

THE SIEGE OF SEBASTOPOL.

HEIGHS OF BALKALVA, AUG. 10.—The report of an expedition to the Malakoff gains ground and credence in the camp. False reports are so numerous here that one would pay little attention to the current rumors, did not various indications of a general evacuation give the appearance of probability. At an early hour on Tuesday morning, Gen. Simpson went round the lines, examining the works. Yesterday, General Jones did the same. A council of war was held on Wednesday evening at British headquarters. A most positive symptom than those of approaching action, is the fact, that some of the principal medical officers of divisions have received orders to clear the hospitals, sending to Balaklava such patients as can safely be moved, and to make the customary preparations for the reception of wounded men. This may not mean an assault is immediately to be made, as some short time is necessary to make arrangements and prepare the stores, but it does indicate the quantity of these may be formed from the fact that, on receiving this order, the chief medical officer of one division, consisting of rather more than 6,000 effective men, sent one squadron of cavalry and 6 tons' weight of various articles. Such a mass of drugs, lint, plaster, bedding, wine, and other hospital-necessaries and comforts is painfully suggestive of what may probably be expected to go down in the next serious operation against our tenacious foe. But at the point to which things have now come, success is not to be hoped for without heavy loss, and if the former be counteracted, the latter may be endured, if not checked, at least without the loss of an inch that after a bombardment, very large forces will be sent in to attack.—Some talk of a combination of French and English troops against the Malakoff, and even that our own General (Gardner) and the Highlanders as the British force that is to co-operate with our allies. If the attack really is to be made, heaven grant, that this time no blunders may be committed, and the blood of this gallant army may not again be guinea-gold, as it has been, through mismanagement. If we fail this time we may make up our own minds, as many have already done, to remain where we are for the winter. It is the opinion of some here, that Sebastopol will not be lost until we regularly invest the whole place. There are various opinions in both the French camp and the English as to the impregnability of the Malakoff. Some believe that if we succeed in storming the outer works, we shall find within a second line of invincible strength. Others think the strength of the inner works are exaggerated. Of course in all this there is much more of conjecture than of well-founded opinion. The General-in-Chief keeps their information and intention to themselves. If we get the Malakoff, little doubt is entertained that the south side will speedily be ours; whether we shall be able to remain in it under the fire from the forts on the north, is another question. If we are driven out however, and the fleet destroyed, we shall be at liberty to busy ourselves with the northern forts, or to move inland, as may be decided upon. As for the town, which we have treated with so much forbearance, it is reported that it will be left to us in its present neat and serviceable condition. If Russia be faithful to her military traditions, we shall obtain but a heap of ruins and ashes.—No snug quarters will there be in Sebastopol for the allied armies, which have been long alternately crippled with cold, plunged to the knees in mud, or seethed in sickly Crimean vapours. A time there was, now some ten months bygone, when Sebastopol was to be better than any other place.—A better condition—time when Russian prisoners expressed their surprise at not being sent into depot there, since they made sure the place had fallen into our hands after the battle of the Alma.—It is too useless to waste paper upon the matter, but we might also talk of the time, when the Malakoff was but a round tower, instead of the strong fortification now the chief obstacle to the capture of the place to which it is the key. However, if previous errors have fallen into, let us hope that they

will in future be avoided, and that the next attack will be completely successful, and have a widely different result, from the last. After nearly two months' monotonous inaction, during which many thousand men of the allied army have been put hors d'combat by trench-dutty and disease, I can think of no other mode of proceeding, but a camp—even of the croakers, who, I regret to say, are pretty numerous—who will not joyfully hail the resumption of more active hostilities.

I must observe, that there are persons whose opinion is not without weight, who do not believe that we shall attack soon, and a similar doubt appears to exist among some French officers whose opinions I have heard expressed. These seem to think that a tremendous bombardment, accompanied, such as shall literally pulverise the defences opposed to us and completely crush the enemy; and they add that some time must elapse, before the necessary preparations are completed.

Leave of absence continues to be granted to a very large extent. Taking five of the latest general orders, those of the 3d, 6th, 6th, 7th, and 8th inst., we find the names of no less than twenty officers who have been granted leave of absence for 14 days. Of these, twenty-nine proceeded to England, twenty-six of them in virtue of medical certificates, and three on "urgent private affairs," or in consideration of peculiar circumstances.—27 went to Scotland, and 24 rapt for periods varying from two to five weeks; 12 on board ship; and two to the Ministry of St. George, where there are ten rooms fitted up for ailing or convalescent officers. I do not, but that these officers are not to be considered as having fully justified by the circumstances of the respective cases; but such numerous departures are not the less extremely inconvenient to the army, and leave many regrets to be expressed.

I read a colonel declare, that he had but one captain and three subalterns on duty in his battalion, and that he, consequently, had to send 100 men into the trenches under charge of a youth of eighteen years of age, who could not be trusted, at least, is very unfortunate. Enough officers do not come out to replace those who go home. This protracted siege—if siege it may be called, which in reality it is not—has done away with the 32d detached fort—certainly not popular with the officers of the army, few of whom care to remain, if they have a respectable pretext for returning home, while fewer still desire to return later, when once they get to the rear, and find that there is no more movement in the campaign—if, instead of monotonous trench duty, we were engaged in ordinary warfare, manoeuvring, marching, fighting, there would be both less sickness and fewer seeking leave. I do not attempt to decide the question whether leave is sometimes too easily granted, and more to interest than to necessity. The French are thought to fall into the other extreme, and instances have been cited to me, where leave has been granted to a soldier who had been saved, had they been allowed to exchange severe duty (one night out of three in the trenches, independently of light labour) for a period of relaxation in a more salutary climate.

In cases that go into hospital, a very small proportion terminate fatally. This appears from the general returns up to the 15th of July. According to the best evidence I can obtain, the present effective strength of an assaulting army in the Crimea is upwards of 30,000 men, exclusive of troops that have arrived within the last three days. The *Etna* and *Arabia* steam transports have reached Balaklava from England (the latter after the extraordinary rapid passage of 14 days) with large quantities of several regiments out here. Transports have reached Kamiesch with reinforcements for various French regiments. This furnished the foundation for a report (to show you how ridiculously things are magnified) that the British army had received 20,000 French troops had arrived, and that extensive operations were immedately to be commenced.

Yesterday the Russians amused themselves by throwing the ground close to the right of the fourth division. Two of these buried themselves in the front close

to a Russian hut of the 17th regiment, who were very officious and assisting the wounded, but doing no other damage; another killed a man of the field-train as he lay in his tent. It is said the missiles were intended for General Bentinck's tents, which are near the fourth division flank-still, which are on a man's hill.—The duke of Newcastle is still staying there. A new kitchen, building for the General, is thought to have attracted the attention of the Muscovite gunners. The fire in rear of the Redan, which I mentioned in my last letter, is said by the French to have been occasioned by one of their rockets.

Captain Layard, Deputy Assistant-Quartermaster-General, a brother to the member for Aylesbury, had died of dysentery on board ship at Balaklava. He had just received extension of leave to proceed to Scutari.

Colonel Windham, who since the first landing of the allies in the Crimea has been the very efficient and able Adjutant-General of the fourth division, has been promoted to the command of the 2d Brigade of the 2d division.

We are by this time pretty well accustomed to hear of deaths in the trenches; but until the other day, we had no example of a birth having taken place in that uncomfortable and dangerous locality—certainly not exactly that which a lady might be expected to prefer as the scene of her confinement, which I mentioned in my last letter, and the arduous which so distinguishes our gallant allies are shared, it appears, by the ladies of their nation. Three nights ago, a luxuriant *contince* accompanied her husband to the trenches, and there she bore a son, who, in restorative *piu rere*, and to brave, with masculine courage, the storm of shot and shell. There was possibly some miscalculation in the matter, but the fact is, that towards the small hours of the morning she was taken with the pains of maternity, and gave birth to twins. Mother and children are doing well.—*From the Times, Correspondent.*

THE COMMAND OF THE ARMY IN THE CRIMEA.—We have reason to believe that General Bullen, who has been ordered to return home, he is to be succeeded by Major General Markham, an officer of great merit, who has lately joined the camp from India. General Markham entered the service in 1824 as an ensign in the 32d Regiment. He obtained his lieutenancy in 1825, and his captaincy in 1829.

Whilst serving as captain, he accompanied his regiment to Canada, and saw not a little active work there in 1836-37, during which he distinguished himself. In the latter year, he was severely wounded. A couple of years subsequently he was promoted to be major, and in 1842 he got the command of the 32d Regiment as lieutenant-colonel. His service in the Crimea, in 1854, to that country, where it landed in the autumn of the year, and marched forthwith to the North-west provinces, the frontier of which was in a disturbed state.

His services in 1854 were distinguished in the Punjab, and the fortress of Moulton declared in favour of the enemy, the 32d Regiment was ordered to the seat of war, and Lieutenant-Colonel Markham received the command of a brigade of infantry. During the campaign he distinguished himself by his energy, and by the efficient manner in which all his duties were performed.

For the six years he commanded his regiment, he had a pattern in camp and quarters to the British army, and as a brigadier, his reputation was not behind what it had been when he was a battalion leader. At the close of the campaign he received the well merited rewards of being named in an order of the day, and as a member of the Campaign of the Bath—the former honouring him the rank of full colonel in the army.

After a short period of leave in England, Colonel Markham rejoined his corps in India in 1846, and was afterwards promoted to be major-general, and as a consequence or comfort should induce him to abandon the company in which he had risen from the lowest to the highest commissioned rank. He was not, however, destined to do duty again with that corps, for upon the death of Colonel Mountain, the Adjutant

General of the Queen's troops in India, Colonel Markham was selected to succeed him.

After serving but a short time in this very respectable post, the Royal Warrant of last October gave the Commander-in-Chief the opportunity of selecting for promotion the rank of Major-General, our Colonel, irrespective of his standing in the service, whose professional character stood high enough to merit such a choice.—The very high nomination to the staff of the Crimea, our Colonel, who was at the same time nominated to command a division of the Bengal army.

When, however, the English public and the English press began to canvass every fresh nomination to the staff of the Crimea, our orders were sent out to General Markham to join the head-quarters before Sebastopol without delay. This he was only too glad to do, and within thirty days of receiving the order, he in the Northwest of India, he reported himself to General Simpson, and received the command of the Second Division of the army.

Subsequently General Simpson intimated to the Horse Guards that he feared his being so long absent from his family, and Lord Hardinge, as we are informed, sent out directions that, should he so, Major General Markham was to take command of the army serving in the Crimea.—*London News.*

THE QUEEN'S LETTER TO SIR E. LYONS.—It is well known that an autograph letter was sent by the Queen to Sir Edmund Lyons on the death of his son. We believe that it has not yet appeared in print, and so grateful a proof of womanly deference and respect to the most manly and accomplished subjects. We print the letter *substantia*:—" Buckingham Palace, June 26th, 1855.

"The Queen cannot let any one but herself express to Sir Edmund Lyons the Princess's and her feelings of deep and heartfelt sympathy on the most melancholy occasion of the loss of his beloved and gallant son, Captain Lyons. We are deeply to thank the heavy affliction into which Sir E. Lyons is plunged at this anxious moment, and we mourn over the loss of an officer, who proved himself so worthy of his father, and who was so bright an ornament to the service he belonged to. To lose him, just when he returned triumphant, having accomplished all that was desired and wished, must be an additional pang to his father. If sympathy can afford consolation, he possesses that of the whole nation."

OFFICERS IN THE NAVY.—Some returns moved for by Mr. Scoble, M. P., show that the number of captains promoted to be active rear-admirals, from the first of January, 1850, to the latest period, amounts to 50; that the number of active commanders of 25 years, standing and upwards in that rank amounts to 18, the date of the commission of the senior being the 24th of June, 1817; that the number of reserved commanders, who had previously held the rank of lieutenant 25 years and upwards amounts to 56, and the maximum number of years 44; that the number of retired commanders of 25 years and upwards amounts to 336, and the maximum number of years to 43; that the number of active lieutenants of 20 years' standing and upwards in that rank amounts to 304, the date of the senior's commission being the 24th of January, 1808; that the number of reserved lieutenants is 677, the date of the senior's commission being December 29, 1796; that there are 308 surgeons and 259 assistant-surgeons fit for service, and 260 surgeons and 260 assistant-surgeons unfit for service; that the number of mates now in the navy is 312, the number of midshipmen 324, and the number of cadets 408.—Since 1845, inclusive, 1,417 cadets have been admitted. The number of flag officers on full pay is 18, and the number on half-pay 81; the number of captains on full pay 128, and the number on half-pay 262; the number of commanders on full pay 192, and the number on half-pay 357; and the number of lieutenants on full pay 886, and the number on half-pay 291.