

CONFIDENTIAL.

## KRONSTADT.


AN account of the Island of Kotlin and Fortifications of Kronstadt, written at the request of Lieut.-Colonel T. B. Jervis by Mr. William Sadler, resident at that place about thirteen years, and who left it on the 24th day of March last, returning to St. Petersburg the 26th day of April, 1854, thence to England *vid* Warsaw, Berlin, and Hamburg. The manuscript has been carefully overlooked by Lieut.-Colonel Jervis, and a variety of information bearing on the Military defences written down from Mr. Sadler's testimony. It is not supposed that this information is rigidly correct, but it is of some value.

THE Island of Kotlin, the easternmost of the islands in the Gulf of Finland, is situated about seventeen miles west of the City of St. Petersburg, five miles north of the southern shore, and about nine miles south of the northern shore, of the Gulf of Finland. This island derived its name from the word *kotol* (which signifies kettle), as the first thing that the Russians found on the island, when they took possession of it from the Swedes, was a fisherman's kettle. On the eastern end of this island is built the Town and Fortress of Kronstadt, which is also the chief naval port and depôt of the Russian fleet in the Baltic; the streets are wide and clean, and the town is altogether very regularly planned. The population, according to the last estimation, which was taken in the year 1849, consisted of 25,120 inhabitants, chiefly Russians. The town on the western, northern, and eastern sides is surrounded by a high and strong rampart of granite and earth, the outer scarp being about six feet thick, supporting the usual parapet, &c., of earth, upon which are mounted a number of guns, all of iron, of large calibre, probably thirty-two pounders. There are two barracks built close to the western wall, and about six or seven close to the northern and eastern walls. The wall on the western side of the town is surrounded on the outside by a moat or ditch, which runs across the island from south to north, beyond which the ground slopes off in a glacis. In this wall there are two gateways; one is called the Citadel Gate, to the south, and the other the Kronstadt Gate, towards the northern end, which are the only entrances to the town from the island, and over the moat or ditch there are two drawbridges of wood. On the eastern face of the town there is also a gate, which is called the St. Petersburg Gate, from which there runs out into the sea, to the distance of about one-third of a mile, a jetty constructed of wood, for the accommodation of the steamers that run between Kronstadt, St. Petersburg, Peterhoff,





and Oranienbaum; the depth of water at the extremity of the pier may be seven to nine feet. The three moles (they are so designated in Kronstadt) are built about half-a-mile out into the sea on the southern face, having been formed by walls of such width as to admit troops or persons to pass freely. The pier that runs out into the sea, and which forms the westernmost wall of the Merchants' Mole (so called by the Russians), is only partly built of stone, and that is the lower part, which only rises about two feet above the level of the sea, the upper part being entirely of wood, or timber casing filled with stones and sand, which, during the summers of 1852 and 1853, was entirely rebuilt of wood, it having been for some years previous in a very ruinous state. Along the whole of this wall or pier are mounted large iron guns and a few mortars, which are as closely placed as they can be conveniently for working. The wooden bulwark for the protection of the men is about five and a half feet high and about five feet thick, this is a sort of wooden casing, the interior being fitted up with stones.

The entrance to the Merchants' Mole fronts the battery of Kronslot, which is on the south side of the channel; the pier or wall here, which faces the channel and south shore, or the coast of the Gulf of Finland, is entirely of granite, rising about twelve to fourteen feet above the level of the water. On the eastern side of the gate or entrance to the Merchants' Mole, the pier or wall forming the south side of the Moles, projects out in an angle thus 

This angle was about ten years ago filled up with piles, stones, and sand, upon which Fort Menchikoff has been built. This fort is a very fine and neatly finished piece of masonry, and has been completed about four or five years; it mounts four tiers of guns of large calibre, say about seventy, and commands the immediate entrance to the harbour. It has a very great fault; and that is, that it cannot free itself of smoke when in action. Very lately it was observed to have a fissure right down one side, which is supposed to have been occasioned by the settling of some of the piles. The next mole to the Merchants Mole is called the Middle Mole, which is much larger than the Merchants' Harbour, and is partly separated from it by two piers, between which runs a canal which leads to one of the dry docks. In this harbour the transports that are employed in running between Kronstadt, Sweaborg, Revel, and Abo, &c., with Admiralty stores and provisions, generally load and discharge. Some of the larger men-of-war, take up their positions in this mole, in consequence of the greater depth of water. The pier or wall, which forms the enclosure of the mole, is only partly built of stone, the other part being of wood, and which is not in the very best condition. It is also mounted with a number of iron guns. Merchant vessels are also allowed to lie in this harbour, when the Merchants' Mole is very full. The Men-of-War's Mole is also an extensive Mole, and is next to the middle harbour; the pier or wall which incloses the harbour projects more forward into the sea, and forms the south-eastern part of the mole into an oblong shape, and then forms an angle and runs off nearly in a straight line to the easternmost point of the island. These walls are chiefly built of granite. This mole is only occupied by men-of-war, and no private persons are allowed to go in, those excepted who are attached to the Admiralty. In this harbour there is always a guard of about fifty men, under the command of a lieutenant. To the eastward of the Man-of-War's Mole, is what is called the Inner Road, where during the summer months the steam squadron generally rides at anchor. At about half a mile from the shore at the eastern end of the island, are two wooden magazines erected on piles, one of which is used as a powder magazine, and the other as a coal store. The Admiralty, or Admiralty store and warehouses, dry docks, and timber yard, &c., &c., are situated nearly in the centre of the town, of which it occupies more than one fourth, it is inclosed by a canal and an iron palisading, which runs





round it and is kept private. The saw mills are situated near the Man-of-War's Mole, at the eastern end of the town, this building, though not of great extent, is of red brick, and the mill is worked by a steam engine of some years standing. The Arsenal is a fine red brick building, and stands at the eastern side of the parade ground, called Peter's-plain, which latter lies at the back of the Middle Mole. This building contains about fifteen to twenty thousand stand of arms. There are also some flags that were taken from the Turks and Swedes during the last wars, and in the yard which is attached to the same, there are about 400 to 500 pieces of Ordnance. In this building there is a model in wood of Kronstadt, as planned by Peter the Great; it was made some fifty years ago; but about six years ago, there was a new model made by the express direction of His Imperial Majesty, Nicholas the First, which is also placed here.

In the centre of Peter's-plain, about twelve years ago, the monument of Peter the Great was erected; the figure, which is of bronze, was cast in St. Petersburg; it is about eleven or twelve feet high, and stands upon a base of polished granite, facing the south shore of the gulf, with its head inclining to the westward, towards which it is pointing with the right hand. About two or three weeks after its erection, it was found to be deficient of one of its spurs, which had been filed off and stolen, supposed to have been done by some of the soldiers or sailors, for the sake of something to drink. Fronting this plain is the residence of the Governor and Commander-in-chief of the Baltic fleet. The naval club and library, as also the Imperial apartments for the reception of his Imperial Majesty when he visits Kronstadt, face this plain. The establishment for the Pilot cadet corps, is a little more to the westward, and faces the Italian pond which is at the back of the Merchants' Mole. This corps is formed specially for the education of cadets for the pilot service, and they are regularly organized with naval, or rather military rank. It is a very large and fine building, and has at present about 300 cadets; attached to this building on the top of one of the wings, is the Observatory. There is also a naval school for the sons of sailors, the average number of boys is 550, who are taught the first rudiments of education, and are generally brought up for the Imperial navy.

During the last four or five years, the Government has been erecting a very large and extensive iron foundry, which is very nearly finished; this building is constructed of stone, brick, and iron; the roof, beams, ceilings, staircases, and window frames, being of the latter material. These works have been built expressly for the convenience of the steam squadron, as nearly every article required for the repairs of the machinery of the same, has to be sent to the works at Kolpina, which is about forty miles from Kronstadt (eighteen to twenty miles beyond St. Petersburg). When this foundry is completed, the works at Kolpina will most probably be removed to Kronstadt. The Naval and Military Hospital is most worthy of notice, as it is considered to be one of the best in Russia; it is a very extensive building, constructed of red brick, and three stories high, it is capable of containing about two thousand five hundred sick; the rooms are very large, and well ventilated; the floors are of parquet, which are kept polished. The bedsteads are of iron, the bedding is furnished with hair mattresses, and the apartments in general clean. It is divided into wards, each ward having its own special branch of disease, to which is appointed a medical officer, and a certain number of nurses or attendants. There is also a separate ward for Officers. This hospital is entirely supported by Government, with the exception of a trifle, which is deducted out of the pay of every naval officer, serving in the Baltic fleet. The barracks at Kronstadt are large buildings, and will accommodate about fourteen to sixteen thousand men; there is not much to be said about them, except that they are not kept so clean as they ought to be. The manege, or building similar to what elsewhere has been used for riding schools, is a very extensive building constructed of wood, and is used mostly



during the winter months for drilling and training the sailors in their military exercise. These poor fellows who go to sea for about two months in the summer, no sooner get their vessels into harbour, than they strip them of their rigging, &c., and roof them in for the winter; after which their military exercise commences, and continues throughout that season, so they are, as one may say, more soldiers than sailors. During the winter they mount guard as well as the regular soldiers. The number of soldiers generally stationed at Kronstadt, being not more than one thousand five hundred men. At one end of the building is a frigate, or rather a model of one, with all the rigging and sails, &c., for the practice of recruits. The Emperor generally goes down to Kronstadt once or twice during the winter, and in this building he generally reviews one of the naval equipages (so anomalously called), which consists of one thousand men, both in Military exercise, and in Naval tactics.

The Baltic navy consists of 27,000 men, and is divided into Equipages, Brigades, and Divisions; each Equipage consisting of 1000 men, which is generally commanded by a captain or post-captain; the Brigade or Squadron consists of three Equipages, or 3000 men, which is commanded by a rear-admiral; and the Division consists of three squadrons or brigades, or nine equipages, which is 9000 men, and is commanded by an admiral or vice-admiral.

The cathedral at Kronstadt is a large white building, and is constructed in the form of a cross, on an open plain, at the west end of the town, and is now undergoing some repairs. The dome and spire of this church, which is called after St. Andrew, are both gilded, which has only been done within these last five or six years. Besides this, there are four other Slavonic Greek churches, as also one Catholic church, chiefly for the Poles who serve in the navy and army, and other foreigners, who are very few. A Protestant church for the English shipping, kept up by the Russia Company (established 1555), and a Lutheran church for the Germans and Fins, &c.

The only navigable entrance to the harbour of Cronstadt, or St. Petersburg, for vessels even of small draught of water, is by what is called the South Channel, which runs between the south shore of the Island of Kotlin and the south shore of the mainland. The North Channel, which runs on the north side of the island, having been for many years blocked up by old vessels which have been sunk there for that purpose, and in order to make the channel still more secure, there has been, during these last ten or twelve years, a quantity of stones thrown in, as also in the deeper parts a quantity of piles driven down; the direction in which this barricade has been formed is from the western end of the town of Cronstadt across the channel to a place called Liffie Noss, on the coast of Finland. Close by this place is the village of Sisterbek, where there is a manufactory of muskets and arms, belonging to the Government. The South Channel and entrance to the naval port of Kronstadt is strengthened and defended by four large batteries, which are built out into the sea on piles. The largest of these forts is Kronslot, which stands on the south side of the channel, opposite to the Merchants' Mole of Kronstadt. The channel which runs between the two, is not more than five to seven hundred feet wide. This battery has been under repairs for the last three or four years, and they have also been employed driving piles, and filling part of the same up with stones, as the inside formed a kind of mole, the walls being only sufficiently wide to mount guns, and admit of a free passage for soldiers to walk. The part which has been filled up is towards the sea, where it is intended to have a very formidable piece of masonry built for three tier of guns. The foundation of this fort has been begun, but it will take at least ten or fifteen years to complete it, should the work be continued without interruption; at the present moment it can only mount one tier of guns.



The Risbank Fort is also situated on the south side of the channel, at about the distance of two and a quarter miles from Kronstadt. This battery has been building these last ten or eleven years, and it is not yet quite finished, the scaffolding was still up in November last, 1853. This fort mounts three tiers of guns of heavy iron; in July last there were no guns mounted. In the month of July, 1852, a frigate was moored at about four or five hundred yards distance, abreast of this battery, and His Imperial Majesty the Czar with his son, the Grand Duke Constantine, who is Minister of Marine, came down to Kronstadt to try the strength of the battery, which they did by firing from the frigate with balls, and having fired about twenty-five rounds at the same, they found that the shot had made very little impression on the stone walls, though part of the same had to be taken down for fear that some of the inner stones might have moved or been injured. The cost of rebuilding that part again was stated at 30,000 silver roubles.

Fort Alexander is the most westerly of these batteries, and commands the north side of the south channel; it is a large crown battery of three tiers, and has been built some thirteen or fourteen years. It is about two and a quarter miles or rather more distant from the pier head at Kronstadt.

Fort Peter the First, or the Citadel, is about one mile, or a mile and a quarter, distant from Kronstadt, and is also on the north side of the channel (on the southern side of the island). This battery is also built of granite, and has been erected these last twenty years; it is the smallest battery of the four and mounts only two tiers of guns. At about three miles and a half from Kronstadt, on the north side of the south channel, to the westward, was the wooden fort called Fort Constantine, which was built on piles, and as it was in a very decayed condition, orders were given to pull it down, which has been done during the last winter.

On a projecting point of the island, just at the back of the citadel, there has been erected during this last winter, a battery of wood, upon which are mounted thirty guns. At the western end of the island, there is an old field work or raised earthen battery, originally built by the Swedes, and is called Shantzkoï Krepst, on that part of the island that is called Alexander Shantz. This old fort has been repaired, and a number of guns have been placed in battery. I should estimate the number to be about forty.

At the commencement of November last, 1853, a submarine telegraph wire was laid down between Kronstadt and Oranienbaum, which extends thence to Peterhoff, the summer residence of the Imperial family, and thence to St. Petersburg. This is entirely for the Government service, and used for secret correspondence, which was formerly carried on by telegraphic signals.

On the 24th of March, 1854, all English and French subjects, by order of the police, were compelled to leave Kronstadt. On the 27th and 28th of March, three regiments of soldiers marched over the ice to Kronstadt, two field batteries of artillery were also sent. On the first of April the town was announced to be in a state of siege. During the month of March last several caissons or iron cases were manufactured at one of the government foundries in St. Petersburg, under the direction of professor Jacobi, who is the inventor of these caissons; they are filled with a combustible composition for the purpose of blowing ships up. A great number of these caissons have been lately laid down in the channel and entrance to the harbour of Kronstadt, and are connected by electric wires to galvanic batteries, which have been placed in the different forts. It was also reported that large stones had been thrown into the channel in different places, in order to impede the passage. Two divisions of the Baltic fleet are lying at Kronstadt, and including steamers and sloops, which amount to about forty or forty-five sail, Admiral Ricardo (an Italian by birth), the



commander-in-chief received orders to lie with the fleet in the inner roads, which is behind the Man-of-War's Mole under the shelter of the town and batteries; the average depth of water there, is from three and a half to five fathoms; and in the outer roads, which is to the westward of Kronstadt, it varies from four to eight or nine fathoms. The Government mail steamer, "Wladimir," that runs between Stettin and Kronstadt, during the navigation (*i.e.*, the season when the waters are navigable), has had new boilers put in during this last winter, and has been mounted with guns, and will be used as a steam frigate. The navigation at Kronstadt on an average, opens about the commencement of May, and closes about the middle or end of November. The average number of British and Foreign merchant vessels that arrive at this port during that time, is from fifteen hundred to two thousand, and the trade within these last few years has very much increased. Kronstadt at the present moment has a garrison of about twenty thousand men, a great number of which have been billeted on the inhabitants. There is also a great quantity of ammunition here, and a number of furnaces have lately been manufactured and sent down to Kronstadt, for the heating of red hot shot, many other preparations also have been made for defence. About the middle of April last, a sad accident occurred, from which about fifty-two men lost their lives. These men were in the laboratory making eighteen-pounder cartridges, when, by some accident or other, the powder ignited, and the whole place was blown to atoms; the quantity of powder said to have been in the building, was seventy four barrels. The shock of the explosion was tremendous, and was felt many miles off, the houses in the town had nearly all their windows broken, and in a number of buildings the whole frames fell out into the streets. The only entrance to the harbour of Kronstadt is by the channel which runs between the batteries, as to the south of Kronslot there is a shoal which stretches out as far as Oranienbaum, which is on the south shore of the Gulf of Finland, upon which there is not more than from five to nine feet of water.

Such are the few observations I have ventured to set down in writing. Many others might possibly have been added; but I thought it would be more becoming in me, not being in the Military profession, but simply an observant traveller, to refrain from enlarging on a subject where incorrect information might be highly prejudicial to the interests of my country. Such as it is, it will therefore be received with all indulgence, it is at least truthful, if some should consider it not sufficiently ample: but it may even be considered in the present exigencies of war, as my friend Lieut.-Colonel Jervis has led me to believe, most valuable to the Ministers and the Commanders of the fleet.

(Signed) WILLIAM SADLER.

London, 7th June, 1854.

