

WAR NEWS.

Siege of Sebastopol—Starvation in the English Army—Contrast between the Conduct of the English and French General Officers.

[From the London Herald.]

ENGLISH CAMP, HEIGHTS OF SEBASTOPOL, }
December 12, 1854. }

It is useless to try to disguise matters as to the way our troops have suffered lately. Some of them have been literally almost starving—indeed, for two whole days the naval brigade did not get a single morsel, and for days previous they had been on half rations. Our men are mere spectres of their former selves, and, as a matter of course, when ill-fed and over-worked, they have an alarming proportion of sickness amongst them. Yesterday the whole way from our camp to Balaklava was quite covered with French mules, which we had borrowed to carry in such of the sick as have been invalided to Scutari, Malta and England; 1,206 men were thus sent for embarkation at Balaklava. Half of these will never return, and the other half cannot be fit for duty for at least three or four months. I do not mean to say for a moment that such numbers of sick are often sent in. God forbid. If such were the case, the British army in the Crimea would soon become a fiction. But such numbers are sent in for invaliding nearly every fourteen days, and do not include an immense number of cases brought in daily by the ambulances to the general hospital at Balaklava, or the cases which are treated in the various regimental hospitals in camp. These 1,206 invalids are men who cannot be cured here, and who are sent entirely out of the Crimea. The illness of the majority of these arose, I am certain, from want of food, and of proper food. Yet in the midst of this general privation our commissariat at Balaklava act as if their supplies were inexhaustible. For instance, a few days since the *Pride of the Ocean* came in from Varna with one hundred and ninety five bullocks on board, and at a time when, above all others, fresh provision was wanted; yet, though the captain of the *Pride of the Ocean* represented that he had no forage on board, and that the bullocks must die, the authorities at Balaklava, for some extraordinary freak or other, refused to allow him to enter the port until five days had elapsed, by which time only eighty of the oxen were alive, and these were so miserably weak and attenuated, that some died on the landing, and hardly any were fit to eat. Again, at Eupatoria, there was a fine supply of sheep for the use of the army; 2,000 were kept upon the beach, where there was nothing to eat, while 3,000 in good condition grazed just outside the town. The 2,000 "lean kine" were sent down for the use of the troops, and were embarked in such a state that only 900 reached Balaklava alive, and 200 of these died the day after their landing. Your readers can imagine the condition of the survivors when I say that the average weight of each (when they were at last put out of their misery) was only 15 pounds, and some even were as low as eight pounds. The day after these miserable little skeletons were shipped at Eupatoria, the *Costa* came down and swept off our 3,000 good sheep, with about 400 head of cattle. There are no more supplies to be got now from Eupatoria, but from Varna and Bourgas we might feed 200,000 men if our commissariat would only send steamers there, instead of keeping them, like the *Harbinger*, (a steamer of 900 tons), which is retained as a residence for Captain Christie, R. N., when there are scores of sailing vessels which could fulfil such an important duty equally well. The truth is, we must have a radical change in the whole of our warlike arrangements. Without some improvement, reinforcements are useless; they only come out to starve slowly, or to be surprised and shot in their tents, as at Inkermann. Past oversights we have already paid for in the blood of our best troops, but it is not yet too late to save us from the evils which threaten for the future, if the public will only use their eyes and see how events are managed and progressing here.

If it would be impossible to imagine a more perfect contrast than is presented by the appearance of Balaklava and Kherson, where the French supplies are landed. At the latter place the most thorough cleanliness and good order reign in all departments. There are separate neatly made piers for each description of supply. Cavalry land at one, infantry at another; barrels of beef, pork, biscuits, guns, ammunition and medical stores have each their allotted jetties, under the charge of proper officers. With such arrangements things are never out of the way, nor in the way. At Balaklava it is precisely the reverse—there stores and supplies of all kinds are tumbled in the mud upon the narrow beach, amid a chaotic heap of broken timber, ship's anchors sunk into the road, stones, filth and rubbish of all kinds.

Again, whenever speculators send up ships laden with such camp luxuries as flannel shirts, wine, spirits, candles, preserved meats, &c., the French instantly send round and buy the whole cargo, which is retailed afterwards to the French at cost prices. Of course it would be beneath our government to do anything of the kind, and so our officers must either endure their hardships or lighten them by paying the most awful prices to the Greeks and Maltese, who trade in our necessities. Canrobert and the French generals are to be seen each day—no matter what the state of the weather—riding round the camp, inspecting the French troops, and visiting the hospitals. On our side, I don't think since the campaign began a general officer was ever seen in an hospital; and for the last fortnight, as far as I can ascertain, not a general officer has been seen about the camp at all. Of course, we believe they are in the camp; but for all we know of their presence (excepting, always, Sir Collin Campbell), they might as well be at St. James's or Windsor. I state these facts with reluctance, though they are strictly true, and, what is more, already form the subject of bitter comment throughout our cantonments. Let our generals only show themselves among the troops; say once or twice a week, and at least appear to take some interest in their condition, I am certain it would do them as much good as a double ration. The influence which superior officers possess over British soldiers is proverbial, and it might now be most advantageously employed in cheering up the spirits of the men, depressed under privations and hardships of no common kind.

RUSSIAN ITEMS.

The Czar's two sons passed Percep on the 9th, returning to St. Petersburg.

A Russian ukase is published ordaining that whoever shall, after a battle, commit acts of cruelty on the wounded or unresisting, shall suffer the punishment of death.

Gen. Murawien is appointed to the command of the Caucasian army, with all the powers previously enjoyed by Prince Woronzoff. Gen. Osten Sacken is removed from the command of the 3d to the 4th corps, *vice* Dannenberg, disgraced.

The exportation of sheepskins, provisions, sailcloth, linen and live cattle is prohibited from the Russian ports of the Danube, Black Sea and Sea of Azoff.

Odessa letters state that some anxiety existed there from the hints of the London journals respecting an intended bombardment of the place; but on the spot, there was no appearance of any hostile demonstration.

It is not generally known that the chief engineer officer who conducts the defence of Sebastopol is Gen. Destrem, a Frenchman. Destrem was presented to the service of the Emperor Alexander by Napoleon I, at the time of the treaty at Tilsit.

Destrem is not only an accomplished engineer, but a poet of considerable talent. He has translated into French verse the fables of Kriloff, called "the Russian Lafontaine."

The Journal of St. Petersburg contains an order relative to the forwarding of gifts to the wounded in the Crimea. Officers are appointed to visit the wounded of the fleet, to administer relief in money and comforts, to take their instructions respecting the care of their families, to take charge of their letters, and otherwise to administer aid. Sixty Sisters of Charity have been sent as nurses.

General Schabelsky, a most energetic man, has succeeded Gen. Annenkoff, as Governor of Odessa.

Eight English steamers have been taking soundings off Etchakoff; hence it is surmised that the allies will make an attack on Percep.

A ukase, dated December 13th, orders a levy of 10 men in every 1,000 throughout the eastern half of the Empire, to commence on the 15th of February, and be completed by the 15th of March. Jews are not exempt.

The Delhi Gazette asserts that there is evidence, hardly now to be gainsaid, that Russia is rapidly becoming possessed of the whole Doab of the Jaxartes and the Oxus, a country which, for centuries of history and twenty more of tradition has supplied India with invaders. The head quarters of a Russian force—how large or how small that force is of little moment—are now established within 500 miles of our northwest frontier.

FROM ST. PETERSBURG.—Mr. Henry Evans, a resident of St. Petersburg, writes to the New Bedford Mercury respecting the feeling created in Russia by the war. He says:—

"All the troops that have been quartered in this city, Riga, Revel, and along the coast of Finland, are now in full march for the Crimea and Austrian frontier. The Russian army now in the Crimea is about 120,000 strong, and I am told that it will be increased to 300,000, by the first of January. All the arsenals and foundries belonging to the government, as well as all the private foundries and machine-shops, are in full operation day and night, manufacturing large cannon, small arms, marine steam-engines, &c.; in fact, the minds of the Russians are engrossed in the war, they think of nothing else, talk of nothing else; they are aroused and determined to prosecute the war to the full extent of their resources with all their energy. No doubt that the allies will find a more formidable foe than they anticipated, but they will not yield until they accomplish their object.

Austria still holds to her unsettled position; she may make a half-way proposition to the Western powers, but she will be sure to keep one link of her chain connected with Russia and Prussia. 200,000 Russians frowning on her border will keep her from coming out bold for the Western powers. Col. Coit is here; he has had an interview with the Emperor; and will soon make arrangements to manufacture his revolver in this country. I feel confident that we shall have peace by the 1st of April next, or a general European war.

GREAT BRITAIN.

Parliament is not in session, and the news is consequently scanty. A brief meeting of both houses was held on Saturday, the 23d, at which the royal assent was given to the bill for the enlistment of foreigners and to the militia embodiment bill, which have now become law. Both houses then adjourned until the 23d of January.

The foreign enlistment continues as unpopular as ever. By the way, there are doubts expressed if Germans can legally enlist under the new act, seeing that, by Art. XVIII. of the act of the German federation, it is expressly forbidden to German subjects to enter into the military service of foreign states.

Captain J. T. Peat, late of the Australian packet ship *Golden Era*, has been tried at Liverpool for neglect of duty, and was sentenced to eight months imprisonment.

A statement having been made that Col. Coit had gone to Russia to supply the Czar with revolvers, he writes a letter to the *London Times*, saying it is not his fault if all his facilities of manufacture are not now at the disposal of the British government.

There is a man named Fletcher, 108 years old, now living near London. He was a soldier during twenty-eight years of his earlier life, and fought against the United States in the first American war.

The United States frigate *San Jacinto* arrived at Gibraltar December 12th. The steamer *New York* passed the straits on the same day, with troops for the East.

FRANCE.

The Emperor opened the Legislative Assembly in person.

THE EMPEROR'S SPEECH.

Messieurs les Senateurs, Messieurs les Deputes: Since your last meeting great deeds have been accomplished. The appeal which I made to the country to defray the expenses of the war was so well responded to that the result has surpassed my hopes. In the Baltic, as in the Black Sea, our arms have been victorious. Two great battles have added renown to our standard. The intimacy of our relations with England has been brilliantly attested. The English Parliament has voted thanks to our generals and to our soldiers. A great empire, made young again by the chivalrous sentiments of its Sovereign, has detached itself from the power which for forty years has menaced the independence of Europe. The Emperor of Austria has concluded a treaty—defensive to-day, offensive perhaps tomorrow—which unites his cause with that of France and England.

Thus, gentlemen, as the war is prolonged the number of our allies increases, and the ties already formed become closer. For what ties are, in fact, more secure than the names of victories shared by the two armies and recalling a common glory, the same anxieties and the same hopes agitating the two countries, and the same aims and the same intentions animating the two Governments in all parts of the globe? Thus the alliance with England is not the effect of a mere passing interest or of political expediency, but it is the union of two powerful nations associated for the triumph of a cause in which for more than a century their own greatness, the interests of civilization, and the liberty of Europe are at the same time involved. Join me, then, on this solemn occasion, in thanking here, and in the name of France, the Parliament for its cordial and warm demonstration, and the English army and its esteemed chief for their valiant co-operation. Next year, should peace not be established, I hope to obtain the assistance of that Germany whose union and prosperity we desire.

I am happy in paying a just tribute of praise to the army and fleet, who, by their devotion and discipline, in the south as in France, have nobly answered my expectations. The army of the East has hitherto borne and overcome everything—disease, fire, tempest and privation, a city constantly revictualled, defended by a formidable artillery on land and sea, and two hostile armies superior to us in numbers, have been powerless to weaken its courage or subdue its spirit. Each man nobly did his duty, from the Marshal who seemed to have forced death to wait till he had conquered, to the private soldier or sailor whose last cry in expiring was a prayer for France, and a cheer for the elect of his country. Let us, then, together proclaim that the army and the fleet have deserved well of the country.

War, it is true, brings with it cruel sacrifices, yet everything bids me push it on with vigor, and for this purpose I count upon your assistance. The army at present consists of 518,000 soldiers and 113,000 horses, and the navy of 62,000 sailors afloat. It is indispensably necessary to keep this force in an effective state; and to fill up the vacancies occasioned by the annual discharges and by the war, I shall ask of you, as I did last year, a levy of 140,000 men. A law will be brought before you for ameliorating the position of soldiers re-enlisting without increasing the expense; it will be of immense advantage to increase the number of veteran soldiers in the army, and to allow in future the weight of the conscription to be diminished. I hope that this law will soon meet with your approval.

I shall demand of you authority to conclude a new national loan. Although this measure will increase the public debt, we must not forget that by the conversion of the Rentes the interest of the debt has been reduced by 21 1-2 millions. The object of my efforts is to place the expenditure on a level with the receipts, and the ordinary budget to be presented to you will be found in equilibrium, while the resources of the loan will suffice to meet the demands of the war.

You will see with pleasure that our revenues have not diminished, that industrial enterprise is sustained, that all the great works of public utility are continued, and that Providence has graciously given us a harvest sufficient for our wants. The Government, nevertheless, does not close its eyes to the uneasiness caused by the dearth of provisions, but has taken every measure in its power to prevent and lighten this uneasiness, and has founded in several places, new elements of work.

The contest which is going on, restrained as it is by moderation and justice, although it causes the heart to beat, has caused so little alarm to the commercial interest, that the different parts of the globe will soon bring together here all the fruits of peace.

Foreigners cannot but be struck with the remarkable spectacle of a country, which, counting on the divine protection, sustains with energy a war at 600 leagues from its frontiers, and which develops with equal ardor its internal riches—a country where war does not prevent agriculture and industry from prospering, nor the arts from flourishing, and where the genius of the nation shows it.

The Imperial speech was frequently interrupted by acclamations from every part of the hall, and terminated amid repeated shouts of "Vive l'Empereur."

The speech was highly praised; and it caused a slight depression of the funds in both France and England.

On the 27th, the Minister of Finance was authorized to raise a loan of five hundred millions of francs.

[From the Millennial Star.]

THE CRIMEA.

Casualties to the brethren on Nov. 5—prospects of the work and the War.

HEIGHTS NEAR SEBASTOPOL, }
Nov. 25, 1854. }

DEAR PRESIDENT—Your letter of the 3rd inst., came safe to hand, and was very welcome, for our communication with the rest of our friends throughout the world is nearly cut off, partly by us having no proper opportunity of writing, and partly because a great number of the letters that we send, and of those that are sent to us, are not carried to their destination.

I will now relate the manner in which your letter came to hand. Two men of the 49th Regiment went four days ago on pass to Balaklava, about six miles from this, and were ordered to call for any letters that might be there awaiting transmission to their own regiment. The men are still absent, but their haversacks were found this morning by some sailors on the road between this and Balaklava, and forwarded by them to the regiment. In one of them were found your letter, and another from brother Bell at Malta.

Since I wrote last to you, we have had rather busy times, in coming to the Crimea and fighting several battles. As for the battle of Alma, which we fought on the 20th of Sept., you have already heard more full accounts than I can give, but we have fought two engagements since that time, one on the 26th of Oct., when the Russians attacked the position which we occupied, and which we still occupy, but they were driven back with considerable loss. There was only our division engaged against them, but supported by other divisions, both French and British. The Russian loss was about 800. There were about 15,000 Russians engaged.

Their next attempt was on the 5th of this month, when they began to drive in our pickets early in the morning, under cover of a foggy rain. Our division was again the first into action, being encamped nearest the point of at-

tack, but we found it was not so easy to drive them back as formerly, for they came against us in immense numbers, having formed up near the point of attack during the night, besides planting a number of heavy guns against us. They likewise brought 105 field pieces into action. Our division was engaged for a length of time, and driven back nearly to our camp, before any of the other divisions had time to come to our assistance; but, then, division after division began to arrive, both of French and British, and the Russians were again forced to retire. Our troops were forced back three successive times to the very borders of our camp, but they forced the Russians to fly at last, and captured a number of their guns, besides taking a great number of prisoners. The loss of the Russians in killed and wounded, is said to be 13,000. I do not know how many came against us altogether, but I hear that there were 60,000, of whom 20,000 never went back to Sebastopol.

Our division being the first engaged, and so long unsupported, was reduced to a mere skeleton by killed and wounded. I was wounded myself, by a bayonet, in the left arm, but I was able, through the blessing of God, to return to my duty in about five days. One of the brethren, of the name of Brodie, belonging to the 41st Regiment, was killed, and bro. Hay, of the 55th, had to get his right arm cut off above the elbow. Another of the 41st, was wounded slightly in the hand. Bro. McDonald, of this regiment, was wounded three times—the top of his head was first scraped by the splinters of a shell. He had it bound up in a handkerchief, and entered the engagement again, when another shell burst near him, which threw the clay and stones up into his face, knocking him senseless for some time, and swelled his jaw very much. He received also a musket ball in the palm of his hand, but he appeared to be doing well at the time he went away with the rest of the wounded to Balaklava. The rest of the brethren are well.

I am sorry to say that nothing can be done for the spread of the work, at present. We can hold no meetings, and it is only by stealth that we can have an opportunity of conversing with one another; indeed, there are some brethren, within a mile of me, whom I have not seen since we took up position before Sebastopol, but some of the brethren in the division have had accidental interviews with them. Elder Bell has written from Malta, to say that bro. Miller, of the Artillery, has come up from Gibraltar; but none of us have been able to see him. We cannot leave our camp for many minutes at a time, for we do not know what calls might be made for us before we were five minutes away. There is a very bad spirit manifested towards the gospel by the people among whom I live, for if anything whatever is mentioned concerning the Latter-Day Saints or their doctrines, there is nothing can be heard for some time after, but cursing and vile abusive language from almost every one in the tent.

Any information concerning the circumstances of the Latter-Day Saints, or any new principles revealed, is received by us with the greatest satisfaction, particularly that contained in your letter concerning the new places appointed for the gathering of the saints, as we all look forward with hope for the day that we leave Babylon, and are enabled to unite ourselves with the saints of the Most High, and learn of His laws from His Prophets in His Temple. We can appreciate in some measure the manner in which the saints in civil life in England are used and despised, but we are doubly bound, and consequently look forward with more fervency to the day when we may call ourselves free. And we have the more hope, as Cincinnati is so much easier reached than the Valley, until we can obtain means to assist us further on the way.

From the 1st to the 16th of October, we were busily engaged in throwing up batteries and entrenchments, and planting heavy guns and mortars, and getting up ammunition, shot, and shell from Balaklava, while the Russians kept throwing shot and shell at us all the time that we were engaged at work. They throw up shell sometimes from the vessels in the harbor in the centre of the town, right among our tents, but none of our regiment, and very few of our division, have been hurt by them, either in camp, at work, or on picket, except during the regular engagements which I have already mentioned.

We began the bombardment of the town on the morning of the 17th of Oct., while some of our shipping entered the harbor about the middle of the day, got at once under the range of the Russian forts, and would have swept everything before them, but the French Admiral, who was in command, apprehensive of our shipping being destroyed, gave the signal of recall, which our ships were obliged to obey, and they got very much cut up in getting out of the harbor again. Since that time the shipping have done nothing else than keep up a strict blockade. Our batteries have continued the bombardment ever since, principally upon the batteries thrown up by the Russians outside their walls, and upon their shipping in the harbor. We did the most damage to them during the first two days of the bombardment. Our firing has been very slack since that time, as the nature of the harbor enables the Russian shipping to take shelter under some hills, which completely screen it from the fire of the batteries which we at first threw up. But since the action of the 5th of Nov., the allied forces have been busy throwing up batteries on the ground on which the two last actions were fought, which will give us complete command of the harbor and town, and at the same time prevent the Russians advancing as they did the two last times. We shall be ready to open fire from the new batteries and redoubts in a few days.

There are several considerations to prevent our taking the garrison by storm—mines, strong divisions ready to attack us in the rear, whenever we storm, and strong divisions outside the walls on the north-west side of the town, with plenty of heavy ordnance, and an advantageous position ready to open fire upon us as soon as we are in possession of the town. We require more troops to master the divisions that are encamped outside of the town, so as to keep our present position secure at the same time.

The 62nd and 97th, 34th and 46th regiments, with several drafts for other regiments, have lately joined the army, but they do not make up our loss in killed, wounded, and those who died of cholera, fever, and bowel complaint. But many thousands of French and Turks have also joined us.

Our commanders are preparing for our wintering in our present position. We have begun to build houses, or rather huts, one for each company; and winter clothing has arrived for us, which is to be served out as possible. Living in tents is—