

evident that a dread seriousness hung over and oppressed all. Most made silent arrangements "in case any thing should happen,"—letters to friends, money matters, &c. &c., had to be looked to. I felt a most oppressive weight on my heart, a catch in the breath, an awe as if some fearful catastrophe was overhanging me. One could discern, however, throughout it all a determination to succeed, yet a clear knowledge of the difficulties and the sacrifices required. There was no bragging, no funk, but a cool, calculating resolution. The hospitals were being cleared, and the ambulances arranged, evidently in the expectation of a great influx of wounded. The night was spent in such preparations. No one for a moment doubted the success of the attack, and many made appointments to meet afterwards in the town who did not live to know of our repulse.

Half an hour after midnight on the 17th, without the sound of bugle or drum, the men fell into rank, and in silence marched off to their respective stations. As we were preparing to move to the front, the troops destined to form the forlorn hope passed us in silence. Their heavy, even tramp sent its echo to the heart, so certain was it that few of that gallant band would see another sun. A merciful thing it was that they could not foresee the fate in store for them!

I was stationed in front of the picket house, where the reserves of Guards and Highlanders were placed, and from this point we could clearly see the whole proceedings. When we got to the ground it was quite dark. The veil of black smoke which enveloped the town was continually rent by the blaze of cannon. The masses of troops moving to the front were dimly seen in the ravines before they disappeared under the murky curtain. As Lord Raglan and his staff rode past us, just before dawn, his name was passed along the crowd in a whisper. On all the eminences around groups of spectators could be indistinctly seen through the grey mist, all gazing in anxious expectation on the doomed city. Slowly the dawn spread over the landscape, and with its first faint streaks the shroud redoubled. The veil which concealed the town slowly rose, and was earned seaward by the morning's breeze. Rapidly the whole scene became unfolded. Below us lay the city, purely white and beautiful, the harbor beyond was like a lake of quicksilver, reflecting the rays of the rising sun; and beyond the dark masses the enemy could be seen covering the northern shore. From daybreak onwards, no imagination can portray, nor pen describe, the scenes which took place! It was in its most fearful and repulsive features. War is, in truth, one of the few things in which the reality far exceeds any idea which can be formed of it, or any description which can be given of it.

None but eyewitnesses can conceive such a scene as that which took place before Sebastopol on the 18th of June! The air above the works of the enemy was filled with living shells, and those explosions left in the atmosphere little clouds of pure white smoke, and along his parapets the great round shots struck thick as hail. At half-past three in the morning the assault began by the advance of the French against the Malakhoff. The musketry now began to rattle on both sides, and for a length of time there was one long curtain of fire kept up along the lines of attack and defence. Then dawn began to join in the cannonade, and how soon the men recovered from the depression, how rapidly delivered as to sound, caused by the failure of the assault. A continued roll of great drums. Great volleys burst out at three several points in the town, and completed a scene which had stood beside them, and who now

seemed more nearly one's conception of hell lay on a bed of agony, was well-nigh unremembered—to him alone the scene now appeared a reality. The camp assumed its wonted appearance, and nothing was spoken of but when there was to be another attack. August.—The battle of the Tchernaya was an incident which broke in on the monotony of camp life. We did not hear anything of it till the fight was nearly over, but when we went up to the height overhanging the river later in the morning, the Russian army was debouching in force on the plain beyond, and which was further down the river than the scene of the battle. It was a glorious sight! They poured forth from the narrow valleys leading down from the plateau of Mackenzie's Farm in glittering masses, "rank after rank, like surges bright of a broad sea of gold," till the whole plain was chequered with infantry, cavalry, and artillery. There they remained for some hours drawn out in battle order, and then retired as they came, a long line of dust alone marking their retreat up the dark valleys in the distance. Near the bridge, in the little grassy plains on either side of the river, which had been the grand point of attack, the dead and wounded lay in heaps, fearfully disfigured by the round shot which had played on them, and all along the road to camp they lay at intervals. The prisoners taken were the most miserable specimens of soldiers I ever saw. I met a body of about six hundred of them on their way to camp, and among them there was hardly one man in the prime of life. Old, grey, toothless men, and young raw boys, formed the bulk of their number. They certainly did not appear much distressed at being made prisoners.

From where I was stationed, I could see the dense masses of the attacking columns advance up the slope, then the torrents of grape which met them would obscure their ranks for a moment, and hardly a man would be seen to remain. I at one time saw a body of men, many hundreds strong, so completely swept away by one discharge, that only a few of the rear rank remained when the iron storm went past! The dead and dying could be clearly distinguished lying in piles on the hill-side, and over their prostrate bodies fresh troops crowded on to meet the same fate. Many a manly heart and nervous arm went down in the deadly struggle on the green hill-side! No valour availed—the cannon's force was greater than the strength of man. How many ardent hopes were extinguished, how many home circles destroyed, and lives rendered miserable by the havoc of that hour, none can tell, no more than they can imagine the bodily agony or the grief for home and friends which was there endured! What would be the value of what is called glory, if weighed on the field of battle and among the dead!

I was sent down to the front at an early hour, and the scene in the ravines and trenches baffles all description. The air was alive with projectiles. Shells bursting in mid air, and falling in heavy masses on all sides, round about rushing along, and leaving wide-spread destruction in their wake; and the sharp "ping" of the Mine startling us all out of propriety. Large bodies of men, fatigued and dusty, were living in shelter under the rocks. The hospital marquees, placed behind some projecting corner, were surrounded by stretchers and ambulance waggons filled with wounded men. The heat was oppressive. We, too, as well as the French, had been repulsed. It was but too plainly written in the men's faces. They never spoke a word, but walked sullenly homewards. The collapse and disappointment were proportionate to the nervous excitement. The wounds received on that day were of the most fearful description, as they were nearly all caused by shell or grape. Limbs torn off, skulls half carried away, and chests laid open were common accidents. The hospitals were full of men torn and mangled, and presented a scene much more fearful than even those of the field of battle. From the advanced position occupied by many of the worst wounded when they were hit, they could not be got at till the night of the 19th, and thus many of them lay unassisted for two whole days under a scorching sun, and the dews of the interment.

It was very curious to observe that as the men recovered from the depression, caused by the failure of the assault, a few days afterwards it was all forgot, and the same old reckless spirit prevailed. The comment caused by the sound of a round shot falling, and his bed was smashed behind him; September.—No one saw anything of the final assault on the 8th, except those more immediately engaged, as cavalry were early stationed to keep back all not on duty from the heights in front of the encampment. The great conflagration at night, by which the town was destroyed, lit the whole camp, and caused the greatest excitement from the ignorance which prevailed as to the movements of the enemy. The different and conflicting accounts which one hears of the cause of our repulse a second time from the Redan, makes it impossible to form any just idea of how this unfortunate affair turned out so badly. When the south side was found abandoned in the morning, the joy throughout the camp was universal. The place had at last fallen, and the ardent longings of months were satisfied. I will at some future time give you an account of the "heap of blood-stained ruins" as we found them on their being taken possession of by the Allies. The enemy had a very nasty habit, for some time previous to the taking of the town, of throwing round shot into our camp, a distance of about three miles. We could not understand how it was managed, but, sure enough, night and day they came crash down so regularly every three minutes, that you might safely set your watch by them. As they were fired vertically, we never heard them approach till they fell with a rush which sent the blood back to one's heart. At night they were particularly annoying, often coming so close that you involuntarily sprang out of bed, thinking they were coming through your tent. It was most curious, that though these shot were thus falling continually on camping ground, which was studded over as thick as it was possible with tents, only two men were killed by them. Certainly the hairbreadth escapes were numerous. One officer rose from his bed in the excitement caused by the sound of a round shot falling, and his bed was smashed behind him;