

579

PAPERS

RESPECTING THE

SETTLEMENT OF CIRCASSIAN EMIGRANTS

IN

TURKEY.

*Presented to the House of Commons by Command of Her Majesty, in pursuance of their
Address dated June 6, 1864.*

LONDON:
PRINTED BY HARRISON AND SONS.

501

RETURN to an Address of the Honourable the House of Commons, dated June 6, 1864;
for—

“Papers or Correspondence, or Extracts, relating to the Immigration of the Circassian Tribes into Turkey, with any account of the circumstances under which they have been driven out by the Russians, and of any preparations which have been made to receive them in Turkey.”

No. 1.

Consul Stevens to Earl Russell.—(Received March 12.)

(Extract.)

Trebizond, February 17, 1864.

THE agglomeration of Circassian emigrants in this town has become a serious matter, and ought to occupy the immediate attention of the Porte. During the last three days fresh arrivals have taken place, and circa 3,000 have been landed; some 40,000 more were preparing to quit their country. Amongst those who have reached, hundreds are labouring under disease, superinduced by famine and misery which they suffered previous to embarkation. Emin Pasha, Governor-General of the Province of Trebizond, has done all he could to alleviate the condition of these unfortunate people, but the means at his disposal are very limited. Meanwhile disease is spreading fearfully amongst the Circassians and natives; the mortality from typhus is on the increase; the panic is great and general, and every one is making arrangements to quit the town. Of three European doctors in whom confidence was placed, one, a French subject, died to-day of typhus; another, a British subject, attached to the Quarantine Department cannot attend the sick, the functions of his office absorbing all his time. A number of the Pasha's employés, whose duties brought them in contact with the Circassians, became infected, and several have died.

The Porte recently sent to this place a quantity of old military clothing, and some drugs for the use of the emigrants; the former has been distributed, the latter proved useless.

The quarters in the vicinity of the cemeteries are rendered uninhabitable owing to the careless manner in which the dead are buried, and the offensive consequences thereof; and whole families are abandoning their dwellings. The chief aqueduct which feeds the fountains of the town is tainted, a Circassian corpse having been found floating therein a few days ago. The streets and squares are in a wretched filthy condition; provisions are getting scarce and dear, and fuel is completely wanting, all which augments the misery and tends to the spread of disease. If some measure is not immediately taken to remove the various inconveniences alluded to, it is to be feared that directly the spring sets in, the public health will suffer considerably.

From the best information obtainable, the mortality must have exceeded 3,500 between December and this date, of which, emigrants 3,000, Turks 470, Greeks 36, Armenians 17, Catholics 9, and Europeans 6.

No. 2.

Consul Dickson to Earl Russell.—(Received April 5.)

(Extract.)

Soukoum-Kalé, February 22, 1864.

STEPS are being taken here for prosecuting the war on the Circassian coast with renewed energy.

A Staff Officer recently arrived here from Tiflis, has been reconnoitring Sochy, from the sea, which it is intended to occupy in spring. As far as I am able to learn, an expeditionary force of some 9,000 men, to consist partly of contingents from the army in the Transcaucasian provinces, and partly of the garrison troops of Soukoum-Kalé, will, in all probability, endeavour to proceed overland from Gagri. Meanwhile, the troops are being daily practised with the improved rifles that have been lately supplied them,

[253]

B 2

and the bakeries are actively employed in the preparation of a large quantity of biscu.

It would be equally difficult for me to state precisely what course the Circassians intend to pursue in the present emergency. All appear to centre their hopes in a forthcoming European war with Russia, and should that not take place, it is not unlikely that, rather than continue to offer open and armed resistance, which experience has taught would only entail upon them increased severities without the chance of final success, the mountaineers may come to terms with their Russian conquerors. Such, at least, I believe to be the opinion urged by many. The emigration of the Abadzekh, and subsequently of the Shapsough, famine, the cattle murrain, have considerably weakened the power even of the Oubikh, who are still in their integrity. To these misfortunes must be added the absence of all political cohesion between the northern tribes, or such remnants thereof, and those inhabiting other parts of the Caucasus, and, indeed, the almost utter impossibility of bringing about such a consummation. Each and all cannot be made to forget their blood feuds, still less to unite in a common cause; and the very war they are all so longing for would perhaps only give fresh impetus to the former, and widen the breach in the latter.

The probable immediate result of the present cruel war cannot be better illustrated than by a local saying, that "even a woman might now-a-days travel from Soudjouk-Kalé to Anapa without fear of meeting a single human being."

No. 3.

Sir H. Bulwer to Earl Russell.—(Received April 23.)

My Lord,

Constantinople, April 12, 1864.

THE continued advances of the Russians in Circassia, and the ill-treatment experienced by the natives from the Russian troops, have led to an almost complete emigration from the country: 25,000 have already reached Trebizond, and others are endeavouring to escape in small boats at every risk. The conglomeration of vast quantities of these people, who have no industrial habits, threatens the health and peace of any one locality, and the loss of life which is occasioned by their hazardous attempts to escape from their conquerors is shocking to humanity. The Turkish Government is therefore about sending vessels to Trebizond to remove the emigrants thence, and place them in different parts of the Empire; and it is also in negotiation with the Russian Chargé d'Affaires here, in order to be able to adopt some measures by which those unfortunate people, who, after the most heroic attempts in defending the country where they were born, are at last obliged to abandon it, may be able to seek an asylum with safety in the Ottoman dominions.

I understand that the Russian Chargé d'Affaires has shown no difficulty, as far as he is concerned, in entering into arrangements with the Porte, and has applied to his Government for further instructions.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HENRY L. BULWER.

P.S.—I may take this opportunity of transmitting to your Lordship a Petition which has been addressed to Her Majesty the Queen by the Circassians, together with a translation of the same.

H. L. B.

Incosure in No. 3.

Petition.

(Translation.)

OUR most humble Petition to Her Magnificent Majesty the Queen and Emperor of England is to the effect that—

It is now more than eighty years since the Russian Government is unlawfully striving to subdue and annex to its dominions Circassia, which since the creation of the world has been our home and our country. It slaughters like sheep the children, helpless women, and old men that fall into its hands. It rolls about their heads with the bayonet like melons, and there is no act of oppression or cruelty which is beyond the pale of civilisation and humanity, and which defies description, that it has not committed. We

have not, from father to son, at the cost of our lives and properties, refrained from opposing the tyrannical acts of that Government in defence of our country, which is dearer to us than our lives. But during the last year or two it has taken advantage of a famine caused by a drought with which the Almighty visited us, as well as by its own ravages, and it has occasioned us great distress by its severe attacks by sea and land. Many are the lives which have been lost in battle, from hunger in the mountains, from destitution on the sea-coast, and from want of skill at sea.

We therefore invoke the mediation and precious assistance of the British Government and people—the guardian of humanity and centre of justice—in order to repel the brutal attacks of the Russian Government on our country, and save our country and our nation together.

But if it is not possible to afford this help for the preservation of our country and race, then we pray to be afforded facilities for removing to a place of safety our helpless and miserable children and women that are perishing by the brutal attacks of the enemy as well as by the effects of famine; and if neither of these two requests are taken into consideration, and if in our helpless condition we are utterly annihilated notwithstanding our appeals to the mercy and grace of the Governments, then we shall not cease to invoke our right in the presence of the Lord of the Universe, of Him who has confided to your Majesty sovereignty, strength, and power for the purpose of protecting the weak.

We beg your Excellency to be the medium of making known to the great British Government and to the glorious British nation our condition of helplessness and misery, and we have therefore ventured to present to your Excellency our most humble petition. A copy of it has been submitted to the Sultan's Government and to the Embassies of other Powers.

(Signed by the people of Circassia.)

29 *Sheval*, 1280 (*April 9, 1864*).

No. 4.

Consul Dickson to Earl Russell.—(Received May 17.)

(Extract.)

Soukoum-Kalé, March 17, 1864.

I FEEL it a painful duty to report a deed that has come to my knowledge, which has so exasperated the Circassians as to excite them to further resistance, however desperate their case may be.

A Russian detachment having captured the village of Toobeh on the Soobashi River, inhabited by about 100 Abadzekh, and after these had surrendered themselves prisoners, they were all massacred by the Russian troops. Among the victims were two women in an advanced state of pregnancy, and five children. The detachment in question belongs to Count Evdokimoff's army, and is said to have advanced from the Pshish valley.

As the Russian troops gain ground on the coast, the natives are not allowed to remain there on any terms, but are compelled either to transfer themselves to the plains of the Kouban or emigrate to Turkey.

No. 5.

Consul Dickson to Earl Russell.—(Received May 17.)

(Extract.)

Soukoum-Kalé, April 13, 1864.

THE Ubikh and Fighett tribes are fast embarking for Trebizond. In fact, after their land having been laid waste by fire and sword, emigration to Turkey is the only alternative allowed to those mountaineers who refuse to transfer themselves to the Kouban steppes and contribute periodically to the militia.

The condition of these poor people is described by eye-witnesses as most distressing. In the hurry of departure the overcrowding of boats is so little heeded as to lead to frequent disasters, while such of their horses and cattle as war and famine have spared are being sold for a few paper roubles.

In some instances the emigrants, sooner than see their weapons (may be heir-looms in the family for centuries) exchange hands with the enemy, have flung them into the sea.

With a view of introducing Russian colonization in the conquered districts the Government offer grants of land and other privileges to the Azoff Cossacks who may desire to settle there. Government employés indiscriminately, who may have served ten years in the Caucasus, will be entitled to claim an allotment of the land.

No. 6.

Consul-General Murray to Earl Russell.—(Received May 17.)

My Lord,

Odessa, April 29, 1864.

I HAVE the honour to report that information has reached me that Vardan and Söchy have recently been occupied by the troops under command of Major-General Heymān, who encountered no resistance. The mountaineers are in a most distressing condition, and are emigrating to Turkey as fast as boats can be found to take them away.

Grants of land in the conquered districts will now be offered to such of the Azoff Cossacks as desire to settle in the South of the Caucasus, and every encouragement will be given them to do so.

His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Michael has recently made a tour of inspection in the South.

I have, &c.

(Signed) E. C. GRENVILLE MURRAY.

No. 7.

Sir H. Bulwer to Earl Russell.—(Received May 20.)

(Extract.)

Constantinople, May 3, 1864.

YOU are aware of the large and sudden immigration of Circassians into the Ottoman dominions.

The Russian Government has now acquired the territory of that brave and devoted race, who have only prized one thing more than country—liberty, or at least the life which is free from the domination of a foreign foe. They are flying the shores immortalized by their defence and seeking an asylum in a neighbouring Empire. In short, Circassia is gone; what yet remains to save is the Circassians.

The Ottoman Government is willing to afford the refuge they desire. But its means for doing this are, as your Lordship knows, scanty; what it has already done—and this, comparatively speaking, is little—has been at a cost of 200,000*l.*

One mode of granting hospitality to these unhappy exiles is by dividing them amongst different Turkish villages in different districts, and allotting to four Turkish families one Circassian family in these districts.

This is undoubtedly the cheapest mode, but the worst: it adds to the miseries of the already miserable condition of the Turkish peasant; it affords but a wretched chance of existence to the poor Circassians; whilst the strength of these almost invincible warriors is divided, dissipated, and lost.

It would be a matter of policy, favourable both to Turkey and Europe, to colonize that part of the Ottoman dominions which extends from the Black Sea towards Erzeroom with these gallant fugitives. This country is opposite to that they have quitted, and in some degree resembles it; and here they might repose from their misfortunes.

Nor is this all; if converted into a sort of military colony, they might furnish a new resource to the Turkish armies which are already too great a drain upon the agricultural part of the Turkish population.

There is, moreover, at this moment and precisely at this spot a great object to achieve, for which the Circassian population might be made most useful.

Your Lordship well knows how much a road from Trebizond to Erzeroom is required. The events of the last few weeks render this now more and more urgent for Turkish trade.

To the construction of the road a certain portion of the Circassian immigration might be applied, and this would of course be far easier if their ultimate home was in its vicinity.

Thus combined together are—a great immediate resource to the Ottoman armies; a great and immediate relief to the Ottoman agricultural population; and the completion

of a work not only highly essential to Ottoman interests, but to the general interests of the world. For carrying out a plan of this kind, however, in a suitable manner the Turkish revenue affords no adequate means; that revenue is already appropriated; nor would it do, just as Turkish credit is beginning to move a little freely, to overburthen it by taking from the ordinary income of this country a sum which that income cannot without great embarrassment supply.

At the same time the sum in question would not be so great if reduced to annual income. The calculation I make is about 1,500,000*l.* sterling; the employment of a part of the Circassian population on the Erzeroom road and in the Turkish army might make it something less. Take the interest at less than 100,000*l.* per annum.

Still, it would hardly be fitting for Turkey to seem to beg for this sum, however great the necessity for it, and however noble and useful the purpose on which it is to be employed. There should be something like a movement in Europe to aid her.

Surely policy, humanity, public admiration for unexampled valour, public pity for almost unexampled distress, would come in to assist a cause to which no heart that has ever felt for deeds of patriotic heroism could be insensible.

Were a Committee formed in London and Paris for raising a loan for the object I have described, Turkey might guarantee the interest; and the customs of Trebizond, which by the plan in contemplation would be immensely increased, would be a fitting guarantee.

A Commission in this case should be formed here, consisting of Ottoman subjects of known character, to which might be annexed some European delegate.

I saw so many advantages combined, without any great apparent difficulty, in my project, and it grew upon me so much by reflection, that I spoke of it two days ago to Aali and Fuad Pashas, who, after some consideration, showed a hearty willingness to enter into it.

I then communicated it to M. de Moustier, who said he himself had thought of something of the kind, and we agreed together, after a conversation on the subject, to address our Governments respecting it.

I think I know your Lordship's sentiments sufficiently to flatter myself that they will not be very different from my own; and if they should eventually be embodied in any scheme somewhat like that I have hastily sketched out, it will be a source of the highest gratification to me to have contributed in the slightest degree to have called forth a tribute of generous feeling towards a nation which, from a variety of untoward circumstances, has been crushed amidst the universal regret of sympathizing Europe.

No. 8.

Sir H. Bulwer to Earl Russell.—(Received May 20.)

My Lord,

Constantinople, May 11, 1864.

IN relation to my despatch of the 3rd instant, I should observe that I do not expect any sympathetic movement in favour of Circassia would get the Turks money without security; but if the object for which such money was required was explained, and a sort of feeling manifested in favour of the project, Turkey would stand in a more favourable position than if she came forward without any such assistance to demand money.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HENRY L. BULWER.

No. 9.

Earl Cowley to Earl Russell.—(Received May 20.)

My Lord,

Paris, May 19, 1864.

WITH reference to Sir Henry Bulwer's despatch of the 3rd instant, transmitted to your Lordship by the present messenger, in which his Excellency lays before Her Majesty's Government a plan for the colonization of a part of Turkey by the immigrants from Circassia, a plan which he states to have received the approval of his French colleague, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that M. Drouyn de Lhuys approves equally Sir Henry Bulwer's views.

I have, &c.

(Signed) COWLEY.

Lord Napier to Earl Russell.—(Received May 23.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, May 17, 1864.

I TOOK the liberty yesterday of calling the attention of Prince Gortchakoff to the painful statements in the English newspapers concerning the hardships to which the emigrants from Circassia were exposed in their passage to Turkey, and to the burden imposed on the Turkish finances by the reception and sustenance of a population estimated to amount to 300,000 souls.

The Vice-Chancellor replied that the tribes had insisted on leaving the country; that the Imperial Government regretted it; that it was absolutely necessary to remove these people from their mountain fastnesses, where their predatory and martial habits would be incurable; but that a fair offer had been made to all to settle on lands in the plain, which they had rejected.

His Excellency added that the estimate of their numbers to which I alluded was probably greatly exaggerated; and that if the Turkish Government incurred a considerable expense on one hand, on the other they gained an addition to the Mahomedan population of the Empire which would be of considerable value to the Turkish army.

I said to Prince Gortchakoff that, two years ago, one of the most distinguished officers of the army of the Caucasus had told me that the tribes still in arms at that time on the shore of the Black Sea numbered about 30,000 fighting men, which would give a population of about 250,000. The estimate might, however, be exaggerated, and all might eventually not emigrate.

I have, &c.
(Signed) NAPIER.

No. 11.

Earl Russell to Sir H. Bulwer.

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 25, 1864.

HER Majesty's Government have had under their consideration your Excellency's despatch of the 3rd instant, on the subject of the immigration of Circassians into the Ottoman dominions; and I have to acquaint you that they concur in your suggestions as to the best means of providing a permanent Settlement for these unhappy people, and approve the course pursued by you in the matter.

I am, &c.
(Signed) RUSSELL.

No. 12.

Lord Napier to Earl Russell.—(Received May 30.)

(Extract.)

St. Petersburg, May 19, 1864.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith, in reference to my despatch of the 9th instant, an extract of the official journal of this date, containing further particulars of the operations which have resulted in the emigration of the independent tribes in the Western division of the Caucasus, partly to the basin of the Kouban, but chiefly to Turkey.

The territory occupied by the several tribes alluded to embraces the mountain chains, from which the larger rivers run northward towards the Kouban and the smaller streams southward towards the Black Sea. The region lies between latitude 43° 30' and 44° 30' and between longitude 38° and 40° Greenwich.

It is designated on the accompanying map,* and the points on the coast at which the emigrants are assembled are written in red ink. No estimate has appeared as yet of the whole number of persons thus destined to expatriation. The Minister of War, I am told, speaks of 100,000. The calculation of the foreign newspapers is 300,000. In the report now submitted to your Lordship we hear of 80,000. In the month of March, 30,000 are affirmed to have gone from the mouth of the River Touapsé alone, and 50,000 are said

* Will be published hereafter.

to be waiting at various points on the shore. We know that many had emigrated previously, and we are not assured that the movement has come to an end. Some are mentioned of the tribe of the Abadzekhs, who have accepted the alternative of a settlement in the plain of the Kouban, but the number is not given. It certainly seems not improbable that the emigration may mount up eventually to more than 150,000. If 150,000 indigent persons of all ages and sexes be thrown upon Turkey, such a burden must be severely felt both by the Government and the population. It is difficult to conceive that such a multitude could be moved, clad, lodged, and nourished for one year for less than 500,000*l.* sterling, and certainly they will earn little or nothing for themselves in that period.

The Russians say that a fair offer was made to all the mountaineers to move into the plain, and to enjoy there, with an ample donation of land, some of the privileges of local self-administration. If the tribes had accepted the offer, the settlement of the people would have cost a vast sum to the Russian Government. The charge has been generously but rashly accepted by Turkey.

Inclosure in No. 12.

Extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of May 19, 1864.

Bulletin du Caucase.

DANS ses Nos. 78 et 90 "L'Invalide Russe" a parlé de la défaite que le détachement du Général-Major de Heymann avait fait subir aux Oubykhs le 19 Mars, et qui avait contraint cette tribu à renoncer à continuer la lutte. Les détails de cette affaire que l'on vient de recevoir, ne seront pas, nous l'espérons, sans intérêt pour nos lecteurs.

Voici quelle était, au moment où le printemps de cette année allait commencer, la situation des affaires dans la partie occidentale du Caucase; tous les versants septentrionaux de la chaîne, depuis la Laba jusqu'à la mer, et les versants méridionaux, depuis l'embouchure du Kouban jusqu'à l'ancien fort Véliaminow, étaient nettoyés des populations hostiles.

Resserrés par la population Cosaque, qui occupait tout le territoire, de l'est au Pschisch, et depuis la mer jusqu'à l'Oubinc, et isolés des montagnes par nos détachements, les Abadzekhs avaient été mis dans l'impossibilité de se refuser à l'exécution des conditions de soumission acceptées par eux; dans le courant de Février, ils avaient quitté leurs aotûs, et s'étaient transportés jusqu'au dernier, avec leurs familles et leurs biens, soit sur les points qui avaient été assignés pour leur établissement dans la plaine du Kouban, soit pour émigrer en Turquie.

A la fin de Février, lorsque ce résultat eut été définitivement obtenu l'Aide-de-camp Général Comte Yevdokimow résolut d'entreprendre des opérations persévérantes sur le versant méridional, afin de contraindre les tribus pillardes qui l'habitaient, soit à s'établir sur les points qui leur seraient indiqués le long du Kouban, après avoir renoncé à leur ancien genre de vie, soit à émigrer en Turquie.

Dans ce but, le détachement du Dakho, du Général-Major de Heymann devait franchir la chaîne principale aux sources du Pschisch et occuper la vallée du Touapsé.

Le Général-Major Comte Soumarokow devait, avec une partie du détachement de la Djouba, passer dans le bassin du Schapsoukho, et de là se porter, par la route de la côte, sur l'embouchure du Touapsé, afin d'opérer sa jonction avec le détachement du Dakho; l'autre partie du détachement de la Djouba devait coopérer aux opérations du détachement de la Pschéka du côté du Psékoups.

Le 21 Février, le détachement du Dakho, sous le commandement de l'Aide-de-camp Général Comte Yevdokimow en personne, opéra le passage de la chaîne principale, et, le 23, atteignit l'embouchure du Touapsé, où il occupa l'ancien fort Véliaminow, n'ayant eu, dans les escarmouches de ces trois journées, que deux hommes tués et trois blessés. Ce mouvement eut pour résultat la soumission à discrétion de toutes les tribus montagnardes établies entre le Touapsé et le Psésouapé. Simultanément une partie du détachement de la Djouba, qui avait attendu, près du poste de Tkhamakha, la baisse des eaux du Schebsch, avait également franchi la chaîne principale et atteint avant le 4 Mars l'embouchure de Schapsoukho.

De son côté, le détachement de la Pschékha, du Général-Major de Grabbe, de la suite de Sa Majesté l'Empereur, avait passé, le 1 Mars, des sources du Psékoups dans la vallée du Touapsé, et après avoir nettoyé de sa population le cours supérieur de

[253]

C

cette rivière, était rentré pour le 17 Mars dans le fort Khodyji, situé sur le versant du nord.

L'évacuation de tout le versant du nord par les populations aborigènes permit, au commencement de Mars, de supprimer, dans la province du Kouban, la majeure partie des lignes de cordons,* en n'y laissant que de très-faibles détachements.

Après avoir terminé la construction des postes entreprise le long du Touapsé, le Général-Major de Heymann marcha, le 4 Mars, avec le détachement du Dakho, le long du Psésouapé, et le 5 occupa sans coup férir l'ancien fort Lazarew.

Du 6 au 16, le détachement manœuvra pour nettoyer le versant méridional entre le Touapsé et le Psésouapé; ces mouvements eurent pour résultat l'émigration générale des Schapsougs, qui se concentrèrent par masses à l'embouchure du Touapsé, dans le but de passer en Turquie.

Entre-temps, on reçut la nouvelle que la jeunesse Oubykhe, ayant appelé à son secours les Akhtchipskhoves, avait résolu de s'opposer à notre marche ultérieure sur le Schakhé, et dans ce but s'était massée, près de la côte, dans une position avantageuse sur la rivière Godlik. Afin d'empêcher cette bande de recevoir des renforts, le Général-Major de Heymann, commandant le détachement du Dakho, jugea nécessaire de procéder immédiatement à l'attaque du Schakhé, et le 18 Mars il se mit en marche, de l'embouchure du Psésouapé, en trois colonnes: celle du centre, sous son commandement en personne (5 bataillons avec 2 pièces d'artillerie et la Cavalerie), longea la côte en suivant le versant de la chaîne qui la borde; celle de droite, guidée par le Lieutenant-Colonel Soltan (3 bataillons), suivit le bord même de la mer, et la colonne de gauche, du Lieutenant-Colonel Kluki de Klugenau (4 bataillons avec 2 pièces de montagne), s'avança par les montagnes. Les montagnards ouvrirent le feu à l'approche de nos colonnes de leur position. Après avoir reconnu la disposition de l'ennemi, le Général-Major de Heymann ordonna aux tirailleurs de Sévastopol et de Bakou de se débarrasser de leurs havre-sacs et de commencer une attaque de front, tandis que le Lieutenant-Colonel de Klugenau attaquerait, avec une partie de ses troupes, le flanc de l'ennemi, qu'il ferait tourner par une autre partie de sa colonne. Les montagnards soutinrent d'abord notre premier choc dans l'aotûl qui se trouvait en avant de sa position, puis ils se replièrent derrière des abatis d'arbres; attaqués aussi derrière ce retranchement, ils prirent la fuite après une résistance peu prolongée mais assez vive. A la suite de ce combat, la majeure partie d'entre eux se dirigea vers la côte, dans le but d'émigrer, tandis que la plus faible portion se retira dans les montagnes.

Notre perte, dans cette affaire, a été d'un officier subalterne (le Lieutenant Gavronsky, du régiment d'Infanterie de Sévastopol) et de 7 hommes tués et d'un officier subalterne (le Sous-Lieutenant Ivanovsky, du même régiment) et de 14 hommes blessés.

Le 19 Mars, le détachement continua, dans le même ordre, son mouvement vers le Schakhé; pendant sa marche, quelques dizaines d'Oubykhs et de Schapsougs rallièrent, à cheval, le Général de Heymann, et la masse de cavaliers indigènes qui l'escortait s'accrut de plus en plus à mesure qu'il approcha du Schakhé. A deux heures après midi du 19 Mars, le Général, escorté d'une sotnia de Cosaques et d'environ 300 cavaliers Oubykhs et Schapsougs, occupa le fort Golovine, vers lequel convergea ensuite le détachement.

Les avis des espions affirmaient que la terreur inspirée par la défaite du rassemblement Oubykh dans la journée du 18 se propagait de plus en plus au fond des montagnes. Les Oubykhs et autres tribus hostiles restées sur le versant méridional avaient perdu tout espoir de maintenir leur indépendance. La plupart d'entre eux commençaient à penser à émigrer en Turquie, et déjà un grand nombre se rassemblaient par campements sur le bord de la mer; quelques centaines de familles habitant près de la côte avaient immédiatement frété les kotchermas récemment arrivées et étaient déjà parties. Profitant de cette situation des affaires, le Général-Major de Heymann résolut de se porter rapidement en avant, afin d'occuper le point central du territoire Oubykh avant de laisser aux montagnards le temps de se reconnaître.

En conséquence, le Général fit passer les troupes sur la rive gauche du Schakhé, l'infanterie au moyen d'une passerelle et la cavalerie ainsi que les chevaux de bât, à gué, où l'on perdit 12 chevaux entraînés par la rapidité du courant; le 22, il continua sa marche vers le sud, en trois colonnes comme précédemment, et le 25 Mars il occupa l'ancien fort Navaghinsky, à l'embouchure de la Sotcha. Pendant ces quatre journées de marche, les Oubykhs ne tirèrent pas un coup de fusil contre nos troupes.

Sur les bords de la Rivière Dagomys, le Général Major de Heymann avait reçu la soumission du principal ancien des Oubykhs, le Hadji Dogamoukow, ci-devant chef des

* Les lignes de cordons du Bas-Kouban, Abadzèkhe, de la Basse-Laba et les sections de cordons de Batalpacha de Stavropol, de Protchnookop et d'Oust-Laba.

bandes d'Oubykhs, de Schapsougs et d'Abadzèkhes qu'il rassemblait pour attaquer nos lignes et nos détachements.

Ensuite, les anciens des Oubykhs, des Schapsougs, des Djighètes, et des Akhtchipskhouves se rassemblèrent, vers le 30 Mars, auprès du détachement, pour être présentés à Son Altesse Impériale le Commandant-en-chef de l'armée du Caucase et lui faire leur soumission.

Le 2 Avril, Son Altesse Impériale reçut la soumission de ces anciens, et après avoir écouté leurs demandes, elle leur donna ordre de se transporter à la côte: cet ordre s'exécute. Des masses énormes d'Oubykhs et de Schapsougs sont établis par campements sur divers points au bord de la mer, et partent pour la Turquie au fur et à mesure de l'arrivée des navires qui viennent les chercher.

Dans le courant du mois de Mars, 30,000 individus sont partis du Touapsé; environ 50,000 autres attendent leur tour d'embarquement à Anapa, Novorossiisk, sur la Djouba et le Touapsé, et il en partira au moins encore autant des côtes des territoires Oubykh et Djighète.

C'est ainsi que la résistance des dernières et des plus opiniâtres tribus hostiles a été vaincue, grâce à la persévérance et aux fatigues inouïes des troupes du Caucase. Quoique l'on ne puisse pas affirmer que la guerre du Caucase soit complètement terminée avant que nos soldats aient parcouru tous les défilés des montagnes et en aient expulsé les derniers habitants, il est à espérer du moins que nous ne rencontrerons plus de résistance opiniâtre nulle part, et qu'en raison même de leur faiblesse numérique, les tribus restées dans les gorges des montagnes ne peuvent plus être considérées comme offrant le moindre danger pour nous.

No. 13.

Lord Napier to Earl Russell.—(Received May 30.)

(Extract.)

St. Petersburg, May 23, 1864.

IT is apparent that the Russian Government have long taken an absolute resolution at any risk to remove the whole of the mountaineers still in arms from their native places. The system pursued has been for two years past to move the troops and the Cossack forts and settlements slowly but surely up the valleys which pour their waters northwards to the basin of the Kouban, dispossessing the indigenous inhabitants at every step until at last the highest fastnesses have been reached, and the people inhabiting the watershed have been pushed over into the valleys sloping southward to the Black Sea, and have carried the savage and sequestered people of those regions in masses to the coast.

The policy of Russia, though unrelenting, has not been deliberately sanguinary. There was no desire to exterminate the people; the object was to remove them. Repeated attempts have been made to negotiate a general surrender and emigration, nor have the overtures of the Russian administration been altogether unsuccessful. In three settlements extending along the southern bank of the Kouban for about 150 miles from west to east, a portion of the Schapsougs, the Bjedouchofs, and the Abadzèkhes have been colonized with some success. The Abadzèkhes alone are more than 30,000. It is an error, therefore, to suppose that all these people, or even the great majority before the last general movement, have preferred the alternative of emigrating to Turkey. To the proposals of the Russians the Oubykhs have, however, remained altogether inaccessible. When the Emperor was in the Caucasus last year he visited the frontier of that tribe, and received a deputation from them. They demanded to be left in the possession of their territory, and promised to live on terms of peace and good neighbourhood with the Russians. The Emperor, as I am told, considering their inveterate predatory habits, and the difficulty of holding them to any engagement, declined their request and gave them the choice of war, emigration to the Kouban, or emigration to Turkey. They accepted the alternative of war, and the fortune of arms having gone against them, they now throw themselves on the generosity of a Mahomedan Power rather than on that of the Russian Government. To this result the Turks have greatly contributed by the incessant encouragements which they offered at an earlier period to the emigration. They have since discovered the inconvenience attached to this course, and have, when it was too late, requested the Russian Government to delay and regulate the movement which their incitements had aided to create.

However this may be, the unanimity and precipitation with which the tribes have crowded to the shore probably took both Russians and Turks by surprise. As soon as

C 2

the Emperor was informed of the reports circulated abroad concerning the hardships and sufferings to which the emigrants were exposed, His Majesty telegraphed to the Grand Duke Michael, desiring him to send agents to the spot to inquire into the state of affairs, and to provide the means of relief. Instead of sending an agent, the Grand Duke went in person, and during the last fortnight His Imperial Highness has been on the coast. The last reports have been received from Sviatii Doush (Holy Spirit), near Gagri, and it would appear by these accounts that the distress of the Circassians on the Russian territory has been exaggerated. The Grand Duke affirms that they are in possession of live stock, that distributions of bread have been made to them, and that their sanitary condition is by no means so bad as has been represented. No epidemic disorder prevailed among them. The sufferings of the emigrants had rather been on the voyage to Turkey, and after their arrival at Trebizond, where there was a deplorable accumulation, mismanagement, and misapplication of the assistance sent by the Sultan.

The Grand Duke had asked and had received authority to call to his assistance all the Russian vessels of war in the Black Sea, and as many merchant-vessels as could be disposed of for this duty, so as to provide better means of transport for those who were still bent on leaving the country. A certain reaction, however, seemed to have commenced, and some manifested a disposition to remain and accept an establishment on Russian soil.

From the last accounts of the Russian Consul at Trebizond, it would appear that the average number of deaths at that place among the emigrants was forty per diem.

According to the information derived from the Minister of War, the whole amount of emigrants cannot exceed 100,000.

No. 14.

Lord Napier to Earl Russell.—(Received May 30.)

(Extract.)

St. Petersburg, May 24, 1864.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith, an extract of the official journal of this date.

Inclosure in No. 14.

Extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of May 24, 1864.

LE "Messager d'Odessa" publie la rectification communiquée suivante :—

"Il résulte d'informations particulières reçues de la Nouvelle-Russie qu'il s'y était répandu, et principalement à Odessa, des bruits touchant de prétendus abus dont les montagnards seraient l'objet lors de leur transport en Turquie et qui seraient tolérés par les autorités du Caucase. De pareilles informations, de quelque source qu'elles proviennent, ont en tout cas leur bon côté, et les dites autorités ne manqueront assurément pas d'y porter leur attention; toutefois le mot 'tolérés' ne saurait d'aucune façon y être appliqué, d'autant plus que le public est dans l'ignorance la plus absolue des conditions dans lesquelles cette transmigration s'opère.

"Voici ces conditions: L'autorité supérieure du Caucase propose spontanément aux montagnards qui se soumettent, de deux choses l'une; ou de s'établir sur les points qui leur sont assignés sur les bords du Kouban, ou bien émigrer en Turquie, alternative dans laquelle elle leur laisse une entière liberté de choix. Jusqu'à ce jour les montagnards se transportaient en Turquie sans le moindre contrôle de la part des autorités Caucasiennes; les propriétaires des embarcations Turques entraînent en pourparlers directs avec les montagnards émigrants, et les prenaient à bord sur une rive qui non seulement était soustraite à notre surveillance, mais qui n'était pas même en notre pouvoir. Conséquemment les conditions déterminant le nombre de personnes à transporter à bord d'un navire d'un tonnage donné, de même que celles relatives à l'entretien de ces personnes pendant la traversée, dépendaient uniquement des arrangements personnels faits entre les montagnards et les propriétaires des navires frétés.

"Pour démontrer jusqu'à l'évidence que les autorités Caucasiennes ne sauraient être accusées des vexations endurées par les montagnards dans leurs traversées, nous croyons devoir rapporter le fait suivant, qui dénote suffisamment la manière de voir de ces autorités dans cette affaire. Pour venir en aide aux montagnards tant pacifiques qu'hostiles, transigrant en Turquie de points déjà occupés par nous, elles leur ont

accordé le droit de recevoir certains secours pécuniaires des Commissions nommées *ad hoc.*"

No. 15.

Consul Stevens to Earl Russell.—(Received June 3.)

My Lord,

Trebizond, May 19, 1864.

FRESH arrivals of Circassian emigrants continue occurring daily, and the number encamped at Akchekalch and Saradereh yesterday was 25,000. The mortality amongst them averages from 120 to 150 per diem: 35,000 to 40,000 have been landed at Samsoun, and have infected that place to an alarming extent; as many as 500 deaths have recently occurred there in forty-eight hours. The bakers, from fear, closed their ovens, and quitted the town; for several days bread was wanting, which nearly led to an *émeute*. Dr. Barozzi has proceeded to Samsoun to the assistance of the emigrants.

A Turkish steam-frigate, with a sailing frigate in tow, and divers smaller steamers recently arrived here from Constantinople, and were ordered to the coast of Circassia to embark emigrants for Varna direct. As many as 200,000 more are reported ready to quit their country, and Russia insists upon their leaving by the end of May, old style.

The emigrants present at Trebizond are of the Oubikh tribe. They are, generally speaking, poor, and of an indolent character; they have no regard for cleanliness, which prevents the allay of disease in their ranks, and which is making such frightful havoc amongst them. They live huddled together, infecting one another; they sell the rations and clothing distributed to them by the local authorities; they sell their children for a few piastres; they disinter their dead at night to steal the calico wrappers which envelope the bodies, and then abandon the corpses in the open fields. Lately they concealed several deaths from the local authorities with a view to continue in the receipt of the rations of the deceased individuals; and one corpse was discovered hid for eleven days in one of the tents, other emigrants occupying the same covering without the slightest repugnance.

Such a miserable state of things must lead to serious disorder before long, and will undoubtedly create a furnace of infection directly the warm weather sets in. The attention of the Porte should again be revived, or Trebizond and Samsoun, two important commercial cities, will suffer considerably.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRAS. J. STEVENS.

Papers respecting the Settlement of Cir-
cassian Emigrants in Turkey.

*Presented to the House of Commons, by Command
of Her Majesty, in pursuance of their Address
of June 6, 1864.*

LONDON:
PRINTED BY HARRISON AND SONS.

5323

M A P

REFERRED TO AT PAGE 6

OF

“ P A P E R S

RESPECTING THE

SETTLEMENT OF CIRCASSIAN EMIGRANTS

IN

TURKEY,”

Presented to Parliament June 7, 1864.

*Presented to the House of Commons by Command of Her Majesty, in pursuance of their
Address dated June 6, 1864.*

LONDON:
PRINTED BY HARRISON AND SONS.

Image in preparation ...

MAP referred to at Page 6 of "Papers
respecting the Settlement of Circassian
Emigrants in Turkey," presented to
Parliament June 7, 1864.

*Presented to the House of Commons by Command
of Her Majesty, in pursuance of their Address
dated June 6, 1864.*

LONDON.
PRINTED BY HARRISON AND SONS