

frank faces and honest, kindly smiles, — have inspected their men and made their reports, and 'fallen in' in their proper places; and the word is given, and its head moves off—'By the left; quick march!' and the column winds quietly down into the valley of the shadow of death.

The sun is just setting, and gilds the men's faces, and the tufts of arid grass above their heads in the deepening ravine, with a tawny orange hue peculiar to a sunset in the East.—The evening is beautifully soft and still, but the dust is suffocating, rising as it does in clouds from the measured tread of so many feet; and there is a feeling of depression, a weight in the atmosphere, such as I have often observed to accompany the close of day on the shores of the Black Sea. Even the men seem to feel its influence—the whispered jest, the ready smile which usually accompanies a march is wanting; the youngest ensign looks thoughtful, and as if he were brooding on his far-away home; and the lines deepen on many a bearded countenance as we wind lower and lower down the ravine and reach the first parallel, which to some now present must be so forcible a reminder of disappointed hopes, fruitless sacrifices, and many a true and hearty comrade who shall be friend and comrade no more.

NIGHT ATTACK.

The officers have established a sort of headquarters at a *place d'armes*, or re-assembling spot near the centre of their own 'attack.'—Three or four are coiled up in different attitudes, beguiling the long dark hours with whispered jests and grave speculations as to the intentions of the enemy. Here a stalwart captain of Highlanders stretches his huge frame across the path, puffing forth volumes of smoke from the short black pipe that has accompanied him through the whole war—the much prized 'cutty' that was presented to him by his father's forester when he shot the royal stag in the 'pass above Craig-Owar;' there a slim and dandy rifleman passes a wicker-covered flask of brandy-and-water to a tall sedate personage who has worked his way through half-a-dozen Indian actions to be senior captain of a line regiment, and who, should he be fortunate enough to survive the present siege, may possibly arrive at the distinguished rank of Brevet-Major. He prefers his own bottle of cold tea; as it gurgles into his lips the Highlander pulls a face of disgust.

'Take those long, indecent legs of yours out of the way, Sandy,' says a merry voice, the owner of which, stumbling over these brawny limbs in the darkness, makes his way up to Ropsley, and whispers a few words in his ear which seem to afford our colonel much satisfaction.

'You couldn't have done it better,' says he to the new arrival, a young officer of engineers, the 'bravest of the brave,' and 'the gayest of the gay;' 'I could have spared you a few more men, but it is better as it is. I hate harrasing our fellows, if we can help it. What will you have to drink?'

'A drain at the flask, first, Colonel,' answers the light-hearted soldier; 'I've been on duty now, one way and another, for eight and forty hours, and I'm about beat. Sandy, my boy, give us a whiff out of 'the cutty.' I'll sit by you. You remind me of an opera dancer in that dress. Mind, you dine with me to-morrow, if you're not killed.'

The Highlander grows out a gruff affirmative. He delights in his volatile friend; but he is a man of few words, although his arm is weighty and his brain is clear.

A shell shrieks and whistles over our heads. We mark it revolving bright and beautiful, like a firework through the darkness. It lights far away to our rear and bounds once more from the earth ere it explodes with a loud report.

'Not much mischief done by that gentleman,' observes Ropsley, taking his cigar from his mouth; 'he must have landed clear of all our people. We shall soon have another from the same battery. I wish I knew what they are doing over yonder,' he adds, pointing significantly in the direction of the Redan.

'I think I can find out for you, Colonel,' says the engineer; 'I am going forward to the last 'sap,' and I shall not be very far from them there. Your sharpshooters are just at the corner, Green,' he adds to the rifleman, 'wont you come with me?' The latter consents willingly; and as they rise from their dusty lair I ask leave to accompany them, for my curiosity is fearfully excited, and I am painfully anxious to know what the enemy is about. The last 'sap' is a shallow and narrow trench, the termination of which is but a short distance from the Russian work. It is discontinued at the precipitous declivity which here forms one side of the well-known Woronzoff ravine; and from this spot, dark as it is, the sentry can be discerned plainly moving to and fro—a dusky, indistinct figure—above the parapet of the Redan.

The engineer officer and Green of the Rifles seat themselves on the very edge of the ravine; the former plucks a blade or two of grass, and flings them into the air.

'They can't hear us with this wind,' says he. 'What say you Green; wouldn't it be a good lark to creep in under there, and make out what they're doing?'

'I'm game!' says Green, one of those dare-devil young gentlemen to be found amongst the

subalterns of the British army, who would make the same reply were it a question of crossing that glacis in the full glare of day to take the work by assault, single-handed. 'Put your sword off, that's all, otherwise you'll make such a row, that our own fellows will think they're attacked, and fire on us. Mind you, my chaps have had lots of practice, and can hit a haystack as well as their neighbors. Now then, are you ready? Come on.'

The engineer laughed, and unbuckled his sabre.

'Good afternoon, Mr Egerton, in case I shouldn't see you again,' said he; and so the two crept silently away upon their somewhat hazardous expedition.

I watched their dark figures with breathless interest. The sky had lifted a little, and there was a ray or two of moonlight struggling fitfully through the clouds. I could just distinguish the two English officers as they crawled on hands and knees amongst the slabs of rock and inequalities of ground which now formed their only safety. I shuddered to think that if I could thus distinguish their forms, why not the Russian Riflemen?—and what chance for them then, with twenty or thirty 'Minies' sighted on them at point-blank distance? However, 'Fortune favors the brave;' the light breeze died away, and the moon was again obscured. I could see them no longer, and I knew that by this time they must have got within a very few paces of the enemy's batteries, and that discovery was now certain death. The ground, too, immediately under the Russian work was smoother and less favorable to concealment than our own. The moments seemed to pass very slowly. I scarcely dared to move, and the tension of my nerves was absolutely painful, every faculty seeming absorbed in the one concentrated effort of listening.

Suddenly a short, sharp stream of light, followed by the quick, angry report of the Minnie—then another and another—they illumine the night for an instant; and during that instant I strain my eyes in vain to discover the two dark creeping forms. And now a blinding glare fills our own trenches—the figures of our men coming out like phantoms, in their different attitudes of labor and repose. The enemy has thrown a fire-ball into our works to ascertain what we are about. Like the pilot fish before the shark, that brilliant messenger is soon succeeded by its deadly followers, and ere I can hurry back to the rallying point of the attack, where I have left Ropsley and his comrades, a couple of shells have already burst amongst our soldiers, dealing around them their quantum of wounds and death, whilst a couple more are winging their way like meteors over our heads, to carry the alarm far to the rear, where the gallant blue jackets have established a tremendous battery, and are at this moment in all probability chafing and fretting that they are not nearer the point of danger.

'Stand to your arms! Steady, men, steady!' is the word passed from soldier to soldier along the ranks, and the men spring like lions to the parapet, every heart beating high with courage, every firelock held firmly at the charge. They are tired of 'long bowls' now, and would fain have it out with the bayonet.

The fire from the Redan lights up the intervening glacis, and as I rush hurriedly along the trench, stooping my head with instinctive precaution, I steal a glance or two over the low parapet, which shows me the figure of a man running as hard as his legs can carry him towards our own rallying point. He is a mark for fifty Russian rifles, but he speeds on nevertheless. His cheery voice rings through all the noise and confusion, as he hollas to our men not to fire at him.

'Hold on, my lads,' he says, leaping breathlessly into the trench; 'I have had a precious good run for it. Where is the Colonel?'

His report is soon made. It is the young officer of engineers who thus returns in haste from his reconnoitring expedition. His companion, Green, has reached his own regiment by another track, for they wisely separated when they found themselves observed, and strange to say, notwithstanding the deadly fire through which they have 'run the gauntlet,' both are un wounded. The engineer confers with Ropsley in a low voice.

'They only want to draw off our attention, Colonel,' says he; 'I am quite sure of it.—When I was under the Redan I could hear large bodies of men moving towards their left. That is the point of attack depend upon it.—There they go on our right! I told you so. Now we shall have it hot and heavy, or I'm mistaken.'

Even while he speaks a brisk fire is heard to open on our right flank. The clouds clear off too, and the moon, now high in the heavens, shines forth unveiled. By her soft light we can just discern a dark, indistinct mass winding slowly along across an open space of ground between the Russian works. The rush of a round shot from one of our own batteries whizzes over our heads. That dusky column wavers, separates, comes together again, and presses on. Ropsley gets cooler and cooler, for it is coming at last.

'Captain McDougal,' says he to that brawny warrior, who does not look the least like an opera dancer now, as he rears his six feet of

vigor on these stalwart supporters, 'I can spare all the Highlanders; form them directly, and move to your right flank. Do not halt till you reach the ground I told you of. The Rifles and our own Light Company will stand fast!—Remainder, right, form four deep—march!'

There is an alarm along the whole line.—Our allies are engaged in a brisk cannonade for their share, and many an ugly missile hisses past our ears from the foe, or whistles over our heads from our own supports. Is it to be a general attack? a second Inkermann, fought out by moonlight? Who knows? The uncertainty is harassing, yet attended with its own thrilling excitement—half a pleasure, half a pain.

A few of our own people (we cannot in the failing light discover to what regiment they belong) are giving way before a dense mass of Russian Infantry that outnumber them a hundred to one. They have shown a determined front for a time, but they are sorely pressed and overpowered, and by degrees they give back more and more. The truth must out—they are on the point of turning tail and running away. A little fiery Irishman stands out in front of them; a simple private is he in the regiment, and never likely to reach a more exalted rank, for, like all great men, he has a darling weakness, and the temptation to which he cannot but succumb is celebrity—the pages of the 'Defaulters' Book call it "habitual drunkenness." Nevertheless, he has the heart of a hero. Gesticulating furiously, and swearing, I regret to say, with blasphemous volubility, he hears the coat from his back, flings his cap on the ground, and tossing his arms wildly above his head, thus rebukes, like some Homeric hero, his more prudent comrades—

'Och, bad luck to ye, rank cowards and shufflers that ye are! and bad luck to the regiment that's disgracin' me. Would I wear the uniform, and parade like a soldier again, when it's been dirtied by the likes of you? Faith, not I, ye thunderin' villains. I'll tread and I'll trample the coat, and the cap, and the facin's, and the rest of it; and I'll fight in my shirt, so I will, if they come on fifty to one. Hur-roo!'

Off goes his musket in the very faces of the enemy; with a rush and a yell he runs at them with the bayonet. His comrades turn, and strike in vigorously with the hero. Even that little handful of men serves for an instant to check the onward progress of the Russians. By this time the supports—Guards, Highlanders, and the flower of the British infantry—are pouring from their entrenchments; a tremendous fire of musketry opens from the whole line; staff officers are galloping down hurry-scurry from the camp. Far away above us, on those dark heights, the whole army will be under arms in ten minutes.

The Russian column wavers once more—breaks like some wave against a sunken rock; dark fitting figures are seen to come out, and stagger and fall; and then the whole body goes to the right-about and returns within its defences, just as a mass of heavy clouds rising from the Black Sea sweeps across the moon, and darkness covers once more besiegers and besieged.

We may lie down in peace now till the first blush of dawn rouses the riflemen on each side to that sharpshooting practice of which it is their custom to take at least a couple of hours before breakfast. We may choose the softest spots in those dusty covered ways, and lean our backs against gabions that are getting sadly worn out, and in their half emptied inefficiency afford but an insecure protection even from the comical ball of the wicked 'Minnie.' We may finish our flasks of brandy-and-water, and our bottles of cold tea, and get a few winks of sleep and dream of home and the loved ones that, except in the hours of sleep, some of us will never see more. All these luxuries we may enjoy undisturbed, We shall not be attacked again, for this is what the soldiers term 'a quiet night in the trenches.'

(To be continued.)

SPARTAN-LIKE INDIANS.

We slept very comfortably at an hotel, at Three Rivers: then up by times next morning and off in waggons and calashes over a road roughened with the wheels of charcoal carts, and then got into a large canoe, and paddled 'up stream' to the bottom of the Falls, where the river rushed round a large wooded island, and dashed with great noise, and amidst clouds of spray, over black rocks of fantastic shape into a vast caldron of unknown depth. Years ago, an incident of a tragic nature took place at these Falls. Part of a tribe of Indians was descending the St. Maurice, in several canoes, intending to stop above the Falls and make a portage round them. As they drew near, the chief, in the leading canoe, observed the banks lined with the warriors of a hostile tribe waiting in ambush to surprise and overpower them. Standing up in his canoe he pointed with his paddle to the bush, and then down the stream to the cataract, his people understood his meaning, better to perish in the thunder of waters than by the scalping knife and tomahawk of their foes, and the whole, without hesitation, glided down the rapids, and perished amidst the thundering waters of the great Shewenegan.

Communication.

Matapedia, December 17, 1857.

Mr Editor,

I shall not comment on the last quotation, but shall quote another.

"But Mr. Editor Common Jack is much in want of a new coat for the rubbing the old one got while in Dalhousie, a boarder at five shillings a week, no wonder he flatters his friends there, of their knowledge not knowing how soon he may return, the old coat being so often turned and ready to be turned again. But having to be employed by Mr Meagher for reasons only known to themselves; it was not for his ability as a road maker, that is a thing he knows nothing about, but just to enable him to get a new coat, so that it will not require to be turned at the next Election, and will keep him from being clerk, and rendering accounts for the open houses at that time."

Well, after all, Common Jack is worth a new coat at Election times, more particularly to "keep him from being Clerk and rendering accounts for the open houses at that time." Bad work, I should say, for Common Jack to be engaged in—"rendering accounts for the open houses at that time;" better far, in my opinion, to have saved them as curiosities, and to have them sent to a museum, or make them a present to an antiquarian society. I never knew before, Sir, that the open houses kept accounts. Well, let this pass too, and I shall not mind the turning and losing of the old coat at present, I may perhaps take it up when I come to examine yours, and in the meantime slightly notice your opinion of 'Common Jack' as a road maker.

You say—"But having been employed by Mr Meagher for reasons only known to themselves; it was not for his ability as a road maker, that is a thing he knows nothing about," Wonderful, that Mr Meagher should conduct himself so strangely. First, to employ "an industrious honest man," because he had "confidence in him," and next to employ a man who had no "ability as a road maker," and all, as Contractor says "for reasons only known to themselves."

Give an account of your stewardship, Mr Meagher, such work as this will never do. But let me whisper this into your ear, Mr Contractor—Common Jack knew about road making (both practically and theoretically) long before he saw the lovely mountains of the Restigouche, having served an apprenticeship with some of the best road engineers Nova Scotia could produce at that time, and he doubts if you, Mr Contractor, or any of your clique in Restigouche, can teach him a great deal in the road making line. But this is neither here nor there, so we will just pass on to something else.

Another extract, you report this dog carried mail, is the "most regular mail in the three Provinces during that time, from that we may judge the honest Scotchman has not often lost his road, but that long eared gentleman would very willingly put his feet into the Scotchman's shoes, but the responsibility would be too much for him, and security hard to find."

Well, Sir, that long eared gentleman is by no means covetous; he has not the smallest desire to "put his feet in that Scotchman's shoes;" yet, although he has no desire to fill the office himself or any person belonging to him, I am not quite sure when mail bags come to be examined, and coats compared, a person or persons might be found or pointed out, fit to put their feet into that Scotchman's shoes; and security found too, to bear all the responsibility.

As to your honest Scotchman, not often losing his road, I would just say that there was no great danger on that head, without he got astray betwixt his door and bed post. That he did get astray the time alluded to in Common Jack's Letter, there are too many living witnesses in the land to prove the fact. The name of one I am permitted to give—Mr Anthony Clark, who was in the camp at the time, and from your honest Scotchman's sallow looks and haggard appearance, mistook him for an Indian, and accosted him as such. But let us gather one or two more extracts for the public, and see how they will bear investigation.

"I was always an advocate for the Matapedia road, that long eared gentlemen would not sign a petition in favour of the road; he is now bragging over what he has done with his writing his writings only attack private individuals, and only calculated to hurt the circulation of the paper they are published in."

Take another extract and compare them.—"But when the government of Canada has expended thirty or forty thousand pounds, can this long eared gentleman or his employer, give any information how this road will be kept open in winter, as it is well known there is land left for settlements for many miles together on this line of Road, and nothing will ever improve the County until an iron road is made."

What do you mean, Mr Contractor? Do you mean to lead the Government of Canada into another scrape? did you not "always advocate the Matapedia road?" and now you turn about and advocate an "iron road to improve the County;" and now gravely ask the question how the road is to be kept open in winter, that you "always advocated," and jeer the Government of Canada for having allowed itself to be induced to expend "thirty or forty thousand pounds" on this road. Really and truly, Sir, your advocacy of 'an iron road to improve the County,' must carry with it great weight and consideration in forwarding this favourite road of yours. I trust should you convey your thought or wishes to the Government on this favourite scheme, that you will be more expli-