

## Incidents of the War.

## OFFICIAL DESPATCHES.

The French Minister of War has received the following despatch from the Commander-in-Chief of the army of the East:—

Before Sebastopol, March 17.

M. Le Marechal.—I have the honour to forward to you an account of several encounters which have taken place in the trenches, and which are, necessarily consequent on the execution of our various siege works.

On the night of the 14th and 15th we had carried forward the parallel opened before the mamelon, which is in front of the Malakoff Tower, and where the Russians have established their new work, a first line of ambuscades, whence the sharpshooters of the enemy much incommoded our working parties, and whence they had killed, on the morning of that very day, Captain Guilhot, of the engineers whose loss we sincerely regret.

The troops to whom this operation was confided executed it with much vigour and devotedness, under a heavy fire of musketry and cannon of the Tower. The operation was repeated on the night of the 15th-16th; it was, as the former one, vigorously conducted; the ambuscades were razed. General Bosquet very much eulogises the energy of the troops which were employed in these two combats, which have been an opportunity for very creditable deeds of individual courage.

Generals Neil and Biset have reconnoitred the parallel opened during that night, and prepared the execution of another parallel nearer the mamelon, which stands before the Malakoff Tower. We shall begin it to-morrow night in a ground where, unfortunately, the rock is very near the surface of the soil, a condition against which we have not ceased to struggle everywhere, since the commencement of the siege.

On the left, we have continued our works before the central position. In the same nights from the 14th to the 15th, and from the 15th to the 16th, in spite of a very heavy fire of musketry and grapeshot, we connected again to the former works, by a fresh parallel of upwards of 400 metres—the trench forming an angle advancing in the direction of that bastion.

These operations have cost us a score and a half of men killed or wounded; among the former is Captain Adin, of the 2d regiment of the Foreign Legion.

In the night from the 15th to the 16th the besieged, doubtless intending to make a diversion on our extreme left, and probably supposing also that the works begun on the night were engrossing all our attention, directed towards that left a sortie, composed of 450 volunteers from various corps. The effort was seconded by a company of the 10th Battalion of Foot Chasseurs, and a company of Voltigeurs of the 2d Regiment of the Foreign Legion.—That combat was very brilliant; the assailants, met by a very brisk fire, and repulsed with the bayonet as far as beyond the parapet of the trench, left in our hands 29 men killed or wounded, and as many on the ground that divides the trench from the ambuscades whence they had gone. They had, however, removed a great number by means of detachments provided with litters. In all, that little combat must have cost the Russians one third of the effective force which they had brought to bear thereupon. It has cost us 5 men killed and 12 wounded.

During the eight days which have just elapsed, we have tried the fire of a small battery constructed by us, armed and served by the English, and which looks towards the main harbour. We have remarked that one of the war steamers whose fire inconvenienced us, Gro-monosetz, had been hit by our shots. We this day hear that they scarcely had time to bring her to the entrance of the harbour when she sank. This incident is not without importance, especially on account of the moral effect which it must have produced on the garrison. The port is indeed, the line of retreat of that garrison, and the more threatening our action will become on that line the more will the troops become uneasy and discouraged.

The Brigade of the Imperial Guard has been vigorously constituted. The best soldiers of the army in the East naturally found there their place and a noble reward. Yesterday I solemnly gave to the Regiment of the Zouaves of the Guard the flag which the Emperor entrusts to them. His Majesty and yourself, M. le Marechal, may rest assured that it will be well kept.

In spite of the exceedingly sudden variations in the weather in the Crimea, the number of the sick shows indications of a decrease.—Accept, &c.,

The General Commander-in-Chief of the army in the East.

CANROBERT.

Her Majesty's Ship Leopard, off Kertch, March 8.

Sir,—the wind being off shore this morning, I sent Her Majesty's ship Viper to examine the Daghaz of the Kouban Lake, and also the coast as far as the Tower of Djimiteia, and have the honor to enclose a letter from Lieutenant Armytage, reporting his having, in the latter place,

destroyed the new tower, with two guns, also the barracks and other buildings.

Lieutenant Armytage deserves great credit for the able manner in which he has performed this service with his small vessel.—I have, &c.,

(Signed) GEO. GIFFARD, Captain.

Rear-Admiral Sir Edmund Lyons, Bart, G. C. B., Commander-in-Chief.]

Her Majesty's Steam Vessel Viper, off Kertch, March 8.

Sir,—I have the honor to report, that in obedience to your instructions, I left this anchorage at 5.30 this morning for the purpose of examining the mouth of the Kouban Lake. I arrived off there at nine, and observing a small force of Cossacks on the north spit, opened fire and dispersed them, then examined the lake in the whale boat of this ship, and observing nothing of consequence, proceeded along the coast to the south eastward.

I had just previously taken possession of a small vessel laden with charcoal and other goods, which I brought in with me, with three prisoners on board. I enclose you her papers, &c., as they may be useful to his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, and request your directions in reference to the prisoners.

At 1.50 P. M. I arrived off the Martello Tower, at Djimiteia, anchoring bow and stern at a distance of 500 yards from the beach, and at 2 P. M. opened fire upon the fort, dispersing the few Cossacks that remained.

It is now my pleasing duty to inform you that I have effectually destroyed the fort, barracks and granaries (having set fire to the latter), spiked and disabled the two guns, destroying the ammunition; and all, I am happy to say, without any casualty on board the Viper.

I beg to bring under your notice the conduct of Mr James Roche, second master, who commanded the landing parties; and Mr John R. Moss, master's assistant, who aided him in destroying the guns; both having performed their duty much to my satisfaction.—I have, &c.,

(Signed) WILLIAM ARMYTAGE,

Lieutenant and Commander.

Captain George Giffard, H. M. S. Leopard, Senior Officer.

Her Majesty's Ship Leopard, Sujak Bay, March 13.

Sir,—I have the honor to acquaint you, that from the information I had received from the Circassians, at Ghelenjik, and also from the observations of Monsieur Le Bris, of his Imperial Majesty's steam-vessel Fulton, as well as my own on the 6th instant, in Soujak Bay, I was led to believe the Russians had sent many guns, stores, &c., away from that fort, and would probably leave if a force appeared off it.

Wishing to have more certain information for you, on my return to your flag, I, on the evening of the 11th inst., when the Highflyer joined me, proceeded with the Leopard, Highflyer, Swallow, Viper, Fulton, French steamer, to Soujak Bay, where we anchored on the morning of the 12th, but a fresh gale, with heavy swell, prevented our closing the batteries. I therefore threw some shells into the place; and the Circassians, who soon appeared in numbers, at the same time, attacked the small fort at the head of the bay, opposite the town, drove out the garrison, and burnt it at 8 A. M. This morning the Circassians informed me they had a sufficient force, and would attack Soujak Kale by land, if I would do so by sea, and wishing to encourage them and embarrass the enemy, I immediately moved the squadron to within 1000 yards of the South Face, and opened fire on it. From this point the enemy only had ten guns to bear on the ships, but the light wind and damp weather made the smoke hang over and conceal them from our fire, while our masts above were conspicuous to them.

We soon drove all the inhabitants and troops out of the place, except those in the eastern batteries, but I was much disappointed to find that the Circassians did not advance to attack them when out of the town, as they had promised. I, therefore, moved out again, as, with our small force of men, it would have been too great a risk to land, the main body of the garrison being close at hand.

The arsenal and public buildings are much injured, and several of the guns were silenced and dismounted. Our loss, I am happy to say, has been small; and some injury has been done to the masts and hulls of the ships.

I was much pleased with the able way in which all the ships took up their assigned positions, and have to thank Monsieur Le Bris, of the Fulton, Captain Moore, Commander Craufurd and Lieutenant Armytage, commanding the Viper, for their able support, as well as all the officers and men.

The Russian force, apparently 1500 or 2000 men, and the other inhabitants, are now encamped about a mile north of the town, having left a few men in the batteries; they will have great difficulty in communicating with Anapa, being surrounded by the Circassians (who were collecting reinforcements), and should they return to the town, a small naval force can at any time drive them out again.

I enclose you a list of casualties among the ships.

I have, &c., GEORGE GIFFARD, Captain.

Rear-Admiral Sir Edmund Lyons, Bart, G. C. B.

Casualties on board Her Majesty's ship Leopard, received during the attack at Soujak, on

the 13th March, 1855:—Killed, one; wounded, two.

Return of killed and wounded on board Her Majesty's ship Highflyer, at Soujak Kale, March 13, 1855:—Killed, none; wounded, two.

## RUSSIANS IN THE CRIMEA.

The *Moniteur de l'Armee* says that several foreign journals have exaggerated the amount of the Russian force in the Crimea, stating it at 170,000 or 200,000 men. This journal affirms that the total effective of the enemy's troops, including the garrison of Sebastopol and those stationed at Tchermaya, Bakchi Serai, Simpheropol, &c., and before Eupatoria, does not exceed 115,000, of which 25,000 belong to the cavalry and special corps. The number of Russian guns in the Crimea is much less than has been stated.

## THE NAVIES AT THE TRENCHES—THE SANITARY COMMISSIONERS.

The public will learn with scarcely less surprise than satisfaction, that the main object of the Crimean Railway Expedition is already completed, and the munitions of war are now being conveyed direct from Balaklava to the trenches. It is needless to say how vast a remission of toil to the overtaxed strength of the troops is thus effected, and with what increase of vigour and animation they now address themselves to the legitimate prosecution of the business of the siege, without the exhaustion consequent on labours wholly alien to those of an ordinary military nature. Moreover, the line is now laid and worked from Balaklava to the French camp at the top of the steep incline hitherto by horses, but at the date of the last advices, the engine had begun to supersede animal power, which was gladly used for other purposes. Thanks to the agency of the railway, we have now begun to reciprocate the services the French had bestowed upon us in our extremity, for a large quantity of hut and hospital timber had been forwarded as long ago as the 10th, and such aid was highly appreciated by our allies, who are enthusiastic in their admiration of the systematized application and endurance of the navies, and delighted by the methodical order and regularity that prevail through all the arrangements of the corps.—This recognition on the part of the French is the more remarkable as they themselves now are, and have all along been, well provided with horses and other means of transport. The branch to the opposite side of the harbour has for some time been completed, and available for removing the heavy guns and mortars on the Diamond wharf, and by rendering both sides of the harbour available is of the greatest utility. The issue department of the Commissariat for fuel and barley, has for some time back been removed from Balaklava to Kadikoi, where the navies had likewise constructed a proper depot and platform, with the requisite sheds and conveniences. Of the assistance which the railway corps are to the Commissariat, and of the immensity of the operations of the latter department, some idea may be formed when it is stated, that of barley alone nearly 1,000 sacks are required by the army daily; and, in the conveyance of this vast quantity, Mr Bail, the officer who looks after the matter, gladly acknowledges the assistance he receives from the navies, and does everything in his power to facilitate its being rendered. So, indeed, do most of the heads and subordinates in all the other departments at Balaklava,—the condition of which has undergone a most beneficial change since the railway has begun to lighten it of some of the enormous traffic, or rather impediments to traffic and aggravation of confusion, which had so long rendered it the synonym of everything that was chaotic and distracting. The removal of the issue department for all descriptions of army requirement, as well as of forage and fuel from Balaklava, would, of course, still further contribute to relieve the town, and it is to be hoped that by this time the Quartermaster-General has adopted this course, especially as to the issue of food in the camp, which would save the men the necessity of coming all the distance to the town for provisions, and marching back with them. As further instances of the miscellaneous utility of the navies, it may be mentioned that the Naval Brigade falling short of water, the well-sinkers belonging to the railway corps, had been set to bore to obtain water in the neighbourhood of the camp, and it was expected that their researches would be speedily efficacious. The limekilns continue in full operation, and two more were being in course of construction near the Third Division in the front. The washing place for the hospital had likewise been completed, and altogether the whole sphere embraced in or influenced by the operations of the railway corps, was assuming an aspect in every way the reverse of what had prevailed a very short time ago. As late as the 17th, the date of the most recent advices we are now quoting from, the weather has been occasionally extremely warm and enervating, and the navies had begun to complain of a degree of lassitude which they had never experienced in England even when the thermometer had ranged considerably higher. This naturally begets alarm as to the health, when the heat shall have really begun to act upon the prodigious area now affected by the process of animal decomposition of all kinds going on within several miles of the British position on either side; and proportion-

ate anxiety is beginning to be felt for the arrival in the Crimea of Mr Rawlinson, the engineer of the sanitary commission, whose preliminary labours are so indispensable to the beneficial exercise of the skill of his medical coadjutors, Drs. Sutherland and Gavin. As regards the commission, it has already done some good, and paved the way for an infinite deal more, at Constantinople. The hospitals on shore, at Scutari and Kululee, and the floating one at Seraglio Point, have been inspected and reported on. The authorities have given the commissioners every assistance, and the works recommended are already commenced.

## SKIRMISH BETWEEN THE TURKS AND RUSSIANS AT EUPATORIA.

Under the date of Eupatoria, 5th March, the *Moniteur* publishes the following extract from the *Journal de Constantinople*:—To-day Skender Beg left Eupatoria with 300 irregular cavalry, and 100 Tartar bashi-bazouks to make a reconnaissance, and he was met by four strong squadrons of Russian regular cavalry. Notwithstanding the disproportion of numbers, an obstinate struggle ensued. At last, hard pressed, Skender Beg was compelled to retreat, retiring slowly, and fighting inch by inch all the ground. In this affair the Russians lost 40 men. The Tartars had made 5 prisoners but they afterwards escaped. Skender Beg had only 11 men killed and 2 men wounded, but he himself received a severe wound. He received a sabre cut on his right hand, which damaged three fingers, and rendered amputation of the fourth necessary; he also received the thrust of a lance near the heart; but the most serious wound was the cut of a sabre across his forehead. No fears are however, entertained of saving the life of this brave and dashing cavalry officer. The fortifications of Eupatoria are being carried on with great activity, and will soon be terminated.

A later account brings the death of this gallant soldier.

Letters from the Times' Correspondents at Eupatoria and the Camp before Sebastopol have arrived. They bring news down to March 6th from the former, and March 10th from the latter. Nothing of any importance had happened since the date of previous communications.—We extract the following paragraphs:—

March 3.—The activity of the landing piers is greater than ever, through the arrival of seven steamers and nine sailing vessels, charged mostly with cavalry and artillery. Now that the vessels and the Turkish authorities—thanks to Mascher Facha's (Sir G. Lakeman) exertions—have got into the way of it, the embarkation of the cavalry at Sepotolis is proceeding rapidly. Thus the Thames went from here to Burgas, was loaded with horses, and returned to this place in four days and a half. A stage is constructed at Seropolis from which the horses can be walked into the barges, while the steamers themselves are only at one cable's length from the stage. The Thames remained only six hours, and took in 190 horses.

March 6.—This morning Colonel Symmons went down to Kamiesch. The disembarkation is going on as favourable as can be expected.—Within the last few days we have had regular spring weather, so that it may be expected that the force of the winter is broken.

Eupatoria begins inside as well as outside, to assume the character of a fortress. At night-fall patrols are traversing the streets in every direction, and no one is allowed to pass without the parole. At the same time stricter regulations have been introduced about going out of the town.

## THE SEA OF AZOFF.

Kamiesch, March 4.—The British frigate Leopard, and the French steamer Fulton, have just returned from their cruise of observation at the entrance of the Sea of Azoff. The number of Russian vessels still afloat in that sea, is more considerable than was generally supposed. There seems especially to be an increase of activity between the town of Kertch and the nearest points of the Asiatic coast. It is the road hitherto taken by the troops and conveys of ammunition which daily arrive to reinforce the great Russian army of the Crimea. Owing to her small tonnage, the Fulton was enabled to draw near enough to the coast to sweep it with her guns, and protect the landing of the troops which were on board the Leopard. A battery of 12 guns was piked. A Dutch vessel, which had been ice-bound for some days, gave information leading to a belief that large fortifications had been commenced by the governor of Kertch, and that a stockade was contemplated between the peninsula and the island of Teman. The Straits of Yenikale, which separates them, have 23 feet of water at their greatest depth, but generally only 13 or 14 feet. There is a rumour at present in the squadron, that Admiral Burat intends sending the Pomone, screw frigate to that point, in order to prevent the Russians from closing that important passage. The small draft of water of that vessel, her powerful artillery, and her being a screw steamer, are so many reasons for selecting her for that service.

## OPERATIONS IN THE CRIMEA.

Camp before Sebastopol, March 12. Sir John McNeil and general Simpson, who are to superintend the working of the staff and commissariat departments, arrived to-day.—But for the positive obstacles thrown in his way