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HOW THE WAR GOES.

(From the Nation.)

All that will and skill could hitherto accomplish has been attempted by the Allied Diplomats at Vienna, without apparently advancing the peace negotiations a single stage; and indeed the most sanguine red-tapist of them all seems now to retain but little faith in the delusive promises of the Czar. But in the meantime the deadly struggle before Sebastopol proceeds in all its terrible reality.

Before presenting our usual narrative of the siege, here is a racy original letter from a non-commissioned officer of the gallant 88th:—

"Camp before Sebastopol, 22nd Dec., 1854.

"Dear Frank—I hope that yourself and Mary Anne are still well and strong, and that Susan, my aunt, and the children, are in the same state. I am, I thank God, in good health still, and without a scratch, except what I may blame myself for, as scratching here is fashionable, for, was any one charitable enough to erect a scratching-post here, they would soon receive as many prayers as did the Duke of Argyll. I did not intend to write to you till I should do so from Sebastopol, but the siege is going on so slowly, that it is not easy to say, with any degree of certainty, when it is likely to terminate; however, I hope it shall be soon, suddenly, and on our part triumphantly. I shall first give you a slight sketch of what I saw at Inkermann, but to give any general details I cannot, nor could any one personally engaged in it, but, of course, you have seen them from many sources. We were, by half an hour, the first regiment of our brigade who were started to work, at about seven o'clock of a dark, hazy morning, and after nearly an hour's march, if trotting and sliding through mud may be so called, we found ourselves gaining the brow of a hill, straggling through thick and high brushwood to where we were told there was a body of French, but which turned out to be an immense column of Russian infantry; who, as we emerged from the bush within forty yards of them, poured a deadly volley of musketry into us, and down we were smashed in dozens. The men in rear as they charged up were met by a similar salute.—We slapped some shot into them, and then retired, as it was impossible to reform within twenty or thirty yards of such an overwhelming force, and so many of ours were knocked over. As we retired, we closed on our Colonel (Jeffries) who was the last to retire, and remained in the centre as a rallying point; and when the remnant was collected together we were turned on them again. There the uphill commenced in earnest. Many of the Russians were close to our ranks, even when we were retiring.—Then began some bayonetting, a trifle of knuckling, with several other ingenious methods of knocking the souls out of each other. Fortunately for us a part of the 77th arrived in support of us, and with their very timely assistance we managed to get a glimpse of the backs of our late acquaintances. We were unable to do them much harm in their retreat, as our ammunition was expended, and we were much jaded after being the previous 24 hours under heavy rain in the trenches, and not having tasted a drop of grog, nor even a drop of water after our return from them until we were turned out for the day's business.—After this affair we had to occupy the brow of a hill directly opposite to and under the fire of two Russian batteries, one on our left and another on our front; but being without a round in our pouches, we were ordered by a staff officer to retire to the opposite side of the hill, where we would be sheltered from the enemy's fire; but meeting General Caurobert and staff, we were desired to re-occupy our old ground, as he said, to "show a front." This ground we occupied between five and six hours under a hurricane of shot and shell, which tore the ground into furrows around us, killing and wounding many, part of which time we had not a round in our pouches;—but when we did get it, I think we made tolerable use of it amongst the enemy's artillery, which was about seven or eight hundred yards from us. At about five o'clock in the evening they had totally disappeared, and we were marched again to camp, thinking it was high time for breakfast.

"We lost that day 10 killed and 91 wounded—a great many of the latter have since died. Through some mistake there has not that number appeared in the papers which recorded our loss.

"You must not consider that a regiment at home is itself abroad. We came out 850 rank and file, and got two drafts of 150 more men; but are now unable to muster little more than 300 men fit for duty. At Inkermann there were only five companies present, there being three companies and our Colonel (Shirley) in the trenches. The wear and tear of men here is very great, especially among young soldiers, and I am sorry to say that some of the old fellows walk off their feet.

"Why the Russians did not eat us as well as beat

us I can only account for by supposing that they were not hungry, and that they thought we should be reinforced. I don't think I say too much when I say that they were at least five or six to one against us. It was a regular hammer and tongs affair, that was as much influenced by discipline as a street row while close fighting lasted. Alma was a Phoenix Park field day to Inkermann. A tolerable sham-fight there would nearly represent the former, but you would require to see a determined close-faction-fight to give you a faint idea of the latter.

"We have to carry part of our rations about six miles from Balaklava. While there was fine weather and little to do for our bat horses, the commissariat would only allow them six lbs. of corn daily; when the roads became deep through heavy rains, and their mode of conveyance insufficient, they called on our horses, but as they had them at starvation point for some months, as soon as their legs got fast in the mud, which is more than knee deep, they were unable to extricate themselves, and there they died. Some companies muster for duty only 23 or 24 men. I am greatly afraid that we shall be disgraced some time or other as we are so very few, and getting more so, and still expected to do the duty of a regiment. A man can do no more than a man's work. Should he do more, he won't be long able to continue it. We have not even means of carrying our sick to Balaklava. The French have to convey them for us. I see that some have decried our men for picking the pockets of the dead. It may not be right, but when men have to bury their enemies by the hundred, and their own comrades and relatives in sight of them refusing to do it, I don't think it a serious crime to empty a man's pocket that you were going to bury. I think the gentleman who brought such a charge against us would act in a similar manner by his own father. I have heard of very few cases where any one found a penny with a dead Russian, but many are now wearing the kits they found in their packs. I for some time wore a clean shirt; I am wearing braces and boots that belonged to them, and other articles that belonged to a dead Frenchman, and I'd like to catch a sneaking member of the Peace Society reading me a homily on the battle-field, on the enormity of our crime. The Russians bayonet our wounded—we never retaliated; we'd as soon think of eating a cannibal, because we know a cannibal would eat us.

"The weather is both wet and cold, and men suffer a great deal. As you inquired about the shaving, I have to inform you that I have not shaved a hair off my face since I landed in the Crimea—now in my fourth month—nor will I ever do so till compelled.—A razor is, in my opinion, only fit for those who can afford to wear corns. The guns of the besieged and besiegers are firing away at each other as pleasantly as when they first commenced. I am writing this sitting on my blanket in my tent, shifting according as the rain comes through the canvas. Writing-desks and three-legged stools are sadly deficient here.—You, I know, will excuse bad writing and blundering. Fuel is very scarce; and, as one of our 'tulips' said the other day, 'You'd travel three miles before you'd get an inch of wood a yard long.'—As usual, yours truly."

THE BRITISH CAMP.—CAMP BEFORE SEBASTOPOL, DEC. 30.—There has been a remarkable change in the weather within the last few days, and if the present fine mild days and sharp bracing nights last a little longer we may hope to be relieved out of the slough of despond, to stay the march of sickness, and to make some progress in the siege. To-day the thermometer marked fifty deg., and to-night it is down to only forty-two deg. There is as yet, however, no improvement in the state of the roads. In fact, it is a mere figure of speech to use the word "road" at all. The Heracleotic Chersonese, as the learned delight to call it, is a swamp, accessible by means of various quagmires, and any one direction is as good, or rather as bad, as another. On the 26th the French lent the English army 500 horses, and on the 27th they lent them several hundred men to carry up shot, shell, and provisions to our camp. A painful task they had of it. Those indefatigable fellows, the Zouaves, toiled through the heaps of mud, each with a heavy shot or shell in his hands, with an amount of *sacré*ing enough to impregnate the atmosphere, and they did good service ere the day was over. Yesterday our own men were engaged in the same painful labor: A considerable amount of ammunition will speedily be gathered together at our artillery depots in this way; but when we re-open fire the supply will not equal the demand. Many new guns and mortars have been mounted, and some of the old ones have been repaired. Mr. Murdoch, chief engineer of the Sanspareil, successfully performed in the trenches the operation of pissing in one of the five guns of the Terrible the day before yesterday; and the fine weather has been employed in repairing platforms and restoring works, and improving the posi-

tions of our guns. At Balaklava large quantities of shot and shell have been landed, and mounds of iron globes block up the quay and fill the yard around the ordnance wharf; but the tramp of horses' hoofs, and the roll of cart-wheels, have worn the quay away into a canal of semi-fluid nastiness, through which stepping-stones, shot, and the cables and warps of ships, afford an uncertain and devious passage.

CAVALRY PROSPECTS.—Since the date of the last mail about 900 horses, ponies, and mules have been landed here for the use of the army, but they die off by dozens every night. The mules left at Varna were sent down overland to Constantinople and embarked in the Jason for Balaklava, where they arrived a few days ago. The Turks have a curious way of accounting for dead horses. It is Oriental, but satisfactory. One of the men left in charge of horses at Varna came down to Scutari to render up his accounts to the Commissariat officer of the department. The first thing he did was to produce a large sack, which was borne into the apartment of the functionary by two men. "Two hundred of your horses have died," said the Turk. "Behold! what I have said is the truth;" and, at the wave of his hand, the men tumbled out the accounts of the sack on the floor, and lo! 400 horse-ears, long and short, and of all sizes and shapes, were piled in a heap before the eyes of the astonished officer. The *Singla*, the *Cormoran*, and two other steamers, freighted with horses, also arrived within the last few days, but many of the animals they brought were scarcely worth the cost of carriage, and will not long survive their hardships in the Crimea. The firebrand came round from the fleet with ammunition, but the authorities at Balaklava would not receive it, though there were requisitions for powder and shot in the office at the very time. She went back nearly as she came, but the stores were put on board another man-of-war, and are now here to be landed. Cattle and other live stock have been sent up from Gumlik, in the Sea of Marmora, by the *Tonning* and the *City of London*, and will prove a very welcome addition to our supplies, though the doctors say something more is wanted to stop the ravages of the scurvy than fresh meat. Scorbatic diseases, combined with dysentery, prevail but too extensively among our troops, and the French suffer from the same malady, though not to the same extent.

FATE OF THE "REINFORCEMENTS."—As the siege progresses our operations assume a grander and more enlarged character. Upwards of 10,000 Turks are now at Eupatoria, and 1,200 French have been sent round from Kamiesch to their assistance. These troops will be succeeded by others in rapid succession, till at least 20,000 men are assembled on the road between Perekop and Sebastopol. The Niger is under orders to sail from Balaklava, and the officers believe they are going to Varna for Omer Pacha, and that they will land him at Eupatoria. This movement is evidently intended as the precursor to a complete investment of Sebastopol. Between November 1 and December 20 no less than 10,600 English, 5,600 French, and 4,800 Turkish troops have been conveyed in British ships to the Crimea. It is a melancholy fact that these reinforcements suffer more than the men of the acclimated regiments, and that it must not be taken for granted that the soldiers sent out here form permanent additions to our army. Although the mortality among them is not very great, many of the drafts and of the newly arrived regiments are so enfeebled by illness after their arrival that they must be taken off the effective strength of the regiments. In order to afford the public some idea of the extent to which sickness has prevailed, I may mention that the 9th regiment does not now muster 250 bayonets, and that the Brigade of Guards is not now 1,000 strong on parade. The draft of 150 men which went out to the Scotch Fusiliers, under Lieutenant-Colonel De Bathe, the other day is reduced to about twenty men at present. A short time ago, when this brigade furnished the men for picquets in the Tchernaya Valley, an order was sent to the Brigadier to strengthen the picquets which he had sent down. He was obliged to represent that when he had done so the force of his brigade would be reduced to 30 men. Such are the sacrifices we make on the altar of war. May we trust that the victims were all required, and that none of them could have been spared?

THE FLIGHT OF THE OFFICERS.—The number of officers "sending in their papers" has greatly increased lately, and in the medical department applications to be allowed to resign have been met in several instances with a refusal. We are losing tried men, and get out mere raw lads in lieu of them. The composition of an army must be defective when officers abandon their profession at the very time they have got the best opportunity of acquiring a knowledge of it, and of obtaining the great objects of a true soldier's ambition—promotion and glory. Scarcely one

of the old generals and brigadiers of our army, as it was originally constituted, now remains to us. Sir George Brown, much enfeebled and shaken by his wound, is, we hear, on his way home, and has left his glorious Light Division. The Duke of Cambridge has given up the command of the First Division, and was still at Constantinople, when we last heard of him, in delicate health. The Third Division remains under the command of Sir Richard England, who enjoys the blessings of a good constitution, and who has not been wounded; and he is the only General of Division now left to us, of all who landed in the Crimea, with the exception of Lord Lucan, who still remains at the head of the Cavalry Division. Sir De Lacy Evans has ere this arrived in England to recruit his shattered health, and leaves behind him the division he so ably commanded, full of regret at his absence and at its cause. We all know the fate of poor Sir George Cathcart, and the loss the Fourth Division sustained in him. And now we must reckon in the list of divisional leaders whose services we have been deprived of, Major-General Pennefather, than whom we had no better or more gallant soldier. He is on his way home, greatly weakened by illness, and quite unable to resume his command. Poor Brigadier Adams, Brigadier Goldie, Brigadier Torrens, and Brigadier the Earl of Cardigan, are all gone, dead or incapacitated by wounds and ill-health to continue in the discharge of their duties. Brigadier-General Strangways found a soldier's death at Inkermann, and the remains of General Tylden lie on the bloody ridge of Alma; nor did Colonel Alexander long survive his predecessor in the command which he so devotedly filled.

HARD TO PLEASE!—I fear we are all exercising our privilege of grumbling to a great extent out here. Even the medal and the clasps, so long expected, so ardently sighed for, have not stopped the mouths of the malcontents. It has not escaped notice that Brigadier-General Pennefather, owing to it is universally believed, to some official mistake, has not been mentioned in the general orders. However, the grumbling is not raised on account of these omissions. The orders will speak for themselves. The cavalry who survived the charge of Balaklava—the Heavy Dragoons, who cleft the masses of Russian horse like a levin brand—the Hussars and Light Dragoons and Lancers, who rode through fire and blood to the Russian battalions, which in vain sought shelter behind their murderous artillery—think that they, too, deserve a special mark of their Sovereign's favor, and that "Balaklava" is not less worthy of reward, if the most daring courage and the most brilliant gallantry can earn it, than even "Alma" or "Inkermann." These are matters, however, in which, if wrong has been done, the verdict of the country will do justice. It is but right, however, to state this: that when the general orders were read to the various regiments, they were received generally with great gravity, and without any external sign of satisfaction, in the majority of the instances of which I have heard.

Dec. 27.—The 18th Regiment (Royal Irish) arrived in the *Magdalena* to-day, all well. Their fur caps and new coats made them objects of great attraction to the tattered old campaigners on the beach. The stores sent up by the *Caradoc* from the gentleman distributing the fund entrusted to the *Times* to purchase articles for the sick and wounded are eagerly sought after by the medical men of the different regiments. The Russians are very active getting up guns in every possible direction along our approaches. The French have also pushed a trench within 180 metres of St. Vladimir. Continual firing and skirmishing are going on at night in front of our lines, and along the French works. The Turks continue "to die like flies." They literally are found dead on their posts where they have mounted guard. The Russians are said to have received reinforcements, and were heard cheering last night inside the town.

Dec. 28.—Fine weather. The 18th are not yet landed. A good deal of activity is displayed in sending shot and shell to the front. Many of the sutlers are warned that they must leave Balaklava, as the accommodation is required for our own people. Firing is very slack on both sides.

Dec. 29.—Last night a party of our men made a rush at some wood stored up by the Russians near the town, and carried off a great quantity of doors, palings, and planks. The Russians opened a heavy fire on them, but did little damage. The want of fuel is very severely felt in the front by all the troops. Is there no cold in Heraclea? Is Newcastle exhausted? The fine weather still continues. The work of handing up shot by shot continues.

The *Morning Herald* correspondent, proceeding with the narrative, describes another stupid blunder committed by the conductors of the siege:—

English Camp, Heights of Sebastopol, Dec. 30.—Very little firing is now exchanged between the belligerents; both parties seem collecting all their