

INCIDENTS OF THE WAR IN THE CRIMEA.

From the Correspondent of the London Times.
THE BATTLE OF ALMA.

BANKS OF THE ALMA SEPT. 19.—Last night orders were given by Lord Raglan that the troops should strike tents at daybreak, and that all tents should be sent on board the ships of the fleet. Our advance had been determined upon, and it was understood that the Russian light cavalry had been sweeping the country of all supplies up to a short distance of our lines and outlying pickets.

At three o'clock in the morning the camp was roused by the reveille, and all the 30,000 sleepers woke into active life. The boats from the ships lined the beach to receive the tents.—The commissariat officers struggled in vain with the very deficient means at their disposal to meet the enormous requirements of an army of 26,000 men for the transport of baggage, ammunition, and food, and a scene which to an unpractised eye would seem one of utter confusion began and continued for several hours, relieved only by the steadiness and order of the regiments as they paraded previous to their marching.

The French, on our right, were up betimes and the camp fires of the allied armies, extended for miles along the horizon, and mingling with the lights of the ships, almost anticipated the morning.

7000 Turkish infantry, under Suleiman Pasha moved along by the seaside; next to them came the divisions of Generals Bosquet, Canrobert, Forey, and Prince Napoleon. Our order of march was about four miles to the right of their left wing, and as many behind them.

The right of the allied forces was covered by the fleet, which moved along with it in magnificent order, darkening the air with innumerable columns of smoke, ready to shell the enemy should they threaten to attack our right and commanding the land for nearly two miles from the shore.

It was nine o'clock in the morning ere the whole of our army was prepared for marching. The day was warm, and our advance was delayed by the wretched transport furnished for the baggage—an evil which will I fear, be more severely felt in any protracted operations, everything not absolutely indispensable was sent on board the ship. The naval officers and the sailors worked indefatigably and cleared the beach as fast as the men deposited their luggage and tents there. At last the men fell in and the march of the campaign began.

The country beyond the salt lake, near which we encamped, is perfectly destitute of tree or shrub, and consists of wide plains, marked at intervals of two or three miles with hillocks, and long irregular ridges of hills running down towards the sea at right angles to the beach.—It is but little cultivated, except in the patches of land around the unfrequented villages built in the higher recesses of the valleys.—Hares were started in abundance, and afforded great sport to the men whenever they halted, and several were fairly hunted down among the lines of men. All oxen, horses or cattle was driven off by the Cossacks. The soil is hard and elastic, and was in excellent order for artillery.

After a march of an hour a halt took place for 50 minutes during which Lord Raglan, accompanied by a very large staff, Marshal St. Arnaud, Generals Bosquet, Forey, and a number of French officers rode along the front of the columns. The men spontaneously got up from the ground, rushed forward, and column after column rent the air with three thundering English cheers. It was a good omen. As the marshal passed the 50th regiment he exclaimed, "English, I hope you will fight well to-day!" "Hope!" exclaimed a voice from the ranks, "sure you know we will!" The troops presented a splendid appearance. The effect of these grand masses of soldiery descending the ridges of the hills rank after rank, with the sun playing over forests of glittering steel, can never be forgotten by those who witness it. Onward the torrent of war swept, wave after wave, huge stately billows of armed men, while the rumble of the artillery and tramp of cavalry accompanied their progress. At last the smoke of burning villages and farmhouses announced that the enemy in front were aware of our march. It was a sad sight to see the white walls of the houses blackened with smoke, the flames ascending through the roofs of peaceful homesteads, and the ruined outlines of deserted hamlets. Many sick men fell out, and were carried to the rear. It was a painful sight—a sad contrast to the magnificent appearance of the army in front, to behold litter after litter borne past to the carts, with the poor sufferers who had dropped from illness and fatigue.

Presently from the top of a hill, a wide plain was visible, beyond which rose a ridge darkened here and there by masses which the practised eye recognized as cavalry. It was our first sight of the enemy. On the left of the plain, up in a recess formed by the inward sweep of two ridges, lay a large village in flames; right before us was a neat white house unburnt, though the outhouses and farmyard were burning. This was the imperial posthouse of Bouljanak, just 20 miles from Sebastopol.

A small stream ran past us, which was an object of delight to our thirsty soldiers, who

had now marched more than eight miles from their camp. The house was deserted and gutted; only a picture of a saint, bunches of herbs in the kitchen, and a few household utensils were left; and a solitary peahen which soon fell a victim to a revolver, stalked sadly about the threshold. After a short halt for men and horses by the stream, the army pushed on again. The cavalry (about 5000 men of the 8th hussars, the 11th hussars, and 13th light dragoons) pushed on in front, and on arriving about a mile beyond the posthouse we clearly made out the Cossack lancers on the hills in front. Lord Cardigan threw out skirmishers in line, who covered the front at intervals of ten or twelve yards from each other. The Cossacks advanced to meet us in like order, man for man, the steel of their long lances glittering in the sun. They were rough-looking fellows, mounted on sturdy little horses, but the regularity of their order and the celerity of their movements showed they were regulars, and by no means despicable foes. As our skirmishers advanced the Cossacks halted at the foot of the hill. Their reserves were not well in sight, but from time to time a clump of lances rose over the summit of the hill and disappeared.—Lord Cardigan was eager to try their strength and permission was given to him to advance somewhat nearer; but as he did so dark columns of cavalry came into view in the recesses of the hills, and it became evident that if our men charged up such a deep ascent their horses would be blown, and that they would run a risk of being surrounded and cut to pieces by a force of three times their number. Lord Lucan therefore, ordered the cavalry to halt, gather in their skirmishers, and retire slowly. None of the infantry or artillery were in sight of us, topped the brow of the hill. When our skirmishers halted the Cossacks commenced a fire from their line of videttes, which was quite harmless. Few of the balls came near enough to let the whizz be heard. Two or three officers who were riding between the skirmishers—Lieut. Colonel Dickson, R. A., Captain Fellows, 12th lancers Dr. Elliott, R. A.—were looking out anxiously for the arrival of Captain Maude's horse artillery when suddenly the Russians emboldened by our halt, came over the brow of the hill, and slowly descended the slope in three solid squares. We offered them battle, and they had lost their chance, for our cavalry now turned round, and rode quietly towards the troops. Our Skirmishers, who had replied smartly to the fire of the Cossacks, but without effect, retired and joined their squadron. At every 50 paces our cavalry faced about to receive the Cossacks if they appeared to charge. Suddenly one of the Russian cavalry squares opened—a spurt of white smoke rose out of the gap, and a round shot, which pitched close to my horse tore over the column of our cavalry behind, and rolled away between the ranks of the riflemen in the rear, just as they came in view of the cavalry. In another instant a second gun bowled through the 11th hussars, knocked over a horse taking off his rider's leg above the ankle. Another and another followed, tearing through our ranks, so that it was quite wonderful so few of the cavalry were hit. Meantime Captain Maude's artillery galloped over the hillock but were halted by Lord Raglan's order at the base of the rear of the cavalry at the left flank.—This was done probably to entice the Russians further down the hill. Meantime our cavalry were drawn up as targets for the enemy's guns and had they been of the iron they could not have been more solid and immovable. The Russian gunners fired admirably, they were rather slow, but their balls came bounding along quite visible as they passed in right lines from the centre of the cavalry columns. After some 30 rounds from the enemy our artillery opened fire. Their round shot ploughed up the columns of the cavalry, who speedily dispersed into broken lines, wheeling round and round with great adroitness to escape the six and nine pound balls. Our shells were not so successful; but one, better directed than the rest, burst right in the centre of a column of light infantry which the Russians had advanced to support their cavalry. Our fire so hot, the service of the guns so quick, that the enemy retired in about fifteen minutes after we opened on them. While this affair was going on, the French had crept up on the right, and surprised a body of Russian cavalry with a round from a battery of nine-pounders, which scattered them in all directions. We could count six dead horses on the field near the line of fire. It is not possible to form an accurate notion of the effect of our fire, but it must have caused the Russians a greater loss than they inflicted on us. We lost six horses and four men were wounded. Two men lost their legs. The others, up to yesterday, though injured severe, were not in danger. One of the wounded men, a sergeant in the 11th hussars, rode coolly to the rear, with his foot dangling by a piece of skin to the bone and told the doctor he had just come to have his leg dressed. Another wounded trooper behaved with equal fortitude and refused the use of a litter to carry him to the rear, though his leg was broken into splinters. It was strange in visiting the scene where the horses lay dead, that the first feeling produced on the spectator when the horror of seeing the poor animals ripped open by shells from chest to loins, as though it were done by a surgeon's knife, had subsided was that Sir E. Landseer, in his picture of 'War'

must have seen one of the animals before us—the glaring eye-ball, the distending nostril, the gnashed teeth, are all true to life. When the Russians had retired beyond the heights, orders were given to halt for the night, and our tired men set to work to gather the weeds for the fuel. As soon as the rations of rum and meat were served out, the casks were broken up, and the staves served to make fires for cooking, aided by nettles and long grass. At night the watchfires of the Russians were visible on our left. Great numbers of stragglers came during the night, most of them belonging to the 4th division. It was a cold night, and if I could intrude the recital of the sorrows of a tentless man wandering about in the dark from regiment to regiment in hope of finding his missing baggage, I might tell a tale amusing enough to read, but the incidents in which were very distressing to the individual concerned. The night was cold and damp, the watchfires were mere flashes, which gave little heat, and barely, sufficed to warm the rations; but the camp of British soldiers is ever animated by the very soul of hospitality; and the wandering was lucky enough to get a lodging on the ground beside a kindly colonel, who was fortunate enough to have a little field tent with him, and a bit of bread and biscuit to spare after a march of ten miles and a fast of ten hours. All night arabs were arriving, and soldiers who had fallen out or got astray came up to the sentries to find their regiments. Sir George Brown, Sir De Lacy Evans, the brigadier, generals, and staff officers went about among their divisions and brigades ere the men lay down, giving directions for the following day, and soon after dusk the regiments were on the ground, wrapped up in great-coats and blankets, to find the repose they could after the days exertion.

It was much regretted that our cavalry force was so miserably deficient, for if we had been even two to three we could readily have disposed of the vapouring lancers on the hill, who had irritated the men very much by their derisive cries when our skirmishers retired. It was admitted that, as a military spectacle, the advance of our troops and the little affair of artillery, as well as the management of the cavalry, formed one of the most picturesque and beautiful that could be imagined. No pencil could do it justice, for the painter's skill fails to impart an idea of motion, and the writer has not yet been born who can describe with vividness and force enough to bring before the reader the events of even the slightest skirmish.

Camp at the Alma, Sept. 20.—Pressed by time, and excited by the events of this most memorable day, I despair, indeed, of giving the faintest conception of the terrible conflict which has just been terminated with the greatest honor to our arms, and I shall confine myself for the present to a simple narrative of the incidents of which I was an eye-witness. A commanding position, selected with great strategic skill, and defended by 40,000 men and 100 guns, has been carried, after a decisive and bloody encounter, by the most determined and brilliant valour of an inferior force of the allied armies. In no battle, ancient or modern, were the cool courage and bravery of the British soldier ever more fully and gloriously displayed. The war is not indeed, terminated by this great victory, but the effect of such a dreadful blow has destroyed the last remnant of the prestige of Russian armies, and has freed Europe from the dismal chimeras which has pressed upon her councils for the last half century.

We have to deplore great losses, but when it is considered how strongly the enemy were entrenched, how well their artillery was handled, and how courageously they fought, it is almost wonderful that more lives were not sacrificed in this desperate encounter.

On the morning of the 20th, ere daybreak, the whole of the British force was under arms. They were marshalled silently; no bugles or drums broke the stillness, but the hum of thousands of voices rose loudly from the ranks, and the watchfires lighted up the lines of our camp as though it were a great town. When dawn broke it was discovered that the Russians had retired from the heights, but had left their campfires burning. The troops lay on their arms for about an hour, while the generals were arranging the order of our advance. Lord Raglan had made his dispositions the previous evening, and the generals of division, Sir G. Brown, Sir De Lacy Evans, Sir R. England, and Sir G. Cathcart, aided by their brigadiers-generals, went from colonel to colonel of each regiment under their command, giving them instructions with respect to the arrangements of their men in the coming struggle. It was known that the Russians had been busy fortifying the heights over the valley through which runs the little river Alma, and that they had resolved to try their strength with us in a position which gave them vast advantages of ground, which they had used every means in their power to improve to the utmost. The advance of the armies this great day was a sight which must ever stand out like the landmark of the spectator's life. Early in the morning the troops were ordered to get in readiness, and at half-past six o'clock they were in motion. It was a lovely day; the heat of the sun was tempered by a sea breeze. The fleet was visible at a distance of four miles covering the ocean as it was seen between the

hills, and we could make out the steamers on our right as close to the shore as possible.

The Generals St. Arnaud, Bosquet, and Forey, attended by their staff, rode along in front of the lines, with Lord Raglan and his generals at second halt, and were received with tremendous cheering. At 1 20 we saw the steamers inshore (French) commenced throwing shells up to a height in front, and the enemy replied by a heavy fire, but the distance was too great for any effectual result. The action became general at 1 45 on the part of the French and Turks, who carried the heights on the right, which were but weakly protected. At 2 30 we advanced down the slope towards the valley of the Alma, above which rose the lines and redoubts of the enemy. As we advanced they set fire to a village at the base of the descent to the valley at our side, and, covered by the smoke, opened a tremendous fire of 9 and 12-pounder guns from their earthwork batteries. Our artillery replied with shot, shell, and rockers, while the men advanced through a storm of bullets, and rushed across the stream—the light division on the right, the second division next, the first division in the centre, and the third supporting them. Amid a most tremendous fire, the guards rushed up the hill and stormed the heaviest battery. Once they were driven back but the duke rallied them, and led them to the charge in person. Sir George Brown had a horse shot under him. Sir De Lacy Evans led on his division under the very thickest of the *mitraille*. The Russians threw spherical shot, marked with a cross, which inflicted terrible wounds, and their practice when they got the range, was excellent. At three the French had moved up solid columns of infantry to the heights on our right, and turned the guns against the enemy. Our men struggled through the flames of the village and the river under a continuous roll of artillery. At four o'clock they charged in three divisions up the heights. The light division suffered fearfully, particularly the 7th and 23rd regiments, which Sir George Brown led in person. The 55th and 95th, and 30th also suffered severely. The rifles, second battalion, though the first under fire, suffered least of all, as they got over before the enemy caught the range.

At five o'clock the Russians were flying in every direction, ploughed up by the splendid fire of our guns, leaving on the field an immense number of dead, three guns, drums, and ammunition. The want of cavalry prevented our getting more prisoners or capturing a greater number of guns. Our loss is about 1200 killed and wounded, including a great number of officers. Fuller particulars in my next.

This is written on the field, amidst sights too terrible to mention.

Heights above Alma, Sept. 21.—The order in which our army advanced was in columns of brigades in deploying distance, our left protected by a line of skirmishers of cavalry and of horse artillery. The advantage of the formation was, that our army, in case of a strong attack from cavalry and infantry on the left or rear, could assume the form of a hollow square, with the baggage in the centre. Our great object was to gain the right of the position, so that our attacking parties could be sheltered by the vertical fire of the fleets.

We had, in fact, altered our base of operations. As we marched forward to Bouljanak, we allowed the enemy to deprive us of our old basis of operations, in order that we might get a new one. For this purpose the baggage was brought up and covered by the 4th division, and the Cossacks were allowed to sweep the country in our rear far behind us. Our new principle, in fact, was to open communication with our fleets, and, as far as possible, obtain their material and moral aid. In advancing towards the sea obliquely, on the morning of the 19th, we were met by 17 squadrons of cavalry, deployed to meet our handful of horse, and it was necessary to make a demonstration of artillery and infantry to extricate our men from the difficulty into which they had been plunged by advancing to far in front of their supports. However, the enemy were driven back by our guns which made beautiful practice, and the cavalry maintained their ground, having retired in splendid order before a force which refused to meet them when they might have done so, by a charge down from the elevated position they occupied, with a fair chance of an encounter ere our artillery could come up. Our line of march on the 20th, as I have said, was towards the right of our former base, and brought us in contact with the French left, under Prince Napoleon, it being understood that Sir De Lacy Evans's division, on our extreme right, should act in concert with that of his royal highness the prince, which was of course furthest from the sea. As soon as we had ascertained the position of our allies accurately, the whole line, extending itself across the campaign country for some five or six miles, advanced. At the distance of two miles we halted to obtain a little time to gather up our rear, and then the troops steadily advanced in grand lines like the waves of the ocean, with our left frittered away as it were into a foam of skirmishers under Colonel Lawrence and Major Norcott, of the rifle brigade, 2nd battalion, covered by squadrons of the 11th and 8th hussars, and portions of the 4th 13th light dragoons, and 17th lancers. This was a sight of inexpressible grandeur, and for the first time one was struck with