

Canrobert concurred with Lord Raglan in denouncing to Prince Mentschikoff the atrocious acts of his soldiery.

As regards the true source of an exceptional malignity driving good-natured men to go and butcher the wounded, there has been a general concurrence of judgment; and the tenor of Prince Mentschikoff's answer will be hardly surprising to those who remember that this war, after all, in its origin was a war of the Churches, and that the infuriate soldiery who could plunge and re-plunge their bayonets into the body of a prostrate, disabled adversary, had been 'consecrated' only a few hours before by blessings and prayers, and anthems grandly roaring for blood.

In answering the denunciation which reached him under a flag of truce, the Prince loftily repudiated it as a charge which could not be even listened to, if brought against the Imperial army generally; and he declared that a defenseless enemy was, and always would be, under the protection of the Russian flag. He, however, admitted it to be possible—though he did not, he said, know the fact—that 'individually, and in the heat of combat,' some exasperated soldier may have suffered himself to do an act of violence which was to be deeply regretted; but then he went on to show that, supposing the imputed butcheries to have been really committed, they must have been provoked, after all, by a religious sentiment. His countrymen, he said, were an eminently religious people, who could not but be filled with horror when they learned that a church—very holy in their estimation—had been desecrated by the invaders of Russia; and thence he went on to conclude that, if any of the French or the English had indeed been dispatched on the battle-field whilst lying disabled by wounds, they must have owed their fate—not to the ruthlessness, but—plainly to the outraged piety of his troops.

WAS THE ATTACK ON INKERMAN A SURPRISE?

For weeks they had well understood that an attack, if attempted at all, might there be most hopefully ventured; and only a few days before they had seen the enemy come to make himself at home on the ground, and even rehearse his enterprise. They knew, too, that for such an undertaking early morn was the most fitting time, and some two or three hours after midnight they received a vague warning in the low, distant sound of wheels reported by Sargent and Morgan, followed up before long by the pealing of the Sebastopol bells. And again it is true that with a moderate edition to the force

which performed and supported the outpost duty, or even without such addition—though in that case a risk of incurring occasional vexatious losses—the pickets might have been so placed as to be capable of giving an earlier notice of any attack on Mount Inkerman than the adopted system could insure; and even, indeed, without all that hazard the object might have been partly attained by causing the outlying pickets to patrol to the front every morning a little before break of day. On the whole, it was certainly possible that by a keener attention to dubious signs, and an altered disposition of their outpost system, our people might have accelerated their discovery of the coming attack.

The machinery of Pennefather's outpost system was not "set" in such way as to make it detect the enemy in the act of ascending Mount Inkerman; but for the purposes of its more limited task the instrument worked with as much accuracy as the dimness of the air would allow. Before the first shot was fired, the troops here in charge had duly stood to their arms. At the time of the enemy's approach, the men of the new pickets were in their appointed places: they engaged the enemy as soon as he could be descried through darkness and mist: by their firing they amply announced the attack: they thwarted and vexed the advancing thousands so obstinately as to give time for our reinforcements to come up: and the commencement of the attack was reported to Headquarters with a promptitude which at once brought Lord Raglan to the recognized seat of danger.

On our left, the first Russian attack was at once defeated by Grant. On our right, the Taroutine corps had scarce pressed back seven outlying sentries, when Adams came up with the 41st and drove it out of the battle-field. As regards the centre, Pennefather could say with truth that the Russians had been made to fight hard for more than two hours, and to suffer the defeat, nay, the ruin, of no less than twenty battalions, before they drove in his main picket. In the teeth of such facts it would plainly be wrong to say that Pennefather was "surprised" at Inkerman.

But, on the other hand, it must be acknowledged that the English—intent on the siege—had been able to bestow little care, with still less of their scanty resources, upon the business of defending the Chersonese against field operations; and although long accustomed to expect an attack on Mount Inkerman, they had certainly failed to imagine that any force approaching in its numbers to a strength of 40,000 would ever be brought to assail them on that one corner of ground. So, when called upon to encounter what they did—and that, too, whilst baffled by a densely