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Highly Important News from Russia.

LONDON, DECEMBER 16.

At a late hour last night arrived a mail from Gottenburgh. The tidings by this conveyance far exceed every thing that we have before had the happiness to communicate, of the triumphs of the Russians, and the defeats of their adversaries. The affairs of the Russian campaign were only brought down by the despatches previously received, to the 13th of November. From those which we now impart to the public, we find that a sanguinary action, wherein Bonaparte himself commanded, was fought on the 17th. Herein, the Russians,—we shall not say that they were completely victorious, for fresh glories awaited them,—but herein they killed, wounded, or took prisoners, nearly 10,000 of the enemy, and captured 76 pieces of cannon. On the 18th or 19th, Ney undertook to restore the fallen fortunes of his master; but it was only to share a similar, or severer fate: the killed and wounded of this second encounter are not enumerated; but those of the French, who laid down their arms, humbled by defeat, and exhausted by suffering, are estimated at 12,000 men.—But the official despatches from St. Petersburg present us with another battle that was fought at Senno, and continued two days, the 14th and 15th. This, too, terminated in the triumph of Count Wittgenstein over Victor, and was succeeded by the junction of the forces under the Russian General with those commanded by Admiral Tschitchagoff; a military operation, we suspect, of no less importance than a third victory, and which it was the object of Victor's attack to prevent. His own union with Bonaparte is now, we apprehend, rendered next to impossible; nor, with their reduced and defeated forces, is it a matter of much importance.

Inferior successes of the Russians follow like the gleaming after a fruitful harvest. A transport of remount horses, destined for a General who should have fought on the other side, Prince Swartzenberg, has been taken by the Russian Colonel Czernitschoff. The same Officer has also had the happiness of restoring to their country a transport of Russian prisoners, among whom are Baron Winzingerode and General Switchen.

This is a premature attainment of the fruits of peace even while the war continues. The French couriers, also, are arrested as well as their armies defeated; and every circumstance attests the full and complete triumph of their adversaries.

DECEMBER 17.

We hardly know the terms in which we are to address the people of this and every other European country, on the subject of the *Extraordinary Gazette*, contained in our last paper. It does more than confirm our hopes,—it does more than justify the ardent expressions of triumph, in which we indulged on Wednesday. And really, in speaking of the successes of the Russians, we are obliged to abate the excess of our joy, not from doubt of their magnitude or reality, for upon these our countrymen may rely; but from mere apprehension, lest the vicissitude of human affairs, which does not usually suffer mankind to exult beyond measure upon any occasion whatever, should, by we know not what unexpected reverse, abate somewhat of the transcendent facility which is promised the world, by the overthrow and disgrace of its most detested and detestable tyrant. We shall only say, therefore, in so many words, that Bonaparte is wholly defeated in Russia; he is conquered, and a fugitive. And what can we say more? We have seen his army pass from victory to victory; we have seen it overthrow kingdoms, and subjugate realms,—insult sovereigns, and oppress peasants,—violate every human right, and diffuse every species of human misery. And now where is it? Where shall we look for it? "A wide and capable destruction hath swallowed it up." In this awful event we rather admire in humility the dispensations of Providence, than exult with pride over the fall of an haughty foe; it is hardly to be viewed as an occurrence between man and man, or between nation and nation; but as a divine judgment upon the earth. Having said thus much, we hope in the spirit of self-abasement, on the amazing events which have taken place in Russia, we must now enter upon an analysis of their particulars.

Lord Cathcart's despatches of the 23d and 25th ult. are nothing but a series of admirable exertions on the part of the Russian Generals and their troops; and miserable humiliations, and ruinous defeats, on that of the enemy. From the date of his former report, up

to the 9th of November, Marshal Kutusoff held on the pursuit of the French,—cutting off their detached parties, and narrowing their resources. On that day Count Orloff Denizoff, commanding a portion of the advance between Smolensko and Krasnoi, fell in with a corps of detachments from the Imperial Guards, under General Barraguay d'Hilliers. The particulars of this action are sufficiently remarkable. The corps was marching to Kalouga, and obviously ignorant of the events that had occurred since the evacuation of Moscow. What an idea does this give of the distraction of the flight, of the confused and broken counsel which could not find time or means to intimate its own movements to so important a share of its *élite*! The Russians found them posted in three villages on the road; three small corps of irregulars, under a Colonel and two Captains, attacked them in their post. The undisciplined bravery of this handful of Russians mastered the skill of the French guards; and at the close of the struggle, one division, under Charpentier, was nearly cut to pieces; d'Hilliers' division made a rapid retreat to Smolensko; and Augereau, brother to the Marshal, after seeing a thousand of his men killed, surrendered the surviving two thousand to Captain Phicner, who had not fifteen hundred. The succeeding days were, like those that had gone before distinguished by further losses of the enemy. On the 12th, the same active Officer who had conducted the affair of the 9th, attacked a foraging party of the cavalry and artillery, killed 1500, made 1800 prisoners of these important corps, and took 1000 horses, and 400 carriages, chiefly laden with stores. On the 12th Adjutant General Denizoff killed 500, and took 400 more.

On the other side of Smolensko the same spirit was followed by the same result; and Platoff, who is the evil genius of Beauharnois' corps, attacked it on the 9th. The action must have been bloody and ruinous to the enemy, for the Cossack General brought off 33 pieces of cannon; while the prisoners spared from the sabre and the lance, amounted to but 200. These, bloody and successful as they were, were but the prelude to greater events. Marshal Kutusoff, convinced that it was the intention of the French to make a movement by Krasnoi, a town to the south-westward of Smolensko, pushed forward a strong body under General Onverow, to divert the manœuvre. The French still moving forward in heavy masses from Smolensko under Davoust, a reinforcement was brought up, commanded by Lieutenant General Prince Galitzin. This measure appears to have been masterly and decisive. The French were turned, and knowing at length that there was no chance in retreat, engaged with the fierceness of men who had every thing to lose. The Russian artillery poured upon them: (it is probable that the greater part of the French artillery was lost in the march from Moscow,) and after fighting the fight of despair, as long as they had strength or arms, they gave up the day, with the loss of two Generals, 58 officers, 9170 rank and file prisoners, 70 pieces of cannon, and 3 standards. The *baton* of Davoust was one of the trophies of this glorious day. The loss in killed and wounded was immense. But the strongest feature of all, was the presence of Bonaparte,—he, the cause of this whole scene of havoc and misery, came to the field to try the last throw for fortune, and see the desperate game played.

It may be beyond human imagination to conceive the thoughts and tumults of his mind as he saw that battle join,—the mixture of stormy passions,—the rage and disappointment,—the fierce repentance and the darkened glory, that urged each other like clouds over the heart of a man so eminently gifted, so splendidly successful, and then perhaps within an hour of utter ruin. When the day turned he fled: "Abiit, erasit, erupit," and left his army to their fate. The French having now quitted Smolensko, and given the usual evidence of their having quitted it finally, by blowing up the cathedral with the same wanton and barbarous wickedness which had already marked their retreats in Spain and Portugal. Marshal Kutusoff advanced an additional force to cut off the rear divisions under Ney. It gives an extraordinary testimony to the vigour and unwearied spirit of the Russian General to see him thus fighting without intermission, not resting satisfied with the most distinguished successes, but toiling and triumphing on, while there was a remnant of his enemy before him.

On the 17th of November, about three in the afternoon this memorable action began by an attack on the Russian line. The French, under cover of a fog, advanced to the foot of the batteries. Forty pieces of cannon, and the whole musketry of the line, opened on them at the distance of 250 paces. Under this deluge of fire, they could neither fight nor fly. A flag of truce was sent to Gen. Millaradovitch, and at midnight the whole corps of 12,000 men laid down their

arms. The loss in the battle was enormous. Marshal Ney was wounded. He, like his master, fled from the field, and was pursued by the Cossacks across the Dnieper. Four Generals of Division were said to have been wounded, and upwards of an hundred officers were among the prisoners. The most irresistible proof of the broken spirit of the enemy, is the small number of the Russian loss. In this encounter, in which the French fought, not for victory but for life, their conquerors lost but 500 men.

The Russian arms were equally prosperous on the Dwina. On the 14th November, Count Wittgenstein was attacked by Victor, with the express object of driving him across the river. The Russian advanced guard drew him on by an admirably cool retreat within the range of their batteries. The loss of the French in the attack was between 2 or 3000, and next morning they had completely withdrawn. The cavalry sent in pursuit continued to harass them, and had already brought in 600 prisoners. The despatch notices a trait of military spirit, which gives a fine answer to the tales in the French Bulletins of the cowardice and disaffection of the peasantry. A battalion of raw militia, when the order came for the retirement of the troops in front, refused to understand it, crying out that their Emperor had sent them there to fight, and not retire. With such soldiers, an empire must be unconquerable.

The successes of the Russians are, indeed, in their whole aspect, most glorious. But there is one source of anxiety which absorbs the minds at this moment, and before it all other interest passes away. The question, whether Bonaparte has escaped, or can escape is almost the only one to which we can listen for the time. He is reported to have been with Davoust's army on the night of the 16th; and to have fled rapidly towards Poland, with his Guards, some Polish divisions, and some Italians. On the next day, the Moldavian army was to have taken up its ground at Minsk; and it was conjectured, that, in that case, none of the fugitives could escape. Through every part of the North, rumour was busy in assigning different terminations to the career of this bold bad man. He was said to have shot himself on the night after the destruction of Ney's corps; but it was still more strongly reported, that he had been dangerously wounded. Letters from Berlin mention, that couriers had arrived at that city, for the purpose of procuring the most eminent surgeons to administer aid to a great personage of the French army, who had received a deep sabre cut on the neck; and that accordingly three of the principal practitioners, whom they name, had gone off with all possible speed. These, of course, we give as mere reports, but they show the state of public feeling on the Continent,—the wild and eager desire to shake off the yoke of the tyrant,—and the noble opportunity offered to a sound and enlarged policy for raising it from servitude. But whether Bonaparte escapes or not, his army is undone, and his military fame degraded. How he may face his people, may be well worth his thought: that he may never enter again upon his career of blood, is well worth our's.

DECEMBER 14.

Sir E. Nagle is appointed to succeed Sir J. T. Duckworth in the command at Newfoundland.

Government, it is understood, have received accounts from Sir J. B. Warren, of the rejection of the proposals which he had been authorised to make, and have, in consequence, ordered a strong reinforcement of ships to join the Admiral at Halifax. In addition to those already on their passage, the following have received directions to join him:—*Ramilles*, of 74, Captain Barker; *Sybilie*, of 38, Capt. Upton; *Eclipse*, Capt. Tucker; *Indian*, Capt. Jane; *Arab*, Capt. Wilson; and four smaller vessels.

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Admiral Bentinck is joined with Lord Cathcart in the Councils of Russia, and if need be, is to have a command.

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