

War-Department, February 15, 1856.

LORD PANMURE has this day received a Despatch and its Enclosure, of which the following are copies, addressed to his Lordship by General Sir William Codrington, K.C.B.

*Head Quarters, Sevastopol,
2nd February, 1856.*

MY LORD,

THE destruction of the Docks of Sevastopol is now completed; the sides of the last dock were blown in yesterday morning, small parts of the wall here and there only remaining. Thus the whole of the canal of entrance and north docks in charge of the French, the basin in our mutual charge, and the south docks in English charge, are separate, but shapeless masses of dirt, heavy broken stones, split beams of timber, and shattered gates protruding from the heap of confusion.

The labour of destruction has been difficult; these fine works were formed in the middle ravine at its outlet in an inner and sheltered part of the harbour, one of the natural watercourses from the plateau on which we are encamped. This end of the ravine, about 700 yards from its mouth, seems to have been filled in so as to create a great artificial dam of earth, which, with the steep banks on each side, form three sides of a raised enclosure looking down upon the docks. A solid stone wall, much struck by shot, crowns this sort of natural square; the fine but shattered barracks, standing still higher on the left, with the sheds and dockyard buildings, the masting shears, and a long quay to Fort Paul in front jutting into the harbour, show how well adapted all was for its purpose. It is now a picture of destruction, desolation, and silence; there lies against the quay the half sunken hull of a vessel; and, in the harbour beyond, the only things breaking the surface of the water are the lower masts of sunken ships of war.

The drainage of the water of the middle ravine must, however, pass through to the harbour somewhere, and it was this that has so much impeded the shafts; for the water from rains often stood two feet high over the floor of the docks, and thus of course filled the shafts themselves. Some details of the execution of these are given in the enclosed summary from Colonel Lloyd, Commanding the Royal Engineers, the immediate executive officers being Colonel Gordon and Major Nicholson.

Amidst great difficulties of cold and wet, very severe frost at one time, and perpetually recurring pressure at another, the work went steadily on; and great praise is due to all those concerned, the Engineers and Sappers, parties of the Royal Artillery, the 18th Regiment, and latterly of the 48th Regiment. These parties return to their duty to-morrow after constant and laborious work.

The casualties have been but six, of which two only have been fatal, and one man of the 48th Regiment lost by foul air in a shaft; after several vain attempts by Major Nicholson, other officers and men, themselves descending at great risk, the poor fellow's body was brought up, but life was gone.

Your lordship will see that Colonel Lloyd expresses his obligation to Mr. Deane, and the Chief Engineer of Her Majesty's ship Royal Albert, for their assistance.

The Voltaic Battery, we must confess, did not always succeed, it seems to require great nicety in preparation, but in those cases in which I saw it succeed the effect was perfect—ignition and its

result, the shake of the ground, the heaving up of the mass seemed to be instantaneous.

The destruction of other things will continue.

I have, &c.,

W. J. CODRINGTON,
General Commanding.

The Lord Panmure, &c. &c. &c.

Enclosure.

*Head Quarters, Camp, Sevastopol,
February 1, 1856.*

SIR,

AFTER a period of three months' unceasing labour in the dockyard, for the destruction of the docks, in compliance with Lord Panmure's orders, it affords me very great satisfaction to report, for your Excellency's information, the termination of our exertions in the demolition of that portion allotted to the English, which consisted of the three docks on the south side, and one half of the east and west sides of the basin.

The result of our operations has been the perfect destruction of the whole, the foundations being completely torn up. The length of time occupied in effecting the above object has, I regret, far exceeded what had been anticipated, owing to many circumstances over which no human being could have any controul. Your Excellency, I believe, is aware that on the morning of the 16th December, 1855, after a very heavy and continuous fall of rain, all the shafts which had been sunk behind the revetment walls of the docks, were found to have twenty feet of water in them, the shafts being thirty feet deep; and the shafts along the bottoms of the docks, which had been sunk to a depth of twelve feet, were not only quite full of water, but had 2 feet 6 inches of water above the floors of the docks themselves.

A very large party was employed day and night endeavouring to reduce the water, and effected this object but slowly, as the water continued to find its way in by percolation. At this stage of the work, the wet weather was suddenly succeeded by intense frost, which for some days rendered our pumps useless, thus causing a further delay and obliged us to bale the water out of the shafts, resuming the pumping as soon as the pumps would work again, which has been continued to the very last.

It was the intention to have destroyed one entire dock at a time, but owing to the influx of water such an arrangement was obliged to be abandoned, and such charges only as could from time to time be prepared were fired, the pumping in very many cases being kept up day and night until the last moment. The bottoms and sites were blown up before the sides were destroyed, which enabled us to be satisfied that the former were thoroughly demolished.

I must observe that, as the demolition of the northern portion was carried out by the French, it is incumbent on me to explain why their operations were not subjected to as many difficulties as fell to our lot. Their docks were four feet higher in level than ours, and in no instance had they, I understand, any water to contend against, or at least so small a quantity as to be scarcely appreciable. Their charges in the bottoms were not more than 6 ft. deep, whereas our's averaged 10 ft. 6in. in depth.

Though the external effect of some of our explosions may not appear great, I am happy to