,' said her niece.

Mrs Mulloney writes from Cork to her sister in this city, that her cousin Bridget died in August last. 'She ate ludy male,' she says, 'till she got the 'Cornelia Morgus,' which carried her off in less time than you'd snuff out a candle.'

If you wish to cure a scolding wife, never fail to laugh with all your might until she ceases, then—kiss her!

THE CRIMEA.

STATE OF THE ARMY.

The Times correspondent thus describes the further demolition of the Docks at Sebastopol. He writes on the 14th.

The demolition of the docks proceeds. There were eleven mines, and 8,000lb. of powder were employed. At about half-past one o'clock the fuse was lighted, and the engineer officers ascended the high ground in rear of the docks to await the explosion. Owing to the mistake of a subordinate officer in charge of the wires, three of the mines were let off prematurely.—Five minutes elapsed, and then the other exploded, not all of them quite simultaneously, but in very rapid succession. The effect was most satisfactory. To re-construct what was overthrown would give more trouble than to build a new dock, for the removal of the ponderous rubbish would of itself be an Herculean labour. The quantity of powder used would suggest the idea of a prodigious explosion, fragments flying high into the air, and strewing the land around; but it must be remembered that the force of these mines is directed laterally, and its first apparent effect disappoints expectation. It is only when the smoke clears away, and one beholds the huge masses of granite that have been riven from their beds, that one forms a just idea of the power applied. At the moment of the explosion, however, some blocks of very respectable size were seen flying through the air, in a direction, fortunately, where their fall was innocuous. Amid and within the gray smoke a dust-cloud appeared. There was a tremulous motion of the ground, and some stones fell off the dockyard wall. The engineer officers were highly satisfied with the effect produced. Few spectators were there, for it is never known beforehand, with any degree of certainty, when these explosions are to take place. A few French officers were present, some of them with photographic apparatus, to catch the effect of the explosion. The Russian batteries were silent. Shortly after the explosion, as I rode up through the Redan, a few shots were fired; but they were chiefly directed at the French part of the town. For the last few days the Russian fire has been very slack. They have probably found out that they merely wasted their powder and shot.—When the destruction of the docks is completed, which will not be before the end of the month, I hope to send you a detailed sketch of the whole operations.

The position of affairs on the 15th is thus described by the correspondent of the Daily News:—

During the last three or four days the camps on the extreme right have been on the alert in the expectation of an attack from the enemy. Rumour fixed on the 12th instant, the Russian New Year's-day, as the probable date of this event. Nothing more than usual transpired, however, nor did observation of the enemy's position indicate any signs of movement. In the course of the morning of the 12th, General Codrington rode over towards Inkermann to reconnoitre, attended by two of his staff, and, as usual, a single orderly dragoon. The limited number of his escort forms a striking contrast with the brilliant cavalcade which generally announces the approach of Marshal Pelissier, or even with the escort which ordinarily accompanies a French general commanding a corps d'armee or division.

There has been a sudden and remarkable change in the weather. On Saturday, the 12th the sun shone brightly, and the weather was so mild and fine that the winter clothing was universally laid aside. The following day we had mists and constant rain until evening from the west, changed to the northward. The thermometer fell rapidly, and yesterday morning at nine o'clock indicated only 10 deg. F. above zero. The temperature continued very low all day, and, being accompanied with a strong wind from the north, the cold was felt very severely. Snow found its way through every crack and crevice of the wooden dwellings, and every precaution was necessary in the open air to prevent frostbite. The roads, which were previously in an exceedingly muddy and uneven condition, became suddenly congealed, and have since been trying enough to the transport animals and passengers from their hardened, irregular, and slippery surface. The troops everywhere appear very healthy and vigorous, notwithstanding these sudden variations of climate. Some of the French troops in the plain are reported to be suffering from a form of scorbutic disease.

No occurrence of note has place in the camps. A few days ago a French officer wandering too near the Tchernaya river in pursuit of game, was shot dead by a Russian sharpshooter.—Two English officers, who had managed to get in front of the French sentries in the same valley, had a narrow escape of a similar fate the day before yesterday. They were wandering on, and had got some distance in advance towards the position of the Russian sentries. A French sentry, who had called in vain, at last hit upon the expedient of discharging his musket to attract their attention, and fired over their heads. This roused them quickly enough, and, on looking around, they discovered a group of four or five Russians, partly concealed and apparently awaiting their nearer approach among some rushes at the opposite edge of the

river. They at once turned back towards the French lines, and regained them, not without risk, for the Russian shots grooved up the ground about them near enough to prove the necessity of the sentry's warning. The Russian sharpshooters line the whole length of the Tchernaya on the north side, and omit no opportunity of firing a shot at a casual straggler.

A very important change has been made in the constitution of the land transport corps.—The sections of the corps which have hitherto been designated divisions, and have been under the command and direction of captains of division, subject to the control of the director-general of the land transport, are in future to be regiments—each under the command of a field officer, and subject to the orders of the general of the division of the army to which it may happen to be attached. There can be no doubt but that this arrangement will lead to stricter discipline among the men, better security of public property, and facilitate the necessary arrangements in case of one or two divisions being detached from the main body of the army. The details of this plan have been published in an after order.

The fourth division is going to arrange a new theatre near Cathcart's-hill, and two small packs of barriers are daily expected out—to follow drags.

The defaulters of our army, who now wear a white band round their caps, as our sappers did during the siege to distinguish them from the artillery, are daily employed breaking stones on the roads and collecting the iron shot into heaps for transmission to Balaclava. The French assert that in a week they will have all their guns, together with their share of the enemy's at Kamiesch. I only wish we were as forward. March is fast drawing nigh, and if haste is not made we shall be pushed at the last moment. There is no reason in the world why all the keys should not be blown in, which would take much longer to re-build than the five docks and basin, after the debris were cleared away, and likewise all the white buildings and perfect stone storehouses destroyed, so that when this army quits the Crimea, it might be truly stated that not one stone was left standing upon another. Flags of truce have been lately of rather frequent occurrence.

Yesterday No. 3 general order was to the following effect:—All officers are desired to complete themselves with pack-saddles and field equipment with as little delay as possible. General officers will be so good as to see that this order is attended to in their respective divisions. This looks like a move in the spring.

The Politician.

THE BRITISH PRESS.

From Lloyd's London Newspaper, Feb. 3. A 'HOPE' OF PEACE.

The Queen's speech is, at least, simple and direct to its object. Her Majesty does not bring the assurance, but the hope, of peace. Cautiously acknowledging the good offices of Austria, the Queen says, 'I have the satisfaction to inform you that certain conditions have been agreed upon, which I hope may prove the foundation of a general treaty of peace.' Very good; but what follows, is still better. 'In conducting these negotiations,' says her Majesty, 'I shall deem it right in no degree to relax my naval and military preparations until a satisfactory treaty of peace shall have been concluded.' Thus while the Paris conference sits, our folks in the dockyards and arsenals are to be up and stirring.

With the Queen of England's speech, very opportunely comes the Emperor of Russia's after interpretation of the conditions proposed by Austria. This almost leaves the matter as it was. Most assuredly, it is merely the poorest prudence in us not for a moment to bate in preparation for further warfare, the whilst Count Nesselrode picks certain of the conditions to pieces, and at once rejects the most important. The fifth point leaves to the belligerent powers to make certain terms for the assurance of the complete fulfilment of the other four—this point with all courtesy, Russia begs to waive in toto. She will have none of it. In all other respects she is still willing to treat for peace, still ready to accept any amount of eulogy for her moderation; but the fifth point she strikes out. However, the Austrian minister is to smooth over the difficulty. He has given his word so far. Russia has read the fifth point; but—

In reading it, we ask ourselves if a principle so vaguely conceived, and which opens the door to a negotiation altogether new, if even a complete agreement was made upon the four points, the hope of peace could be realised? M. le Minister of foreign affairs has, it is true, anticipated this apprehension, in stating in his despatch that he will not delay to express to the courts of Paris and London the confidence which animates him that they will not use the right of presenting special conditions but in a European interest, and in such a manner as not to offer serious obstacles to the re-establishment of peace.

This, certainly, leaves the questions of peace very questionable, wholly depending upon the

appreciation of the Courts of London and Paris of the confidence which animates the Austrian Minister in their simplicity. Russia, however, always pacific, knows best what will best secure enduring peace.

It is, then, in the well understood interest of peace that we insist upon the striking out of the fifth clause, and this so much more that the European interest, which it seems to have in view, uselessly complicates a question already thorny, and belonging by its nature to the decision not of the parties engaged in the actual contest only, but to that of a European Congress, sole arbitrator of existing transactions. The Cabinet of Vienna will doubtless know how to appreciate these considerations, and give them effect to the interest of peace with the allies.

There is no doubt that the Austrian Cabinet will do its best, so to 'cook' the Nesselrode despatch as 'to make things pleasant' to Russia. However, we give the summary of the despatch in question;

RUSSIAN READING.

1. In exchange for the strong places and territories occupied by the allied armies, Russia consents to restore to the Ottoman Porte the strong places and territories occupied by its armies in Asia.

2. (Relating to the Danube.) Accepted.

3. Consequently there will neither be erected nor preserved military or maritime arsenals upon the shores of the Black sea. The two coasting powers mutually engage to keep up only the number of vessels of a fixed force necessary to the service and protection of the coast.

4. (Assurance to Christian subjects of Turkey, of their religious and civil rights.) Accepted.

5. Struck out.

For the service of their coast, the belligerent powers reserve their right, which belongs to them, to produce in a European interest some special conditions besides the four guarantees.

Now is France so very desirous of peace that she will sign a treaty made up of these garbled conditions? With the fifth point struck out Russia, in fact, loses nothing. She offers Kara, in exchange for Sebastopol, and certain other 'strong places and territories occupied by the allied powers.' She accepts, pure and simple, the point relating to the Danube; and, though she may subsequently force a quibble into the third point, she accepts that. The fourth point is, of course, not to be contested; besides, the readiness to render what is of the least worth gains for her a character for moderation. But the fifth point, Russia utterly rejects. 'Fifth point. Struck out.' Well, will France and England, in complacency to the Czar, run their pens through it? Or will Louis Napoleon alone, anxious for peace, give in his consent, leaving it to England sternly to refuse, only, after a time, sullenly to acquiesce? In this Nesselrode despatch there is, assuredly, matter for months' debate: but this, her Majesty leaves us to imply from her speech, will not be permitted. The conference may sit and sit through the frost; but—(our dockyards and arsenals, and our recruiting parties are still in full operation)—but with the commencement of the fine weather must end fine words. Let the treaty be signed pure and simple, or let war in all the purity and simplicity of its terms recommence. The country longs for a settlement of the score in the Baltic; though, with all its yearnings for a righteous satisfaction, we doubt not that Russia will be allowed to triumph upon paper, however she may have been beaten on the field.

And then the cost of the war? Is there to be no return of any part or portion of the millions—a hundred millions and more, declared the arithmetical John Bright—the war has cost us? Are we to have no return of our double income tax in the repeal of other imposts? Is the poor man still to feel the swaggering despotism of Russia in his cupboard? Are you to have spent so much treasure, so much precious blood to lay the fiend—and with no return? None. One point, then, is still wanting. Point the sixth, that makes Russia pay the expenses of her own atrocities. The priceless living she cannot restore to us, but she should pay back the price, every farthing of it of her own just chastisement.

But, then, France is so anxious for peace! Even now Louis Napoleon may have in his mind's eye the new decorations prepared in the Tuilleries for the suite of rooms dedicated to his future visitor—Alexander the Second!