



SECOND SUPPLEMENT

TO

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1855.

*War-Department, November 29, 1855.*

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

*Sevastopol, November 17, 1855.*

MY LORD,

ON the 15th instant, about 3 P.M., a terrific explosion shook the camp of the army and spread heavy destruction in the immediate neighbourhood of its force; even here, at Head-Quarters, two and a half miles perhaps distant, it burst open and broke windows, all felt the power of it, and the high column of smoke, with shells bursting in the midst and around it, told too well the cause, and showed the danger of all within its reach.

It was not long before we were on the spot: to the sudden burst had succeeded a continued and dark drift of smoke, which told its tale of continued fire and of danger; constant bursting of shells was going on, and the ground was covered with bits of wood, musquet balls, and splinters of shells from the first heavy explosion, which had strewed the ground with destruction, and killed and hurt very many people.

100,000 pounds of powder had exploded in the French siege train, set fire to all the stores there, and to our neighbouring English park where all was fiercely burning, whilst the tendency of the light air at first threatened a second and as serious an accident from powder, not eighty yards off, for the roof of the building had been damaged and the door blown in by the shock.

Some General Officers had fallen in and marched part of their divisions down, others sent some in fatigue, some with stretchers for the wounded, all exerted themselves with the French with an energy and disregard of danger that was admirable; blankets were taken to the exposed store, placed and wetted on the roof by water being passed up in buckets; the doors were covered with wet

blankets and sandbags, and in a short time it was reported and looked safe, though the closeness of the fire and frequent explosions could not allow the feeling of security. Many detached though small fires were burning, and the ground of both the French and English parks, a space of 150 yards across, was a mass of large fires, some of fuel, some of huts, some of gun carriages, boxes, handspikes, and rope.

The fortunately light air had rather changed its direction, and by breaking up and dragging away things, a sort of lane was at last formed, the fires cut off, and gradually got under control, because confined to smaller though fierce fires, but manageable.

I saw every one working well, and I know that French and English took live shells from the neighbourhood of danger to a more distant spot, and at a later period parties threw what earth the rocky soil could give, upon the fires, and helped much to subdue them; all was safe about 7 P.M., and a strong guard and working party posted for the night.

The army was under arms the following morning before daylight, and everything being quiet, I ordered the divisions to turn in, and continue the working parties in the roads, which I had counter-ordered for that morning.

The exploded powder store was situated in the ruins of some walls which had advantageously been made use of for the purpose of shelter; it had been the store of supply to the French attack on the Malakoff front, and it contained the powder which had been brought back from their batteries.

It is at the head of the ravine, which, as it gets towards Sebastopol, forms the steep and rocky valley of Ravin du Carénage.

The Light Division was on the ground which it first took up in October, 1854; the Rifles on the right, then the 7th, the 33rd, and 23rd; on their left the 34th Regiment, which subsequently joined, was on the right front in advance; and the vacating of a spot of ground by the Sappers' camp, enabled me when commanding