

From the N. Y. Courier and Enquirer, March 16.

The Late Czar.

Nicholas Paulovitch, Emperor of Russia, now reported to be dead, was the ninth child of the Emperor Paul, by his second marriage with Maria Feodorowna of Wurtemberg, and was born on the 25th of June, 1796, at Gatshina, near St. Petersburg. Imperial historians call him the fifteenth sovereign of the house of Romanoff who has ruled in Russia. Others call him the eighth sovereign of the Holstein Gotorp dynasty, which is of German descent.

At the time of his birth, and for years afterward, there was little sign of the high destiny which awaited him.

Two elder brothers, the Grand Duke Alexander and the Grand Duke Constantine, were immediately between him and the throne, and prospectively were their issue, which might cut him off from it forever.

He was four years old when his father, Paul, ascended the throne. He, with his younger brother, Michael, received his education under the immediate superintendence of his mother.

The first event of his youth which stamped itself with terror on his memory, was the murder of his father, Paul.

On the fearful night when that tragedy occurred, his mother caught up the two young Princes in her arms, and amid the clash of weapons and the confused voices of alarm in the palace, she ran through the corridors leading to the apartments of the Emperor, where she was stopped and forced back by one of the conspirators. In the meantime, the Emperor was strangled with a scarf by the hand of assassins, and Alexander I. was proclaimed Emperor the ensuing day.

The first years of the reign of Alexander were so full of stirring events, that the private history of his younger brothers Nicholas and Michael remains in a measure unrecorded. Their education was eventually entrusted to tutors, both native and foreign, who instructed them in the sciences and in the French and German languages. In the acquisition of modern languages Nicholas exhibited some adroitness, whilst he was passionately fond of music, and even composed, it is said, several parade marches. The demeanor of Nicholas is said to have been cold and reserved in his youth to those around him, even to his mother when he had first passed the bonds of childhood and began to understand his real position in the imperial palace. He early manifested a love of martial studies, particularly the ordinary routines of field muster discipline.

The youth of Nicholas was what may be said to be moral. In the gallant Court of his brother the Emperor Alexander, he appears to have kept himself marvellously free from intrigues, and to have concentrated all his pleasures on military exercises and amusements.

In 1814 Nicholas left the Court of his brother for a tour abroad. He visited France, Germany, England, and various other countries, and returned home early in 1817.

On the 13th of July, 1817, being then hardly twenty-one years of age, he married Maria Charlotte, eldest daughter of the late King of Prussia. The bride was about two years younger than the bridegroom. The marriage was solemnized at St. Petersburg, and the bride, in accordance with Russian law, although she came of a Protestant family, adopted the Greek religion, and with it the Christian names of Alexandra Feodorowna.

The marriage is said to have been one of love on both sides, although there was, doubtless, political expediency mingled with it. There was a great similarity between them not only in the majesty of figure, but also of mind and character.

At the time of his marriage, Nicholas held the military rank of Head Inspector of Engineers in the service of his brother, the Emperor, but he was not admitted to the Council table when political and diplomatic questions were discussed, and his sphere of operation was confined to mere garrison service. Nicholas felt his subordinate position and lived with his wife retired from the Court, a domestic man, deriving his happiness in performing the part of a husband and father in such a manner that the example of himself and wife has been cited as a model of domestic bliss.

His eldest son, Alexander Nicolaiwitch, was born one year after his marriage. In 1819 followed the birth of his second child, the Grand Duchess Maria; in 1822 that of the Grand Duchess Olga.

Alexander died December 1st, 1825. The news arrived at the Winter Palace, where the Imperial family were assembled in the chapel to render thanks for the messages received the previous day, announcing the convalescence of the Czar.

It was Nicholas who received the fatal news, he only of the three brothers then being resident in St. Petersburg. It was supposed by the Russian people that the Grand Duke Constantine, the next brother in age to Alexander, (the latter having died without any direct heir) would succeed to the throne. But Constantine had some years previously resigned his claim in favor of Nicholas, the fact being only known to the Empress-mother.

Before the news of Alexander's death was bruited in the streets of St. Petersburg, Nicholas obtained a brief interview with the Empress-mother. What passed at the interview is not known. Immediately afterwards, Nicholas repaired to the Senate Palace to take the oath of allegiance to his brother Constantine. The State Council replied by appealing to sealed packets deposited by Alexander with the Senate

to be opened after his death. The packet was found to be the resignation of Constantine addressed to Alexander, a letter of Alexander assenting thereto, and a decree which gave the throne to Nicholas.

Nicholas was then invited to a seat at the State Council, but he answered he had no right to sit there as he was not a member of the Council, but he was ready to receive any communication which they might have to make at his winter palace. To the palace the Council accordingly repaired, and were about to take the oath of allegiance to him, when he refused to receive it until his elder brother had signified to him his determination to resign.

After a lapse of fourteen days, during which all the official acts of Government were performed in the name of the Emperor Constantine, Nicholas received the news of his brother's refusal of the throne, and on the 24th of December 1825, he formally accepted the Government. He fixed, however, December 1st, the day on which Alexander died, as the commencement of his reign.

A conspiracy was the first greeting which Nicholas received at the very moment he seated himself on the throne, and the promptness, daring, and energy, with which he met and quelled it, shadowed forth the determined character which he has since exhibited. We need not repeat the details—a portion of the army revolted and refused allegiance. Nicholas used mild measures at first, but when they were found to be of no avail, a few shots of the cannon did the rest, and throwing down their arms, the rebellious who had survived the fire, begged for mercy. Some of the leaders were hung, some sent to Siberia, while the punishments of a few were of a lighter character.

From that day forward, Nicholas, Czar of Russia, has been firmly seated on his throne. How he has governed, how he has improved on the absolute sovereignty of his predecessors, until now more than ever all his people are but one mighty piece of human machinery moved and controlled by his will alone, we need not here relate.

Neither is it necessary for us to enter into the events of his reign and the causes of the present war, in the midst of the blaze of which, if reports are true, he who lighted the fire expires. These are all well known to our readers, and we have neither the time nor space in the hurry of this brief sketch to give them.

In personal appearance, Nicholas is said to have been the handsomest man in Europe—tall commanding, with a perfect outline of form—physically a fitting monument to mark the history of the present age. A broad chest, a face in which severity and consciousness of majesty were the predominant characteristics, and mouth regularly chiseled, sometimes beaming mildly, but never smiling; eyes which glared terribly in anger, but were calm and mild when the soul was unruffled.

Such was the physical man, Nicholas of Russia. Besides his eldest son Alexander, and the two daughters we have mentioned, he leaves another son, the Grand Duke Constantine, his probable successor, as his eldest son Alexander was born before he ascended the throne.

New Scheme.

SAN FRANCISCO, Feb. 6, 1855.

I hasten to lay before you, in advance of all publicity, a scheme which is now advancing, under profound secrecy, among a goodly number of our most respectable and influential citizens. I have no time to comment, but give you the plan, as it has been revealed to me, without any injunction of concealment.

A new republic is to be formed, consisting at first of ten States, three to be comprised within the present limits of the State of California, three in Oregon Territory, two in Washington Territory, and two from the western portions of Utah and New Mexico. The basis is to be a confederated government, similar to yours on the Atlantic side.

The great railroad is to be abandoned, and every obstacle thrown in the way of its construction; while the argument at the hustings is to be made to the people, that the Government at Washington have refused the road to the people of the Pacific.

The question of slavery is to be adjured and disclaimed until the plan is so far executed that there can be no restriction, after which the Southern four or five States will adopt slavery.

The first convention is to be imposing in numbers, and especially so in the distinguished talent of its members. You need no information as to the number of ex-Senators, ex-Congressmen, ex-Governors and ex-Judges who swarm in our midst, panting for one more good old-fashioned political chase.

The President, Senators, Representatives and Cabinet Ministry are all to be chosen, by the direct vote of the people. The Naturalization Laws are to be fixed on a severe basis.

The act of independence is to be simultaneous with a well planned and decisive seizure of the United States reserves, with whatever of moveables or live stock they may contain. The Sandwich Islands are to be guaranteed their independence, and the United States are to be appealed to in a tone of friendly good-bye.

Here you perceive an opening for all the prominent politicians—a field for the military and naval aspirants—a call for powder mills and ordinance foundries. You may also guess how readily such a severance will be graciously received by England, France and Spain.

I leave the subject with you, without comment. Visionary as it may seem, it is not a fancy sketch; fail it may, but it is now a purpose of deep interest with the parties concerned.

The first public movement will be either a society or a convention, for the purpose of

forming a new party, to be called the Pacific Railroad party, to draw off a majority of citizens from all old party alliances.

Through this medium the Washington Government is to be proscribed and proved to be practically inadequate to our necessities. It is to be shown that we send our gold away, and receive no Governmental protection in return, and that as we now virtually govern ourselves, we might as well have the credit of it abroad.

The conspirators will be startled when they see this letter in your columns, and will begin to heave the lead to find out their soundings.—[Cor. N. Y. Herald.]

The War in England.

PROGRESS OF THE POPULAR MOVEMENT IN ENGLAND—CAUTION TO MINISTERS.

* * * * * We are wearied of expecting every thing decisive. Meanwhile there are things which will wait as little as time and tide. The people of England are tired of waiting forever, and are venting their impatience in public meetings. Marylebone, Liverpool, Birmingham, and other boroughs are passing strenuous resolutions in favor of greater activity abroad and administrative reform at home. Only let our statesmen dawdle a few weeks more, let the war go on a little longer on the old system of no fighting, but some 1,500 dead or deceased every week, and these provincial meetings, now more angry than serious, will begin to acquire a new and terrible import as the only places where men are in earnest and intend what they say. These safety valves, as they are called, of the British constitution, are apt to fall into desuetude, and almost contempt, so long as Parliament seems to be doing its duty; when it fails they come into play and astonish politicians. Nay, let Parliament, let Cabinet beware! What if we should see the rise of a league for military reform? Should the war cost the country 50,000 men and £50,000,000 every year, without results, without honor, but with much injury to commerce and increasing distress to the community, we certainly shall have a league, and a much more dangerous and unconstitutional one than its triumphant prototype. If there is the least suspicion that the war is not carried on as well as it should be, and that the maintenance of a vicious military system, it will answer the purpose of the mercantile classes to tax themselves to any amount for maintenance of a political agitation. This would bring the comonality into direct collision with the prerogative, and we can only say that we trust we may not see it in our time.—[London Times 23d ult.]

The Sorgho Plant.

The scarcity of corn in France has drawn attention to a new plant, recently introduced from China, which promises to supersede to a certain extent the use of beetroot in the manufacture of sugar and the distillation of alcohol.

The Agricultural Committee of Toulon has recently addressed a report to the Minister of War, with respect to the use of the plant in question. It is called the sorgho, or holcus saccharatus, and was first introduced into France in 1851, by M. de Montigny, the French consul in China, who sent some grains of the seed to the Government.

Since then the culture of the plant has been commenced with success in Provence, and promises to be of great advantage to Algeria. The sorgho has been called the "sugar-cane of the North of China," and numerous experiments have recently been tried, with a view to ascertaining if it possesses the properties necessary for producing a crystallizable syrup, so as to become a rival to sugar-cane and beetroot.

According to the report of the Toulon Agricultural Association, it would appear to have these properties. The fact has been ascertained by a series of experiments made in the department of the Var. It also appears to be richer in the saccharine principle than any known plant excepting the vine.

Beetroot contains from 8 to 10 per cent, of sugar; the sorgho produces from 16 to 20 per cent., from which 8 to 10 per cent. of pure alcohol, fit for all industrial and domestic purposes, can be produced.

The refuse is excellent food for cattle, who are very fond of it. The plant grows with great rapidity, and does not require irrigation.—[Dispatch.]

[Can any of our Elders abroad furnish Utah with the seed of the Sorgho plant?—Ed.]

☞ A correspondent of the London Daily News gives an account of a dreadful storm at Naples. He says:

"There has been much illness during the winter in Naples, and the proportion of deaths was for a short time as great as during the pestilence of the cholera this last year. Every one has been attacked by influenza, and several of our oldest residents have been taken off by it."

When I wrote last, I complained of the weather as having been very cold, and having inflicted serious damage on the orange crops. I am now writing on the day after the severest storm which has been known here for many years. It came on the evening of the 14th, from the Southwest, and raged with the intensest fury till the morning of the 16th. In some villages near the coast the sea, which rose as if impelled by some subterranean commotion, made a clean breach over the houses, sweeping them out completely of their contents, and taking them off to sea. The early crops have been destroyed, and the olive trees have suffered much. As yet we have heard but little of the disastrous effects of the storm, but we are fearful that it has occasioned a wide-spread ruin.

LOUISVILLE, March 17.—We were visited with a most tremendous storm last night. The hail stones that fell were at least two inches in circumference, and they came down with such force as to break in roofs, demolish skylights and do much damage otherwise.

Kossuth on the War.

A second letter from the "Governor of Hungary" is published in the New York Times. It commences thus:

SIR: L. Napoleon Bonapart is just now the axis of rotation in European politics. Old England has abjured her aristocratic stiffneckedness towards the lucky parvenu. She has no will of her own. Her Palmyrs and Jonny's pilgrim, from time to time, to Paris, and fetch the parole, and walk with submissive obedience in the track of the adventurer. Do you know the real reason which made England go to the Orient? Why it is simply and solely because Bonaparte was going there. Nothing more and nothing less. England was afraid to have him there alone, so she followed him.

The letter concludes as follows:

The French arm in the Crimea is trembling on the brink of a military revolt. Read the letter I to-day send to the Sunday Times (here enclosed.)

The war is not popular in France. Palmerston, at his late visit to Paris, was so much stricken at this fact that he advised the Emperor to resort to some "constitution concessions;" but he fears to paint the evil one on the wall—he might step down, of course.

The unpopularity is such that not one volunteer recruit is to be had in warlike France, either for love or money. The "conserits" betake themselves to their heels by hundreds. Their families are made responsible, and can get no substitute under 6,000 francs, (\$2,400.)

At Paris, between the "garde" and the "line," a dozen duels day by day.

Difference and division in the head-quarters of Bonapartism, and in the very midst of the family. Fould and Morny are for peace at any price. The "Emperor" is for war only as "a simple diversion al' esprit public," and therefore a war restricted to the Crimea and to the Pruth at the utmost, just as Louis Philippe desired to make he war in Algeria. Certain members of the "family" tell him that this is as much as to lose the only real army he has, and to expose France to a coalition, without having any force to oppose but raw recruits, badly led, because it is a fact that he has no Generals, (the Cavaignacs, Changarniers, Lamoricières, Bédouins, Lefflos, Charrases, remaining irreconcilable.)

The "Emperor" asks: "Well, what is to be done?" Some of the family answer: "Recall the army from the Crimea; leave the English to do in the East as they can, and a 'Polish campaign' with the whole of the resources we have left." Upon this the Emperor gets in a fit, and shouts: "So you advise revolution? d—n you, rather, Nicholas." And he sends for the lawyer Béranger, and orders him to draw up a memoria showing that Morny, after having been Morny for 46 years, is his own legitimate brother, a full blood Bonaparte, the next heir to the throne, upon the principle of the Roman law, Pater est quem mytiō demonstrat. The memoria is in the course of preparation. Very likely you will have soon some Bonapartes in America again, probably without passports, if the people will let them go.

[From the New York Herald.]

Terrific Fire in the Pineries of Carolina.

The passengers on the Wilmington and Manchester Railroad, in the northern part of South Carolina, enjoyed, on Friday night last, the exciting and magnificent spectacle of a fire in the woods, extending over the distance of ten miles, and showing first on one side, then on the other, and frequently on both sides of the road. Occasionally the scene rose to the dignity of sublimity.

Many a tall yellow pine was on fire to its very top, waving in the strong wind like a vast plume of flame. Now the flames would crawl up and lick the wheels of the locomotive, rendering the air near the windows too hot to be endured, and filling the cars with suffocating smoke; and then, as we passed rapidly on, long wavering lines of fire would be seen sweeping on to attack some new and unburnt field. Now and then we would pass a large field which had been cultivated, but upon which great numbers of old stumps were standing; these, although not blazing freely, were still all on fire, the glowing coals standing out in the darkness like millions of colored lamps.

Great showers of sparks would sail over us, glittering and dancing about like a cloud of fire flies. Sometimes a single lighted woodknot would ignite perhaps fifty feet from the ground—a gigantic torch in the dark green of the evergreen pine.

Long reaches of fencing were on fire, and once or twice we saw the bright embers remaining after the fences were consumed—an endless serpent of living coals.

This fire had commenced burning ten or twelve hours previous, but so dry was the material, that it had extended for miles when we passed; and the alarm in the vicinity was general and extreme. Farmers were out with their hands to protect their buildings and produce, and large numbers of men were watching the railroad, but it was generally thought some considerable portion of it must be burned. An immense amount of damage must have resulted, as there are large turpentine plantations in the neighborhood.

The scene was one of the most thrilling and sublime I have ever witnessed, and will never be forgotten by

PINE KNOT.

Monday morning, March 12, 1855.

Our Locomotive.

An Englishman was bragging of the speed on English railroads, to a Yankee traveler seated at his side in one of the cars of a "fast train."