

worked, and our picquets cannot keep awake all night. If we shot a hundred a day for sleeping on their posts they would still do it. In fact, in the way they are taxed at present, if they did not sleep they would die. At the same time a knowledge of these reasons has, it is said, led the French to be most suspicious of the vigilance of our sentinels, and a short time since there was a rumor that they were to mount picquets outside ours. I do not believe there is any truth in this report, though most certainly in all the new batteries at Inkermann, and round the place where we were surprised on the 5th, French sentries are now posted where ours used to be. The French soldiers has now one night on duty to four of sleep.—Our poor fellows, on the average, has 10 hours off duty and 30 on—an all-important difference. It has been remarked, since the bad weather set in, that whenever our out-picquets have had occasion to use their muskets, not more than 20 per cent. would go off—the caps of all the rest having become too damp. A little cover for the lock (waterproof outside) would soon remedy the evil which at Inkermann caused so serious a loss.

The sortie upon the French was made against their most advanced battery, at about 8 in the morning, while a thick mist hung over the ground. A considerable number of Russians (about 1,000 or 1,200) sallied from the Garden Battery, and made a desperate attempt to capture a new trench in which five mortars and five long guns have lately been mounted. The guard and picquet observed the attempt, and seeing the force in which it was made, retired into the battery to hold it until reinforcements came up. The guns could not be used, as the embrasures were still masked. The enemy ran on quickly, and attempted to pass over the parapet of the work, but the fire of the French was too severe. A part of them then turned off, and, crossing the covered way by which it is approached, took the battery in the rear. By this means a number were enabled to enter the work, and a desperate conflict ensued with the French, who, outnumbered by ten to one, could not I am informed, prevent the spiking of two mortars—some say of all five. Before the enemy were able to do much mischief—or, indeed, before they could well be said to hold their ground against the French picquet—a reinforcement of 600 Chasseurs came up, and on their first appearance the Russians, still superior in numbers, retired, firing as they fell back. For about 100 yards they retreated in good order, but then, as the fire of the French became more deadly, they grew disordered, and at last fairly broke and fled. The French loss was one officer and between 40 and 50 men killed and wounded. The Russians lost five prisoners, and left about 30 dead behind on the ground. Except in one or two cases the enemy's wounded were carried off. As usual, the Russians tried to revenge the defeat by opening a smart cannonade upon the offending battery which would not be captured; but I have not heard of any particular damage being done to it—at least none that a couple of men with spades could not repair in an hour. It is because I know perfectly well the tremendous cannonade which earthworks will bear unhurt that I have little faith in any mere battering destroying the enemy's.

December 22.—For the last few days rumours have been flying round the camp to the effect that a Russian reinforcement of 42,000 men, under Osten-Sacken, has entered the Crimea, I have not been able to trace this report to any undoubted authority, yet still it forms the only topic of conversation, and seems generally believed. After the efforts the enemy has made to get up troops, it would be presumptuous to say that he cannot send more; yet making every allowance for the energy, perseverance, and ability of the Russian commanders, I do not think we have anything to fear from the efforts of soldiers who, however they managed it, still must have come from Odessa in this season of the year. On the whole, I think the best thing that could happen for the allies would be the attempt of the enemy to throw 100,000 troops into the Crimea at this juncture.

No matter how it was managed, a large force marching now must lose half in the course of a fortnight, and those that remain at the end of that time would be nearly worthless. At the same time, whether the enemy received reinforcements or not, we shall not be long now without a fight of some kind. As soon as the first remembrance of Inkermann is blunted, the enemy will try again, and with the same result—of course. The Russian infantry never will conquer ours, even if they outnumber us 10 to one.

December 23.

The night before last there was an attempted sortie on the French lines. I say attempted, for, though a larger force of Russians than usual came out, they appeared utterly disheartened, and after wavering irresolutely, were dispersed by the fire of the picquets. The enemy then commenced a furious cannonade, principally directed on the new French work, to which I am sorry to say a good deal of damage was done. Most of the English and French batteries fired in reply. The French guns in the Inkermann battery also opened fire for the first time to a night cannonade.

One or two shots were fired during the day from these works to try their range, and the result, I am told, makes all parties more sanguine,

than ever that the town, arsenal, and harbour can be commanded and destroyed from this place. It is a pity the discovery was not made before now. Batteries so commandingly placed, and of such strength, might have materially affected the result of the general bombardment of the 17th. All our shortcomings may be traced to the bad principal on which it is notorious the English sieges are always conducted.

By the way the London journals inform us that Sir Edmund Lyons has been blockading Anapa, Tamama, and Kertch, and intercepting the Russian communications. There is not a word of truth in any of these statements, nor even a reasonable foundation for them.—Correspondent of the Morning Herald.

Heights before Sebastopol, December 23.

I have learnt with much regret of the late arrival of the mail from the Crimea, and the consequent disappointment which you must have felt at that mishap. I hope the evil is now remedied. Formerly, as you are aware, news was received by the same mails down to 8 A. M. of the morning of departure, whereas now the bag closes in Balaklava the night preceding, and hence letters sent from the camp before Sebastopol must be forwarded by 4 o'clock on that day, or otherwise the risk of the bearer losing his way in the dark may be the consequence. But at present it seems to me nothing of very great moment if they are delayed; as for any stirring news I am not able to give, and all who are out here "fishing for news," will find it rather a difficult matter.—The drums and fifes of a neighbouring regiment are playing the "Girl I left behind me," and how is it possible that I can write when music turns my thoughts to the one dearest of my thoughts? The weather is the all-engrossing topic here—the fall of the fortress is out of mind now. Every one knows, we must winter here. I have heard that many winters in the Crimea are very wet. Our present weather here would seem to warrant it. To-day we have had rain accompanied with sleet, snow and hail, with wind cold from the east, resembling the perishing winds from the same quarter in England. Last night, after the rain, a slight frost of a perishing kind, ushered in the morning.—Our camp is in a very muddy condition. The troops, having the idea that they are to remain in their present site, have invariably dug the earth out of the tents, by which they get into warmer berths, and have the advantage of greater room. The tent forms the roof, the earth the walls. The stones with which these heights abound are made to form walls round the tents, and likewise walls of houses, cemented by mud. The roofs are formed of skin, the inside of the hut is generally two feet at least below the level. It is astonishing the warmth that these hovels afford; the ground two feet below the surface is very dry. A small chimney-place is in general made in which a fire is kept; and since charcoal has been issued, the hovels so built form not an unthankful home to a soldier wintering amidst the frost and bitter bleak winds. The Czar, perhaps, is waiting to find us in the position of Napoleon at Moscow, in 1812—driven out of position by the cold weather and snow. I think he will be deceived. Our wooden huts have arrived in part, and are being daily conveyed up; and in these the troops live in hopes of weathering the winter, and smiling in the Czar's face as the spring advances.

December 24.

This is Christmas-eve. Everything, with the exception of the toast and ale and the bonnie fire of an English home, indicates the season. Frost and snow prevails. It has rained during the last 28 hours. This morning the wind changed round to the north, the rain changed to snow, and later in the evening the snow abated. Frost is now on the ground. Everything indicates approaching winter in its most rigid form. All around us has a dreary wintery appearance. The lonely sentry walks his beat with a rapid step to keep his blood in circulation. His eyes are still on his front. He feels, as he looks on his enemy, as they lie in bivouac without tents, and says to himself, "Johnny Russ, if you can stand this weather, I can; you have no kind English friends endeavouring to increase your comfort. I have."

I can positively state that the feeling of the lowest man in a regiment is touched by the kind sympathies of the English nation for the well-being of their troops now encamped on the heights of Sebastopol, covered with snow and anything but cheering. I speak from experience, such sympathy has brought many a tear from an honest breast.

Winter we believe has now set in, and now is the time for our winter clothing. Frost, which we hope will set in and harden the ground will enable us to transport those comforts from Balaklava to our camp.

The troops brought out by the Royal Albert were landed at Balaklava, but on account of the state of the weather they cannot move up. The drafts of the Guards are very young—too young for the deadly work required of them.—Already death is amongst them. Last night one poor fellow perished from cold. Should this weather continue there is no hope of their being able to move. The 71st Regiment (part of the troops brought out by the Royal Albert), remains at Balaklava to do all fatigue duties.—Last night regiments were ordered to furnish names of officers and men entitled to decorations

for the glorious day of Alma and Inkermann, to be sent into the Military Secretary. Never were decorations more honourably won. I have this day received a note from the Rev. R. Halpin, chaplain to the troops at Scutari, and formerly chaplain to the first division; he is now chief chaplain at Scutari. He states that all is comfortable at Scutari, and his words I fully believe. I have just overheard a group of soldiers reading the Russian account of the battle of Inkermann, and the prayers of the priests and the address of the Czar to "his brave children of the south." You would have laughed at their remarks. One man in particular stated, why did not his dear children bury their own dead, and not allow the barbarous troops, "the English," to perform that duty?

December 25.

This is Christmas-day, and Christmas weather too. A sharp frost last night, with a little snow on the ground. A clear open day to-day, with a sheer cold wind from the north, and every prospect of the same to-night. Nothing has marked the day further than Divine service—no English cheer greeted us here—no roast beef or plum-pudding made us smile. Russian shot and shell played as lively as ever to-day.—What a dull Christmas! how different to this time twelve months. I heard one poor fellow say, with his toes peeping out on the ground, "Wait till next Christmas—we may then, perhaps, smoke our pipes and be joyous, and think lightly of the past." Hope kept that man's spirits up; he thought not so much of the present providing a chance remained of his again enjoying Christmas in England.

An alteration in the despatch of mails has taken place, and every Tuesday and Saturday is fixed as the days of departure. So many alterations have taken place that one is never certain for a day. This alteration has taken me so much by surprise that it is impossible for me to write much.—Correspondent of the morning post.

OUR GALLANT GUERRILLAS.—The following is extracted from a private letter:—"I must tell you something about our sharpshooters, who have had a most exciting and dangerous time of it. They got out with their captain, Gerald Goodlake, of the Coldstreams, and fight entirely on their own hook. The other day they started down the ravine which leads to the harbour of Sebastopol, and after an intensely exciting stalk of four hours, they got past the line of Russian sentries, and came upon a picquet of four times their number, who were cooking and smoking. They attacked them with great success, and wounded several, and were only obliged to retreat by a sortie from a breastwork in their rear. Captain Goodlake had a very narrow escape, as he was left with a sergeant, and had to cut his way through them, luckily with no more damage than a bullet through his coat. He was, as you know, always a right good sportsman, and is quite in his element with this guerilla warfare. This has created a great sensation here, as they got within 200 yards of the harbour and town of Sebastopol, and nearer than any Englishman (not prisoners) have reached since we landed in the Crimea.

AN EXCHANGE OF COURTESIES.—A letter from the Crimea says:—"While I am speaking of the fleet I must not forget to mention a circumstance which occurred the other day, as it is the first trace of that spirit of civility which so eminently characterised Peninsular warfare, and of which very little is to be seen in the present war. All the communications about exchange of prisoners, burying of dead, &c. were received by the Russians in a kind of surly spirit quite at variance with all traditions in the warfare of civilized Western nations. The present instance makes the first exception. Some time ago the Stromboli was sent in towards the batteries of the harbour with a flag of truce, in order to take back a Russian artillery officer in exchange for Lord Dukellin. Sir Edmund Lyons took advantage of this opportunity to send as a present a cheese to the Russian admiral with whom he had been acquainted in former days. On the 15th inst. the compliment was returned. A 14-oared boat came out from the town and brought a deer as a present back to the admiral, together with a polite letter from the Russian admiral, in which I hear the passage occurs, that 'the Russian admiral remembers with pleasure the time of his acquaintance with Sir Edmund, and regrets not to have seen him for so long, except the other day, when he came in rather close with the Agamemnon.'

INTERCHANGE OF COURTESIES.—The following is circulated in Paris:—"In the beginning of the campaign, some officers of the Guards invited several officers of General Bosquet's division to dine at their mess. The French officers sent a deputation to decline the invitation in the most delicate and friendly terms possible. Most of them, they said, had little or nothing beyond their pay to live upon; they could not return hospitality in the same style that they knew it would be offered to them, and they felt certain that the English officers would understand their scruples, and not press them to accept civilities which some at least among their numbers might feel as laying them under the weight of an obligation. They would eagerly seize every occasion to grasp the hand of an English officer, would be delighted to join in a promenade and

a cigar, but upon the whole thought it best to abstain from entering upon a course of dinner giving. Against such an excuse of course no remonstrance could be made, and the English officers merely expressed their regret that by the force of circumstances they could not see so much of their comrades in arms as they had hoped to do. But after the battle of Inkermann the English mess in question had lost their plate and china, their cellar, their potted meats, hams, preserves, and other luxuries, and owing to commissariat difficulties but too notorious, found it difficult to procure the most ordinary rations. When these misfortunes became known in the camp, the French deputation of officers renewed their visit, and said with comic good humour, that since the fortune of war had removed inequalities which originally constituted their only objection to an interchange of feeding, they hoped the English officers would take pot luck with them. This spirited invitation was naturally accepted, and the delightful fraternity which prevails between the two services was thus cemented by another link.

A SCHEMING ZOUAVE.—The German Universal Gazette has the following amusing anecdote, stated to have occurred before Sebastopol. The French having remarked an unusual activity among the garrison of the Quarantine Fort, were anxious to know the cause of it, and for that purpose determined to get hold of some Russian sentinel at the outposts. But that was no easy matter, the sentinels being usually on the alert, and taking good care to keep out of danger. At last, a Zouave offered to furnish the article in question. That very night, a watchful Muscovite heard a rustling among the bushes. He cried, "Who goes there?" but the only answer he received was a grunt. Thinking he to himself, "This is some fat pig that has deserted from the enemy. Bless me, if I could only get hold of it, and smuggle it into the fort, so that our officers may not lay hold of it!" With this view he returns the grunt, the conversation becomes interesting to both parties, and at last the worthy Russian sees the object of his desires approach. He lays down his musket to seize it, but, oh horror! the treacherous beast turns the tables upon him, throws him down, and gags him in no time, then, with a low whistle, he calls five Zouaves to his aid, who carry off his victim to the French camp in triumph.

A SERIOUS MISHAP.—An amusing occurrence took place before Sebastopol. A shell from the enemy dropped right into the muzzle of one of our guns. In bursting there it shattered the gun and made it recoil. A soldier, who was sitting in the rear of it, in a coil of rope, was tripped up and fell. Seeing a man knocked over caused, as usual, a shout for the doctor, who rushed up in great haste and caught the man in his arms. "What is the matter my man?" said —. "Oh! sure, sir," says he, "I've lost my pipe!" for which he seemed in an agony of mind.

CHANGE FOR SPANISH.—It is said that we are to have a Spanish legion as a reinforcement for the Crimea. We propose that if such be the case, their pay should be made over to British holders of Spanish Bonds. They having bled in the cause of Spain, it is only fair that they should have the price of Spanish blood in return.—Punch.

BETWEEN BULL, CHAPAUD, AND THE POST.—We are beginning to reap the reward of the close alliance between the people of France and ourselves. We are to write to one another at the cost of eight sous instead of twenty. What a happy man is Rowland Hill! In due season and throughout the civilised world his genius will assert itself in cheap postage. France and England as a beginning exchange fourpenny letters: may they never again exchange 42-pounds. May the paper exchanged by them always be post, and never, never cartridge!—Punch.

HOME CARES IN THE CRIMEA.—The following is an extract from a letter from a captain of British Cavalry in the Crimea:—"At last we have received orders to hut ourselves. The horses are to be huted by government, so, afterwards, are the men, but the officers are left without any means, such as wood, or proper tools, and yet recommended to hut themselves. Yesterday morning I got one of the few spades belonging to the regiment, and manfully set to work at a hole some 12 feet by 18, to form the foundation of a hut, when down comes an orderly to say that Lord Lucas, who is setting his house to rights, wants every spade and pickaxe in the brigade. So farewell for some time to my hut! Did I tell you of the two turkeys I am fattening for Christmas? I have built them a hut, and stuff them with biscuit and barley. I suppose we ought to kill one soon. I intend to make a plum-pudding myself—I wonder what it will be like."

ANECDOTE OF THE SIEGE OF SEBASTOPOL.—The Journal de Belfort (Haut-Rhin) relates the following incident connected with the siege of Sebastopol:—"Every night 12 volunteers, taken from all the corps, quit the trenches and go into the neighbourhood of the town, on the breach, or near the enemy's batteries, to examine what works have been destroyed and what repaired.