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DIARY OF THE SIEGE.

(From the London Times' Correspondent.)

SEBASTOPOL, September 29.—The enemy, having discovered the preparations for throwing up batteries near Fort Alexander and the ruins of Fort Paul by the French and English respectively, recommenced a heavy fire from the northern works and forts this morning, which they continued throughout the day, and which, at times, amounted to a cannonade. The French mortars replied to it with vigor, aided by some guns on the left. The Russians fired from Fort Michael, from Little Severnaya, and from the Harbor Spur Battery, and their shot went crashing through the ruined houses, but did not create any very serious injury. An enormous convoy was seen going out of the northern camps towards Simpheropol, but it was impossible to ascertain whether the carts were full or empty. As it was an exceedingly clear day, we could look into the Russian camps as clearly as if they had been our own, and through my glass I could make out the faces of the gunners on the top of Fort Catherine, who were working the guns *en barbette*. The enemy were working with great energy at new batteries all over the extensive series of sloping hill-sides south of the Belbek. Their Kadikoi, or Donnybrook fair, had, like ours, revived again, and was well attended, and in the distance large herds of oxen ranged at will. On going down to the town I heard that our 17-gun battery, begun last night by Lieutenant Graham, R.E., was stopped by order. Possibly we may be going to do something which will render such works of no utility. The progress of the men in removing wood from the houses is so rapid that there will scarcely be a stick of the place left. At four o'clock a serious accident took place, which has inflicted some loss on the army in depriving them of a considerable magazine of wood. A shell from the Russians burst close to the barracks, and a merchant sailor ran to look at the crater it formed in the ground. Thence he entered the building itself, and snatched about smoking his pipe till he came to some loose gunpowder, on which, being of a scientific and experimentalizing turn of mind, he tried the effects of dropping several sparks from the burning tobacco. The powder, as is not unusual in such cases, exploded with violence, and blew up the sailor and a sentry outside. They were both dreadfully burnt. As the floor was covered with cartridges and loose powder, the fire caught, and went leaping on by fits and starts to a large quantity of the same combustible matters. No one could approach to stop the fire. It at last caught the magazine, and the explosion blew out the walls and ceilings of the central barrack. The flames set fire to the dry woodwork, and in a short time the whole pile of buildings, which were of admirable construction, was in a blaze. The conflagration lasted till all that could be burnt was consumed, and lighted up the sky at night to a great distance. All that remains of the Imperial Barracks of Sebastopol is a mass of charred and blackened stones, split by the action of the fire. The Russians, thinking that the accident had been caused by their own fire, plied their guns with increased vigor, and threw shot and shell around the place, but did no damage. It is not quite certain that the man who caused the accident was a sailor. Some people say he was a navy of the Army Works Corps. Whoever he was, by the act for which he so dearly paid, he destroyed not less than 30,000 cartloads of wood, which would have been made available for hutting and fuel. It is, on the whole, a miracle that more accidents of the kind do not occur, owing to the neglect of the authorities and the carelessness of the men. No one seems to take any care to destroy the great quantities of powder, loose and in cartridges, which is to be found in all the Russian batteries, and in every nook and corner of the place. It was only the other day a naval officer pointed out to me the danger arising from the number of live shells lying inside the Redan. The fuses are open tubes of wood, and have no caps, so that a spark setting fire to one fuse would blow all the shells up. These live shells are to be found in all directions, and are generally nicely imbedded near small magazines or piles of cartridges. It is now supposed that the explosion which took place in the Strand Battery, and hurt so many men, was a fougasse. The Russians seem to be strengthening their camps near Mackenzie's Farm.

October 2.—The army is amused by rumors of active service, while all around them gives token of hibernation and stagnation, except our allies and the enemy. It is whispered that on Thursday next there will be a secret expedition for a place the name of which is by no means secret, and that 25,000 French and 15,000 English troops are to go on board the fleet with all possible expedition on that day. Again, it is said, "orders have been received from England" by electric telegraph to keep all steamers in Balaklava or at Kamiesch; but, if such orders were sent, they were assuredly disobeyed, for steamers leave Balaklava daily, and the Great Britain, largest of them all, is getting ready to return home on Saturday next, and will be preceded by the Colombo and several others. The telegraph has many evil qualities attributed to it. Quick as is its agency, it is sometimes too slow. For example, it is stated that orders were sent from home to spare the houses, public buildings, and docks of Sebastopol. It was only in our power to comply with the latter part of these injunctions, for the bombs and shot of our batteries, aided by the enemy's destructiveness, had laid all in ruin, and the docks only require a lighted match to fire the train, and these models of grand design and of beautiful workmanship will be mere craters of blocks of red granite, fine sandstone, and granite. Another indication of an intention to move is supposed to be conveyed by the fact that returns have been required from each regiment of the number of bat horses belonging to it, but those returns are not asked for in anticipation of any expedition whatever. Actually the work of the army is one of preparation, not for motion but for stagnation. The men are engaged on great roads from the ports to the front, which will be permanent marks of the existence of the allied armies on this spot for centuries; in fact, with so much labor at their disposal, our authorities are determined, if possible, to atone for the apathy of last autumn. It must be remembered that the enemy has an equal amount of labor set free for the accumulation of stores and the formation and repair of roads, and that they can now cover the Crimea with depots and fortified lines from Simpheropol to the Belbek. The roads which we are making are almost beyond the requirements of an army of temporary occupation. All these preparations are being made to enable the army to exist comfortably in its winter cantonments, to bring up huts, food, clothing, and fuel, and to remove guns, mortars, and *matériel* from the front. The trenches will be left as they are, except in so far as the parapets will be affected by the removal of the gabions which the men are permitted to take away for firewood. For these peaceful labors we have been blessed by the most lovely weather. The days are warm, and the air is charmingly fresh and pure.—The autumnal or second summer of the Crimea has shone upon us with all the delightful influences of repose. The earth teems again with herbs and flowers of autumn. Numerous bulbous plants are springing up over the steppes, among which the "Colchicum Autumnale" is prominent, and the hill sides ring with the frequent volleys directed upon innumerable quail, against which our army wages fierce battle at present. The demolition of the houses in Sebastopol goes on, but it is not so safe to visit the place as it was formerly, inasmuch as the Russians now shell vigorously, and throw shot at any considerable groups in the streets. The French have two mortars, which belonged, I believe, to the Russians, among the ruins of the Karabelnaia, and bombard the barracks in the citadel with great success.

October 5.—The expedition seems settled, and will assuredly sail this week, unless the weather should turn out very unfavorable. The Light (not the Hussars) Brigade of Cavalry have received orders to hold themselves in readiness to embark, and it is believed they are going to Eupatoria. Our destination is kept as close as possible, but every one affects to know it, points it out slyly on charts, or mutters it into your ear. The excursion of the fleet, and its return a short time back, may now have a deeper significance than before, but, if it was a ruse, the secret is now known to the enemy. We are told this expedition is going to Oczakoff, at the entrance to the Bug, or to Kinburn, or other abstruse places known in England only to the "Hertfordshire Incumbent" and a few Fellows of the Geographical Society. You will be intimately acquainted with all its proceedings, not to speak of its destination, by the time this communication is half way to Marseille, and I am almost afraid to say where I think we are going to, but with much deference suggest that it is intended as a feeler towards Perekop and Nicholaieff. The exact number of French I do not know, but I have heard that they will number 15,000. The Light Cavalry Brigade, under Lord George Paget, C.B., is said to be destined for Eupatoria, and it is evident that a strong demonstration is intended against the Russian convoys westward of the Tchongar route into Russia. If we are only blessed with moderate weather for a few weeks, these expeditions, judiciously handled, may precipitate the evacuation of the Crimea; but if the winter gales set in early it will be hazardous or impossible to land. Already the skies look unsettled and lowering—dark fog banks rest occasionally on the Euxine, and masters of sailing transports anchored outside Balaklava in 30 or 40 fathoms of water look

uneasily to windward as they think of the storm of Nov. 14, 1854.

At present the troops are in excellent health. Our strength is very considerable. It is almost as numerous as that with which the Duke fought the battle of Vittoria. The infantry counts 27,000; the cavalry, 3,500; the artillery, 9,000—in fine, General Simpson has under his command not less than 38,000 effectives of all arms. There are few things to be complained of; but an army is an insatiable creature, and its providers must be as thoughtful and foreseeing as ants. Supplies must come in beforehand in prodigious quantities, or we are starved out. A pile of stores disappears in a day. To all commissariat officers in charge at Balaklava it may be well said—"Nulla fronti fides."—"Have no faith in the front." When we hear of deficient harvests and of a want of breadstuffs at home, the recollection of the enormous quantities of wheat and corn destroyed at Kertch is forcibly before us. At the time it seemed wasteful, almost wicked, to burn this corn, when we were bringing food at enormous expense from England and every country in the world. We are now sending agents to America to buy breadstuffs. Could not Sir George Brown have managed to carry away a little of the millions of pounds of the precious article which we destroyed so recklessly? Verily, there is a Nemesis springs out of such deeds sooner or later, and ruin has not been long in attaining a dangerous maturity. We have been obliged to borrow flour from both French and Sardinians—but then it must be remembered that we consider it necessary to give our men bread four times a week, though the French are contented if they get bread once a week. Our stock of rum is exhausted. The rum-ships have not come in, and at present the whole army is drawing its supplies from the commissariat stores of the 4th Division, where Captain Dick, Land Transport Corps, and Deputy-Adjutant-Commissary-General Barlee had accumulated rum for their men for 70 days. As an instance of other deficiencies, I may mention that the butchers embarked for the commissariat of the expedition have no implements to carry on their trade with, and that they cannot procure them in the camp, even though they paid for them. In the same way the soldiers on the roads have scanty and inadequate tools to work with, and those used during the siege by the army are worn out. Captain Foster, who is in charge of the Croat and civil laborers, will be obliged to go down to Constantinople in a few days to purchase tools, and, instead of getting out good articles from England, we spend money and time in trying to repair those which are really useless. The Sappers' tools, which have been handed over to the men employed under the Army Works Corps here, are all that could be expected of them. But what are these as compared to the evils endured by our adversary? True, indeed, that of the condition of the Russian army encamped on the Belbek nothing certain is known in camp, but the generals have means of information, the action of which and the results are not divulged. Now and then one gets a glimpse of the world beyond the adverse sentries. The pickets bring in some foot-sore, ragged, emaciated, sickly-looking deserter, who tells a sad tale of want and suffering. Is he a Dolon or not? That is the question. The deserters who come in to the Sardinians are sent to our head-quarters; those who surrender to the Turks are brought to the French *Quartier-Général*. The last two who arrived at General Simpson's were a Pole and a Russian, and both were in such a condition as to excite the liveliest compassion among our soldiers. Their clothes were in rags, and the fragments of their boots scarcely clung to their feet. They came from the army near Baidar, and they stated that the whole of the men were in the same state; that all they had to eat was bread or biscuit and barley, and that they get no meat, and had only occasional issues of quarter rations of vodka, or spirits. Their officers told the troops that the allies were starving, and had no forage for their horses; and these two men were observed to laugh and throw up their hands in surprise as they passed the great piles of provisions accumulated at our depot on the Col. They said they were laughing at the lies which had been told to them. They were in such a forlorn state that Colonel Blane, the kind and feeling commandant of the head-quarters camp, sent down an active and intelligent non-commissioned officer, Sergeant Gillespie, of the Provost Marshal's department, under whose immediate control all prisoners are placed, to the Russian stores at Sebastopol to get them great-coats and clothing, but he could not find any boots, and it was observed that no boots were in store when the place was taken, and that the prisoners were very badly shod. This is very unusual with Russian troops, and shows the straits to which their army must be reduced. When the place was evacuated the English took 62 prisoners, many of whom were drunk and asleep amid the ruins of the

houses, and they were all badly dressed and ill provided with shoes or boots. The wounded men taken in recent affairs of outposts by the Sardinians present the same appearance, and the fact is evident that the Russians are rapidly deteriorating in condition and in external efficiency. The men state they get 3lb. of bread or 1lb. of biscuit a-day, and a little barley, which they boil into a kind of soup, and that that is all their rations. Now and then, as I have said, they receive a small allowance of wheat or barley brandy. They are kept alive by assurances that the allies must soon go, and then they will have (poor deluded creatures!) the spoils of the English camp, which is rich in everything but food. Most of these men are exceedingly tractable, and they are found to make excellent servants at head-quarters, so long as they are not let at the rum. They are obedient, hard-working, and easily contented, and their masters all speak highly of them. Since the war began we have had nearly 1,000 of them at head-quarters, and very few of them have belied that character. One of them, a Polish non commissioned officer, was of great use as a spy, but he was seized with an unconquerable desire to join the Polish Legion at Varna, and had got as far as Odessa, when he was recognized and shot as a deserter. There are many races in the Russian army, but none seem willing to desert except the Poles, and the number of these disaffected soldiers who have come over to us is very small indeed. In reference to a paragraph which you published from a contemporary, classifying the regiments engaged in the attack on the Redan into English, Irish, and Scotch, in accordance with the names each of them bears, I can assure you nothing can be more fallacious than any deductions from such *data*. It is not by any means true that each regiment consists in most part of natives of, or is raised in, the province or county from which it derives its name. For instance, a large proportion of the 41st Welsh are Irish, and that regiment till lately has been recruited in Ireland, but now orders have been issued to raise men in Wales, where the character and reputation of the regiment may at present exercise greater influence in procuring recruits. The 77th, which is called the East Middlesex Regiment, is almost exclusively composed of Irishmen; the 30th, or Cambridgeshire, contains a very great number of Irishmen also; and the 90th, or Perthshire Volunteers, has quite as many men from Tipperary as from the shire it is named after. The same remark is true of many other regiments engaged; but there are very few Irish in the Rifle Brigade, still fewer in the Highland regiments, and least of all in the Guards. The 21st North British Fusiliers contains many Irish and many natives of Gloucester and Somersetshire—in fact, a regiment is constituted of natives of the districts into which it sends its recruiting parties and with which it has, as it were, a connexion, so that you will find a great number of the Royal Artillery come from the north of Ireland, and of Riflemen from Kent, and of Marines from the midland counties and seaport towns of England, and of the 71st Highland Light Infantry from Glasgow. The names of the killed and wounded, though by no means a certain or accurate index of the districts from which regiments are recruited, generally furnishes bases for a tolerably just approximation to the truth.

CAMP OF THE ALLIED ARMIES ON THE TCHERNAYA, OCTOBER 6.

There is no assertion, however absurd in itself, to which peculiar circumstances cannot give at least a semblance of truth: thus the elaborate sophistry of the Belgian paper *Le Nord* that the fall of Sebastopol is rather an advantage than otherwise for the Russian army, that it renders Prince Gortschakoff's position more concentrated, and consequently less assailable, seems to get a semblance of truth, in face of the inactivity of the allied armies for the last month. As long as there was the slightest reason to suppose that the Russians had recognized their position in the Crimea as untenable, and that they were on the point of retiring, a movement as if to threaten their flank and rear from Baidar, or some half-measure in the direction of Eupatoria, may have been thought sufficient to help on this good-natured resolution so freely attributed to the Russians; but now, when even the most incredulous must have been convinced that nothing is further from the idea of the Russians, when we see and know them to be making preparations to keep their line of plateaux during the winter, and when only a short space of time remains during which anything can be undertaken before the winter sets in, it would not be so very surprising if the assertions of the above-mentioned paper, about the improved position, of the Russian army, found believers elsewhere than in the brains of its editor. Of course this month may have been one of preparations, but it has been so for both parties. The expedition to the north, the orders received by the Light Cavalry Brigade to be in readiness to embark

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