

[From New York Herald, Oct. 20.]

THE WAR.

POSITION, MOVEMENTS AND PROSPECTS OF THE ARMIES IN THE CRIMEA.

The last official despatches report the south side of Sebastopol to be occupied by detachments of French and English troops, who have had distinct quarters of the town assigned to them.

The Russians concentrated their forces in the northern forts, and were occasionally firing upon the town, to which the allies replied from the two forts which remained intact (Nicholas and Quarantine), and from the ruins of other forts. Prince Gortschakoff, in his reports, describes the fire of the allies as heavy.

Preparations were making by the British and French engineers, by the sinking of immense mines, to destroy the splendid docks, arsenals, and shipbuilding yards of Sebastopol, and thus uproot the place as a naval stronghold. Though there is no official information on the subject—the allied generals, for obvious reasons, being silent as to their future operations—there are various premonitions of a vigorous campaign in the open field.

It is uncertain, and will remain so for some little time, which of these threatened attacks is the real, but there is quite enough in Prince Gortschakoff's despatches to show that he considers himself seriously threatened in front and on both flanks.

Another significant fact is that the English land transport corps are in full activity; that the field batteries of the artillery are in marching order; that large numbers of the French cavalry have embarked for Eupatoria; and by the telegraphic accounts from Vienna, it is stated that the allied fleets had left Sebastopol on some secret expedition.

It is again asserted from Vienna that the Russian army is retreating.

The Times correspondent, writing on the 21st, is not at all sanguine that the Russians will be forced to abandon their position on the approach of winter.

Prince Gortschakoff, on the 23rd ult., reported that 26,000 men had been landed at Eupatoria, and that on the 26th this force was increased to 33,000 men. He has since reported that "imposing masses" of the allied troops continue to threaten the left wing of the Russian army, from the valley of Baidar, whilst a force amounting to between 30,000 and 40,000 men threaten the right wing of the Russians from Eupatoria.

The correspondent of the Daily News takes a different view. He says:—

The belief gains ground that the Russians are preparing to evacuate the north side of the harbor of Sebastopol. The extensive earthworks which have been lately constructed, and others in course of construction, are regarded as simply intended to cover the retreat, and protect the rear guard of the Russian army. Carts have come in empty from the Mackenzie heights, and have gone away laden, it is supposed, with provisions. These arrangements are supposed to indicate an intention to retire.

It is still understood that a combined movement is to take place against the enemy's position on the Mackenzie heights. A direct attack from Bakshiserai is spoken of, the approach from the south being made by a route which is kept secret, and which will have the effect of avoiding the enemy's fortified entrenchments.

In an order which Prince Gortschakoff has addressed to his soldiers, the prince admits a loss of from 500 to 1,000 men per day during the last 30 days of the siege. To continue to defend the south side, he says, would have been to expose the troops to be uselessly murdered. He concludes by saying:—"It is not Sebastopol we have left in the enemy's hands, but burning ruins that we have set fire to ourselves. Sebastopol enchains us to its walls—with its fall we acquire freedom of action and a new war commences."

A letter from St. Petersburg states that the evening before the Emperor's departure for the south a grand council was held, at which it was decided to carry on the war with the utmost energy.

The Emperor went from Moscow to Nikolaieff, the great Russian naval depot on the Euxine, where, on the 23rd ult., accompanied by the Grand Dukes Constantine, Nicholas and Michael, he made an inspection of the troops, fortifications and dockyards. The fortifications, it is stated, are to be greatly strengthened and extended.

By telegraph we learn that the Czar has left Nikolaieff for the Crimea; his object in proceeding thither being doubtless to inspire his forces by his presence, and turn the tide in favor of Russia.

Various Russian and Prussian accounts state that the war is to be carried on with the greatest determination, and that the Crimea is to be defended to the last extremity.

General Mouravieff, who is now in Asia, will, it is intimated, take the place of Prince Gortschakoff, who is to become minister of war.

Moscow advices state that 192,000 men have been added to the military force of Russia.

[From the London Times, Oct. 4.]

Once more solicitude for the future must return to its old place in the thoughts of the nation, and mingle with the recollections of past triumphs. The ruins of Sebastopol are in the hands of the allies; a number of cannon and many thousand projectiles are among the spoils; forts that were partially blown up may be repaired and armed; but still the great question of the subsistence of the victorious army during the winter will be only partially solved by these advantages. Two contingencies are now before us—one, that the Russians, having lost the town, the arsenals, and the docks of Sebastopol, will consider that the maintenance of a fort and earthworks on the north side will serve no purpose, while it will endanger the whole army of the Crimea, and most certainly entail vast exertion and outlay during the ensuing months.

The facilities with which the allies can transport a force to any point on the coast early in the

spring must be present to the minds of the Russian generals, and make them anxious to reinforce the troops at Nikolaieff and on the Lower Danube. These are the reasons which render even the evacuation of the whole Crimea not improbable as a military movement.

On the other hand, there are not wanting causes which may lead to a determined resistance. The chief of these is a motive which may urge the Czar and his advisers to the most desperate resolutions—the feeling of national and military pride. It may be something to them to induce the world a little longer to believe that Russia has not entirely lost Sebastopol. They may also hope to be able to hold their ground until the rains of winter, and judge that then the operations of the allies will be delayed during an interval of which diplomacy may make good use.

By the letter of our correspondent, it will be seen that a belief prevails in camp that the enemy will not relax without a struggle their hold of the northern forts and the ridge they occupy. Great stores of provisions, shot and shell, are ready for a long defence; the Russians labor at their new works as unceasingly as they prepared to defend the southern side. Military carts, laden with produce, are continually passing almost within range of the allies, and should all this be a feat, it is certainly the most expensive and surprising on record.

There also exists an idea that the allies are not ready to attack. Should the enemy be of this opinion, it will not fail to strengthen his resolution to remain. For either contingency it is the duty of the British government to prepare.

Should the enemy maintain his present positions it is evident that the great body of our army must still either remain on the spot where it has been encamped so long, or that, at least Balaklava must continue to be the port from which its supplies are drawn. The harbor of Sebastopol must remain closed as long as the Russians are in possession of the sea batteries or until the roadstead is cleared of wrecks, and thus there will be no advantage, but a positive inconvenience, in occupying the place.

Even putting aside the hostile efforts of the enemy from the opposite shore, it is doubtful whether there be much that can be called habitable remaining of the conquered town. The great works of engineering science, the docks, the solid batteries, may have defied the flames; but barracks and private houses seem either to have been totally destroyed, or so far injured as to require more labor for their repair than would construct new dwellings.

As it now appears certain that the Russians will not quit their positions without a campaign, actual or menaced, and therefore no dispersion of the British force can take place, it becomes the duty of the government and people to recur to those considerations which occupied them before the excitement of the last three weeks.

It is a duty to take thought for these things, even in the freshness of triumph. With a great general victory is but the beginning of new labors; and it will not do for the nation to rest content with what it has done, while an obstinate enemy is opposed to it, with energies perhaps sharpened by defeat.

Should the enemy abandon his last works the harbor of Sebastopol would be open, and transports might land provisions within a few yards of the allied troops, who might either find themselves dwellings in the town or be partly encamped along the northern side. But this second conquest, though not impossible, ought not to be regarded as a certainty, or prevent the continuance of the works which were justly deemed necessary a few weeks since.

The position of the Turks and Sardinians, with a part of the French, in the plain of Balaklava, renders absolutely necessary the completion of these enterprises, without which they will be forced to close up to the rest of the army, to the great discomfort of all and the diminished safety of the allied positions. The accounts given by our correspondent of recent preparations for the winter are not entirely reassuring. The Guards were one day marched down to work on the roads, but when they arrived there were no tools,—no spades, shovels, pickaxes or barrows; and so they marched back again.

A great part of last year's warm clothing is irretrievably ruined, and the old stores must not be relied upon; but "if the huts only arrive in time by the sailing ships in which they have been stowed" much of the severity of winter will be disarmed. It is this speedy arrival which we wish to insure.

The telegraph has now for some time been silent, and we have a right to augur from the reticence of the generals that they have something to conceal. Indeed, it is hardly to be supposed that a commander with the vigor and resolution of Marshal Pelissier would allow the six weeks of fine weather which remain to pass away without an endeavor to complete his victory and raise still higher the reputation of his country. The powerful fleet of the allies, consisting now, for the most part, of screw vessels, and the numberless transports of the British marine, may, through the skill acquired by a twelvemonth's experience, land in a few days a powerful force at any point whence it might be desirable to operate.

As to a direct advance on the Russians there are various opinions. The most general is that, though a hazardous movement, not to be undertaken without much caution, it might succeed, now that all the armies of the allies are at liberty. The chief difficulty is to obtain access to the Russian position, which, towards the south, may be compared to a great natural fortress. The plain of the Crimea rises gradually till it reaches the line of the Tchernaya, and there ends in precipitous cliffs, almost perpendicular along many miles.

On this commanding elevation the Russians are posted, and have increased the natural strength

of the region by the artificial obstacles which they are so skillful in creating. The road down which they descended to the Tchernaya, and the pass of Aitodor, some eight miles further on, are strongly fortified. It will be seen that the French have made a reconnaissance on the extreme right, and that they are constructing roads from the valley of Baidar up to the plateau of the Upper Belbek.

Closer to Sebastopol the works of the enemy are even more numerous and formidable. It is probable that if the generals contemplate any attack from the south they would have to make a long detour; but should they be successful in gaining the plateau in force, there can be little doubt that the Russians would soon be compelled to abandon their positions.

The other alternative is a new landing and an advance from some point on the western coast, which would menace the rear and the retreat of the enemy. In this case, should the allies have to fight another battle of the Alma, we might trust that the valor which has once prevailed would be again equally successful. However, the opinion still is that the allies may not be strong enough in men or means of transport to effect any great diversion of this kind. In either case, a campaign of some weeks must take place, and its conclusion would find our army fatigued and requiring rest.

Russian Version of the Capture of Sebastopol.

The first Russian version of the fall of Sebastopol is contained in the following general order addressed by Prince Gortschakoff to his troops, and in an incomplete report of the progress of the siege, published in the 'Invalide Russe':—

GENERAL ORDER ADDRESSED TO THE ARMY OF THE SOUTH, AND TO THE LAND AND SEA TROOPS IN THE CRIMEA.

HEAD-QUARTERS, Heights of Inkermann, in the vicinity of Sebastopol, Aug. 30 (Sept. 12.)

Valiant Comrades!—On the 12th of September last year, a strong enemy's army appeared before the walls of Sebastopol. Despite its numerical superiority, despite the absence of obstacles which military science might have opposed to it in the town, that army did not dare attack it openly [literally, with an open force], and undertook a regular siege.

Since then, despite the formidable force at the disposal of our enemies, who by their numerous ships constantly received reinforcements, artillery and ammunition for eleven months and a half, all their efforts failed before your bravery and firmness. It is a fact unexampled in military annals, that a town hastily fortified, in presence of the enemy, should have been able to hold out so long against a force, the means of attack of which have exceeded everything that hitherto could have been foreseen in calculations of this nature.

And with means so enormous and of such a description, after the ruinous effects of an artillery of colossal dimensions, continued for nine months, the enemy having frequently had recourse to prolonged bombardments of the town, firing on each occasion many hundred thousand rounds, they became convinced of the inadequacy of their efforts, and resolved to take Sebastopol by a combat.

On the 6th (18th) of June they made the assault on different sides, entering courageously into the town, but you received them with intrepidity, and they were driven back on all points in the most brilliant manner.

This check forced them to return to a continuation of their first plan of siege, multiplying their batteries, and increasing their activity of their trench works and mining operations.

Since the memorable day upon which you repulsed the assault two months and a half have elapsed, during which, animated by sentiments of duty and of love to the throne and to your country, you have heroically disputed each inch of ground, forcing the assailants to advance only foot by foot, and paying with torrents of blood and an incredible loss of ammunition for each yard of ground they gained.

In this obstinate defence your courage did not flag; on the contrary, it rose to the highest degree of self-denial.

But, if your intrepidity and your patience were without bounds, there are such in the nature of the possibility of defence. As the approaches of the enemy gradually advanced, their batteries were erected nearer the walls. The circle of fire which surrounded Sebastopol grew daily narrower, and sent death and destruction upon the courageous defenders still further into the town.

Taking advantage of the superiority of their fire at short range, the enemy, after the concentrated action of their artillery for thirty days—which cost our garrison from 500 to 1,000 men per day—commenced that terrible bombardment (bombardement d'enter) from their innumerable engines of war, and of a calibre hitherto unknown, which destroyed our defences, which had been repaired at night with great labor and at great loss, under the incessant fire of the enemy—the principal work, the Kornileff redoubt, on the Malakoff hill (the key of Sebastopol, as a point dominating the whole town), having experienced considerable and irreparable damage.

To continue, under these circumstances the defence of the south side, would have been to expose our troops daily to a useless butchery, and their preservation is to-day, more than ever, necessary to the Emperor of Russia.

For these reasons, with sorrow in my heart, but with a full conviction, I resolved to evacuate Sebastopol, and take over the troops to the north side by the bridge constructed beforehand over the bay and by boats.

Meantime the enemy, beholding, on the 27th of August (8th of September), at 10.30, the half-ruined works before them and the Kornileff Redoubt, with its ditches filled up, resolved upon a desperate assault, first on Bastions No. 2 (Kornileff), and No. 3 (Redan), and after about three

hours, upon Bastion No. 5, and the Belkin and Schwartz Redoubts.

Of these six attacks, five were gloriously repulsed. Some of the points of attack, like that on Bastion No. 2, on which the enemy had succeeded in bringing guns by flying bridges, having at various times been taken and retaken, remained finally ours. But the Kornileff Redoubt, more damaged than the others by the bombardment, was taken by the French, who brought more than 30,000 men against it, and could not be retaken, after the great losses we had suffered at the commencement of this combat, for it would have been necessary to ascend in the midst of the ruins a very steep incline, and then cross a narrow ridge above a deep ditch on the rear face occupied by the French. Such an undertaking might have prevented us achieving the proposed object, and would have cost us, without the slightest doubt, incalculable losses.

The attempt was the more needless as, for reasons already mentioned, I had resolved to evacuate the place. Therefore, as the success of the enemy was confined to the sole capture of the Kornileff redoubt, I ordered that no attack should be made on that redoubt, and to remain in front of it, to oppose any continuation of the enemy's attack on the town itself, an order which was executed despite all the efforts of the French to get beyond the gorge of the redoubt.

At dusk the troops were ordered to retire according to the arrangements previously made.

The examples of bravery you gave during that day, valiant comrades, aroused such a feeling of respect in the enemy that, despite the knowledge they must have had of our retreat by the explosion of our mines, which our troops exploded one after the other as they gradually retreated, they not only did not pursue us in columns, but even ceased firing with their artillery, which they might have continued with impunity.

Valiant comrades, it is painful, it is hard to leave Sebastopol in the enemy's hands. But remember the sacrifice we made upon the altar of our country in 1812. Moscow was surely as valuable as Sebastopol—we abandoned it after the immortal battle of Borodino. The defence of Sebastopol during 349 days is superior to Borodino, and when the enemy entered Moscow in that great year of 1812 they only found heaps of stones and ashes. Likewise, it is not Sebastopol which we have left to them, but the burning ruins of the town, which we ourselves set fire to, having maintained the honor of the defence in such a manner that our great grandchildren may recall the remembrance thereof with pride to all posterity.

Sebastopol kept us chained to its walls; with its fall we acquire freedom of movement, and a new war commences—a war in the open field, that most congenial to the Russian soldier. Let us prove to the Emperor, let us prove to Russia, that we are still imbued with the spirit which animated our ancestors in our memorable and patriotic struggle. Wherever the enemy may show himself we will present our breasts to him, and defend our native land as we defended it in 1812.

Valiant warriors of the land and sea forces, in the name of the Emperor I thank you for the unexampled courage, firmness and constancy you have displayed during the siege of Sebastopol. (Here follow the names of the officers who most distinguished themselves.)

In thus expressing the gratitude your worthy commanders are entitled to who are still living, let us also honor, comrades, those who have fallen honorably for our faith and for our country on the ramparts of Sebastopol.

Let us remember the immortal names of Nachimoff, Kornileff, and Istomine, and let us address prayers to the Most High that He will grant them peace, and eternalize their memory as an example to the future generations of Russians.

We take the following from Prince Gortschakoff's diary of the siege:—

Aug. 24 (Sept. 5).—At 6 a.m. the enemy opened a very violent cannonade and bombardment against the first and second sections of our line of defence; their batteries fired by salvoes. We replied from our works on the right flank of our line of defence by an equally well sustained fire. The fire slackened about 2 p.m., and stopped towards evening. In the 24 hours, according to the observations taken from the telegraph, the enemy fired about 70,000 cannon balls and 16,000 shells.

This terrible fire caused great damage to our works, especially to the Schwartz redoubt, to bastion No. 5, and to the Belkin battery.

During the night, despite the well sustained fire of the besiegers; the garrison of Sebastopol repaired as much as possible the damage done; a portion of the dismantled guns were replaced.

The works of the besiegers did not advance; they busied themselves in repairing the damage done to their batteries.

After describing the fire on the 6th and 7th of September, the diary stops at the 8th, with the observation that Prince Gortschakoff will send a special report of the events of that day.

The diary adds, that on the 11th of September the following vessels were sunk, by order of the Commander in Chief:—The Vladimir, Crimea, Chersonese, Bessarabia, Cremonosets, Elborous, Danube, Turk and Gronzy. Their guns were first taken out of them.

The report concludes as follows:—

Aug. 31 (Sept. 12).—On the 1st (Sept. 13) the enemy fired but little. They attempted to open fire with mortars placed at the landing place called Grafskaja Pristane. On the same day the advanced posts of our left wing observed that two camps had been established in the valley of Paidar, near the village of the Cossacks, on the road from Ouzenbaschik to Ourkousty, in which were six squadrons of cavalry and five battalions of infantry, with artillery.

MANIFESTO OF THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER.

On the 20th of September, the Emperor of Russia addressed the following rescript to Count Zakrevsky, Military Governor of Moscow:—