

and was well acquainted with the situation of the crag to which he had alluded. It might be termed the summit of the hilly range on which the village of Tcherzi was situated. It was to be reached by a rough up-hill road which passed a few feet from its base. The rock itself was of a pyramid shape, and distinguished not so much by its height, as by its isolated and distinct position, which enabled it to be clearly seen, as separate from the surrounding mountains, at a considerable distance. A stony path led up the side; but the general thought it would not be necessary to ascend to the top, but determined after having seen his men in undisputed possession, to leave half his little force in a suitable position to guard the eminence, and return with the remainder.

The night was dark, but the moon had hid her face, and the general would have been unable to direct their march had he not been familiar with the way. Ten minutes enabled them to reach the base of the rock; the general paused for a moment, but once more ordered them to advance and clamber up the rugged side to a spot which he remembered to have seen a few days before, and which he thought would enable them to act with greater effect, should the enemy attempt to carry the post. Rapidly and with as little noise as possible they reached the place.

"We are safe," exclaimed the general, as he gave the word to halt.

His words were lost in a loud shout from the soldiers, and, turning in the direction in which he saw them gazing, he beheld a sheet of flame shooting up from the vortex of the rock, even more fiercely than from the neighbouring summits, and swaying now on this side, now on that, as the breeze bore it to and fro.

At the same moment, he saw enkindled, far and near to the southward, the ominous signals of destruction.

"St. Nicholas protect us!" cried General Boroff, as he looked with consternation at the scene. "We are too late! But hold! Ivan, your carbine; there is one who shall rue this signal lighting!"

He seized the soldier's fire lock; they looked in the direction of his aim, and saw the figure in clear relief against the flame, almost perpendicularly above them, engaged, apparently, in heaping fuel on the furious fire. A flash—a shrill shriek—and the figure fell.

"So perish the enemies of Russia!" cried General Boroff, as he returned the musket. "In line, men! face about! forward!"

"So perish the tyrant!" cried a fierce voice as a figure bounded to the general's side; and before a word could be spoken, or an arm intercept him, his uplifted sword smote the doomed Russian, and his corpse fell heavily to the ground.

"On, Lesghini—Revenge—Liberty!" fiercely shouted the Circassian, as his arm dealt death-strokes at every word. And from the fern bushes and stunted trees that lined the hill side, poured a host of the wild mountaineers, as madly and irresistibly as the swollen torrent. No wonder that even Russian veterans could not stand before them. Confounded by the sudden appearance, awestruck by the fall of their general, ignorant of the localities, and in a position where skill and experience availed them nothing, they fell with fearful rapidity before their infuriated foes.

"Remember your wives and daughters! No quarrels to the spoilers," thundered Alexander for it was he.

But he knew his men, and tarried not to see his order executed. His quick eye had also caught the figure on the summit—he heard the shriek and seen the body fall—and well he knew who needed there his help.

To scale the height was, for his active form but the work of a moment.

"Zairah! Zairah!" he cried, as he folded the body in his arms. "Awake, my own—it is Alexander—your Alexander!"

The body was heavy—the muscles were motionless—the cold eye glared deathly upon him.

"Zairah!" cried he, again, in an intense, slow tone, as if his very heart, and not his tongue were speaking—"Zairah—my beloved—speak to your Alexander!"

There was a movement in the arm—a muscular animation, quivered over the whole frame—life returned to the fine eye—the corpse-like look departed—a sweet expression prevailed the face—and a low voice murmured:

"Thank Heaven! my Alexander!"

There was a pause; the chief saw too surely that life had almost ebbed; he could not distress her, even to attempt to bind up her wound. The moments of life that were left were too precious.

"I heard, on my return to-day, beloved Zairah, from the far-distant mountains, with a force able to avenge you, that you had escaped. I sought you—Oh! it is sad to find you here—thus!"

"Weep not, Alexander! it is better thus!" murmured the maiden. Though innocent, undefiled, I could never have been thy wife—she who lies in a chief's bosom—must be above the suspicion of dishonor."

"Zairah! my own! one question. The Russian—"

"Died by my dagger," almost screamed the dying girl, "when he attempted my disgrace." The effort exhausted her; she sunk back.

"Alexander—farewell—our God will join us—in Paradise!"

Again the muscles contracted—the eye glared—the corpse grew heavier as it leaned upon his bosom—Zairah was dead!

One moment the chief indulged his agony. Then he arose; the flame had somewhat subsided, but its light enabled him to see—a few feet off, a little thicket. Thither he bore the body; a bed of moss supported it. One last embrace—he served a tress with his dagger—dipped it in her blood—raised it to his lips—and then to heaven—cast over the unconscious clay his soldier's cloak—and then bounded down the hill-side.

"To the camp! to the camp!" still infuriated with the taste of blood, the mountaineers rushed onward to the devoted camp. Hundreds joined them on their way; every thicket seemed to lend a hand. Harshly did their shrill war cries echo from the mountains around, and sound a knell from the doomed Russians.

It boots not to tell of the carnage of that night. Suffice it to say, that of three thousand Russians who lay encamped in Tcherzi, hardly a handful escaped to describe the horrors of that fatal onslaught. Suffice it to say, that one war-cry was the fiercest, on sabre the most fatal, one arm the most untiring—the passion Revenge swayed the soul of Alexander.

That was a fearful night for the invading host; besides the number cut to pieces in the field, the attack had been general throughout the mountain country;—the signals had been religiously observed; and four Russian garrisons fell simultaneously before the vengeful Circassians. The reverses of the Autocrat in this campaign are matters of record; the causes that led to them are not so well known. Two years of subsequent warfare hardly sufficed to reduce the Caucasus even to nominal submission.

The Lesghini still inhabit the wild mountain country, and with hardly less bravery and fierceness than marked them at the period to which our story refers. Few travellers dare penetrate this picturesque land, for the Russian, at Teflis, tells him, "Beware of the Lesghini!" Nevertheless, those who have made the venture, tell us that this tribe is mild and hospitable to men of all lands, save one; but, whenever a Russian is named, they give way to an uncontrollable phreazy. Unconquered, and unconquerable, they hate their invaders with an intensity of passion rarely equalled.

Alexander still lives, and his name is a terror to his foes. He has never spared a Russian, and the fame of his achievements has spread from sea to sea. At the Russian settlement of Tledi, far up in the mountains, near the chief haunts of the Lesghini, I have seen a whole company suddenly grow silent, and look around in terror at the mention of his name.

AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINALS

One of the stockmen pointed out two blacks to me at little distance from us. The one was standing, the other sitting. That fellow, sir, said he, who is sitting down, killed his infant child last night by knocking its head against a stone, after which he throw it on the fire, and then devoured it. I was quite horror-struck, and could scarcely believe such a story. I therefore went up to the man and questioned him as to the fact, as well as I could. He did not attempt to deny it, but slunk away in evident consciousness. I then questioned the other that remained, whose excuse for his friend was, that the child was sick and would never have grown up, adding, he himself did not pater (eat) any of it. Many of my readers may probably doubt this horrid occurrence having taken place, as I have not mentioned any corroborating circumstances. I am myself, however, as firmly persuaded of the truth of what I have stated, as if I had seen the savage commit the act; for I talked to his companion who did see him, and who described to me the manner in which he killed the child. Be it as it may, the very mention of such a thing among these people goes to prove that they are capable of such an enormity.—Sterling's Australia.

SCRAPS.—When is a lady's neck not a neck? When it is a little bare, (bear.)

"Doctor, why I have lost my teeth?" inquired a talkative female or a physician.

"You have worn them out with your tongue," was the reply.

"You flatter me, madam," said a fop, upon being told by a lady that his hat was a very fine one.

"Not at all, sir," replied she, "I only praise the latter. Had the head or face been worth notice, I should not have thought of the hat."

"I am afraid," said a lady to her husband, "that I am going to have a stiff neck."—"Not at all improbable, my dear," replied her spouse. "I have seen strong symptoms of it ever since we were married."

Incidents of the War.

STRENGTH OF THE ALLIED ARMY.

The condition of the army, notwithstanding the existence of a considerable amount of sickness, of some discontent, and of an element of weakness in the youthful recruits, is on the whole, as far as one can judge, satisfactory. It is not, however, as strong as people at home would imagine. With all our reinforcement in fresh regiments and draughts it does not reach the strength Mr Sydney Herbert and his friends over and over again declared it to be when it was struggling for life in the snow and mud last winter. The Sardinians acclimated, flushed with triumph, and anxious for another opportunity to try their steel, form a fine corps of about 8,000 men, effective and the Turks can turn out about 13,000 strong. The French notwithstanding their enormous losses by sickness in the taking of the Mamelon, in the assault of the 18th of June, and above all, in the trenches, where they have lately on an average 150 horse de combat on quiet nights, and perhaps twice as many when the enemy are busy, could with ease present 55,000 bayonets to the enemy without distressing themselves, or calling on the camp guards. Our cavalry is just 9,000 sabres strong, and our field artillery everpowering. In a word, while the siege works are advancing steadily, with very few checks, the allies can present on any side a front which is quite strong enough to hold its own against any numbers the Russians can bring against us. There is no ground, no room for them to deploy their men if they had them, and they have already found that attacks by masses of columns successively surging against us, only aggravate the slaughter and confusion of their repulse. From the French sap in front of the Mamelon one can now lay their hand on the abbatis of the Malakoff! It is a hazardous experiment. Major Graham lost his arm in trying it en amateur the other day, for he was hit as he was returning up the trench; indeed, it is a subject of remark that amateurs and officers just come into the trenches are more frequently hit than is consistent with the rules of proportion.—Mr Gambier, a midshipman of the Curacoa, went as an amateur as an advanced parallel of the left attack, and took a shot at a Russian rifleman; he was rewarded by a volley from several of the enemy, and in another instant was going up on a stretcher, with a ball through both his thighs. It is a very common thing to hear it said, poor Smith is killed; just imagine—his first night in the trenches. Jones lost a leg last night; only joined us this week, and his second night on duty, &c. The Russians, of course, must lose in the same way, but I doubt if they have many amateurs. They have quite enough of legitimate fighting, and their losses are said to be prodigious beyond belief. They must soon attack or give up the south side. The Redan looks greatly cut up; it has no longer the nice cabinetmaker's work on its face which it boasted formerly. The diary of events is not important.

THE MARCH TO THE NORTH SIDE.

The gentleman who lately represented the Morning Herald in the Crimea, speaking of the absurdity of those who clamour for a march on the north side of Sebastopol, and who seem to think that such a feat involved nothing but a march, and one that might be undertaken immediately, states that the formidable nature of the obstacles the allies would have to surmount ere the north forts can be attacked at all, are so great that the winter will very probably be allowed to pass ere it is attempted. He thus describes the hindrances to the march to the north side, by Mackenzie's farm:—

Your readers, I presume, are already well acquainted with the fact that the plain of Balaklava is enclosed by a steep, precipitous ridge of chalk cliffs, which varying from 500 to 1,000 feet high, stretch almost from the edge of the water, at the head of the harbour of Sebastopol, across the plain to the bridge of Traktir. The heights thus far run due north and south. At Traktir-bridge they fell back a little, and, turning at a right angle, run east and west for about three miles, when they again form an angle, and trend away to the south to Yalta. The first angle, therefore, where they turn off to the east, is Traktir-bridge; the second angle, where they turn to the south, is Mackenzie's farm. The space of ground enclosed in the angle which Mackenzie's farm denominates is a level waste, productive, apparently, of nothing but large stones. Crossing Traktir the road wends across the waste I have mentioned and under the heights. Every part of this road, I need not say, is commanded by Russian redoubts and batteries on the summit of the cliffs. To take these heights from the front would be utterly impossible; they are too steep to be even scaled by any but expert climbers. They could only be turned—and that could only be accomplished by forcing the Mackenzie road. This famous road is distant from Traktir-bridge about two miles, formerly all communication with the north

side of Sebastopol by this route was shut out by the cliffs, and it was only about fifteen years ago that the Russian troops were employed in cutting the Mackenzie road. It commences at the foot and in the centre of the chain of cliffs which run east and west from the bridge to the farm. It is out in the face of the cliff, a path about twelve feet wide and stretching upwards from the plain in a perfectly straight line into the angle in which Mackenzie's farm is situated. Before in ascending the road (which is so steep as to be almost useless for the purpose of ordinary traffic) the cliffs tower above on the left hand, while on the right is a sheer descent to the plains below varying in depth from 100 to 500 feet. It is this road which the Russians covered with redoubts and batteries during the winter. Cut across it are no less than eight batteries, each one rising above the other at a distance of about 200 yards apart. When the road reaches the top of the ridge a whole mass of guns from the heights on the left and the heights on Mackenzie's farm in front bear full upon it. Once if the top is gained opposition would cease, and well it might.

Any army attempting to force this road must march from Traktir-bridge, with its left flank exposed to such a mitraille as would annihilate even bronze troops, to the foot of the Mackenzie-road—a distance of two miles without returning a shot. Then, while the main body of the army stands under this fire, the storming columns (which can only go twelve abreast at the most) must advance up the Mackenzie-path against the works I have already mentioned. There is no other way of turning these formidable heights, or gaining the north side of Sebastopol, from Balaklava by land. There is a little sheep-track over the mountains from Yalta, but so steep and dangerous as to be almost impracticable for infantry, and utterly so for guns, cavalry, or stores of any description. Now do your readers think, that, in the face of these obstacles, the march round to the north side will be undertaken in the off-hand style our military critics at home seem to expect?—Or do they think that the allies will ever try to force their way by this route at all. I certainly doubt that they will, and give the allied commanders credit for possessing more judgment than ever to attempt it. For though the troops that took the south side of Sebastopol might dare anything, yet I think even Pelissier will pause before attacking the Mackenzie road. In such an attack we might be unsuccessful, and we must be prepared to lose half our army. Even if the Mackenzie heights were undefended, would any general be justified in moving round and changing the basis of his operations from Kamiesch and Balaklava, where railways, and storehouses, and every convenience is arranged, to the bleak cold beach at Katcha, where the fleet would have to lie on a lee shore all the winter, and where in bad weather supplies could not be landed for days, perhaps for weeks, and where above all, the want of roads to camp might renew the horrors of last year. No; the campaign is virtually closed for this summer, and your readers may rely upon it they will bear of no attempt to force the Mackenzie-road. When the campaign is recommenced I believe the allies will land again at Kalamita, and the glory of the first battle of the Alma will then be eclipsed in the desperate struggle of the second.

In the meantime the Russians will gain no strength by wintering in huts around the north forts. If it is true they are short of provisions now, every day their garrison remains there serves the cause of the allies.

THE IRISH GRENADEER.

A writer from the Crimea, alluding to the feeling existing between French and English, thus describes an alteration he witnessed:—More than one lament on our failure before the Redan was also uttered, and in one case in which reproach was thrown into the teeth of a brawny Irish grenadier by a diminutive chasseur with more impudence than discretion, I take to myself the credit of having saved a subject of the Emperor from summary annihilation. Pat had laid hands on a bundle of crockeryware, and was proceeding comfortably along under the influence of a double allowance of rum, when the Frenchman, still worse off for liquor, came reeling by with a looking-glass under one arm and a couple of ducks under the other. Ha! Redan no, Malakoff yes; Ingelese no no bozo! spirted out the son of France, tapping the Irishman with impudent familiarity on the elbow. The whirro! that followed, was worthy of Donnybrook, and in an instant, dashing his crockery to the ground, Paddy grasped the Frenchman by the most capacious portion of his pantaloons, sent the looking-glass to shivers, and would have made work for the doctor out of its owner, if I had not at that moment come up to the rescue. Seeing Frenchmen hurrying to the scene of this tragi-comedy from all points, I deemed it best, for my countryman's own sake, to prevent his administering a chastisement which, however amply deserved, might have endangered the safety of its bestower, and so liberated the frightened impudent, and endeavoured to calm down the wrath