

THE TRANS-CAUCASIAN CAMPAIGN.

The latest news from the seat of war in Asiatic Turkey would seem to intimate that, after their first run of success, the Russians are beginning to find "Turkey's weakest point" somewhat stronger than they anticipated. It is announced, (from a Turkish source, it is true,) that "an attack upon Ardahan has been bravely repulsed by the Turks"; that the assailants of Kars have been "compelled to retire," after an abortive attempt at bombardment; that the unquenchable hatred of the Circassian exiles in the Turkish service has sent them into the fore-front of the fight, to hamper the all-important advance of the Russian left, and that the Turkish iron-clads are again threatening the seaboard of the Caucasus.

But of all these adverse announcements, the most startling, as well as the best authenticated, (its reception at Constantinople having already added one more to the titles of honor borne by the Commander of the Faithful,) is the capture of Lookhoom-Kaleh. It will be remembered that a recent telegram vaguely announced the departure of an expedition, "protected by two Turkish iron-clad frigates," to assist the Circassian insurgents by a descent upon some point of the Caucasian seaboard. That "point" is discovered to be the little port of Lookhoom-Kaleh; and the results achieved by the expedition, as now reported, are momentous enough in themselves, and doubly so when measured by their possible consequences. Lookhoom-Kaleh captured—the native population in open revolt—the town burned and the garrison put to the sword—the Russians driven back to Gangara, and that place itself destroyed—arms, ammunition, and supplies coming over from Turkey as fast as steam can bring them—these are startling tidings to be heard from the rear of an invading army, which has a fortified town in its front, and doubly startling if, as the latest dispatches assert, these movements are merely the prelude to an attempt to break the Poti-Tiflis Railway, (the only one in the Southern Caucasus,) at Kutais, and to raise the whole country in the rear of the Russian force which is assailing Batoum.

Lookhoom-Kaleh, in its normal condition, is a quiet little seaport of the same pattern as Novorossisk, Tuapse, and other towns along the eastern shore of the Black Sea. The ruins of a tiny fort at one end of its little crescent-shaped bay are the only war-like features in the quiet, beautiful panorama; and the ladies and children who were wont to step ashore there from a well-appointed Odessa packet, and sip *café au lait* at the neat little German restaurant facing the quay, or stroll about the miniature park in the centre of the town, would doubtless be sorely amazed to see their dainty little halting place blotting the clear blue sky with rolling smoke, and echoing to the wild mountain scream of the Circassian and the guttural "Allah-il-Allah!" of the Osmanli. With its quaint little one-storied houses clustering along the edge of the blue, sparkling sea, beneath the protecting shadow of a broad, smooth wave of purple hill, (on the slopes of which the Russians have for some years been attempting, not very successfully, to grow Chinese tea,) the whole place looks the very embodiment of voluptuous repose—the model of one of those dainty colonies which the luxurious Greeks were wont to plant along the shore of the Euxine, always with a southern aspect, and "looking forth upon the wine-dark sea."

But the presence of an armed force in their rear, strong enough to master two garrisons and to threaten their only line of railway communication, is a peril which the Russians cannot afford to overlook. When the engineers who constructed the Poti-Tiflis Railway remonstrated with the local Governor for insisting upon running it along the northern bank of the Rion, (the town of Poti lying on the opposite side,) the great man curtly replied, "I can't help it; we *must* have the river between our railway and those infernal Turks." And now, it would seem, the "infernal Turks" have contrived to render even *this* precaution of no avail. Most formidable of all is the scheme of a Circassian rising fostered by armed support from Turkey—the old plan of OMAR Pasha, in fact, revived under new conditions. It is well known how jealously Russia forbade SCHAMYL'S return to the Caucasus after his capture, and how unweariedly she has striven to Russianize the young Georgian nobles by appointments in the civil service, champagne, *écarté*, and the Tiflis opera. To a certain extent she has succeeded; but the danger is not wholly past. In the neighborhood of Poti and Lookhoom-Kaleh, indeed, lie the facile Georgians and the voluptuous Imeritires—men from whom Russia has little to fear—but the shaggy hills of Daghestan still shelter many a grim "Tcherkesse," to whom the first flutter of a Moslem standard would be as the breath of life, and who would ask nothing better than a chance of making good, shoulder to shoulder with his brother Mohammedans, the stern vow which their chief, KASI MOOLLAH uttered with his last breath: "While wood grows and water runs, no peace with the Oorooss!"—Russians.

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