

DESPERATE FIGHT WITH A BEAR.

The headwaters of the Delaware River are about thirty miles north-west of here, in a wild and unfrequented portion of the Catskill Mountains, in Schoharie county. There are very few settlements in the region, but about a year ago a man named Jonas Butler put up a cabin on one of the mountain tributaries of the stream, having a contract with parties in Greene county to peel bark and cut railroad ties. His wife and two children, one a girl about sixteen and the other an infant, occupy the cabin with him. Butler goes into the woods sometimes several miles from his home, and often does not return for two or three days. On Sunday he went out to his work, leaving his family in their cabin. The section is noted for its wild game, deer and bear being plentiful, but the present season bears have been unusually numerous and bold, and the pig-pen of the Butlers has twice been depopulated. About five o'clock on Sunday afternoon Mrs. Butler and her daughter were preparing to feed the pigs, when an immense black bear was discovered trying to get out of the inclosure with a fine, fat shote in its embrace. Mrs. Butler seized a heavy wooden mallet, used in driving wedges, and her daughter took up an axe. They ran and jumped into the pen, followed by the dog, and commenced an attack on the bear. It held on to the pig, however, until the blows of the women and the bites of the dog became too much for him, when it turned on its assailants. It seized the dog and crushed it to death. The girl rained in blows with the axe on the head of the bear, when suddenly bruin made for her. With one sweep of his great paw he sent her axe flying out of the inclosure, and pressed her into one corner. The mother, seeing her daughter's danger, increased the fury of her assault with the mallet, and although the bear got the girl in his embrace, it dropped her before doing material injury to ward off the attacks of the mother. The floor of the pen was now slippery with blood that was flowing from the wounds of the bear, for the girl had struck with the edge of the axe and buried it somewhere in the animal every time. When the bear turned on the mother she shouted to her daughter to run to the house and get the rifle. While Jennie was gone her mother succeeded in keeping the bear from getting too close to her, but when the daughter returned with the rifle she was about exhausted, and was fighting from a corner into which the bear was pressing her closely, having disarmed her. Jennie put the barrel of the gun through a chink in the logs and fired. The ball entered behind the bear's fore shoulder, and he fell to the floor and died in a short time. It was a long time before Mrs Butler could summon strength enough to climb out of the inclosure, and as soon as the excitement that had sustained the daughter was over the latter fell fainting to the ground, and it was two hours before she could get about again. Her clothing was nearly all torn from her by the claws of the bear, but neither of the women sustained any serious injury. Monday Jennie walked out to where her father was at work and told him of the adventure, when he returned home with her and skinned and dressed the bear. It weighed over three hundred pounds.—Correspondent of 'Times.'

CONDITION OF THE FRENCH ARMY.

In the 'Journal des Debats' we find an interesting article on the French army, "*Apropos des Grandes Manœuvres.*" The writer, M. H. Houssaye, speaks of the calling out of the reserves of the class of 1867 as one of the happiest events for the reorganisation of France which have occurred since the war. He is convinced, too, that it is an event of pacific tendency—in fact, that its signal success will secure the maintenance of peace for a long time to come. As Mr. Gladstone has just sounded the trumpet of alarm about the aggressive tendencies of France, it may be worth while to examine the grounds upon which the writer in the 'Debats' bases his opinion of the pacific and absolutely defensive character of the Republic. Only a few months ago almost a panic was created in the higher circles of diplomacy by the disclosure of a design on the part of Prussia to invade France without any fresh cause of quarrel, and for the avowed object of crushing the French nation so completely as to leave it powerless for a long time to come. At that time the military organisation of France was passing through its most critical stage, and it was boasted, and generally believed, that she could just then offer no effective resistance to the gigantic military power of the invader.

Whether or not France was even then quite so helpless as was commonly supposed we shall not stop to inquire, but, at all events, the helplessness of a transitional period no longer exists. M. Houssaye explains the new tactical organisation of the army, which allows the reserves to be so rapidly fused in the ranks. The regiments of infantry are composed of three service battalions, besides a fourth battalion, which, on the peace footing, consists only of the *cadres* (or staff) and two depot companies. Each service battalion has four companies, each company sixteen squads, but these squads are ordinarily reduced to eight, and are reckoned by the odd numbers—1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15. On the arrival of the reserves the even squads are formed, and when several classes of reserves and the men on furlough are called on, both the odd and the even squads are complete to their full number. When the service battalions are completed to four companies, each of two hundred and fifty rifles, the surplus passes into the fourth battalion, which, according to M. Houssaye, could rejoin their regiments almost at the first outbreak of hostilities.

As an example of the rapidity with which this mobilisation can be executed, M. Houssaye tells us that of the class of 1867 nearly one hundred and fifty thousand men were clothed, armed and equipped in twenty-four hours, and were ready to march against an enemy fifteen days afterwards. The successful calling out of a single class of the reserves has thus dispelled the idea, so prevalent a few months back, of the inefficiency of the French military

organisation; but a little consideration will show that this efficiency exists for the purpose of defence—that any alarms about the aggressive designs of France are the merest hypocrisy. As a weapon for aggression, the standing army, composed of well-trained soldiers, can alone be counted as of any value, and the effective strength of the standing army of France hardly exceeds at this moment two hundred thousand men, the number at which it was estimated some months ago by a military writer in 'Blackwood's Magazine.'

The calling out of the reserves would, no doubt, give one hundred and fifty thousand veteran soldiers; but even with this addition, the French army would be plainly inadequate for offensive operations against any first-class power. But for defensive purposes, the men who have undergone a six months' training, or who served as Mobs during the late war, may be counted as effectives, and these in resisting an invasion would swell the ranks of the active army to nearly a million strong. Add to this the territorial army, also purely defensive, which will be tolerably organised before the ensuing summer, when the next panic may be expected to set in. This force will consist of a quarter of a million of veterans who have served their full time in the active army, and of three-quarters of a million of men who served as Mobs or National Guards during the six months' campaign of 1870-71. Plainly, then, France, after a few months more of military reorganisation, will be stronger than ever to resent invasion; but far from being in a condition to think of attacking her neighbors. In truth, her new military organisation is entirely based on the idea of defence, fully three-fourths of her forces having only the training of a militia. One thing would convert this immense mass of military material into a conquering army—namely, that which turned the conscripts of the First Republic into the soldiers of the First Empire—an invasion of France, followed by a protracted war. The success of the late manœuvres render such an invasion far less probable than it seemed six months ago, and, so far, is a guarantee for the preservation of peace.—'Dublin Freeman.'

MADAME TAGLIONI.

THE 'Herald,' on December 26, published a very remarkable letter from Milan, on the subject of the life of Madame Marie Taglioni, the once celebrated dancer, which would be highly interesting if it were only accurate; but it happened not to be so. In the first place, Madame Taglioni was born, not in 1804, but in 1809, on April 23, at Stockholm, being a daughter of the dancer and pantomimist, Filippo Taglioni, and of a Danish lady, Marie Karsten, daughter of the celebrated tragedian of that name. This being the case, as can be seen in any biographical dictionary, Madame Taglioni is only sixty-six this year, and not "seventy-four and upwards." The worthy lady married, as the 'Herald's' correspondent says, M. le Comte de Voisin, but instead of having no children, she has two, and has, therefore, had "no cause for profound regret," at not having any, for both are living and are very fond of her. These children are the present Count de Voisin, an officer in the French army, and the celebrated Princess Troubitzkoi, who has a fine villa on the Como, and is the wife of the Russian Consul-General at Marseilles. It is curious that the "Roman clergy should be so eager after Taglioni's wealth," as says our contemporary, and that her jewels should be worth over 1,000,000 francs, since it is well known that, during the war of 1870, she lost her property, and was obliged to go to London to earn her livelihood as a teacher of dancing, and the 'Herald' itself was the first to inform us of the fact, and the information it then gave has been confirmed by other papers, which have, from time to time, published very interesting accounts of the lady's cheerfulness under the circumstances. She was living not three months ago in Portman Square, giving dancing lessons, and earning a handsome but by no means large income. She was present last week at the banquet given by the Lord Mayor of London, to the various actors and actresses then in the metropolis. Mme. Taglioni's daughter is well known in society. The Princess Troubitzkoi is a graceful and dignified woman, whose love for her mother is one of the chief of her many amiable qualities; so "Taglioni's near relatives have not been dead for years," and the Church has, therefore no reason "to fix its greedy eyes on her wealth," which, unfortunately she no longer possesses. Assuredly has our worthy contemporary, the 'Herald,' been much deceived this time by its correspondent. It certainly is very singular that a leading newspaper should publish such utter rubbish concerning so well-known a lady as Marie Taglioni.—'Spirit of the Times.'

A PROTESTANT TRIBUTE TO DR. FENNELLY.

NOTING the position assigned to the Catholic Bishop of Bombay in the "Precedence List" drawn up by the Bombay Government, the 'Madras Mail' remarks:—"The Roman Catholic Prelate takes precedence of all executive and legislative members of Council, the Judges of the High Court, and all other officials. If the Roman Catholic Bishop of Bombay is as much deserving of the respect of both Catholics and Protestants as is the Right Rev. Dr. Fennelly in Madras, we cannot grudge him the distinction conferred upon him in the new list." The 'Madras Mail' is one of the leading organs of public opinion in this Presidency, and represents the opinion of vast numbers of educated and liberal-minded men. Its estimate, therefore, of Dr. Fennelly, is a highly important one, and is sufficient praise for the good Bishop.

It is proposed to place a monument to Garcia Moreno, the late murdered President of the Republic of Ecuador, in the Vatican library.