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## DIARY OF THE SIEGE.

(From Correspondents of London Journals.)

CAMP BEFORE SEBASTOPOL, August 20.—The fire which opened at daybreak on Friday continued the whole of Saturday and yesterday, but was slackened this morning by order. I should not wonder if it were to be again increased to-night, in order to favor the progress of the French works. This has already been considerable, and the French seem duly sensible of the service our cannonade has rendered them. It has enabled them, I heard a French officer say on Saturday evening, to do in four hours what they previously could not have done in fifteen days. I believe that the three days' fire has enabled them to do what they otherwise would probably never have done. Their foremost parallel, which had been begun at the two ends, could not be completed, owing to its near proximity to the Malakoff. As soon as a gabion was put up a storm of projectiles was hurled against it and the working party. This difficulty has now been surmounted, and the extremities are connected. I understand that good progress was made last night, and that they are enlarging the trench so as to admit of its containing more men. Opinions are divided as to the plan of attack that will be observed. Some think that without pushing their works beyond the point at which they have now arrived, the French will give the assault; and a report is prevalent in our camp that a British division (the Light, it is rumored) will share with them the peril and honor. Others suppose that they will sap up the Malakoff itself, blow up the parapet, and assault amid the confusion consequent on the explosion. All this is mere conjecture. As far as I have had an opportunity of observing, I think the French incline to the latter plan. On the other hand, the distance is now so greatly reduced—is, indeed, so very short—between the French trenches and the Russian defences, that a vigorous assault ought to succeed, unless, indeed, the more desponding anticipations that I have heard indulged in, as to the impregnability of the internal defences of the Malakoff, should be even more than realized. At the same time, we must not be misled as to the probable amount of resistance, by the fact that, since the first day of the bombardment, the Russian fire from the Malakoff, and, indeed, from all parts of their line, has been weak; as if their guns had been silenced by ours, and that the works appear to have suffered considerable damage. Mute though the Malakoff may be, it would not be surprising if, were we to assault to-day, our storming parties should find that every gun could still speak loud enough.—The dearly bought experience of the 18th of June must not be thrown away. On the other hand, our fire has been both severe and well directed. That of the French has been partial, and much less strong—and this has excited a good deal of comment and conjecture, some saying that there had been a misunderstanding, and that the French did not know they were expected to back us with their batteries. It is improbable, however, that there has been any mistake. Persons there may be—perhaps themselves too hasty and impetuous—disposed to tax General Simpson with over great deliberation; but he is generally admitted to be a safe man, not likely to fall into misunderstandings, and one who would be quite sure of what was to be done before attempting to do it. He certainly keeps his own counsel extremely well, and nothing has transpired of the plan which it is presumed he has for serious operations at a very early date. Our loss during the bombardment has not been heavy. It was incurred chiefly on Friday, since which day no officers have been hit to the best of my knowledge, and not many men. For hours together the Russian fire has been very slack, an occasional shot here and there. They seem to consider it a point of honor to go off in great style on the first day, after which they run their guns behind the parapets, cover them with sand bags, and allow us to blaze away with little reply. There are reports that their men fight very unwillingly, and that there is great difficulty in getting them forward. This did not appear to be the case with those who fought the other day at the Tchernaya, but they were double-primed with brandy, and moreover comprised divisions that had just arrived. Many of the battalions who attacked that day had not been into Sebastopol at all. So, at least we learn from the prisoners.—That those who have long been defending the place should be discouraged would not be surprising; but the chief evidence we have of it is that of a Polish officer, who came over a day or two ago. Some of the prisoners taken at the Tchernaya are said to have inquired what had been the result of the attack on our trenches, and, on hearing that none had been made, to have expressed their surprise, as one had been intended simultaneously with that upon our right on the 16th instant. It is believed, or supposed, that the unwillingness of the troops prevented the intend-

ed co-operation to be afforded in the shape of a sortie against our right and left attack. All these conjectures, suppositions, and beliefs must be taken for what they may be worth, which is often little enough. It would not be at all surprising, certainly, if the Russians were discouraged, heartily wearied of their protracted defence, in which they gain no ground, nor have the least chance of gaining any; for our position is really impregnable, and so they must consider it, after the severe repulse of their recent attack on what probably they considered one of its weakest points. To return, however, to our own loss in the three days' bombardment. The information I have obtained convinces me that it does not exceed 200, or, at most, 250 men "hors de combat" beyond the usual average daily loss in the trenches. This is very little, especially if we bear in mind, that the Russian fire on the first day was really extremely violent. As to other damage, one or two batteries of our left attack suffered a little, as I told you in my last; our right scarcely anything. As regards the enemy, we may reasonably hope, although we do not too confidently reckon, that we have punished him pretty severely. Although earthworks take a deal of hammering before they show their marks, both the Redan and the Malakoff have a very battered appearance. We have of course no means of ascertaining the Russian loss of men. It is believed that they sustained a very considerable one on Saturday night. Their fire became extremely brisk on that evening. Our people kept up the musketry against the Malakoff to protect the French workmen, and shells and bouquets of shells were flying all along the lines from right to left—very pretty to look at, but unpleasant to meet. The night was dark, and the only light save that of the burning fuses which crossed each other in curves against the black sky, and that of the flashes from the rifles proceeded from some carcasses which the French threw from time to time to see what they were about. The Russians were numerous in the Redan, intending a sortie, and I believe some of them did venture out, but they were received with such volleys from the Quarries that they quickly retired, and their batteries threw into the Redan a shower of shells, which must have had a murderous effect among the throng of Muscovites. The affair was brief; the volleys of musketry were very sharp indeed, and were taken up, more or less, along the whole line. There was also extremely heavy firing on the left. Altogether the evening was an exciting one, and the consumption of ammunition must have been considerable. At sunset on Saturday evening a party of the naval brigade, commanded by Lieutenant Gough, dragged a 68-pounder up to No. 11 battery left attack. Jack hauled away with his usual good will and alacrity. The Russians fired at him as he went up, but he reached the battery without casualty, and the gun was put in position. The next morning trial was made of it in the presence of Captain Keppel, and it was found to bear perfectly on the mole-head and on the bridge across the creek.—The mole-head is a sort of landing-place at the left-hand corner of the creek, where it enters the main harbor, and is used by the Russians to land their stores from the opposite side. They will be obliged to land them elsewhere in future. I understand that the Russians have been observed moving about the heights beyond the valley of the Tchernaya, and it would not be surprising if another attempt were to be made ere long. They will find us all prepared—the English army full of fight, the French and Sardinians elated with their recent triumph, and the last animated with that additional confidence which the consciousness of having behaved gallantly and proved themselves worthy of their allies cannot fail to give them. The conviction that we shall render a very handsome account of the Russians whenever they think proper to attack us does not prevent our taking proper precaution, and preparing for their reception. The whole of the French Imperial Guard, which was away to the left, where it was of no use, was yesterday marched over to this plateau, and encamped beyond the French semaphore, and all along the slightly elevated ridge that overlooks the valley of the Tchernaya. I do not know the numerical strength of either the infantry or artillery of the Guard, but they form a very large body of men, and fine-looking soldiers they are. There are nine regiments of infantry and some battalions of Chasseurs, which compose a strong force; but I did not see them march up, and opinions vary so much here that even some French officers whom I asked would not venture an estimate of their numbers. I walked round the edge of the plateau yesterday afternoon, and they were all snugly established, had got up their kitchens, composed of a few fragments of rock and big stones, and, while some strolled about picking up the scanty sticks and roots for fuel, others skimmed the *marmites*, some of which emitted an extremely savory odor. The French are certainly

famous fellows for settling themselves down in an instant, and making themselves at home wherever they may be placed.

August 21.—Yesterday afternoon, between five and six o'clock, the whole of the French batteries on the left suddenly opened a furious fire, to which the Russians warmly responded. General Pelissier, in his open carriage, with his aides-de-camp and usual hussar escort, passed through the English camp and went up to Cathcart's Hill. The fire lasted until nightfall, and then diminished. During the night there was not much firing. At midnight it had almost ceased, and one saw but an occasional shell in the air. At two a.m., orders came for our army to turn out. This was rapidly done; the troops moved to the front, to their usual positions in such cases, and remained there until daylight. It is now very early in the morning, and I have not yet been able to ascertain the motives of the alert. It appears, however, that the French turned out before we had orders to do so, and that then a line of telegraphic lights was observed in the Russian positions, commencing at Sebastopol and running along the Inkermann heights. It is said that the French got under arms in consequence of observing a Russian force in motion on the heights in question. Various rumors are abroad as to its object, but none that appear to me worth repeating. From the present aspect of affairs, and notably from the change of place of the Imperial Guard, it seems probable that the French will operate particularly on the Tchernaya line, where they, the other day, achieved so brilliant a success, and that the English will form the main force to be opposed to an attack proceeding from the town. The result of the action of the Tchernaya ought to convince the Russian commanders that it is in vain for them to assume the aggressive; but the arrival of fresh troops doubtless inspires them with new hopes. Some believe that, disheartened by the protracted siege and hopeless of the allies desisting from it, they are likely to stake everything on a desperate sortie. To this is to be opposed the opinion of the less sanguine, who doubt that the besieged suffer so much, in various ways, as has been reported, who think that their determination is unshaken, and the Malakoff is not to be taken. Between the two opinions it is safest to steer a middle course. The object of the French in opening fire on the left is still a mystery in our camp, even in very high quarters. With respect to the turn-out this morning, it appears that the French gave us warning. The Russians were seen assembling towards the right, apparently with a view to attacking the same positions from which they were repulsed on the 16th. They threw up some rockets as signals, and retired. It is to be presumed that they expected to catch us napping, and, on finding themselves mistaken, thought proper to abandon their design.—The enemy continues to throw shot at our camp, but they fall short or on the outskirts, and the damage they do is so trifling as not to be worth the ammunition expended. Yesterday evening, during the firing on the left, they threw up several to Cathcart's Hill. They are fired from an immense distance (the Garden Battery; it is believed), and of course at a great elevation. The soldiers amuse themselves with digging them out of the ground, into which they plunge to a considerable depth.

Aug. 24.—Orders were given this morning that no officer or man should quit the camp. An attack is expected, and the army is on its guard. Large bodies of Russians have been seen to issue from the town, and it is thought they meditate an onslaught upon the Sardinians. It may possibly prove a false alarm, like many others that we have lately had. On the 21st, on returning to camp from sending off my despatch, I found the troops under arms. The enemy had been observed in motion on the heights beyond the Tchernaya. Nothing came of it, nor other similar recent alarms, but the *qui vive* is becoming our habitual state. It is to be hoped this vigilance may not be relaxed at the moment when it is most needed. The general opinion seems to be that the Russians will make a second attempt on the Tchernaya line, combined probably with attacks on other points. It is thought they will come on in great force, and it is therefore desirable we should have strong reserves in readiness, in order that the ultimate triumph, on which we confidently reckon, may not be limited to the recapture of positions snatched by the first heavy onset of overwhelming numbers. Such a result would be less than we have a right to expect should the Russians risk a general attack, and should no greater be attained the fault will be attributable to the dispositions taken. Such an attack, promptly and vigorously met, ought to end in our wresting from the foe some solid advantage, perhaps even in the capture of the Malakoff itself. Had we that, we should quickly be masters of the Redan and the little Redan; it might take a few days to vanquish the resistance offered by the inner line of defence, but

the issue of the contest, as regards the south side of Sebastopol, would no longer be doubtful. If, as we have some grounds for believing, the Russian troops are already considerably demoralized, the loss of the Malakoff might so discourage them as to throw the south side almost immediately into our hands. Its capture and the destruction of the ships would render a very large force—in itself a powerful and numerous army—now employed in the trenches disposable for operations elsewhere. A portion of these troops might then, by the aid of our fleet, be promptly conveyed to Eupatoria, where we already have 20,000 of the best Turks. Suppose we sent off 40,000 men say, 30,000 English and 10,000 Sardinians—leaving the French to observe the north side of Sebastopol and keep the enemy in check down there; we should thus form an army of between 50,000 and 60,000 effective soldiers, which would give an excellent account of any Russian army attempting to retreat northwards. This plan I know to be considered by officers of high rank and great military knowledge and experience as perfectly feasible. We have abundance of transport, plenty of cavalry could be sent, and such a battle might be fought, such a victory obtained, as would eclipse the glories even of Alma and Inkermann; for it is to be observed that even those persons here who take the most desponding view of the prospects of the siege are as confident as men can be of our army driving before it in the field even very superior forces of the Russians. And really when one notes the excellent condition of the troops, and the cheerful, gallant, and loyal spirit that animates them, one cannot doubt that they would fulfil these high expectations; one can imagine no army, though it were twice their number, withstanding their onset, and one reflects with regret on their being kept here all the summer knocking their heads against stone walls, and against earthworks that are worse, expending their energies in the wearisome trench duty, and sighing in vain for motion and action in the field. We have still two months of good campaigning weather before us, and we can only hope they will be employed in such a way as to force in some degree for the unprofitable manner in which spring and summer have been suffered to glide by. We are completely in the dark as to the intentions of the commanding Generals as regards offensive operations. All that we can see is that an attack on our lines is expected, and there our knowledge stops. Meanwhile our artillery and naval brigade are far from idle. A number of old guns have been sunk in the earth, and make excellent practice on the town, sending shells in all directions and doing considerable damage. I believe it is intended to use up all our old guns in this way, and to dig up some that have been buried. The solid 68-pounder that was lately taken down to a battery on the left made an excellent shot a day or two ago at the bridge across the creek, over which a number of soldiers were passing at the time. The bullet cut the bridge in two, killing some of the men, precipitating others into the water, and sinking a barge. On the night of the 22nd the sailors got another 68-pounder into No. 9 Battery, Left Attack. The slings broke on the way, and it took some time and such dexterity and exertion as none but sailors can display, in a like degree on such occasions to get the tackle right again and complete the journey. Unluckily, the accident took place just under fire of the Redan, which opened a heavy fire of shells on the party, but Jack, nothing daunted, persisted in his task, and fortunately accomplished it without casualty. Great numbers of mortars are coming up both for us and for the French, and this gives additional weight to the opinion I before told you was entertained by various persons here—notably by some of the French staff—that it is intended to crush the place under a prodigious fire of mortars. There can hardly be a doubt that those are the most effective weapons we can employ against Sebastopol. The vertical fire which Sir Howard Douglas advocated finds partisans among all practical men here. You may convert the huge earthworks of the Russian batteries into masses of iron by a horizontal fire, but for that the enemy will care little. It is quite clear that his inner works, not his outer ones, are what he reckons on, and only by a vertical fire can we hope to destroy the former. There is something in the wind this evening. The Guards and the Highland Divisions were to furnish men for the trenches, and these were actually paraded when they were ordered to turn in and hold themselves in readiness for other duty. The men gave a smothered cheer as they obeyed the order. Since then I have seen a small body of men from one of those two divisions marching down through the dusk in the direction of the trenches, but there was but a company or two, besides a working party. The report in the divisions which received this unexpected and unusual order is that they are to be employed to repel a Russian attack on the line of the Tchernaya, whither all eyes appear to be turned in expectation of work. The French were under