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DIARY OF THE SIEGE.

(From Correspondents of London Journals.)

CAMP BEFORE SEBASTOPOL, MAY 15.—The active operations of the siege are suspended for a time; our batteries are complete, our works finished, but the armament of them is not yet accomplished. Even the French are tired of a useless cannonade, and there has not been much firing for the last two nights. When the third bombardment may begin it is impossible for me to say, but at present no one pretends to indicate the period of its occurrence. The Russians lately adopted various "dodges" to get our men into their hands and to draw them over the parapet, such as putting their caps on the muzzles of their firelocks and holding them just over the trenches, &c., or shoving their bayonets above the earthworks, and keeping men ready to fire at any soldiers who came forward to seize them. On Friday night a Russian bugler, a mere lad, leaped on the top of the trench, and was killed by numerous balls in the very act of sounding the charge. His dead body fell into our trench. On Friday there was a flag of truce in front of the lines where the fight took place, and we handed over 19 dead Russians found in our trenches to the enemy's burying party. Lieutenant Rochfort, of the 49th, was wounded, not by one of his own men, but by leaping down on a bayonet fixed on a firelock which was lying up against the parapet. He is getting on favorably. The enemy are repairing and strengthening their batteries, and are busy throwing up new works inside the town itself. It is not correct to say that there are any earthworks about Sebastopol with tiers of guns in them; indeed it would not be possible to construct earthworks with guns placed one above the other in them. The expression applies rather to the fact that there are some batteries formed on the slopes of hills, and that the intrenchments rise up one inside the other, so that the inner one is higher up on the hill-side than that in front of it. The camp of the enemy at the northside is now double the size it was a short time back, but there do not appear to be many troops in the tents, and some people think that the tents have been pitched as another ruse in order to deceive us as to their strength. I regret to say that the cholera has commenced its ravages. It is reported that twenty men died of that terrible disease last night. The 71st regiment are about to shift their encampment to the high ground on the left of the Third Division. Both the Buffs and the 71st were in a miserable plight during the rain. Their camping-ground became a slough, and illness rapidly increased in a few days—no doubt, because of the wet ground on which the men lay.

Writing on the 18th of May, the same writer describes a new peril with which the Crimean summer menaces the Allies:—The weather has been so hot for the last few days that fears may be reasonably entertained of the results of lengthened marches or extreme exertion in the sun; in the trenches the temperature is stifling and the atmosphere unwholesome. So far as I am aware, the men still wear the same coats and trousers which they had in the winter; nor has there been to the best of my belief any issue of summer clothing. The excitement of a march, would, however, be very beneficial to the troops, provided they were not overworked, and that they were saved from the outbreak of the terrible maladies which devastated our armies last summer. The possession of the Tchernaya will soon become of consequence to us, were it only for the want of water. I am credibly informed that the rain which fell within the last week is of most unusual occurrence at this time of year, and that such a supply of water is an exceptional circumstance which makes the heart of all the Southern Crimea glad in time of peace, and fills the farmers with joyful gratitude to Heaven. Henceforth, till the month of July, we can expect no rain. There will not be a drop of water from the sky to fill our wells and watercourses for months to come, and the fears I expressed several weeks ago with respect to a scarcity more terrible in its effects to man and beast than famine itself are becoming more and more reasonable as the fierce hot sun day by day bakes the steppes and ravines of the plateau on which we are encamped. The consumption of water by an army of 180,000 men, and by tens of thousands of camp followers, by myriads of cattle, and by beasts of burden, may be readily conceived to be very great, and to increase as the heat does, just in proportion as the means of meeting it are diminished by the same cause. Some feeble attempts have been made to construct dams and form reservoirs at the camps, and some efforts have also been made to bore Artesian wells, but I am not aware that any great success has attended the latter enterprise, and I am certain that the former has been very imperfectly carried out. Major Brandling, of the 1st troop, constructed some good troughs near Karany. Colonel Harding, with simpler means, has made a

very creditable reservoir at the entrance at Balaklava, and there have been isolated instances here and there of similar foresight; but to the best of my knowledge nothing has been done to provide water for "the army"—that thirsty monster, with two hundred thousand or two hundred and fifty thousand mouths and stomachs, who will soon lie sweltering and gasping beneath a broiling sun, worn out by exertion, and maddened by want of this vital necessity. There has been some weak, bald chat, about "the fleet supplying the army with water." The bulk of our army is 10 or 12 miles from the anchorage of the fleet, and water is one of the most difficult articles to carry known to us. Where are our tanks, our water-bags, our transport to supply us from Kamiesch? Above all, where is our transport? Difficulties have already arisen respecting the carriage of rum from Balaklava to the front, because it is in puncheons, and not in smaller vessels. And, then, suppose some accident occurs to the fleet or to the distilling apparatus! Is the fleet to remain here to manufacture water for the army? Are we, in sober truth, to be left to take our chance of dying of thirst in summer, just as we were drowned by wet in winter? Even supposing we had possession of the Tchernaya, it would be far to carry the water up steep hills 200 or 900 feet above its bed to the plateau at the east of which it flows, and the source would remain in possession of the enemy. This is a vital question, if the army is to remain here. The events of this war, or rather the scenery of the camp and of the country round about us, will be amply illustrated by numerous artists, and the daguerreotype has been used by skilful hands to perpetuate the incidents of camp existence, and the groupings and still life of the tents. One gentleman who came out here with a great reputation, and who brought out a letter from Prince Albert to facilitate his arrangements, fixed his tent at head quarters, but he received very little encouragement there, and, as he could not get even the temporary attendance of a servant, he soon moved to other quarters, and has been making the rounds of the camp. He has produced some excellent landscapes, and has even succeeded in "fixing" the effect of the smoke of the guns, but his portraits are not so successful. There are artists for the pictorial journals out here, and amateur sketchers, so that London will soon be made familiar with the external aspect of "the camp before Sebastopol." But there are little *evenements* every day and every hour occurring here and there which never can be depicted. One of the commonest and most exciting, while it lasts, is the pursuit of a centipede. A small party are sitting in a hut, enjoying a frugal and cheerful meal. Suddenly there is an outcry; a man starts up with a face of horror, and with outstretched finger points to a dark insect, all legs and nippers, about six inches long, which is moving rapidly with a tortuous motion along the wall. At the shout of "By Jove, there is a centipede!" every one leaps up shouting—"Where? where?" The boldest seize carving knives or table forks, the more droit two sticks wherewith to catch the artful and venomous enemy, and in a moment the centipede, menaced on all sides, glides rapidly into some chink, where he is pursued by fire and match, or is cut into numberless pieces, and ground up beneath vindictive boot heels. That his bites are extremely painful and venomous, if not dangerous, no one who has seen their effect can dispute. The part bitten inflames greatly, and the patient becomes feverish and excited, but the degree of venom varies very much, and it is said, according to the size and color of the insect. The brutes affect one's boots exceedingly, and attack an intruding foot with all the *animus* of an illegal occupier. They also like dropping from the ceilings and tent sides on the countenance of a sleeper, and climbing stealthily up the thin iron legs of bedsteads into blankets. Dog hunts are indescribably comic for a minute or two, principally on account of the proceedings of the unfortunate animal selected for the sport. He is generally a large, shaggy creature, like a wolf, who has a sort of defiance of horses, and a rule over his fellows which induces him to remain quietly gazing at the approach of the hunters, while his less dignified comrades are seeking shelter by flight, and running with drooping tails and heads hung sideway towards the ravines. The horsemen draw nearer; the dog rises and grows into a gruff bark in order to warn them off. On some the horses spreading right and left, the dog becomes uneasy and surveys his position, rapidly losing confidence in his mastery over it and in its safety. A horrid whoop is uttered by the hunters, and the wretched animal is suddenly smitten with the terrible conviction that he is an object of special attention to the centaurs, and that is "in for a run." Uttering loud barks and yelps, he takes to the ravin, and rushes away for the ravin, and there we leave him. In fact, until the novelty wears off, the amateur has plenty to amuse and edify him. The army is now

well supplied generally with food, but the Turkish bread is very bad. Last week 5,000 lbs. of it were condemned in one division alone, and yesterday a board of officers of the Fourth Division condemned 4,000 lbs. of it as unfit for use. When condemned it is buried in large holes, and the smell from them is by no means agreeable. Colonel Tulloch has abandoned all attempts to bake bread here for the troops, and has handed the ovens, &c., over to Mr. Filder. The men, strange to say, prefer the salt meat to the fresh.

THE BATTLE OF THE 22ND.

Paris May 26.—A despatch to the following effect has been received from General Pelissier, dated May 23rd:—"A very lively combat, directed against an impotent position, has lasted all night. We obtained complete success. The enemy's loss was great, and ours sensible. A French private despatch, published in the *Patrie*, announces that, on the night between the 22d and 23d of May, the French carried by assault the entrenched Russian camp near the Quarantine bastion, which was defended by the whole garrison of Sebastopol."

The *Moniteur* subsequently publishes the following despatch from General Pelissier:—

CRIMEA, 24th May.—To-day we have occupied the lines of the Tchernaya. The enemy who were not in force, offered little resistance in disputing the ground, and retreated rapidly into the fields. We have definitely established ourselves on the works carried. On the 22d an armistice was agreed upon for burying the dead and we were enabled to form an estimate of the enemy's losses. They must be about five or six thousand killed and wounded.

THE RUSSIAN ACCOUNT OF IT.

Under date of the 23rd of May Prince Gortschkoff writes as follows:—

"Yesterday evening seventeen battalions of the enemy, with reserves, attack our trench of counter-approach, commenced the day before in front of Bastions five and six. The combat was sanguinary, and lasted during the whole of the night. Our twelve battalions lost nearly 2,500 men in driving back the enemy."

In the *Debats*, Colonel St. Ange thus writes of the attack on the Russian works on the nights of the 22nd and 23rd May:—

"The works in question had been dug and constructed between the Central Bastion and the Quarantine Bay. It will be easy to explain the locality, if the reader has seen one of those plans of Sebastopol now so common in shop windows. The general enclosure of Sebastopol is divided by the great ravine of the military harbor. We have only to consider here the part comprehended between the ravine on the east, and the sea on the west. On the extreme right rises the great Flagstaff Bastion, a culminating point; then to the left, in going towards the sea, we come to the Central Bastion, so called by the besiegers because it faces nearly the centre of the line that we are considering; further on lie the bastion and the batteries that command the Quarantine Bay.

"On this side our troops already occupy the external part of the Flagstaff Bastion, the cemetery near the Quarantine, and lastly, but quite recently, the counter approaches that lie between this latter point and the Central Bastion; that is to say, we appear to be now in possession of all the chief external parts on the extreme left of the siege works.—We ought to explain how they proceed at these attacks to establish themselves in the conquered work. The attack is the affair of the battalions previously assembled in the trench; there is not much firing, everything is carried at the point of the bayonet by a sudden charge. Behind the attacking troops march detachments of workmen armed with spades and pickaxes, and having muskets slung at their backs; these are accompanied by sappers and miners of the engineer corps, commanded by their officers. As soon as the attacking troops have dislodged the enemy, they proceed to make good their own lodgment there.—This the workmen and the sappers work indefatigably to effect, while the battalions keep the repulsed enemy in check. The object to be now effected is to turn the work against the besieged, that is to say, to give it the form or the direction of a siege trench while preserving every part of the enemy's work conducive to that end. The workmen here are entitled to quite as much merit as the attacking battalions, for they find themselves equally exposed to a fire of grape and musketry; and that, too, without the powerful distraction of excitement that men feel when under fire and charging with the bayonet. The officers of engineers on these occasions are to be admired for their cool courage, as they point out the work to be done, and trace out the direction to be taken in order that the men may suffer least from the line of the enemy's fire. They are active and courageous; but they are also as passionless as if they were

working on the Polygon. The report in detail of the two last nocturnal engagements of May 22nd and 23rd, which will reach us in a few days, will naturally excite great interest, on account of the severity of the action and the importance of the result. General Pelissier has inaugurated his advent to the chief command by a vigorous demonstration, uniting prudence with boldness. We see that the siege of Sebastopol is being carried on with energetic consistency; its successive progress ought to prove to Europe that the powers allied in arms before the walls of Sebastopol will not let go their hold, and that they will end by achieving a triumph, which we have reason to expect, will be all the speedier, inasmuch, as several letters agree with General Pelissier's despatch in declaring that the Russian soldiers are beginning to show in their sorties symptoms of relaxation and discouragement."

THE CAPTURE OF KERTCH.

The following despatch, dated Varna, Monday 21, is from the correspondent of the *Times* in the Crimea:—

"On the Queen's birth-day the allied expedition arrived off the Straits of Kertch. The troops landed and ascended up the heights. The small steamers went up to Kertch. The Russians blew up their fortifications, and even fled after destroying several ships, very large quantities of wheat and flour, and 50 guns. Reinforcements were daily arriving at Constantinople. The occupation of Galatz, and an attack upon Ismael and Reni, are confidently spoken of."

The following additional particulars in the *Moniteur* are given in a despatch from Vice-Admiral Bruat:—

SEA OF AZOFF, MAY 25TH.—The Russians burned their magazines at Kertch, which contained 160,000 sacks of oats, 360,000 sacks of corn, and 1,000 sacks of flour; also three of their steamers and some thirty transports and sailing vessels, and as many more were captured. In the evening we entered the Sea of Azoff. The batteries on the coast at Kertch and Yenikale are in our power. The allies captured 30 vessels, 3 steamers, and as many more, laden with ammunition and provisions, were burned."

A GLANCE AT KERTCH.

The fortress of Kertch is situated in the government of Taurida, in European Russia, on the east coast of the Crimea, sixty miles N.N.N. of Kaffa. It stands on a peninsula to which it gives name, and has a good harbor. The streets are good, the houses generally neat, and the shops well supplied with merchandise. The population is about 12,000. This fortress and that of Yenikale, about twelve miles to the N.N.E., are of importance, as commanding the passage which forms the communication between the Black Sea and the Sea of Azoff. It was taken by the Russians in 1771, and confirmed in their possession at the following peace. It is rising in importance, as the trade of the Sea of Azoff is now carried on by vessels of small tonnage, which discharge their cargoes at Kertch; and the whole quarantine establishment of the Crimea is concentrated here, about four versts from the town. In the neighborhood of Kertch stood the ancient town of Panticapæum, rendered remarkable by the death of Mithridates. Numerous remains of antiquity have been discovered here, especially in the ancient tombs with which the surrounding plain abounds. The environs, for miles around, "form one mass of tumuli."

PELISSIER AND THE ZOUAVES.

We cut the following from the Paris correspondent of the *N. Y. Courier and Enquirer*:—"Pelissier took the command—assumed the offensive, and possessed himself—(with immense loss of life unavoidably)—of some of the most important advanced works of the enemy. Lord Raglan and his brave Allies next moved in another direction and gained possession of the Sea of Azoff; and though these conquests cut off four-fifths of the supplies necessary for the maintenance of the Russian army in the Crimea, besides gaining others present and prospective advantages which you will find recapitulated in the journals. "Now—incredible though it may appear—all this has taken place without the slightest suspicion of Canrobert's personal courage—of which, indeed, he had given on several occasions, unmistakable evidence. The fact is, that he wanted that Devil in him which Ney, and Murat, and Hoche, and Augereau, and Kleber, and Moreau, and Davoust, and Lannes, and Lasalle, and Pajol, and Excelmans, and even Westermann, had, and which Pelissier has. Canrobert would head a charge and mount a breach as fearlessly as Pelissier, but he would not calmly and unrelentingly suffocate in a cave, as Pelissier did—twenty hundred fellow human beings, of all ages and of both sexes. Brave as Hoche, Moreau, or Kleber, Pelissier has not their humanity. During