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## BATTLE OF ALMA.

We copy from the correspondence of the *London Times* the following details of the battle, and of the events of the day preceding:—

Orders had been given by Lord Raglan that the troops should strike tents at daybreak, and that all tents should be sent on board the ships of the fleet. Our advance had been determined upon, and it was understood that the Russian light cavalry had been sweeping the country of all supplies up to a short distance of our lines and outlying pickets.

At 3 o'clock in the morning of the 19th September, the camp was roused by the reveil, and all the 30,000 sleepers woke into active life. The boats from the ships lined the beach to receive the tents. The commissariat officers struggled in vain with the very deficient means at their disposal to meet the enormous requirements of an army of 26,000 men for the transport of baggage, ammunition, and food, and a scene which to an unpractised eye would seem one of utter confusion began and continued for several hours, relieved only by the steadiness and order of the regiments as they paraded previous to marching.

The French, in advance on our right, were up betimes, and the camp fires of the allied armies, extending for miles along the horizon and mingling with the lights of the ships, almost anticipated the morning. The order of march was as follows:—

7,000 Turkish infantry, under Suleiman Pasha, moved along by the sea-side; next to them came the divisions of Generals Bosquet, Canrobert, Forey, and Prince Napoleon. Our order of march was about four miles to the right of their left wing, and as many behind them.

The right of the allied forces was covered by the fleet, which moved along with it in magnificent order, darkening the air with innumerable columns of smoke, ready to shell the enemy should they threaten to attack our right, and commanding the land for nearly two miles from the shore.

It was 9 o'clock in the morning ere the whole of our army was prepared for marching. The day was warm, and our advance was delayed by the wretched transport furnished for the baggage—an evil which will, I fear, be more severely felt in any protracted operations. Everything not absolutely indispensable was sent on board ship. The naval officers and the sailors worked indefatigably, and cleared the beach as fast as the men deposited their baggage and tents there. At last the men fell in, and the march of the campaign began.

The country beyond the salt lake, near which we were encamped, is perfectly destitute of tree or shrub, and consists of wide plains, marked at intervals of two or three miles with hillocks, and long irregular ridges of hills running down towards the sea at right angles to the beach. It is but little cultivated, except in the patches of land around the unfrequent villages built in the higher recesses of the valleys. Hares were started in abundance, and afforded great sport to the men whenever they halted, and several were fairly hunted down among the lines of men. All oxen, horses, or cattle had been driven off by the Cossacks. The soil is hard and elastic, and was in excellent order for artillery.

After a march of an hour a halt took place for 50 minutes, during which Lord Raglan, accompanied by a very large staff, Marshal St. Arnaud, Generals Bosquet, Forey, and a number of French officers rode along the front of the columns. The men spontaneously got up from the ground, rushed forward, and column after column rent the air with three thundering English cheers. It was a good omen.—As the Marshal passed the 55th Regiment he exclaimed, "English, I hope you will fight well to-day." "Hope!" exclaimed a voice from the ranks, "sure you know we will!" The troops presented a splendid appearance. The effect of these grand masses of soldiery descending the ridges of the hills rank after rank, with the sun playing over forests of glittering steel, can never be forgotten by those who witnessed it. Onward the torrent of war swept, wave after wave, huge stately billows of armed men, while the rumble of the artillery and tramp of cavalry accompanied their progress. At last, the smoke of burning villages and farm-houses announced that the enemy in front were aware of our march.—It was a sad sight to see the white walls of the houses blackened with smoke, the flames ascending through the roofs of peaceful homesteads, and the ruined outlines of deserted hamlets. Many sick men fell out, and were carried to the rear. It was a painful sight—a sad contrast to the magnificent appearance of the army in front, to behold litter after litter borne past to the carts, with the poor sufferers who had dropped from illness and fatigue.

Presently, from the top of a hill, a wide plain was visible, beyond which rose a ridge darkened here and there by masses which the practised eye recognised

as cavalry. It was our first sight of the enemy. On the left of the plain, up in a recess formed by the inward sweep of the two ridges, lay a large village in flames, right before us was a neat white house unburnt, though the outhouses and farm-yard were burning. This was the Imperial post-house of Bouljanak, just 20 miles from Sebastopol.

A small stream ran past us, which was an object of delight to our thirsty soldiers, who had now marched more than eight miles from their camp. The house was deserted and gutted; only a picture of a saint, bunches of herbs in the kitchen, and a few household utensils were left; and a solitary peahen, which soon fell a victim to a revolver, stalked sadly about the threshold. After a short halt for men and horses by the stream, the army pushed on again. The cavalry (about 500 men of the 8th Hussars, the 11th Hussars, and 13th Light Dragoons) pushed on in front, and on arriving about a mile beyond the post-house we clearly made out the Cossack Lancers on the hills in front. Lord Cardigan threw out skirmishers in line, who covered the front at intervals of 10 or 12 yards from each other. The Cossacks advanced to meet us in like order, man for man, the steel of their long lances glittering in the sun. They were rough-looking fellows, mounted on sturdy little horses, but the regularity of their order and the celerity of their movements showed they were regulars, and by no means despicable foes. As our skirmishers advanced the Cossacks halted at the foot of the hill. Their reserves were not well in sight, but from time to time a clump of lances rose over the summit of the hill and disappeared. Lord Cardigan was eager to try their strength, and permission was given to him to advance somewhat nearer; but as he did so, dark columns of cavalry came into view in the recesses of the hills, and it became evident that if our men charged up such a steep ascent their horses would be blown, and that they would run a risk of being surrounded and cut to pieces by a force of three times their number. Lord Lucan therefore ordered the cavalry to halt, gather in their skirmishers, and retire slowly. None of the infantry or artillery were in sight of us, as they had not yet topped the brow of the hill. When our skirmishers halted the Cossacks commenced a fire from their line of videttes, which was quite harmless. Few of the balls came near enough to let the whiz be heard. Two or three officers who were riding between the cavalry and the skirmishers, Lieut.-Col. Dickson, R.A., Captain Fellowes, 12th Lancers, Dr. Elliott, R.A., were looking out anxiously for the arrival of Captain Maude's horse artillery, when suddenly the Russians, emboldened by our halt, came over the brow of the hill, and slowly descended the slope in three solid squares. We had offered them battle, and they had lost their chance, for our cavalry now turned round and rode quietly towards the troops. Our skirmishers, who had replied smartly to the fire of the Cossacks, but without effect, retired and joined their squadrons. At every 50 paces our cavalry faced about to receive the Cossacks if they prepared to charge. Suddenly one of the Russian cavalry squares opened—a spirit of white smoke rose out of the gap, and a round shot, which pitched close to my horse, tore over the column of our cavalry behind, and rolled away between the ranks of the riflemen in the rear, just as they came in view of the cavalry. In another instant a second gun bowled right through the 11th Hussars, and knocked over a horse, taking off his rider's leg above the ankle. Another and another followed, tearing through our ranks, so that it was quite wonderful so few of the cavalry were hit. Meantime Captain Maude's artillery galloped over the hillock, but were halted by Lord Raglan's order at the base, in rear of the cavalry on the left flank. This was done probably to entice the Russians further down the hill. Meantime our cavalry were drawn up as targets for the enemy's guns, and had they been of iron they could not have been more solid and immovable. The Russian gunners fired admirably; they were rather slow, but their balls came bounding along, quite visible as they passed, in right lines from the centre of the cavalry columns. After some 30 rounds from the enemy our artillery opened fire. Their round shot ploughed up the columns of the cavalry, who speedily dispersed into broken lines, wheeling round and round with great adroitness to escape the six and nine pound balls. Our shells were not so successful, but one, better directed than the rest, burst right in the centre of a column of light infantry, whom the Russian had advanced to support their cavalry. Our fire was so hot, the service of the guns so quick, that the enemy retired in about 15 minutes after we opened on them. While this affair was going on, the French had crept up on the right, and surprised a body of Russian cavalry with a round from a battery of nine-pounders, which scattered them in all directions. We could count six dead horses on the field near the line of fire. It is not possible to form an

accurate notion of the effect of our fire, but it must have caused the Russians greater loss than they inflicted on us. We lost six horses, and four men were wounded. Two men lost their legs. The others, up to yesterday, though injured severely, were not in danger. One of the wounded men, a sergeant in the 11th Hussars, rode coolly to the rear with his foot dangling by a piece of skin to the bone, and told the doctor he had just come to have his leg dressed. Another wounded trooper behaved with equal fortitude, and refused the use of a litter to carry him to the rear though his leg was broken into splinters. It was strange, in visiting the scene where the horses lay dead, that the first feeling produced on the spectator, when the horror of seeing the poor animals ripped open by shells from chest to loin, as though it were done by a surgeon's knife, had subsided, was that Sir E. Landseer, in his picture of "War," must have seen one of the animals before us—the glaring eye-ball, the distended nostril, the gnashed teeth, are all true to life. When the Russians had retired beyond the heights, orders were given to halt and bivouac for the night, and our tired men set to work to gather the weeds for fuel. As soon as the rations of rum and meat were served out, the casks were broken up, and the staves served to make fires for cooking, aided by nettles and long grass. At night the watchfires of the Russians were visible on our left. Great numbers of stragglers came up during the night, most of them belonging to the 4th Division. It was a cold night, and if I could intrude the recital of the sorrows of a tentless man wandering about in the dark from regiment to regiment in hope of finding his missing baggage, I might tell a tale amusing enough to read, but the incidents in which were very distressing to the individual concerned. The night was cold and damp, the watchfires were mere flashes, which gave little heat, and barely sufficed to warm the rations; but the camp of British soldiers is ever animated by the very soul of hospitality; and the wanderer was lucky enough to get a lodging on the ground beside a kindly colonel, who was fortunate enough to have a little field tent with him, and a bit of bread and biscuit to spare after a march of 10 miles and a fast of 10 hours. All night arabas were arriving, and soldiers who had fallen out or got astray came up to the sentries to find their regiments. Sir George Brown, Sir D. Evans, the Brigadier Generals and staff officers went about among their divisions and brigades ere the men lay down, giving directions for the following day, and soon after dusk the regiments were on the ground; wrapped up in great-coats and blankets to find the best repose they could after the day's exertions.

On the morning of the 20th, ere daybreak, the whole of the British force was under arms. They were marshalled silently; no bugles or drums broke the stillness, but the hum of thousands of voices rose loudly from the ranks, and the watchfires lighted up the lines of our camp as though it were a great town. When dawn broke it was discovered that the Russians had retired from the heights, but had left their campfires burning. The troops lay on their arms for about an hour, while the Generals were arranging the order of our advance. Lord Raglan had made his dispositions the previous evening, and the Generals of Division, Sir George Brown, Sir De Lacy Evans, Sir R. England, and Sir G. Cathcart, aided by their Brigadiers-General, went from colonel to colonel of each regiment under their command, giving them instructions with respect to the arrangement of their men in the coming struggle. It was known that the Russians had been busy fortifying the heights over the valley through which runs the little river Alma, and that they had resolved to try their strength with us in a position which gave them vast advantages of ground, which they had used every means in their power to improve to the utmost. The advance of the armies this great day, was a sight which must ever stand out like the landmark of the spectator's life. Early in the morning, the troops were ordered to get in readiness, and at half-past six o'clock they were in motion. It was a lovely day; the heat of the sun was tempered by a sea breeze. The fleet was visible at a distance of four miles, covering the ocean as it was seen between the hills, and we could make out the steamers on our right as close to the shore as possible.

The scheme of operations concerted between the generals, and chiefly suggested to Lord Raglan, it was said, by Marshal St. Arnaud and General Canrobert, was, that the French and Turks on our right were to force the passage of the river, a rivulet of the Alma, and establish themselves on the heights over the stream at the opposite side, so that they could enfilade the position to their right and opposite to our left and centre. The Alma is a tortuous little stream which has worked its way down through a red clay soil, deepening its course as it proceeds seawards, and which drains the steppe-like lands on its right

bank, making at times pools and eddies too deep to be forded, though it can generally be crossed by waders who do not fear to wet their knees. It need not be said that the high banks formed by the action of the stream in cutting through the soil are sometimes at one side, sometimes at another, according to the sweep of the stream.

At the place where the bulk of the British army crossed the banks are generally at the right side, and vary from two and three to six or eight feet in depth to the water; where the French attacked the banks are generally formed by the unvaried curve of the river on the left-hand side. Along the right or north bank of the Alma are a number of Tartar houses, at times numerous and close enough to form a cluster of habitations deserving the name of a hamlet, at times scattered wide apart amid little vineyards, surrounded by walls of mud and stone three feet in height. The bridge over which the post road passes from Bouljanak to Sebastopol, runs close to one of these hamlets—a village, in fact, of some 50 houses. This village is approached from the north by a road winding through a plain nearly level till it comes near to the village, when the ground dips, so that at the distance of 300 yards a man on horseback can hardly see the tops of the nearer and more elevated houses, and can only ascertain the position of the stream by the willows and verdure along its banks. At the left or south side of the Alma the ground assumes a very different character—smooth where the bank is deep, and gently elevated where the shelf of the bank occurs, it recedes for a few yards at a moderate height above the stream, pierced here and there by the course of the winter's torrents, so as to form small ravines, commanded, however, by the heights above. It was in these upper heights that the strength of the Russian position consisted. A remarkable ridge of mountain, varying in height from 500 to 700 feet, runs along the course of the Alma on the left or south side with the course of the stream, and assuming the form of cliffs when close to the sea. This ridge is marked all along its course by deep gullies, which run towards the river at various angles, and serve, no doubt, to carry off the floods produced by the rains and the melting of the winter snows on the hills and table lands above. If the reader will place himself on the top of Richmond-hill, dwarf the Thames in imagination, to the size of a Hampshire rivulet, and imagine the lovely Hill itself to be deprived of all vegetation, and protracted for about four miles along the stream, he may form some notion of the position occupied by the Russians, while the plains on the north or left bank of the Thames will bear no inapt similitude to the land over which the British and French armies advanced, barring only the verdure and freshness. At the top of the ridge, between the gullies, the Russians had erected earthwork batteries, mounted with 32lb. and 24lb. brass guns, supported by numerous field pieces and howitzers. These guns enfiladed the tops of the ravines parallel to them, or swept them to the base, while the whole of the sides up which an enemy, unable to stand the direct fire of the batteries, would be forced to ascend, were filled with masses of skirmishers armed with an excellent two-grooved rifle, throwing a large solid conical ball with force at 700 to 800 yards, as the French learnt to their cost. The principal battery consisted of an earthwork of the form of two sides of a triangle, with the apex pointed towards the bridge, and the sides covering both sides of the stream, corresponding with the bend in the river below it, at the distance of 1,000 yards, while, with a fair elevation, the 32-pounders threw, as we say very often, beyond the houses of the village to the distance of 1,400 and 1,500 yards. This was constructed on the brow of a hill about 600 feet above the river, but the hill rose behind it for another 50 feet before it dipped away towards the road. The ascent of this hill was enfiladed by the fire of three batteries of earthwork on the right, and by another on the left, and these batteries were equally capable of covering the village, the stream, and the slopes which led up the hill to their position. In the first battery were 13 32-pounder brass guns of exquisite workmanship, which told only too well. In the other batteries were some 25 guns in all. It was said the Russians had 100 guns on the hills and 40,000 men (40 battalions of infantry 1,000 strong each of 16th, 31st, 32nd, and 52nd Regiments). We were opposed principally to the 16th and 32nd Regiments, judging by the number of dead in front of us. I have not been able to ascertain by whom they were commanded, but there is a general report that Menschikoff commanded the army in chief, that the left was under Gortschakoff, a relative of the diplomatist, and that the right was under Bodahoff, the military Governor of Sebastopol. It seems strange that an Admiral should be appointed to command an army, but strange things do happen in Russia. It is also affirmed that the carriage of Menschikoff was taken, and in it was found a