

THE SIEGE OF SEBASTOPOL.

HEIGHTS OF BALAKLAVA, Aug. 10.—The report of an approaching attack upon the Malakoff gains ground and credence in the camp. False reports are so numerous here that one would pay little attention to the current rumors, did not various indications, more than general expectation, give it an appearance of probability. At an early hour on Tuesday morning, Gen. Simpson went round the lines, examining the works. Yesterday, General Jones did the same. A council of war was held on Wednesday evening at the British head quarters. A more positive symptom than those of approaching action, is the fact, that some of the principal medical officers of divisions have received orders to clear the hospitals, sending to Balaklava such patients as can safely be moved, and to make the customary preparations for the reception of wounded men. This may not mean an assault is immediately to be made, as some short time is necessary to make arrangements and procure the stores required. An idea of the quantity of these may be formed from the fact that, on receiving this order, the chief medical officer of one division, consisting of rather more than 6,000 effective men, at once sent in a requisition for about 6 tons' weight of various articles. Such a mass of drugs, lint, plaster, bedding, wine, and other hospital necessaries and comforts is painfully suggestive of what may probably occur, and of how many stout and brave fellows are expected to go down in the next serious operation against our tenacious foe. But at the point to which things have now come, success is not to be hoped for without heavy loss, and if the former be complete, the latter may be endured, if not cheerfully, at least without repining. It is said that after a bombardment, very large forces will be sent in to attack.—Some talk of a combination of French and English troops against the Malakoff, and even designate our first division (Guards and Highlanders) as the British force that is to co-operate with our allies. If the attack really is to be made, heaven grant, that this time no blunders may be committed, and that the blood of this gallant army may not again be fruitlessly poured out by mistakes and mismanagement. If we fail this time we may make up our own minds, as many have already done, to remain where we are for the winter. It is the opinion of some here, that Sebastopol will never be ours until we regularly invest the whole place. There are various opinions in both the French camp and the English as to the impregnability of the Malakoff. Some believe that if we succeed in storming the outer works we shall find within them a second line of invincible strength. Others think the strength of the inner works are exaggerated. Of course in all this there is much more of conjecture than of well founded opinion. The Generals-in-Chief keep their information and intention to themselves. If we get the Malakoff, little doubt is entertained that the south side will speedily be ours; whether we shall be able to remain in it under the fire from the forts on the north is another question. The Russians driven out however, and the fleet destroyed, we shall be at liberty to busy ourselves with the northern forts, or to move inland, as may be decided upon. As for the town, which we have treated with so much forbearance, it is not to be supposed that it will be left to us in its present neat and serviceable condition. If Russia be faithful to her military traditions, we shall obtain but a heap of ruins and ashes.—No snug quarters will there be in Sebastopol for the allied armies, which have been so long alternately crippled with cold, plunged to the knees in mud, or seethed in sickly Crimean vapours. A time there was, now some ten months bygone, when Sebastopol might have been ours on easier terms and better conditions—a time when Russian prisoners expressed their surprise at not being sent into depot there, since they made sure the place had fallen into our hands after the battle of the Alma.—It is bootless to recur to past blunders and omissions, or to talk of the time, when the Malakoff was but a round tower, instead of the strong fortification now the chief obstacle to the capture of the place to which it is the key. However, if grievous errors have been fallen into, let us hope that they

will in future be avoided, and that the next attack will be very differently conducted, and have a widely different result, from the last. After nearly two months' monotonous inaction, during which many thousand men of the allied army have been put *hors de combat* by trench-duty and disease, I can hardly think that there is a man in the camp—even of the croakers, who, I regret to say, are pretty numerous—who will not joyfully hail the resumption of more active hostilities.

I must observe, that there are persons, whose opinion is not without weight, who do not believe that we shall attack soon, and a similar doubt appears to exist among those French officers whose opinions I have heard expressed. These seem to think that a tremendous bombardment is contemplated, such as shall literally pulverise the defences opposed to us and completely crush the enemy; and they add that some time must elapse, before the necessary preparations are completed.

Leave of absence continues to be granted to a very large extent. Taking five of the latest general orders, those of the 3d, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th inst., we find the names of no less than seventy officers who have received permission to absent themselves. Of these, twenty-nine proceed to England, twenty-six of them in virtue of medical certificates, and three on "urgent private affairs," or in consideration of peculiar circumstances; 27 go to Scutari and Therapia for periods varying from two to five weeks; 12 on board ship; and two to the Monastery of St. George, where there are ten rooms fitted up for ailing or convalescent officers. I doubt not, that all these leaves of absence may be necessary, and fully justified by the circumstances of the respective cases; but such numerous departures are not the less extremely inconvenient to the army, and leave many regiments very short-handed of officers. I yesterday heard a colonel declare, that he had but one captain and three subalterns on duty in his battalion, and that he, consequently, had to send 100 men into the trenches under charge of a youth of eighteen. If this state of things cannot be helped, it, at least, is very unfortunate. Enough officers do not come out to replace those who go home. This protracted siege—if siege it may be called, which in reality is a tedious struggle between two rows of detached forts—is certainly not popular with the officers of the army, few of whom care to remain, if they have a respectable pretext for returning home, while fewer still desire to return hither when once they get away. I am persuaded that if there were more movement in the campaign—if, instead of monotonous trench duty, we were engaged in ordinary warfare, manœuvring, marching, fighting, there would be both less sickness and fewer seeking leave. I do not attempt to decide the question whether leave is sometimes too easily granted, and more to interest than to necessity. The French are thought to fall into the other extreme, and instances have been cited to me, where the lives of valuable officers would have been saved, had they been allowed to exchange severe duty (one night out of three in the trenches, independently of light labour) for a period of relaxation in a more salutary climate.

Of the cases that go into hospital, a very small proportion terminate fatally. This appears from the general returns up to the 15th of July. According to the best evidence I can obtain, the present effective strength of the British army in the Crimea is upwards of 20,000 men, exclusive of troops that have arrived within the last three days. The Etna and Arabia steam transports have reached Balaklava from England (the latter after the extraordinary rapid passage of 14 days) with large detachments for several regiments out here. Transports have reached Kamiesch with reinforcements for various French regiments. This furnished the foundation for a report (to show you how ridiculously things are magnified here) current in camp this morning, that 20,000 French troops had arrived, and that extensive operations were immediately to be commenced.

Yesterday the Russians amused themselves by throwing a few round shot into the camp of the fourth division. Two of these buried themselves in the ground close

to a hospital hut of the 17th regiment, shaking the edifice and astonishing the wounded, but doing no other damage; another killed a man of the field-train as he lay in his tent. It is said the missiles were intended for General Bentinck's tents, which are near the fourth division flagstaff on Cathcart's hill.—The duke of Newcastle is still staying there. A new kitchen, building for the General, is thought to have attracted the attention of the Muscovite gunners. The fire in rear of the Redan, which I mentioned in my last letter, is said by the French to have been occasioned by one of their rockets.

Captain Layard, Deputy Assistant-Quartermaster-General, a brother to the member for Aylesbury, has died of dysentery on board ship at Balaklava. He had just received extension of leave to proceed to Scutari.

Colonel Windham, who since the first landing of the allies in the Crimea has been the very efficient Assistant-Quartermaster-General of the fourth division, has been promoted to the command of the 2d Brigade of the 2d division.

We are by this time pretty well accustomed to hear of deaths in the trenches; but until the other day, we had no example of a birth having taken place in that uncomfortable and dangerous locality—certainly not exactly that which a lady might be expected to prefer as the scene of her *accouchement*. The intrepidity and military ardour which so distinguishes our gallant allies are shared, it appears, by the ladies of their nation. Three nights ago, a *buxon continiere* accompanied her battalion to the trenches, there to supply them with the restorative *petit verre*, and to brave, with masculine courage, the storm of shot and shell. There was possibly some miscalculation in the matter, but the fact is, that towards the small hours of the morning she was taken with the pains of maternity, and gave birth to twins. Mother and children are doing well.—From the Times, Correspondent.

THE COMMAND OF THE ARMY IN THE CRIMEA.—We have reason to believe that General Simpson's failing health obliges him to return home, he is to be succeeded by Major General Markham, an officer of great merit, who has lately joined the camp from India. General Markham entered the service in 1824 as an ensign in the 32d Regiment. He obtained his lieutenantancy in 1825, and his captaincy in 1829.

Whilst serving as captain, he accompanied his regiment to Canada, and saw not a little active work there in 1836-37, during the disturbances in that colony. In the latter year, he was severely wounded. A couple of years subsequently he was promoted to be major, and in 1842 he got the command of the 32d Regiment as lieutenant-colonel. In 1846, his corps was ordered to India, and Colonel Markham went with it to that country, where it landed in the autumn of the year, and marched forthwith to the North-west provinces, the frontier of which was in a disturbed state.

When the insurrection broke out in the Punjab, and the fortress of Moulton declared in favour of the enemy, the 32d Regiment was ordered to the seat of war, and Lieutenant-Colonel Markham received the command of a brigade of infantry. During the whole campaign, he distinguished himself by his energy, and by the efficient manner in which all his duties were performed.

For the six years he commanded his regiment, it was a pattern in camp and quarters to the British army and as a brigadeer, his reputation was not behind what it had been when he was a battalion leader. At the close of the campaign he received the well merited rewards of being named an Aide-de-camp to the Queen and a Companion of the Bath—the former honor giving him the rank of full colonel in the army.

After a short period of leave in England, Colonel Markham rejoined his corps in India, determined that no consideration of ease or comfort should induce him to abandon the company in which he had risen from the lowest to the highest commissioned rank. He was not, however, destined to do duty again with that corps, for upon the death of Colonel Mountain, the Adjutant

General of the Queen's troops in India, Colonel Markham was selected to succeed him.

After serving but a short time in this very responsible post, the Royal Warrant of last October gave the Commander-in-Chief the right of selecting for promotion to the rank of Major-General, any Colonel, irrespective of his standing in the service, whose professional character stood high enough to merit such a choice.—The very first officer thus distinguished was Colonel Markham, who was at the same time nominated to command a division of the Bengal army.

When, however, the English public and the English press began to canvass every fresh nomination to the staff of the Crimean army, orders were sent out to General Markham to join the head-quarters before Sebastopol without delay. This he was only too glad to do, and within thirty days of receiving the order, in the Northwest of India, he reported himself to General Simpson, and received the command of the Second Division of the army.

Subsequently General Simpson intimated to the Horse Guards that he feared his health would oblige him shortly to retire, and Lord Hardinge, as we are informed, sent out directions that, should he do so, Major General Markham was to take command of the army serving in the Crimea.—London News.

THE QUEEN'S LETTER TO SIR E. LYONS.

—It is well known that an autograph letter was sent by the Queen to Sir Edmund Lyons on the death of his son. We believe that it has not yet appeared in print, and so grateful a proof of womanly delicacy and feeling ought not to be kept from her admiring subjects. We print the letter *rebatim*:—"Buckingham Palace, June 25th, 1855. —The Queen cannot let any one but herself express to Sir Edmund Lyons the Prince's and her feelings of deep and heartfelt sympathy on the most melancholy occasion of the loss of his beloved and gallant son, Captain Lyons. We grieve deeply to think of the heavy affliction into which Sir E. Lyons is plunged at this anxious moment, and we mourn over the loss of an officer who proved himself so worthy of his father, and was so bright an ornament to the service he belonged to. To lose him, just when he returned triumphant, having accomplished so admirably all that was desired and wished, must be an additional pang to his father. If sympathy can afford consolation, he possesses that of the whole nation."

OFFICERS IN THE NAVY.—Some returns moved for by Mr. Scobell, M. P., show that the number of captains promoted to be active rear-admirals, from the first of January, 1850, to the latest period, amounts to 50; that the number of active commanders of 25 years, standing and upwards in that rank amounts to 18, the date of the commission of the senior being the 24th of June, 1817; that the number of reserved commanders, who had previously held the rank of lieutenant 25 years and upwards amounts to 56, and the maximum number of years 44; that the number of retired commanders who had previously held the rank of lieutenant 25 years and upwards amounts to 335, and the maximum number of years to 43; that the number of active lieutenants of 20 years' standing and upwards in that rank amounts to 304, the date of the senior's commission being the 31st of January, 1808; that the number of reserved lieutenants is 677, the date of the senior's commission being December 29, 1796; that there are 308 surgeons and 259 assistant-surgeons fit for service, and 259 surgeons and 36 assistant-surgeons unfit for service; that the number of mates now in the navy is 212, the number of midshipmen 334, and the number of cadets 408. Since 1845, inclusive, 1,417 cadets have been admitted. The number of flag officers on full pay is 18, and the number on half-pay 81; the number of captains on full pay 123, and the number on half-pay 262; the number of commanders on full pay 192, and the number on half-pay 357; and the number of lieutenants on full pay 686, and the number on half-pay 291.

HASZARD'S GAZETTE, SEPTEMBER 25.

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