

[From the Traveler.]

GIVE ME THREE GRAINS OF CORN, MOTHER.

BY MRS. A. M. EDMOND.

The above words were the last request of an Irish lad to his mother, as he was dying from starvation. She found three grains in a corner of his ragged jacket and gave them to him. It was all she had; the whole family were perishing from famine.

TUNE:—*Irish Emigrant's Lament.*

Give me three grains of corn, mother,
Only three grains of corn,
It will keep the little life I have
Till the coming of the morn.
I am dying of hunger and cold, mother,
Dying of hunger and cold;
And half the agony of such a death,
My lips have never told.

It has gnawed like a wolf at my heart, mother,
A wolf that is fierce for blood,
All the live-long day, and the night beside,
Gnawing for lack of food.
I dreamed of bread in my sleep,
And the sight was heaven to see;
I woke with an eager famishing lip,
But you had no bread for me.

How could I look to you, mother,
How could I look to you,
For bread to give to your starving boy,
When you were starving too?
For I read the famine in your cheek,
And in your eye so wild,
And I felt it in your bony hand,
As you laid it on your child.

The Queen has lands and gold, mother,
The Queen has lands and gold;
While you are forced to your empty breast
A skeleton babe to hold;
A babe that is dying of want, mother,
As I am dying now,
With a ghastly look in its sunken eye,
And famine upon its brow.

What has poor Ireland done, mother,
What has poor Ireland done,
That the world looks on and sees us starve,
Perishing one by one.
Do the men of England care not, mother,
The great men and the high,
For the suffering sons of Erin's Isle,
Whether they live or die?

There is many a brave heart here, mother,
Dying of want and cold,
While only across the channel, mother,
Are many that roll in gold.
There are rich and proud men there, mother,
With wondrous wealth to view,
And the bread they fling to their dogs to-night,
Would give me life and you!

Come nearer to my side, mother,
Come nearer to my side,
And hold me fondly as you held
My father when he died.
Quick, for I cannot see you, mother,
My breath is almost gone,
Mother, dear mother! ere I die,
Give me three grains of corn.

[From the N. Y. Herald of Dec. 7.]

NEWS DIRECT FROM RUSSIA.

ARE THE CZAR AND HIS PEOPLE TIRED OF THE WAR?—RUSSIA AND HER MILITARY RESOURCES.—CONSTRUCTION OF NEW FORTS AND THE STRENGTHENING OF OLD ONES—SEBASTOPOL, CROSTADT, NICOLAIEF AND SWEBORG—THE FINANCIAL CONDITION OF RUSSIA—THE TRANSPORTATION OF PROVISIONS—ARE THE NOBLES OR SERFS DISCONTENTED? &c., &c., &c.

Among the passengers who arrived on Friday last by the steamer Atlantic, was Col. Tal. P. Shaffner, who has come direct from Russia, where he has been traveling for the last five or six months. As this was his second visit to that country, he had ample opportunities for observation and of becoming acquainted with its character and condition, its resources, and the popular feeling with regard to the present war.

Wherever he went he was received by all classes, from the imperial family to the lowest official, with the greatest hospitality, and every attention and courtesy was paid to him during his visit. He has been charged by the English papers with being in the pay of the Czar, and that he is bound by pecuniary obligations to support the interests of Russia; but the real object of those charges, which is deserving of particular notice, have been made against nearly all Americans who have spoken favorably of Russia, is to throw discredit on their statements, and by doing so to conceal the actual condition of things in that country from the world.

Their object, however, has become so apparent that their accusations are entirely disregarded, and the public mind in this country has, from the frequent misstatements, intentional or otherwise, of the British press, at last come to regard their accounts of the war with distrust and suspicion.

Soon after his arrival, we paid a visit to Col. Shaffner, and in the course of a few hours' conversation with him, obtained much of interesting information in relation to the war, and the means at the disposal of the Czar to carry it on. While in Russia, he traveled over a distance of three thousand miles, and visited Croststadt, Nicolaieff, Swaborg, and many other of the most important fortresses throughout the empire.

He was all through the northern, central, and southern portions, and during his travels was in frequent intercourse with the nobility, as well as the lower classes of the population. Wherever he went it was only necessary to introduce himself as an American, when he was immediately greeted with the warmest welcome and compelled to partake of their hospitality. It was the same with all the imperial family.

Before giving any of the facts which he rela-

ted to us, we must state that there were some which he could not as a man of honor make known without compromising his character with the Russian government and destroying all confidence with our countrymen in their business and personal relations.

These facts relate to the numerical force of the army, the strength of the forts and the financial resources of the country, in regard to which he did not consider himself justified to enter into specific details, although he has given sufficient to enable us to form a pretty accurate estimate of their means and resources.

The wisdom of this policy on the part of the Czar will at once be perceived when contrasted with that of the Allies, whose movements are known to the Russians frequently before they take place. In many respects this secrecy is attended with the greatest advantage, and, particularly when nations are engaged in actual warfare, cannot be too strictly enjoined upon all having business or official relations with them, and who are entrusted with matters of State importance.

We have stated that Col. Shaffner was in constant intercourse with all classes of the people; and as a great deal has been said about their feeling in respect to the war, we shall begin by dividing the experience and impressions on this subject.

It has been reported that the nobility are becoming tired of the war, on account of the levies which are made upon them for men; and that they are beginning to display their opposition to the government already, though in what way we have not been informed. So far, however, from this being the case, they are among its most strenuous and ready supporters, and have signified their willingness, again and again, to sacrifice all their wealth before they will consent to yield an inch.

There is only one sentiment among them, and that is a determination to carry on the war so long as there is a rouble in the treasury, or a man to shoulder a musket. On this matter they express their opinions pretty freely, and they appear to be based as much upon sound reason and policy as on a feeling of national pride or national enmity.

They argue in this way:—"Suppose we are defeated: the loss will not fall more heavily upon us than if we were to allow ourselves ignominiously to sue for peace. Our enemies, flushed with victory and renewed confidence in their own strength, would demand as an indemnity, perhaps the fairest and most fertile portion of our country—a portion, too, that we fought so hard and so long to obtain; they will insist, too, on us defraying the expenses of the war with money, and upon the relinquishment of some of our best forts and the diminution of our navy, which they have already expressed their determination to confine within the narrowest limits."

But there is a still stronger feeling actuating them, and that is the feeling of religion, which almost reaches the bounds of fanaticism. It is summed up in the two words, their "God" and their "Emperor," and exceeds, or we should perhaps say stands in the place of, patriotism with them.

Nothing can exceed their zeal and devotedness in seconding the wishes of the Czar, or their indignation at the outrages which have been committed upon their church by the allied troops. The desecration of the churches at Kertch aroused the most intense hatred throughout Russia—a hatred which it will take years to remove from the Russian.

In fact, so great was the excitement created thereby that the government did not consider it politic or prudent to publish all the reported causes of outrage committed.

The desecration of their churches and the outrages which have been perpetrated, it is feared, if fully known, might lead to turbulence, and give to the war the character of a religious feud or riot. Speaking one day to a wealthy Russian noble about the feeling of the aristocracy, he said to Col. Shaffner that the moment the Czar required it, his whole property in money, estates and serfs, amounting to over ten millions, would be cheerfully given up, and he himself, and every member of his family, were ready to sacrifice themselves rather than allow the Allies to dictate terms to Russia.

The general feeling, in which the very serfs participate, is one of confidence in the ultimate triumph of their country. The belief the Czar is invincible, and that Russia never can be defeated.

Is it possible to overcome such a country, or is it at all probable that the Czar, with almost unlimited resources at his command, with a nobility ready to support him to the utmost extent of their means, and a people who regard the war as a crusade against a sacrilegious foe—it is probable, we say, that he will yield one inch of his territory, or accede to a single demand which may lower the standing of his empire, either among his own subjects or the nations of the earth?

Upon the means of enlistment and transportation of provisions various reports have been circulated, and all of them either entirely unreliable, or such a commingling of fact and falsehood that it has been almost impossible to arrive at the truth. Correspondents writing from St. Petersburg to the French and English papers, state that it is necessary to use force in the drafting of men for the army, and that large bands of serfs who have escaped were infesting the country in different parts with their brigandage.

Speaking of these reports, Col. Shaffner says there is no reliance to be placed on them; that he never heard of a single case in which com-

pulsion was employed, and that the Russian serf enters the ranks cheerfully at the command of the Czar, whom he regards as the viceroy of God on earth. No difficulty whatever is experienced in executing the orders of the Emperor; and such is the alacrity with which they are carried out on the one hand and submitted to on the other, that he believes if it were left to the free will of the serfs themselves, hundreds of thousands of volunteers would flock to the standard of the Czar.

New levies are raised with wonderful despatch, and in two or three months out of the raw material thus furnished, a well-drilled, efficient and powerful army is formed and ready for active service. Although it may appear somewhat unreasonable, when his state of serfdom is considered, yet the Russian soldier has a great deal of personal pride, and he shows it particularly in perfecting himself in the use of his arms.

As to the acts of brigandage, and in some cases even of murder, there is no doubt that they have been committed, but not to a greater extent than formerly; and that they are committed now is not to be regarded as a proof that the serfs are discontented or opposed to being sent to the Crimea.

The entire force of the Russian army, including that portion of it stationed at Perekop, numbered, on the middle of October last, about two hundred and fifty thousand. These occupy different positions along the route from Perekop to Sebastopol, and this is so well defended by forts as to render all attempts of the Allies to cut off their supplies utterly powerless. Perekop itself is said to be so strongly protected, that it would employ the whole of the allied forces in reducing it.

The means of transportation, contrary to the statement of the Allies, have not been cut off, nor have they suffered any interruption from the capture of Kertch and the destruction of the immense quantities of grain in the Sea of Azoff. The grain, it now appears, instead of belonging to Russia, was the property of Greek merchants, who had offered it for sale to the Russian government at such an exorbitant price that they refused to purchase it.

They never received provisions in this direction, as they have always been sent by way of Perekop. The Greek merchants, fearing the capture of their property, it seems applied to the Russians for protection; but long before their application was made they were informed that the Sea of Azoff would not be defended against the allied fleets, and they were accordingly advised to take their own counsel in time.

The Russian government, however, although it refused to protect them, made an appropriation of a large amount of money to sink vessels, filled with stone, in the channel at Kertch, to prevent the passage of the enemy's vessels.

The contract for the performance of this work was given to the Greeks themselves, no doubt being entertained that, as it was for their benefit, the work would be promptly and faithfully executed.

The prospect of present gain, however, being more powerful than the dread of approaching danger, the Greek merchants, instead of filling the vessels with stone, used sand, which was washed away by the current, leaving the channel free for the passage of the allies. As this was known at St. Petersburg, very little sympathy, it may be supposed, was manifested for the merchants, who, blinded by their avarice and false to their agreement, had reaped the reward of their own dishonesty.

The transportation of provisions has been so effectively carried on that the Russian army in Sebastopol have never suffered, and the Commissariat has always been well supplied. There were several occasions on which the soldiers were put upon reduced rations; but these were days of fast prescribed by the church, and which are pretty strictly observed.

They are allowed five pounds of meat per week to each man, and there are two days of abstinence from meat out of the seven, leaving an average of one pound per day.

The provisions are generally conveyed from the Smolensk and Saratoff countries to the Crimea in wagons, which are loaded on their return with salt. The same wagons, before the war, went to the Crimea empty, but now they are laden both ways, and make double their former profit, notwithstanding the assertion of a St. Petersburg correspondent of the Paris Pays, that the wagoners, having no employment, are compelled to follow the army.

While traveling through the wheat producing districts, Col. Shaffner saw crops which, he said, were as extensive as any that had been reaped for many years before; and so slight has been the draft on the agricultural population by the raising of new levies, that it will not in the least diminish the next year's produce. When it is remembered besides, that this will have to be kept in the country, in consequence of the allied fleets being in possession of all the outlets from the Black and Baltic seas, there would seem to be very little danger of the Russian army suffering from want of provisions.

The gallant and protracted defence of Sebastopol has proved that, in her fortifications, Russia is inferior to no other country in the world. Comparatively little was known of her system of defenses, and up to the last few months such places as Nicolaieff and Swaborg were never heard of. In the case of Sebastopol, it is a remarkable fact that some of the principal defenses were earthworks, and still more remarkable, that they were found to be more easily defended against an assault than any other kind of fortification.

Sebastopol, however, has not furnished the first proof of this fact, for in our War of Independence, they formed the chief bulwarks, against which the dogged courage of the British troops broke in vain. From the battle of Bunker Hill, on whose heights the patriots had entrenched themselves behind a breast-work of earth, to the last struggle with the retreating foe, fortifications of earthwork were used, and traces of them may still be seen all over the country.

Whether Tottleben is indebted to us for this important fact cannot now be determined, but the value of earthworks for defence was established here three quarters of a century ago.

[Concluded next week.]

Espionage in Loo-Choo.

The perfection to which the system of espionage is carried in Loo-Choo—and consequently in Japan, for the system is no doubt the same in both countries—is almost incredible. I have no doubt that before the second day of our trip was over, the fact was known throughout the whole island, and watchers were set around every village to look out for our approach. We were surrounded with a secret power, the tokens of which were invisible, yet which we could not move a step without feeling. We tried every means to elude it, but in vain. The lovely villages with which the island is dotted were deserted at our approach, and the inhabitants so well concealed, that we rarely succeeded in finding them. Only the laborers who were at work in the fields, were allowed to remain, and even they were obliged to keep at a distance from our path.

We changed our course repeatedly, in the endeavor to mislead the spies, but they seemed to comprehend our designs by a species of instinct, and wherever we went, they had been before us. We scattered our forces, each one taking a separate course, but the spies were still more numerous than we. We could perceive, however, from the demeanor of the natives, that they were well disposed toward us, and felt a strong curiosity to become acquainted with us; and that it was not so much fear of ourselves, as dread of the power of their rulers, which kept them aloof.

I had a great desire to learn something of their social and domestic life, and made frequent efforts to accomplish my object by plunging into the wood from time to time, outstripping the spies, and then darting suddenly into some neighboring village. Although I entered many houses, in two or three instances only did I find the inhabitants within. On my appearance, which must have been very unexpected and startling, the women fell upon their knees, uplifting both hands in an attitude of supplication, while the men prostrated themselves and struck their foreheads upon the earth. I could only assure them by signs of my friendly disposition, and found no difficulty in allaying their apprehensions whenever the spies gave me time enough. On one occasion, where I found two women employed in weaving the coarse cotton cloth of the country, after the first surprise was over they quietly resumed their occupation.

In other respects, the journey was as agreeable as it was interesting. The island is one of the most beautiful in the world, and contains a greater variety of scenery than I have ever seen within the same extent of territory. The valleys and hill-sides are cultivated with a care and assiduity which puts even Chinese agriculture to shame; the hills are crowned with picturesque groves of the Loo-Choo pine, a tree which the artist would prize much more highly than the lumberman, the villages are embowered with arching lanes of bamboo, the tops of which interlace and form avenues of perfect shade; while from the deep indentations of both shores, the road along the spinal ridge of the island commands the most delightful prospects of bays and green headlands on either side. In the sheltered valleys the clusters of sago palm and banana trees give the landscape the character of the tropics; on the hills, the forests of pine recall the scenery of the Temperate zone.

The northern part of the island abounds with marshy thickets and hills overgrown with dense woodland, infested with wild boars, but the southern portion is one vast garden.

The villages all charmed us by the great taste and neatness displayed in their construction. In the largest of them there were buildings called cun-quas, erected for the accommodation of the agents of the Government, on their official journeys through the island. They were neat wooden dwellings, with tiled roofs, the floors covered with soft matting, and the walls fitted with sliding screens, so that the whole house could be thrown open or divided into rooms at pleasure. They were surrounded with gardens, inclosed by trim hedges, and were always placed in situations where they commanded the view of a pleasant landscape. These buildings were appropriated to our use, and when, after a hard day's tramp, we had hoisted our flag upon the roof and stretched ourselves to rest upon the soft matting, we would not have exchanged places with the old viceroy himself.

As a matter of precaution, we kept regular watches through the night, but the natives also kept a counter-watch upon us. The cun-qua was often surrounded with a string of watch-fires; and as the inhabitants seized this opportunity of gratifying their curiosity, we frequently saw hundreds of dusky heads peering at us through the gloom, until the appearance of one of the Government spies scattered them as effectually as if a bombshell had exploded among them.—[Bayard Taylor.]

A tale of Odd-Fellowship, or Woman's Curiosity.

A Lodge of I. O. O. F., at Woodstown, determined to have their lodge room done up clean and nice; it was resolved unanimously that Mrs. K— should be employed to do this job.

After the meeting adjourned, the guardian, who