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DIARY OF THE SIEGE.

(From Correspondents of London Journals.)

May 2.—There was a very brilliant exploit performed by seven battalions of French infantry, in which the 46th Regiment were particularly distinguished, last night and this morning. They advanced before midnight and seized on the Russian ambuscades under a heavy fire. The Russians came out to meet them in force; a tremendous conflict ensued, in which the French used the bayonet in repeated charges, and at last they forced the Russians back into the works, followed them, stormed the outworks of the Central Battery, and took off eight colors, which they brought to General Pelissier. In this gallant affair, which lasted till 2 o'clock this morning, the French had 63 killed and 210 wounded, and 9 officers put *hors de combat*. The obstinacy of the combat last night and this morning was sufficiently evident from the spectacle presented by the ground between the French lines and the Batterie du Centre. The space of rubbish, broken earth, ruins of batteries, and the *débris* of outworks, was covered with gabions, fragments of arms, and dead bodies, and the Russians were busily engaged in burying those who had fallen inside their lines. The firing on the left was incessant and exceedingly heavy, and the Russian artillerymen did their best to avenge the loss of their comrades, but probably not with much effect, although the air was obscured by the clouds of dust arising from the shower of cannon balls, which tore along the surface, marking their course as they ricocheted among the batteries by pillars of earth dashed up by the concussion. The French replied with vigor, and from dawn till eve the contest was continued between the artillery and the riflemen in front of the Flagstaff Battery. Our batteries all day maintained a most profound silence. I was watching both the right and the left attack to-day for an hour closely, and during all that time I did not see one shot or shell from the left, and only three or four were fired from the right, principally at the quarry and rifle pits in the front of the Redan, where, it is said, the Russians have a masked battery of nine guns. There is no appearance of it to the eye, but our engineers are pretty sure of the fact. On the extreme right again the French batteries fired pretty frequently at the Inkermann batteries. Early this morning a little flotilla of some 25 or 30 French vessels, most of them brigs and schooners, sailed from Kamiesch, and stood over to the south-west with a gentle breeze. At 2.30 a body of Russian troops, in three divisions, each about 2,500 strong, were seen marching into Sebastopol from the camp over the Tchernaya. A very large convoy of carts and pack animals also entered the town in the course of the day, and an equally numerous string of carts and horses left for the interior. The troops marched along by the road at the head of the harbor on the south side, and were lost to sight at 3 o'clock behind the rise of the cliffs on the south of the roads. The day was so clear that one could almost see their faces through the glass. Their officers were well mounted, and the men marched solidly and well.—Numbers of dogs preceded and played about the line of march, and as they passed by the numerous new batteries, at which the Russians are working night and day, the laborers ceased from their labors for the time, saluted the officers as they passed, and stood gazing on the sight, just as our own artisans would stare at a body of troops in some quiet English town. About 4 o'clock it was observed by us on the right that the enemy's battalions were forming in columns in the rear of the Flagstaff Battery, and in a few moments afterwards about 2,000 men, who were most likely volunteers, made a desperate rush out of the works close to the Central Battery, and with a loud cheer flung themselves on the French advance. For a moment their numbers and impetuosity enabled them to drive the French out of the imperfect works and ambuscades as far as the parallel, but not without a desperate resistance. The musketry was so heavy that the smoke soon obscured the scene of the conflict from sight, but the French could be seen advancing rapidly along the traverses and covered ways to the front, their bayonets flashing through the murky air in the sun, and in a few moments the Russians were driven back by the cold steel, and forced to fly hastily behind their entrenchments, which instantly opened a heavy cannonade and volleys of grape to check the pursuit of the French. Our allies fought splendidly, and chastised the audacity of the enemy with much severity, but our loss is, I am glad to say, very trifling. Several Russian officers and men were taken prisoners, and the enemy with great difficulty succeeded in carrying off most of their dead, and wounded, but left several of both on the ground. While this affair was proceeding our races were going on in a hollow behind Cathcart's hill.

May 8.—The details of the Kertch expedition have lost their interest, inasmuch as it effected no

thing. The most extraordinary rumors are afloat respecting the reasons of its return *re infecta*, but the subject is one of such delicacy that it is better to refrain from any comment or hypothesis respecting it. It is sufficient to say that the fleet, consisting of about 40 sail, with nearly 12,000 men on board, arrived at the rendezvous, lat. 44.54, long. 36.28, on Saturday morning and on the previous night, and that they were summoned to return to the place whence they came by an express steamer, which left Kamiesch on Friday night or Saturday morning with orders (it is said) from General Canrobert. These orders were, it is reported, sent by the French General in consequence of a communication from Paris, which rendered it incumbent on him to concentrate the forces under his command in the Chersonese. It is not to be wondered at that this abrupt termination of an expedition which, from its secret character, was doubtless intended to effect important services, excited feelings of annoyance and regret among those who expected to win honor and glory and position. Admiral Bruat could not venture to take on himself the responsibility of disregarding orders so imperative and so clear, and Admiral Lyons was not in a position to imitate the glorious disobedience of Nelson. No doubt all the officers engaged, French and English, experienced the bitterest disappointment when they heard the orders to go back to Kamiesch. Of the feelings of the men there can be no question, for they have been only too loudly expressed since their return. It is rumored that the Emperor directed all the troops to be concentrated for some important operation, which is to be undertaken forthwith, but it is scarcely probable his Majesty knew the expedition had actually sailed and was close to the place where, as it is believed, it was to act, at the time the orders were despatched. No one can tell where the men were to land or what place the fleet was to attack, and Kertch, Kassa, and Anapa, each of them, within a moderate distance of the rendezvous, have been severally named as the point of attack, but it is probable, from certain dispositions and orders, that the troops would have disembarked near Theodosia (Kassa), and that the fleet would have been employed in the destruction of the forts which guard the Straits of Kertch on both sides. All such speculations are, however, worthless, nor can the real objects of the expedition be known unless the Generals who conceived it think fit to communicate them to the world. It is certain, however, that the Russians were quite aware of our proceedings, because they must have seen the flotilla cruising along the south coast of the Crimea to the eastward, and for miles the blue sky was seamed with streaks of black smoke from the steamers, which even at the rendezvous were visible from the land. Those on board the ships which were the furthest at sea could easily make out the land. A high peak rising out of the sea to the north was visible to the whole squadron; two or three smaller elevations at no great distance could also be seen distinctly; and there is no doubt but that the low land itself could be discerned from the tops of the men-of-war at the rendezvous. Sir Edmund Lyons is said to be unwell, and his illness is attributed to chagrin at the result of the expedition, or rather at the want of it. The firing was very heavy last night, particularly on the French side, and our casualties in the advanced trenches are becoming heavier every day. The French have constructed some very fine new batteries on the left, and have now put all their new guns in position. Our works are complete, and, as our new batteries are armed very heavily, and are 500 and 600 yards closer to the enemy than the old lines, we may expect tremendous results from their fire. Captain Arnold, of the 4th, in posting his sentries on the left a few nights ago, was fired at by the Russians, and fell.—As he had only a few men with him, and the enemy rushed on at once, he fell into their hands, and it is hoped he is now alive and a prisoner. The 49th were surprised in the advanced trenches on the right the same night, and several of them were bayoneted and received mortal or severe wounds before the 2nd Battalion of Royals, who were on duty behind them, could come to their assistance. Captain Corban received a bayonet wound from one of his own men while leaping into the trench. The enemy were repulsed by the Royals, aided by some of the 49th.—The latter had five or six killed and 15 wounded.

May 10.—About 1 o'clock this morning the camp in front was roused up by an extremely heavy fire of musketry and repeated cheering along our Right Attack. The elevated ground and ridges in front of the Third and Fourth Divisions were soon crowded with groups of men from the tents in the rear. It was a very dark night, for the moon had not yet risen, and the sky was overcast with clouds, but the incipient flashing of small arms which lighted up the front of the trenches, the yell of the Russians (which our soldiers have christened "the Inkermann screech"), the

cheers of our men, and the volume of the fire indicated the position, and showed that a contest of no ordinary severity was taking place. There is an earnestness and reality about the musketry on such occasions which has a language of its own that cannot be mistaken. The regularity and precision of the *feu de joie*, the platoon or file firing of our reviews, have little akin with the passionate, intense, and startling bursts of rifle and musket, and give but an imperfect notion of the deadly rattle and fitful roll of small arms in action, where every man is loading and firing as rapidly as he can, and where the formation of the line is altering every moment. For a mile and a-half the darkness was broken by outburst of ruddy flame and bright glittering sparks, which advanced, receded, died out altogether, broke out fiercely in patches in innumerable twinkles, flickered in long lines like the electric flash along a chain, and formed for an instant craters of fire. By the time I had reached the front—about five minutes after the firing began—the fight was raging all along the right of our position, and as some extra men had been sent down to the batteries when the relief marched down it was thought that we might have made an attack on the Russian works close to our advanced trenches, but it was soon tolerably certain that the enemy had either made a sortie upon Gordon's new works, or a vigorous assault upon the men in front of the trenches. I cannot now ascertain the particulars of the affair, even if one could have the heart to disturb the poor fellows who may have come up from the trenches, and I can only describe what I saw. It seemed as if the fiercest and most determined struggle took place on the left of our Right Attack, but the ground is so very deceitful at night that it is impossible to determine localities with anything like precision. The wind was favorable for hearing, and the cheers of the men, their shouts, the voices of the officers, the Russian bugles and our own, were distinctly audible. The bugles of the Light Division and of the Second Division were sounding the "turn out" on our right as we reached the high ground, and soon afterwards the alarm sounded through the French camp close to them. Hundreds of the soldiers had got up, and were drawn up, watching with the most intense interest the fight before them, as far as they could see it. The tents of the Fourth Division were lighted up, and the old Inkermann men were all anxious and ready for the word to march, should their services be required. The musketry, having rolled incessantly for a quarter of an hour, began to cease at intervals along the line. Here and there it stopped for a moment altogether; again it burst forth. Then came a British cheer, which thrilled through every heart, "Our fellows have driven them back—bravo!" Then a Russian yell, a fresh burst of musketry, more cheering, a rolling volley subsiding into spattering flashes and broken fire, a ringing hurrah from the front; and then the Russian bugles sounding "the retreat," and our own bugles the "cease firing," and the attack—after half an hour's duration—was over. The enemy were beaten, and were retiring to their earthworks; and now the batteries opened to cover their retreat. The Redan, Round Tower, Garden Batteries, and Road Battery, aided probably by the ships, lighted up the air from the muzzles of their guns. The batteries at Careening Bay and at the North side of the harbor contributed their fire, and the sky was seamed by the red track of innumerable shells. You could see clearly at times the ground close around you from the flashes of the cannon. The round shot tore the air with a harsh roar, and shells burst almost in volleys along our lines. The Russians were avenging themselves as best they might for their repulse, and the extent of their mortification and anger might be inferred from the vigor and weight of their cannonade. The instant they began to fire, our ever active allies the French, on our right, opened from their batteries over Inkermann and from the redoubts, to draw off the Russian guns from our men; and our own batteries also replied, and sent shot and shell in the direction of the retreating enemy. The effect of this combined fire was very formidable to look at, but was probably not near so destructive as that of the musketry. From half-past one till three o'clock the cannonade continued, but the spectators had retired before two o'clock, and tried to sleep as well they might in the midst of the thunders of the infernal turmoil. This conflict must have caused considerable loss, and it is a time of painful suspense while one is in a state of uncertainty respecting the fate of friends and the result of such an encounter. Soon after three o'clock, A. M., it began to blow and rain with great violence, and on getting up this morning, I really imagined that one of our terrible winter days interpolated itself into our Crimean May. The tents are dank with wet, the whole camp looks black and miserable, and one step out of doors takes you over the shoes in mud.

May 11.—The fight appears to have been a sortie or even a premeditated attack; but whatever it was, the Russians were completely foiled. It is supposed the Russians had 150 *hors de combat*. The tremendous cannonade they opened was unattended with much effect, considering its weight and intensity, and was only so much waste of ammunition, but our fire on their retreating columns must have added considerably to their casualties. The total loss in the Light Division last night, I am glad to say, turns out to be only 14 *hors de combat*. Lieut. Lawrence, of the 34th regiment, and three men were wounded. The gallant 7th regiment had five men wounded; the 88th regiment, three men; the 90th regiment, one man; and the 23rd, one man wounded. The Russians have succeeded in getting five mortars to bear upon our right attack, which are likely to increase our casualties. We have never had so many mortars directed against this one spot at any time previous to the present.

May 12.—Last night, in the midst of an awful storm of rain and wind—so thick that no one could see a yard beyond him—a body of Russians came up on our left attack, but the sentries gave the alarm just in time; and Colonel Macbeth, of the 68th Regiment, got his men into order and received the first fire of the enemy as they came up to the trench with perfect steadiness. Some of the Russians leapt up on the parapet and jumped into the battery, where they at once met their fate. There was a desperate struggle between the Russians and the men of the 68th outside the lines, in which the bayonet was freely used on both sides; but the enemy were repulsed by our fellows, led by Colonel Macbeth, Lieutenant Hamilton, and a sergeant of the 68th. I regret to say that Captain Lloyd Edwards and six men of the 68th were killed, and 22 men of the same regiment were wounded. We took some wounded prisoners. It is of course impossible to ascertain the particulars.

The *Post* gives an account of the fate of the secret expedition from Sebastopol, bound for the Straits of Kertch, on the 2nd of May:—"A battery of artillery, consisting of 134 horses and 180 men; and 30 sappers; embarked on the same day. The infantry was chiefly composed of French troops; the whole British force mustering about 2,800 men, with 780 horses and transport animals. Sir George Brown was entrusted with the command in chief of the expedition. Each man had 50 rounds in pouch, and 100 per man in reserve. One waggon for rockets attended the battery of artillery. The commissariat had 14 days' provisions with them. The destination of the expedition was Kertch Straits, where they were to land at a small bay, just beyond Kamiesch Point, and about 10 miles from Kertch. Their first endeavors were to have been directed to an attack by land and sea on Fort St. Paul, lying about eight miles from Kertch, a fortress mounting 21 guns. It was intended to march along the shore and attack it in rear, whilst the fleet bombarded it in front. After having dismantled this place, they were to proceed on to Kertch. The main object of the expedition was to destroy the depots of reserved stores stationed there by the enemy; and to open a road into the sea of Azoff. Major Gordon, Royal Engineers, accompanied a *reconnaissance* to this place some time since, and it was from his report that the expedition had its origin. The enemy are said to have sunk a considerable number of vessels from Fort St. Paul to the sand-banks from the Asiatic side, and also some in the Straits of Yenikale. The distance of Kertch from this place is about 180 miles. The return to Balaklava, early on the morning of the 6th, of the whole expedition has filled every one with surprise and astonishment. The expedition had reached its destination, or at any rate, within a few miles of it, at daylight yesterday morning, and were preparing to disembark, which they anticipated would be accomplished by 8 a.m. They could see the forts at about eight miles' distance. At this moment a signal was hoisted from the admiral's ship for captains to come on board, and on their return the order was given to return to Balaklava. Never were men's minds more disappointed; and never before did officers and soldiers swear more vehemently at the ill-luck which had overtaken them. It now appears that news had been received by the admirals from the Emperor, which had the effect of countermanding the expedition. Rumor says that a screw is loose; that the French objected to the expedition; and further, that if it went, for the troops to land at Kassa Bay, then to pass over to Arabat, and afterwards take the Kertch peninsula in front of them. On this point, it is said, the allies disagreed. The true reason for the recall of the expedition, it appears, was General Canrobert's wrong application of a telegraphic despatch from the Emperor; and this, it is likely, is the real reason of his resignation. The *Post* afterwards says:—"We are informed