

Incidents of the War.

Camp before Sebastopol, January 13.

Last night the wind changed round to the southward, and the thermometer rose to 30 deg. A speedy thaw followed, and the roads and camp will once more suffer from the ravages of our old enemy—the mud. The Russians, who had been very active inside the town during the day, and who had lighted great watchfires on the north side of the place, illuminated the heights over the Tchernays with rows of lights, which shown brilliantly through the darkness of the cold winter's night, and were evidently with all possible pomp and ostentation celebrating the opening of their peculiar new year. Lights shown from the windows of the public buildings, and our lonely sentries in the valleys and ravines, and the *enfants perdus*—the French sharpshooters lying in their lairs with watchful eye on every embassage before them—might almost fancy that the inhabitants and garrison of the beleaguered city were tantalizing them with the aspect of their gaiety. At midnight all the chapel bells of the city began ringing, and it was evident that a religious ceremony of extraordinary solemnity was about to take place. On our side the sentries and pickets were warned to be on the alert, and the advanced posts were strengthened wherever it was practicable. About a quarter past one o'clock this morning the Russians inside the line of works gave a loud cheer. The French replied by opening fire, and the Russians in return instantly began one of the fiercest cannonades along the front of their position which we have yet heard. It reminded one of those tremendous salvos of artillery which the enemy delivered on two or three occasions before we opened our batteries interrupted floods of flame, which broke through the smoke as lightning through the thunder-cloud, and revealed distinctly the outlines of the buildings in the town, and the lines of defences swarming with men. The roaring of shot, the screaming and hissing of heavy shell, and the whistling of carcasses filled up the intervals between the deafening roll of cannon, which was as rapid and unbroken as quick file-firing. The iron and stones passed over our lines uninterrupted for more than half an hour, and the French, whose works to our left are less protected by the ground than ours are, had to shelter themselves closely in the trenches, and could barely reply to the massive volleys which ploughed up the parapets of their works, but their *enfants perdus* never lost an opportunity of sending their balls into the embrasures. In the meantime, while the firing was going on, a strong body of men had been pushed out of the town up the face of the hill towards our works in front and on the flank of the left attack. As it was expected that some attempt of the kind would be made, one of the steadiest sergeants in the service was posted here with 12 men. Every reliance was placed on his vigilance and on his strict attention to his duties but somehow or other, the enemy crept up on the little party, surprised, and took them prisoners, and then advanced on the covering parties with such rapidity and suddenness that the parties of the Sixty—th, and of the Twenty—st Regiments, which were on duty in the trenches, were obliged to retire almost without firing a shot. They rallied, however, and fired, and, being supported by the regiments in the rear, they advanced, and the Russians were driven back close to the town. In this little affair one officer and nine men were severely wounded, six men were killed, and 14 men are now missing. The French had to resist a strong sortie nearly at the same time, and for a short time the Russians were within the parapet of one of their mortar batteries, and spiked, it is said, two or three mortars with wooden plugs, but the French soon drove them back, with loss, and in the pursuit got inside the lines of the Russians' advanced batteries. The soldiers, indeed, say they could have taken the place that night, if they had been permitted to do so. At 2 o'clock this morning all was silent once more, and the allied armies had opened their new Russian year on Crimean soil.

A heavy gale of wind blew nearly all day, but the thermometer rose to 38 deg., and the snow thawed so rapidly that the tracks to the camp became rivulets of mud. The establishment of a central depot for provisions has done much to diminish the labours and alleviate the sufferings of the men engaged in the duties of the siege; but the formation of the depot and the accumulation of the stores have worn out and exhausted many of our best men. Horses cannot stand this work.

It is gratifying to be able to note an improvement in the condition of our own troops. The arrangement of the hospital ships at Balaklava also are improved, and the hospitals on shore are better managed and better provided than they used to be. The returns of sickness and mortality in camp show a slight decrease, but the strength of the army has been very materially diminished for the time by illness. When Lord Raglan visited the hospital in Balaklava the other day he witnessed a very different scene from that which others saw a short time before his Lordship came down, but even then he was obliged to call the attention of the medical officers to the complaint made against the arrange-

ments and accommodation for the sick. His inspection of Balaklava was attended with great advantage, and promises to be followed by still greater benefits. In the first place the confusion and suffering consequent on the old mode of sending down hundreds of patients from camp at a short notice, without any previous inquiry, will be henceforth obviated inasmuch as proper notice will be given the medical authorities to provide for the reception of the sick before they are sent down to Balaklava, and the number to be provided for will not be exceeded.—Next the various heads of departments—the tails as well—were at last made to feel that they were not exempt from surveillance, and finally the internal police and administration of the town, which had been in the course of improvement, under the control of Captain Haines, the commandant of the place, and of Mr Deacon, the town adjutant, received renewed impetus in the same direction. It would fill a year's newspaper to relate the instances of barbarous and scandalous neglect and mismanagement which have come to my knowledge, but some day or other when the war is over, one may let the people see how their money goes. One case will do here. A quantity of patent fuel was landed some time ago and stacked up in the yard of the house reserved in Balaklava nominally as Lord Raglan's quarters. A considerable portion of it speedily disappeared, and by some accident the attention of the authorities was directed to the evanescent properties of their fuel. A search was made after the delinquents, and it was found that some of the men encamped outside of the town and quartered in the sheds had taken the blocks of patent fuel to make their fireplaces with! Major Mackenzie, of the Quartermaster-General's department, assisted by Captain Ross, is also very active in improving the state of affairs, and a parcels' office has been established in the town, with proper officers attached to it; so that there is now some chance of the good nature of our friends at home not being utterly thrown away. The orderlies of the office are instructed to go on board each vessel as she comes into the harbour, to find out all parcels for officers or men, and to take charge of them in the store at Balaklava till they are called for, or can be delivered to the owners. The arrangements of the harbour are better than they used to be, and Captain Heath, of the *Sanspareil*, has sent round a circular to the captains of the transports in reference to statements respecting the condition of the harbour at the dates of those statements but I am not yet acquainted with the result.

January 14.

The 39th regiment, Colonel Munro, and the draughts from England sent on board the Golden Fleece from her Majesty's ship *Leopard*, were at last disembarked from the former vessel to-day. The 39th marched to the head of the creek of Balaklava, and occupied ground close to the late encampment of the 18th royal Irish where they pitched their tents. The 18th this morning marched out to the front so as to leave the ground clear for the 39th. The draughts went to their respective regiments. Although the camping ground of the 39th is so near the town, there is no more than one hut pitched for them as yet, and the process of getting up the pieces is very slow and by no means sure.

There was a very heavy fall of snow last night but there was not much wind, and the thermometer stands at 29 deg. The snow is about two feet deep, but it has been drifted to twice that depth in the ravines. The camps have a most curious appearance. Tents, horses, men, huts—all seem jet black by contrast with the painfully bright white sheets of snow which hurt and dazzle the eye on every side. The weather is however, tolerably mild, and exercise and warm clothing render it agreeable. The look of the ships in Balaklava puts one in mind of the ordinary incidents in Arctic exploring expeditions, when vessels are frozen up. The yards and rigging and every rope and stay are covered with thick ridges of fleecy snow, which hangs in flakes or broken masses from the blocks.

The Queen of the South was on fire last week but the sentry detected it in time, and the flames were extinguished. She was laden with powder. There is a story going that the captain of another powder ship, "in a moment of excitement" began firing his pistols against the bulkheads of his cabin the other day. If either events had come off, Balaklava would have disappeared—ships, houses, and all—and the gully would have become for the time a mere large piece of ordnance to blow them out to sea and into the plain.

The temperature of the weather fell towards evening, and the thaw was arrested. Frequent showers of snow fell during the day. It was a weary walk for our poor sailors across from the batteries at Kamiesch, where they are going to join their ships. I met some detachments of the men of the London and other ships going up to the front from Balaklava to take the places of the men who had been sent away, and they afforded a striking contrast in their strong healthy look to the Jacks who have been so long and who have behaved so nobly in the trenches. The French waggons are busy to-day in carrying up shot and powder for us to the depots. Sometimes our artillery waggons, with French horses and drivers, were employed in the same manner. Our officers are full of admiration for their allies. They are never tired of

speaking of the gaiety, bonhomie, and civility of these gallant fellows. This evening a party of 400 of them came down to Balaklava to take up shot, and the officer in charge observed to them it would be very late before they got back to their camps. "Oh! don't say a word about it; we would work all night to oblige our good friends the English," was the reply. The aid we had given our allies in transporting them to the scene of their labours and their glories is, indeed amply repaid by their ample co-operation. The French have their share of the sickness which afflicts us in this winter campaign but the percentage of deaths and men unfit for duty is not so great among them as it is in our camps. The diseases which pursue our army are aggravated by a peculiar condition of mind which the medical men have remarked very frequently in their patients—extreme heartlessness and indifference to life—a langour which induces the cavalier to regard "rest" as the greatest happiness, and deprives them of any inclination to make the least effort or even to take food and nourishment. There was nothing done worth noting to-day in front. The French batteries were silent, and the Russians scarcely fired a shot all day. The usual small arm practise went on in front of the lines between the sharpshooters. Both parties have now become so expert that their greatest pleasure is to try and "do" each other by getting up dummies, and exhibiting devices to draw fire, so that they may have a chance of returning it while the marksman is exposed. The old dodge of putting a shako or a forager on the end of a stick is universally despised, and not a shot will be thrown away on one. Moving them along with an irregular motion above the ramparts and trenches as if a man were walking along, is sometimes successful, and the lucky fellow who gets a ball or two through his head-dress in this way is considered very clever.—The men now know each other—that is, they observe certain gunners in the Russian batteries whom they have seen for some time past, and who have nicknames. "There goes Red Cap!" or "Black beard is going to take a shot at us now;" and so on; and there is a story going that the pickets occasionally fraternize, as they were wont to do in the Peninsula, and that they are all agreed as to the Shippoeth—"Bono Franzig!" "Bono Inglis!" "Bono Musco!" "Turko, no bono!"

The Simla has arrived, with about 400 horses and with some calescents. Thermometer, 34 deg. this evening at sunset.

January 15.

A heavy fall of snow during the night. It is 6 feet deep in some places in the ravines, and on an average is 3½ feet deep all over the plain, but it is so hard one can walk over it without sinking more than a foot into it. The thermometer marked 24 deg. at 8 o'clock this morning, but it is almost a dead calm, and the sun shines brightly at times. At noon the thermometer rose to 34 deg. Her Majesty's ship *Firebrand* went out of harbour this morning. The preparations for our renewed bombardment and cannonade are progressing rapidly. Upwards of 50 fine new 32lb-guns, 13 of the largest sized mortars, and some very heavy siege guns are all up at the depot, and elsewhere, and can be placed in the batteries at a very short notice.—Up to the present date about 14,000 shot and shell of all sorts have been conveyed from Balaklava to our artillery parks, and in that number is not included 4,000 naval shells (with brass fuses). When the batteries open each gun will be provided with 300 rounds of ammunition. There is one mortar at Balaklava which weighs four tons. How it is to be got to the front is not very easy to determine. A Polish officer who deserted recently has given us most valuable information respecting the range of our batteries, and there is reason to believe that when our fire re-opens the effect will be so tremendous that the destruction of the place will be inevitable in a very short time.

It is reported that a deserter came in from the Russians to-day in an exhausted condition. There was a considerable movement visible among the Russians towards Baidar and along Mackenzie's Farm-road to-day, and it is positively stated that Liprandi has received a reinforcement of considerable strength. The guns were silent nearly all day.—Times Correspondent.

Camp before Sebastopol, January 16.

The sortie made upon the Green-hill Battery, which I had just time to announce in my last letter, proved a more serious affair than was at first anticipated. The enemy succeeded so far as to drive the sentries back, and take one sergeant and 14 men prisoners. One officer and about a score of men were wounded in the affair. The trenches were occupied by portions of 68th, the 21st and the Rifles. The sentries of the 68th were in the rifle-pits. The enemy came up, stealthily surrounded them, and opened a volley on the flank and front, which alarmed to such an extent that they took to their heels. The enemy was, therefore, left in possession of the ground. After retiring some distance, the 68th returned to the charge, but again abandoned the ground, leaving their wounded. On calling the roll, one sergeant and 14 men were found missing. One poor fellow, whom the Russians had bayoneted, was subsequently discovered in the trench, completely striped and lying naked, his wounds exposed to the bitter wind and piercing frost. The

Russians, on making the charge, came on with the cry "Raki, raki!" and appeared half drunk. The 68th Regiment were asleep, with the exception of the sentries (who, it is feared, were not far otherwise). The men are so harassed with duty in the trenches, that as soon as they take their posts they curl themselves up in their blankets, and down they go to sleep. The weather though bitter cold, does not prevent but rather encourages their drowsiness. The intense labour our troops are subjected to has led to the French General issuing an order that 1,600 of our allies should be granted in order to give the British some relief. Nominally speaking, the strength of the English of all ranks exceed 40,000 men, but of this there are 16,232 sergeants, drummers, and rank and file sick, leaving available not more than 13,000 for the trenches and pickets, after other necessary casualties are deducted. The daily duty for the 24 hours requires about 7,000 men, so that you may judge what work the men have to perform. On the 12th inst., 39 deaths were reported in camp. The weekly amount of sick sent to Scutari is about 1,000. The men, after they reach Scutari, are retained there until they are properly recovered, and not sent back half cured. This may account for there being so many sick at Scutari. About 6,000 men are there who, if here, would be compelled to take their turn of duty. The French general has stopped all reinforcements coming up for the present farther than the Bosphorus. The object of the commanders is, to have their men as strong as their present circumstances will admit for the ensuing spring. They have enough to maintain their present position until favourable weather for operations sets in.

The Greenhill Battery is reported to be in a very inefficient state, and steps had been taken before the last affair to repair it. This battery was guarded until some few days back by 1,000 men by day, and 1,100 men by night. It was then reduced to 750 by day, and 900 by night, on account of the weakness of the 3rd and 4th Divisions.

The 63d regiment cannot furnish 60 men under arms, so reduced are they by sickness.—They have been ordered to move down to Balaklava, and the 18th regiment, at present stationed there, is to replace them on the heights. The 63d will do fatigue duties at Balaklava.

The City of London steamer, from Constantinople, has arrived with 270 bullocks and 370 sheep—quite a treat for the men. The Nubia has arrived from Eupatoria empty. The Indiana steamer will proceed to Varna, to convey Turkish soldiers to Eupatoria.

Out of 900 men of the Fourth Division, paraded for the trenches the other day, about 90 were found unable to march, their feet being swollen with cold.

Messrs. Smith and Glyn, two gentlemen of the Crimean Army Fund, are here, struggling to bring their object about. I am afraid they meet with many difficulties. Their stores have not yet arrived.—Correspondent of the London Morning Post.

Heights before Sebastopol, Jan. 20.

The enemy's garrison in Sebastopol has, during the last two or three days, been showing forth in the lines in very considerable strength. Along the whole eastern and southern side of the defences, near the Round Tower, the Redan Fort, Redan Wall, Barrek Wall, Cemetery, and the open space near the Quarantine Battery, large bodies of troops were assembled during the great part of the 17th and 18th. At first the demonstration excited some slight uneasiness, as being considered to prelude to a general sortie upon the whole of the allied position, and measures were accordingly taken to render it, like past attempts of a similar nature, utterly abortive and unsuccessful. The enemy, however, showed no disposition to quit their lines, and after remaining about the works I have mentioned some two or three hours, gradually dispersed into the town. On both the 17 and 18th, their dispersal was accelerated by the fire from the French mortars, which managed to drop 10-inch and 13-inch shell wherever the enemy were thickest.

No reason can be assigned for such an assemblage of the garrison. On the 18th inst. not less than 20,000 men could have been drawn up, and at that time the whole of the Russian defences was fully manned, so that, at the lowest computation, there are at least 35,000 effective men still in the besieged town. For days past there have been rumours of Liprandi having received reinforcements to the number of 40,000 men, and the sudden parade of the Sebastopol garrison certainly tends to corroborate a report which is firmly believed in "well informed" circles, but to which I am obliged to admit I can give no credence. Liprandi may have received some 5,000 or 6,000 fresh troops; but 40,000 is simply absurd. The manner in which this reinforcement is said to have arrived (in snow sledges) is, I think, conclusive as to the dependence which may be placed upon the rumour. It would puzzle all the Russians to provide snow sledges for the transit of 40,000 men with all their artillery, horses, baggage, and ammunition, while it would be quite possible to forward two or even three regiments, by such a means of conveyance, especially if no guns were taken. It is far more probable that the unusual force now in Sebastopol is owing to the return of the two or three corps under Li-