



# CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

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## DIARY OF THE SIEGE.

The *Daily News*' correspondent supplies details up to the 18th September. His description of the interior of Sebastopol will be read with great interest. He says:—

After crossing the cemetery, where there is still a chapel riddled with balls and bullets, I entered Sebastopol through an enormous breach made in the central bastion. A large fortified wall protects all this side of the town; within it lies a suburb composed of small houses, which were no doubt occupied by various small tradesmen. This suburb gradually descends towards the water; four streets converge to a sort of platform, connected with a little bridge, which enabled the inhabitants to cross a street below when violent rains transformed it into a torrent. In this small space I counted sixty-eight shells that had not burst, and balls. We then proceeded to the street and boulevard which bear the name of Catherine; it is the elegant quarter of the town; all the houses have but one story, are very neat, and are surrounded with gardens. There is not one that has not received at least a ball; they are completely gutted; all the furniture, such as mahogany bedsteads, chests of drawers, writing desks, &c., was lying about the streets. I remarked a considerable number of pianos and what is very extraordinary, portraits of the Emperor Napoleon and the Empress Eugenie. The whole of this quarter rises in an amphitheatre just opposite Fort Constantine; the theatre is untouched; it is a pretty white building. When I passed by, the scenes were lying outside against the wall. The church called St. Catherine's, a Doric temple, with a gault pediment, has also suffered very little. In this quarter not a soul was to be seen; the streets were deserted, the houses completely abandoned; and it made one melancholy to see these vast solitudes. The whole town is now peopled with only 2,000 French soldiers, who are encamped in the streets. General Bazaine, who has been appointed governor of the place, occupies a pretty house, pierced like the others with three or four balls. In Catherine street is a house which was occupied as a tavern; the doors have been torn down, and the soldiers have written on a board, "Entrez sans frapper." The soldiers amuse themselves with playing at "pitch and toss," and shooting at cats, which are the only inhabitants of the town. Most of the houses have a story underground, where artisans had their shops. From this quarter we went down to the quays. The nearer one gets to the port the greater is the number of barricades. The Russians evidently intended to have defended Sebastopol street by street, for at the top of every street is a wall of large stones, two metres in height, behind which small pieces of artillery were placed. On the quays, which are wide, and planted with trees, it was more difficult to enjoy one's walk, as the Russians still occupy Fort Constantine opposite, and every three minutes they threw either a shell or a ball at the people who were walking about; an Englishman was killed in that way tea steps off from where I was standing. From this quay, and as far as the docks, we may distinguish the mast tops of the Russian fleet rising above water; it has all been burnt and sunk, with the exception of a small steamer on her beam-ends at the corner of the military port. The streets are actually covered with projectiles of every description. The docks have suffered considerably from our fire;—skirting them was a quarter of the town, set apart most likely for workmen and invalids; it is now a shapeless mass of ruins.

Nothing in the town had been destroyed by us;—our artillery has only ruined what was indispensable; it was the Russians, who, during their retreat, sprung an enormous number of mines, and we are finding more daily. Even on Monday and Tuesday, the 10th and 11th, there were explosions every moment and many fell victims to their curiosity. A Russian colonel, they tell me, was killed at the moment that he was stooping down to fire a new mine while hurriedly retreating. Since then our firemen have thrown water over all the suspected spots, and put out all the fires. I met a soldier carrying off an enormous mahogany bedstead for firewood. To conclude, the general aspect of Sebastopol is heart-rending; nothing but ruins, blackened walls, and gutted houses; the ground strewn with projectiles and broken or spoiled furniture. But few visitors in the streets; not a cry, not the slightest noise denoting a living city—all is mournful and silent. The Russians are shut up in Fort Constantine; their camp extends beyond Fort Sivernaia. There is a rumor that they are about to evacuate the north; but, in order to make them do so sooner, General d'Herbiloo is to attack them on the side of the Tchernaya with 70,000 men. Our fleets are still opposite the Quarantine Harbor, and, as soon as the entrance into the great harbor is cleared, they will

enter it, and then, if the Russians have not yet evacuated the north, the fleets will cannonade Fort Constantine on our side, and harass them on the other, and that part of Sebastopol will then soon be in our power.

### ONE REDAN EQUAL TO TEN MALAKOFFS.

Having scrambled to the brow of the hill, I reached the largest of the Russian batteries defending this quarter of the town, and had an opportunity of contrasting its construction with that of the Redan, described in my last letter; but I found it to be merely another instance of the rule to which that work and its immediate flanking supports appear to form the only exceptions. It consisted only of the usual single line of battery with the ordinary strengthening abutments; but without any of the near supports which constitute the Redan a virtually double work. This peculiar character of the latter redoubt was certainly a practical compliment to its opponents, the English, though had it been fought out to the last it would have quadrupled their difficulty in effecting its reduction. It would have been easier to take ten Malakoffs than one Redan, considering that even in its perfect state the former work, if once entered in front or turned in flank, was, to properly supported assailants, an accomplished capture; whilst with the latter, at this point the difficulties and dangers of an enemy culminated. The guns of this battery on the western side of the town, differently from any others I had seen, ran upon a sort of railway, and were each worked from a small elevated platform much above the inner level of the battery itself; their carriages, too, were of a construction which permitted of a much greater depression than in any of the other Russian works I have hitherto visited, to a degree, indeed, which would have raked an attacking party on the very edge of the ditch without. Nearly in the centre of the curve formed by this battery, and some twenty yards in the back-ground, was one of those earth-guns, so to speak, with whose long range shots and shells the enemy used to annoy our regiments in front, as I have had occasion to report more than once. The gun in this instance was neither more nor less than a plain cast-iron tube, without either trunnions or external moulding of any kind, and was sunk about four feet into the earth, at an angle of about forty-five degrees. It was apparently of a 10-inch bore, and a shell of that dimension was visible within it at the time. Some score of small cohorn mortars were also lying about, as likewise several—eight or ten—six-pounders on light field carriages. In the centre of the redoubt, and under cover of the earthwork, stood a small wooden chapel, inside which some simple altar fittings, with pieces of half-burnt tapers, still remained. I may just add, that in this, as in all their other batteries which I have yet seen, the enemy were abundantly supplied with every variety of ammunition—grape, canister, round shot, and shell lying piled up everywhere throughout the redoubt.

I returned by a route which, with the rambles of my two previous visits, formed a tolerably complete round of the entire town on this side of the creek, and I everywhere saw the same utter destruction, and the like complete system of street barricades which had been prepared against a last final struggle to the death. Verily it would have been such a contest as Frenchmen, with all their traditional acquaintance with street fights before and since the Bastille, had never yet encountered. I would have re-entered our own lines through the Redan, but was glad to be stopped, on the ground that the magazines, remarked on in my last letter, as left to themselves for explosion, were being emptied of their dangerous contents. Why the smouldering fabrics above had not been at once extinguished, and this removal effected at first, I am puzzled to conceive; but in this, as in some other things, our chiefs seem to be tardily recognising the principle of "better late than never." A strong working party was also engaged in shovelling more earth over the dead hundreds in the ditch of the Redan, whence effluvia were already emerging in volumes sufficient to poison the atmosphere for miles round.

### PREPARATIONS TO BLOW UP THE ARSENAL.

Report affirms that our engineers are already preparing to blow up the whole of the beautiful dry docks and other public buildings belonging to the arsenal, now in our occupation; but beyond this rumor I know nothing of the intention or the probability of its execution. The French have already collected the fragments of the floating bridge, which had drifted into the Admiralty creek, and are connecting them, to form a passage from their side of the creek to our own.

Such, then, briefly, is the state of Sebastopol, and such, too, the only works which its captors have as yet commenced within it. What a week or a month may bring forth in its destiny, the uninitiated,

like myself, can neither foresee nor foretell. The novelty of the change in our camp life, which has followed its fall, has not even yet worn off; and, in the strange stillness which night now ushers in, sleep is almost difficult to court, after the cannonading lullaby to which we had been so long accustomed.— Novel as this quiet is during the day, when every spot seems pervaded by an oppressive silence like that which reigns over a school play-ground on the first day after the "break up" for the holiday at night, when all the ordinary avocations of camp life are suspended, it presses with redoubled weight on the unhabituated senses.

### HOW THE MALAKOFF AND THE REDAN ESCAPED BEING BLOWN UP BY THE RUSSIANS.

A sapper, who was exploring the batteries of the Redan, just as the Russians were evacuating the town, discovered a large cable, which he cut in two by a blow of an axe, and then called the attention of the officers to it. On further examination it was found to be a thick metallic wire, covered with a coating of gutta percha. This wire led to a powder magazine dug under the Redan, and the discovery of which made the boldest tremble when they thought of the frightful explosion from which they had escaped. The wire came from across the town as far as the sea, which it crossed to the other shore, from whence the electric spark was to be despatched to set fire to the volcano. It was discovered just at the nick of time as the last soldiers had not yet evacuated the town when the forts blew up one after the other, filling up the trenches with the ruins. The Careening Port, the Flagstaff Battery, the Central Bastion, the forts of the bay, the arsenals, and all the principal edifices crumbled to the ground beneath the combined action of shells, fire, and mines. The Redan and the Malakoff alone remained unscathed—the former saved by the sapper, as just mentioned and the latter saved by a shell which had cut the electric-wire in two.

### PREPARATIONS FOR THE COMING WINTER.

Working parties are actively engaged in making and repairing roads. In some of the camps preparations are going on, such as building stone cooking sheds, raising paths, and draining, to meet the severity of the coming winter. The effluvia which prevails in the greater part of the town renders an encampment on the heights above much more desirable in a sanitary point of view. Near some of the works, as the Redan and the Malakoff, the odor, more especially in the latter work, is almost pestilential. Decomposing matter of all kinds in the dark holes and corners of the hiding-places and underground barracks, and bodies buried, but lightly covered by loose earth, or hidden by the debris of stones and gabions scattered by shells which have exploded, are the causes of the offensive effluvia. The removal of these sources of malaria must be undertaken before the neighborhood of the Malakoff hill can be occupied, and this must necessarily be the work of considerable time and labor, more, probably, than can be bestowed at present, if the greater part of the troops are called to active operations in the field. In the larger part of the town on the west side of the south harbor no offensive odor is perceptible. This is the result of the fire; and the pains which the enemy took in rendering its effect complete, though adopted and carried out with very different motives, have doubtless proved an essential benefit to those who may have to remain in the neighborhood of the town. In walking along the principal streets one finds the larger houses on each side entirely reduced to stone walls; everything inflammable has been consumed. Thus nearly all the offensive matter has been destroyed and removed, and a deposit of carbon spread over the ground to neutralise the effect of any which may have escaped the fire and be lying beneath the ruins. In the houses of the suburbs to which the fire has not spread, offal of all kinds—and not unfrequently human remains—are found, and the natural repulsive consequences ensue.

It is no harm to state that our ever active allies, the French, are constructing a breaching battery between Fort Nicholas and the ruins of Fort Alexander, against Fort Constantine, in such a position that the enemy can only avail themselves of three or four embrasures. The statement can do no injury, because the Russians see the French at work on the battery, know its position, and what it is intended for, and fire at the working parties from time to time. Besides, the battery will be quite ready before this letter can reach England. The Russians have placed an enormous quantity of sandbags and earth on the roof of Fort Constantine, and have made regular traverses and embrasures for the guns mounted there *en barbette*.

### PREPARATIONS FOR TAKING THE FIELD.

On the same day that the *Te Deum* was cele-

brated, two French divisions, a large contingent of Piedmontese, and the whole of the French and cavalry—the latter force under General de Longueville—marched *en route*, it is to be hoped, for Baktchi-Serai. This strong corps has passed on through the Baidar valley into the Aitodor pass, by Vernouka; and by this time, we hope, is far on its way towards the old capital of the Tartar khans.— Intelligence has reached our generals that the enemy is in full retreat from the neighborhood of his lost stronghold, and this French and Sardinian force will endeavor to turn the lines of the Belbek on him, whilst another French and English *corps d'armée*, to be immediately transported to Eupatoria, or some point on that part of the coast, will intercept him beyond. I give you this important news as I learn it from a source likely to be well-informed, and it may, I think, be accepted by your readers, as authentic, though I shall be better able to correct or confirm it by the next mail. It is further said, that, of our own troops, the first division (consisting of the guards and highlanders) with the third and fourth, have been already selected for this important service, and will be embarked as soon as the necessary armaments for transport are complete. General Codrington mustered the light division yesterday, with a view to ascertain its fitness for taking part in the expedition; and professed himself satisfied with the numerical strength of the regiments composing it. It is earnestly to be hoped, however, that no personal desire of Sir William's to share in the glory of the undertaking may weigh with General Simpson in imposing further labors this season on a division to whose share so unduly large a proportion of all the operations that have yet occurred, both in the trenches and the field, has hitherto fallen. By far the majority of the troops by which its vast losses have been filled up are raw drafts recently landed and, as such, are utterly unfit for a service for which the army has still so many old, and as yet unworked, soldiers in the other divisions I have named.

### THE RUSSIANS AT WORK ON THE NORTH SIDE.

Having secured their right flank by the very formidable earthen works and batteries which we are permitting the enemy even yet to erect, in addition to their former defenses and to their regular forts, the Russians will now no doubt direct the bulk of their army to protect their centre over the Tchernaya, and their left at Aitodor and on the Upper Belbek. They seem prepared to hold this extensive line, and we appear at present by no means prepared or willing to attack it. As the allies can scarcely spare men enough to send to Eupatoria, and thence to march on Simpheropol, or to force the Russian position on the Belbek by a corps descending on them from the north, and as there is no apparent intention of attacking them from Inkermann or the Tchernaya, this dead lock may last longer than we think, and is likely enough not to be relaxed this winter. The quantity of stores removed by the Russians from the north side to their new depot shows that they are not in want of provisions, unless they take the trouble of carrying dummy sacks, and fill their carts with "make-believes." It may and must be difficult for them to feed their army, but somehow or other, they do so. About noon to-day a flag of truce came in from the fleet, and was met near Fort Constantine by a Russian boat. The conference did not last very long, and its object has not yet transpired. The French mortars and guns were not silent while the flags were flying. Their mortar battery, which is protected by the walls of Fort Nicholas, keeps a constant fire of bombs against the quadrangular storehouse. In addition to the fire yesterday, the French sent two bombs through the roof of the building. Their battery behind the Malakoff is principally directed against the roads to Fort Constantine and Fort Catherine. Three or four times in the day Fort Constantine gives sudden reply to the allies, and the 12-gun battery at Inkermann throws an odd shot at the French battery of the Malakoff. The Russians, however, look as if they intended to work steadily at their earthworks, and some fine day, no doubt, they will open with a roar of cannon with their old style, all along the water-side from Fort Constantine to Inkermann. Large convoys passed in and out of the forts to-day, but it could not be ascertained with what they were laden. It was amusing to watch the coolness of the fellows at work inside the large magazine to-day. Some of them usually stood in the doorway by the water-side to look out for the mortar. "Bom" goes one, and the thick white smoke flies upward in a circling pillar, marked here and there with whirling rings. T-wit! twit! twit! the bomb whistles aloft, the sound becoming fainter as it leaves us, till it begins to grow on the ear of the gentleman in gray, who is on the watch at the other side; he pops in his head, and out come at his summons, like rabbits scuttling from a ferret-haunted warren, a swarm of his comrades, just as the