

THE INTERIOR OF SEBASTOPOL.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 12.—It is delightful to abandon the old heading, "Siege of Sebastopol," which for the last seven months might have been stereotyped, but it is not clear what is to be put in its place, for the only thing that they are doing on the south side, seen prepared to defend the north side, and to erect there another monument of engineering skill, and to leave there memorials of their dogged resolution. The wonder of all visitors to the ruins of Sebastopol is divided, they are astonished at the strength of the works, and that they were taken; they are amazed, that men could have defended them so long with such ruin around them. These feelings are apparently in opposition to each other, but a glance at the place could explain the apparent contradiction. It is clear, in the first place, that the fire of our artillery was searching out every nook and corner in the town, and that it would become utterly impossible for the Russians to keep any parapet or battery without such murderous loss as would speedily annihilate an army. Their enormous bomb-proofs, large and numerous as they were, could not hold the requisite force to resist a general concerted attack made by a long line of guns rapidly fired without previous warning. On the other hand, the strength of the works themselves is prodigious. One hears our engineers feebly saying "they are badly traced," and that kind of thing, but it is quite evident, that to a Russian, who is not a soldier, but a student of the art, they are enabled to sustain the most tremendous bombardment ever known and an eleven months' siege, that he was rendered capable of repulsing one general assault, and that a subsequent attack upon him at four points was only successful at one. The only thing which happened to be the key of his position, and the inference is, that his engineers were of consummate ability, and furnished him with artificial strength that made him equal to our best efforts. The details of the interior of the town, which the public eye of this letter reaches you, it is sufficient to say that of the three or four points attacked, the Little Redan and the Malakhoff on the right, and the Bastion Central on the left, were the only points which were worked on the left, but one was carried, and that was a closed work. The Great Redan, the Little Redan, and the line of defence on the left were not taken, although the attack was resolute, and the contest obstinate and bloody for both assaults. The defence on the right was thought to have attacked the Great or Little Redan, or to have touched the left at all, is another question which is ventilated by many, but which is not for me to touch upon or decide. It is certain, that the enemy knew the position, and was taken by a strategist to defend a position of which we held the key. Sebastopol in flames, his ships sunk, told the story next morning, and some ten thousand French and English soldiers were its commentators. Could we have done so, it would have been the same. The English have claimed the honour of joining in the assault on the Malakhoff, the tower of which we had beaten into ruins, and to have abstained from attacking the Redan, which could offer a desperate and, as events proved, a very successful resistance. The works around the Malakhoff were taken.

The surprise throughout the camp on Sunday morning was beyond description, when the news spread that Sebastopol was on fire, and that the enemy were retreating. The confusion was such, that the English were very ground like so many earthquakes, failed to disturb any of our wearied soldiers when I rose ere day-break, and got up to Catcliff's Hill, there were not many officers standing on that favourite spot; and it was with a doubtful feeling that I returned to the doubtful of the complete success of the French, and certain of our own failure, little dreamed that Sebastopol was ours. All was ready for a renewed assault on the Redan, but the Russians having kept up a brisk fire, and with a few shells, they were at that moment, and having adopted the same plan along their lines, so as to blind our eyes and engage our attention abandoned it, as is supposed, about twelve o'clock, and the silence having attracted the atten-

tion of our men, some volunteers crept up and looked through an embrasure, and found the place deserted by all, save by the dead and dying. Soon afterwards, wandering fires gleamed through the streets and outskirts of the town—point after point became alight, and flames shot out of the windows of the houses—rows of mansions caught and burned up, and, ere daybreak, the town of Sebastopol—that fine and stately mistress of the Euxine, on which we had so often turned a loving eye—was on fire, and the flames were seen to rise. Alexander was blown up with a stupendous crash that made the very earth reel, early in the night.

At sunrise, four large explosions on the left followed in quick succession, and announced the destruction of the Quarantine Central Bastion and Flagstaff Fort. In a moment afterwards the proper left of the Redan was the scene of a very heavy explosion, which must have destroyed a number of wounded men on the left, and early in the middle of the day had entered it completely, and the night were withdrawn. The Flagstaff and Garden Batteries blew up, one after another, at 4. 45. At 5. 30 there were two of the largest and grandest explosions on the left, ever shook the town, and the explosion of the Grand Magazine and the Grand Magazine. The rush of black smoke, of grey and white vapour, of masses of stone, beams of timber, and masonry into the air was appalling, and then followed the roar of a great bombardment; the explosion of shells blown up into the air, and exploding like some gigantic pyrotechnic display in the sky—the effect of the innumerable flashes of fire twittering high up in the column of dark smoke over the town, and then changing rapidly into as many bright stars as the sun in the sky. All this time the Russians were marching with sullen tramp across the bridge, and boats were busy carrying off material from the town, or bearing them to the south side, to complete the work of destruction, and to demolish the houses which were left untouched houses. Of the fleet, all that remained visible were the eight steamers and the masts of the sunken line-of-battle ships. As soon as it was dawn, the French began to steal from their trenches into the streets, and to take advantage of the terrors of these explosions, by the fire of a lurking enemy, or by the fire of their own guns, which kept on slowly discharging cannon shot and grape into the suburbs at regular intervals, possibly with the object of making the French feel the weight of their lives. But red breeches and blue breeches, kepi and Zouave feck, could soon be distinguished in amid the flames, and moving from house to house. Ere 5 o'clock there were numbers of men coming back with plunder, such as it was, and Russian relics were offered for sale in camp before the Russian battalions had marched out of the city. The sailors, too, were not behindhand in looking for "loot," and Jack could be seen staggering under chairs, tables, and other articles of furniture, down every street, and making his way back to the trenches with vast accumulations of worthless. Several men lost their lives by explosions on this and the following day. At 7, ten several small detonations of shells were heard, and the French were seen in the town behind the Redan and also on the left of the Dockyard Creek. At 7. 30 immense clouds of black smoke rose from behind Fort Paul, probably from a steamer which was found burning in the dockyard. The Russians were seen to be firing at intervals, a continuous stream across the bridge, and became broken into small bodies, or went over in intermittent masses unscathed by the shot and shell which plunged into the water close beside them. At 6. 45 the last dense cloud of black smoke was seen, and the pieces were all floated across to the north side at 8. 7. The boats did not cease to pull backward and forward all the time, and the steamers were exceedingly busy long after the garrison moved. At nine o'clock the bridge was pulled asunder, and amid the burning ruins, and the battlements of Fort Paul. As the rush from camp now became very great, and every one sought to visit the Malakhoff and the Redan, which were filled with dead and dying men, a line

of English cavalry was posted across the front from our extreme left to the French right. They were stationed in all the ravines and roads to the town and trenches, with orders to keep back all persons except the generals and staff, and officers and men on duty. At 10 o'clock our men returning with plunder from the town, and to get from them. As they did not stop the French, or Turks, or Sardinians, this order gave rise to a good deal of grumbling, particularly when a man after juggling up a few dollars, several miles, or a table, or some such article, was seen to pass by any of our sentries. The French in one instance complained, that our dragons let English soldiers pass with Russian muskets and would not permit the French to carry off these trophies, but that was not any foundation for the complaint. There was as surely no jealousy on one side or the other. It so happened that as the remnants engaged on the left against the Malakhoff and Little Redan marched to their tents this morning, the second division was drawn up on the right, and the French had to pass their lines. The instant the leading regiment of Zouaves came up to the spot where our first regiment was placed the men with one spontaneous shout sent the air with an English cheer. The French were not to be deterred, and their men dressed up and marched past as if at a review, while regiment after regiment of the second division caught up the cry, and at last our men presented arms to their brave comrades of France, and the French were not to be deterred by the swords, and this continued till the last man had marched by. Mingled with the plunderers from the front were many wounded men. The ambulances never ceased, now moving heavily and slowly with their burdens, and now with a light and quick step, a fresh cargo, and the ground between the trenches and the camp was studded with caecoles or mule litters. Already the funeral parties had commenced their labors. The Russians all this time were swarming about the town, and their interest in the progress of the explosions and conflagrations. They took up ground in their old camps, and swarmed all over the face of the hills behind the northern forts. Their steamers cast anchor, and were moored in the bay, and the French were on the north side, near Fort Catharine. By degrees the generals, French and English, and the staff officers, edged down upon the town; but Fort Paul had not yet gone up, and Fort Nicholas was burning, and our engineers were busy in repairing the works on the north side. Moving down, however, on the right flank of our cavalry pickets, a small party of us managed to turn them cleverly, and to get out among the French works between the Mamelon and Malakhoff. The ground is here literally paved with shot and shell, and the surface is deeply honeycombed by the explosion of bombs at every square yard. The road was crowded with Frenchmen, returning with paltry plunder from Sebastopol, and with files of English prisoners, passing to the rear, and all dejected, with the exception of a few little boys, in a Cossack's cap, and a tiny uniform great-coat, who seemed rather pleased with his kind captors. There was also one stout Russian soldier, who had been engaged in the defence of the Malakhoff, and who danced all the way into the camp with a Zouave and an Indigene. There were ghastly sights on the way, too, Russians who had died, or were dying as they lay, and the ground being so steeply sloping, the fatal Malakhoff. Passing through a maze of trenches, of gabionades, and of zig-zags and parallels, which the French had worked their sure and deadly way close to the heart of the Russian defence, and where the ground being so steeply sloping, where every grove had full tokens of the bloody fray, we came at last to the head of the French sap. It is barely ten yards from that to the base of the huge sloping mound of earth which rises full twenty feet in height above the trench, and shows in every crevice the grinning muzzles of the guns. The tricolour waves placidly from its highest point, and already the French are busy constructing a semaphore on the top. Step briskly out of the sap—avoid those poor mangled heroes who are lying

all around, and come on. There is a deep ditch four feet, some 20 or 22 feet deep, and 10 feet wide. The Sap is a trench where the French crossed—here is the bridge of planks, and here they swarmed upon the unsuspecting defenders of the Malakhoff. They had not ten yards to go. We were 1000, and were then out of breath. Were the French made the things of bread and butter, how easily the French crossed. You observe on your right hand, as you issue from the head of the French trench, a line of gabions on the ground running up to this bridge. This is a flying sap, which the French made the things of bread and butter trench into the Malakhoff, so that they were enabled to pour a continuous stream of men into the works, with comparative safety from the flank fire of the enemy. In the same way they at once dug a trench across the way which is as deep as there are any galvanic wires to fire mines. Mount the parapet and descend—of what amazing thickness are those embrasures! From the level of the ground inside to the top of the parapet cannot be less than 18 feet. There are 1000, and were then out of breath. Were the other, and as each now recedes towards the top it leaves in the ledge below an excellent banquet for the defenders. Inside the sight is too horrible to dwell upon. The French are carrying away their own arms and accoutrements, and their five distinct piles of dead formed to clear the way. The ground is marked by pools of blood, and the smell is already noisome; swarms of flies settle on dead and dying; broken muskets, torn clothes, caps, shakos, and bayonets, and the remains of hats and haversacks are lying in indistinguishable wreck all over the place, mingled with heaps of shot, of grape, bits of shell, cartridges, case and canister, loose powder, official papers, and cooking tins. 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