



CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

VOL. V.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, MAY 25, 1855.

NO. 41.

DIARY OF THE SIEGE.

April 15.—It was stated that the French would explode their mines (*fougades*, I believe), this evening at four o'clock; then the time was deferred till six o'clock, and finally till an indefinite period of the evening, and the groups of spectators, tired of waiting on the hills, retired to their tents. The field-marshal and his staff were amongst the number. At half-past eight o'clock, however, three pillars of red flame hurled through the air with an appalling crash from under the batteries of the Flagstaff Bastion, blowing up the parapets and platforms of the outer works and laying it in ruins. Gen. Bizot died in the course of the night.

April 16.—There was a Council at Lord Raglan's today, at which Omar Pacha and the French generals assisted. General Bizot's honored remains were interred to-day, and Lord Raglan and the principal officers of his staff assisted at the sad ceremony.—The cannonade on both sides was very heavy throughout the day, and as it was calm and fine the French rocket battery opened in the evening, and fired into the dock-yard buildings with effect.

April 17.—There is a considerable diminution in the fire of the batteries on both sides this morning. The haze, which lasted all night, has been dissipated by the sun, and has enabled us to see that things in and about Sebastopol are very much as usual. The batteries have commenced (noon) firing with greater energy. There is a report that orders have been issued to reduce our fire to thirty rounds per gun a day. It scarcely seems probable that such an order should be given unless our guns are becoming shaky, for it certainly will encourage the enemy, whose fire is slackening. We have made a much more serious impression on the town and the batteries than we did last year, and our Allies, instead of being "snuffed out" by the Russians, have established to a certain extent a superiority of fire, and have maintained a vigorous cannonade and bombardment against the place without remission or feebleness since this week, inflicting thereby great loss of life and damage to the enemy's stronghold. The Russian army in the field seems to be dwindling away, or to be doomed to inactivity. A Polish deserter has come in, who reports that we missed a golden opportunity last Monday. It appears that the Russians were apprised of the landing and march of the Turks, and received information which led them to believe we were about to attack Liprandi's army. Every available man was sent out of Sebastopol on Sunday last, and when we opened fire on Monday morning they had only 8000 men in the place. This accounts for their silence and for their surprise. For two days they were working night and main to get their men back from Liprandi's army to the town again, and they have now 28,000 men inside. The deserter says "the place is a perfect hell." There are 300 French sick and wounded in the hospital; no English. The hospital is exposed to fire. All the Poles who have deserted are sent to Varna to join Zamoiski's Polish Legion.

A letter from Kamiesch, of the 14th ult., in the *Moniteur de la Flotte*, gives the following account of the flying attack made by an English and French frigate on the fortifications of Sebastopol, nearest to the harbor:—"At about nine o'clock last night the *Valorous*, English steam-frigate, boldly steered in towards the Russian forts, and every eye was directed towards her movements. On arriving within proper range she suddenly opened her fire, and we could clearly distinguish a complete volley of shells fall in the town. The Russians did not at all expect this attack, and it was therefore several minutes before Fort Constantine returned a shot. As to Fort Alexander and the Quarantine batteries, they did not fire until a second broadside had been delivered by the frigate, which, after following it up by two others, returned to her anchorage outside without having sustained any damage. At about one o'clock in the morning, the French steam-frigate *Caffarelli* got under weigh and performed the same manœuvre as the *Valorous*. The Russians were, however, on this second occasion, more on the alert, as the gunners were all at their posts, and the two rows of casemates of Fort Constantine were lighted up, which produced a very singular effect. The *Caffarelli* fired four broadsides in rapid succession, and then steamed back to her anchorage. The Russians returned the fire pretty actively, but the vessel was only struck by one shell, and suffered no material injury. The diversion caused by this last attack was very opportune, as at the very moment when it took place a very sharp fire of musketry was going on between a battalion of 23rd Light Infantry, and the Russians who were obstinately defending some rifle pits which the French soldiers had received orders to take."

Lord Panmure has received the following despatches from Lord Raglan:

"Before Sebastopol, April 17th.
"My Lord—I have the honor to transmit for your lordship's information a letter from the Inspector-General of Hospitals, expressing his satisfaction in being able to report that the sanitary condition of the army continues gradually to improve, and the mortality and disease to diminish.—I have, &c.,
"RAGLAN.

"Lord Panmure."
"Before Sebastopol, April 17th, 1855.
"My Lord—The fire of both the French and English has been continued upon Sebastopol since I addressed your lordship on the 14th instant, and tho' superior to that of the enemy, it has not produced that permanent effect which might have been anticipated from its constancy, power, and activity.

The guns of the Russians have been turned upon some of our advanced works in vast numbers, and in one particular instance the injury sustained by a battery was so great that the unremitting exertions of Captains Henry and Walcott, and the gallantry and determination of the artillerymen under their orders, alone enabled them to keep up the fire, and to maintain themselves in it. In another battery yesterday a shell burst close to the magazine, which, in consequence, exploded, killing, I am much concerned to say, one man, wounding two severely, and seven in a less degree. Both of the batteries I have mentioned have been repaired, and restored to their original condition.

"I enclose the list of the casualties which have arisen between the 13th and 15th inst.

"I have to lament the loss of two young and promising officers, who had only lately joined the army, Lieutenant Preston, of the 88th Regiment, and Lieutenant Mitchell of the artillery; and I regret to add that two others have been severely wounded, Captain Greene, of the East India Company's service, who has been employed throughout the siege as an assistant engineer with great credit to himself and every advantage to the service, and Captain Donovan, of the 35th Regt., who has most zealously served from the commencement of the campaign.

"The French blew up several small mines in front of the bastion Dumat, after sunset on Sunday evening, with a view to establish a parallel on the spot.—This operation greatly alarmed the enemy, who at once commenced a heavy fire of cannon and musketry in every direction from that part of the town, which they kept up for a considerable time. It occasioned no harm to our left attack, upon which a part of it was directed, and I hope did little injury to our Allies.

"Several hundreds of the Russian cavalry and a small body of Cossacks appeared on the low range of heights in front of Balaklava this morning, and remained about an hour, when they retired, a great portion by the bridge Tractea. The object of this movement was probably a reconnoissance.—I have, &c.,
"RAGLAN.

"Lord Panmure."
The following is a *résumé* of all that was really known about the progress of the war up to the 3rd instant:—

"We have news by way of St. Petersburg and Berlin, by Vienna, by Marseilles; but all these sources of information are discredited we remember that the more rapid sources of communication (viz., the electric telegraph from Balaklava to London) is silent, and by the conjectures to which we are driven in order to account for that silence. The steamer *Caire* brings us intelligence from Balaklava up to April 17. The narrative is a chequered one. General Bizot, the Commander of the French Engineers, died of a wound received by him in the trenches, and was buried on the 16th. On the 14th the French exploded three mines under the Flagstaff Battery, with only partial effect; and, though the Russians apprehended an assault, the injury was not sufficiently great to justify the operation. On the night of the 13th a sortie took place, which cost the French 300 men and six officers, but was repulsed with more than ordinary success, and more than ordinary slaughter. On the 16th, two of the Russian ships were burnt. The enemy's fleet had advanced from the innermost harbour in order of battle, and had placed themselves near Fort Nicholas, the work which defends the southern side of the harbor of Sebastopol. By the Simois we learn that the English have taken by assault the ambuscades in front of the Tower of Malakoff and that the Russians have found themselves obliged to abandon one of their batteries. In the meanwhile the Russians appear to be drawing their lines more firmly around our position; and the concentration of force is, if we are to believe the reports of deserters, enormous. Over and above all this the *Moniteur* publishes a despatch of the 28th, to the effect that the besiegers have momentarily suspended their fire, to await reinforcements, and to spare the expenditure

of ammunition. Putting all these things together, it would seem that we have certainly made some progress in our operations, that we are gradually drawing nearer to the object of our attack, and that the enemy have found themselves quite unable to carry out or maintain the counterworks with which at one time they so seriously threatened our position. Even the Russian accounts admit the tremendous force of the fire to which the town has been subjected. This cannonade must, indeed, have been of unexampled severity—unique, as far as we are aware, in the annals of war. To sustain such a fire for so many consecutive days and nights—nineteen, according to the account of the *Moniteur*—argues an abundance of resources, a solidity in the ordnance employed, and a power of endurance on the part of the men transcending anything we have ever heard or read. The world can never have witnessed anything more terrible than this long-continued struggle, in which instruments of destruction of a size and power never before employed in war have been met by others equally powerful, and the thunders of a tropical storm have been put to silence by the fearful din of artillery. During this great duel of artillery the enemy has been gathering in mighty masses around us, and any day may witness an attack made in enormous force along the whole line of our defences, backed by furious sallies from the beleaguered town. Never were numbers more needed than now. As the land dries, and the country becomes traversable, we must expect to meet in mortal encounter all the troops which a great empire, not elsewhere invaded can spare for the defence of a single province. Never was there a situation so full of hope and fear, of danger and of promise. One moment we seem likely to grasp great successes, the next suggests the apprehension of enormous reverses. The nation is in a fever of expectation. The absolute government of France finds means to communicate to its subjects the last intelligence, even though that intelligence be neither flattering nor encouraging. But we are condemned to learn, at second-hand, information carried by our own telegraph, and are indebted to our neighbors for giving us by that means all the knowledge we as yet possess of our own most interesting affairs.—*Times*.

The great Crimean expedition of England and France is now apparently destined to realize the lowest deep of humiliation. Having expended their combined strength upon the fortifications of Sebastopol, harmlessly as a wave breaks upon a rock—the Allies have been at length obliged to discontinue the bombardment, "for want of both material and men," and the meditated assault upon the citadel is, of course, abandoned as the most impossible of enterprises; and so, after all the labor and perils of a campaign, unredeemed by any genuine glory, a hasty and ignominious retreat over the *Luxine* seems the sole hope of the chivalry of England and France.

The last week or so of the bombardment, especially, seems to have been a sheer waste of ammunition, and the fire finally ceased on the 28th of April. A curious reason is assigned for the suspension—"The besiegers have suspended their fire," coolly observes the despatch, "in order not to exhaust their ammunition." It is quite evident that the Russian commander was perfectly familiar with the resources of the Allies, and he appears to have quietly stood upon the defensive, while they exhausted themselves in the vain hope of effecting a breach.

Had the Allies at any period been adventurous enough to attempt a storming, there is strong reason to believe that it would have incontinently decided their fate, for the garrison was perfectly prepared for the contingency. One incident enables us to conceive the warm reception designed for the "forlorn hope." On the 15th of April the French intended to have sprung four mines which they had succeeded in making under the Flagstaff bastion, but on attempting the manœuvre they could effect the explosion of only three—the result being the destruction of some insignificant portion of the outworks. The result is thus described by the impartial correspondent of the *Times*:—

"The fourth and principal mine was not exploded, as it was found to be close to the gallery of a Russian mine, and so far the explosion failed, and the French were unable to make such a lodgment as was anticipated. The Russians believing the explosion was the signal for a general assault, ran to their guns, and for an hour vomited forth prodigious volumes of fire and smoke against our lines from one extremity to the other. The force and fury of their cannonade was astounding."

It is quite certain, however, that the Allied commanders, with their habitual foresight and discrimination, had resolved upon attempting to carry the place by a *coup de main*, and the companies destined to lead the forlorn hope had been actually told off.—One of the four English officers of Engineers ap-

pointed to assist in the operation, furnishes a graphic description of the Russian fortifications, rising tier upon tier above the position of the Allies. Writing, as he believed, upon the very eve of the assault, he observes:—

"Our information concerning the resources of the enemy inside the town is so uncertain and so contradictory, that one has no guide to go upon. No one who has seen the awful strength of the defences, stretching as they do completely round this side, with tiers of batteries and intrenchments one behind the other, and frequent salient points flanking the entire line, and bringing a tremendous cross-fire upon every point, but must feel that an assault now will be attended with far greater carnage than it would have been six months since. God grant that it may be successful, for on it will depend the safety of the entire army."

In the meantime, however, the representatives of Anglo-French chivalry thought better of it, and having by some fortunate accident obtained a glimpse of their diminished resources, they resolved upon abandoning the bombardment altogether. And now their position is the most perilous they have occupied since the beginning of the siege. "During this great duel of artillery," observes the *Times*, "the enemy has been gathering in mighty masses around us, and any day may witness an attack made in enormous force, along the whole line of our defences, backed by furious sallies from the beleaguered town."—*Nation*.

ABANDONMENT OF THE EMPEROR'S VISIT TO THE CRIMEA.—RAISING OF THE SIEGE.—The Paris correspondent of the *Daily News*, writing on Saturday, the 5th May, says:—

"That which I reported yesterday as a rumor, I state to-day, from private information, as a fact.—The Emperor, owing to unforeseen circumstances, has renounced the idea of going to the Crimea at the beginning of next month. You will have inferred, as the public has done here, from the adjournment of May 15th of the opening of the Universal Exhibition, that his Majesty's departure would be at least postponed. It is not, however, to be supposed that the impossibility of completing the arrangements in the interior of the Palace of Industry by the day originally fixed can have weighed a feather's weight in balancing any such great question relating to the war, as the moment of the Emperor's assumption of the chief command of the allied armies. So long as the original determination that the Exhibition should be opened on the 1st of May was adhered to the Emperor was prepared to inaugurate an incomplete spectacle, on the ground that engagements affecting the highest interests of the civilized world called him hence in a few days afterwards. If his Majesty, as I believe he will do (although it is not officially so stated) opens the Exhibition in person on the 15th, the reason is, that events occurring before Sebastopol have necessitated a change in his plans for carrying on the war.

"I now proceed, not without much hesitation on account of its extreme gravity, to communicate the intelligence on this subject which has reached me from an excellent private source. I do not guarantee the absolute truth of all that I am about to state. It is probable that in any account of what has but recently passed in the state councils, and which can only be related by hearsay, there will be inaccuracies and exaggerations; but subject to this cautionary remark, I believe the main facts of the following narrative to be true:—

"The fire of the allied batteries has entirely ceased. The general commanding the French artillery has written to the Emperor to this effect:—'Sire—I promised to keep up the bombardment during fourteen days. I have done so. My task is accomplished. We have not reduced the place, and are not in a condition to attempt the assault. It only remains for us to withdraw our troops in good order. Our guns, from protracted firing, are completely un-serviceable. We must leave them as old iron in the possession of the enemy.'

"Orders have been sent to raise the siege of Sebastopol. The plan of operations will be completely changed. A campaign in Bessarabia will be commenced with an immense army in June. Fresh levies to an enormous extent will be made in France. The reinforcements likely to be sent to the theatre of war are estimated by hundreds of thousands; and it is not doubted that a new loan of eight hundred millions will be effected in the course of the summer. Gen. Canrobert is recalled. The order for his recall was despatched by telegraph this day.

"According to the authority from which I derive the above momentous information, the Emperor is still fully determined to place himself at the head of the armies allied against Russia, and this I fully believe to be the case. I must mention, however, the existence of a very prevalent opinion, that his Majesty feels it necessary not to quit Paris for two main