

A Great Battle.

(Continued from page 29.)

night work. Any shot in line found the target—that is, the main Russian trench. The storming parties had a breathing space and girded themselves for their final effort. Now they climbed upward as if death were at their heels instead of ahead of them. They did not fire; the "interference" could not without too much risk. The only thing was to reach the top, and before they could some must die, as every man of them knew. The flag of the centre column was waved triumphantly on its appointed cone a minute before the other two. Then we saw the figures on the skyline rushing to any point of vantage where, by sending bullets in pursuit of the flying enemy, they could score losses which should balance their own side of the ledger. The reserves might now go forward safely over the zone which had been fire-swept ten minutes before.

Fighting by Day, Working by Night

Thus the day's fighting was finished, but not the day's work, nor the day's drudgery, nor the day's misery. The wounded were yet to be brought in, and the dead and the fuel to burn them collected by weary limbs. The plunging fire of the Russians against the foe, struggling through the rough fields and over rougher, untilled slopes, had cost the division six hundred casualties, including the death of a colonel.

Late in the afternoon a deluge of rain washed the blood off the grass. The flood of water turned dry beds into dashing rivulets. The flood of slaughter, also settling towards the valley, passed on by the single hospital tent—already congested at daybreak from the night attack—into the village, whose population was crowded into a few houses in order that the wounded might be crowded into others. Through every doorway you caught a glimpse of prostrate figures and of white handgaps with round red spots which made them like wrapped flags of Japan.

Dripping hospital corps men brought in dripping burdens covered with blankets or with the matting in which the rice and horse fodder of the army are transported. When darkness came, the lanterns of the searchers twinkled in and out on the hillside. Dawn found them still at work collecting stray Russian wounded, who had lain suffering all night in the rain, for a dollar and 50 cents a year and the glory which the Czar's service brings them. In the bushes, in the declivities between the rocks of many square acres—could every fallen man be gathered? How many cries coming faintly from feverishly dry lips and finally dying into a swoon were unanswered? At some future time, when a Chinese peasant stumbles over a set of bones, the world will not be the wiser.

In a room 16ft by 10ft, in which were 20 Chinese, I had slept on a chest about 4ft long, and awakened in the night to find my wet feet insisting that my head should take a turn at hanging over the side. In the morning, a mist which thickened at times into rain shrouded hill and valley alike. Mingled with it was the smoke of evaporatory piles, where layers of bodies were consumed between layers of wet wood. Riding back up the ridge, I passed sixty dead Japanese piled in a row under the dripping trees of a Chinese garden. Burial was to be their lot. There was not time to burn them.

Our division's losses were greater than at the Yalu. By this standard and by the physical effort expended as well, we should have rested. But we were only beginning. Our halt was due solely to the mist, which would not permit us to fulfil our programme to advance at the break of day. The infantry remained on the slippery hillside, where they had raised their slight shelters and placed wet cornstalks on the damp, spongy earth for beds. On the crest of the ridge, while the bodies of the Russians who had fallen in the trenches there yesterday were being buried, the staff stood helplessly looking out on the grey awning that hid the next valley and prolonged for a few hours the life of more than one fated big soldier of Russia and little soldier of Japan. Quick as General Ninnai was to attack by night some critical point with definite features, he hesitated to

make a general advance in the fog, which eventually rose as quickly as a drop-curtain.

The Enemy Retreats.

Instantly we knew not only the scene, but also the plot of the play. The deep cutting revealed at our feet opened into a valley which led westward to the Tangho, with its fertile bottoms. The town of Anping was hidden by the projecting base of a bluff. We knew its location by a pontoon bridge thick with Russian wagons going in the same tell-tale direction. The wagons crossed stolidly. There was no precipitation in the lowering of the tents of the camp on the other side.

That first clear view of our position quickened every pulse at thought of catching a rearguard straddle of a stream. The mist had favoured the Russians. It had made our advance cautious and given them cover for retreat. Over the ridge, our infantry, breaking their way through the kowliang, made new paths over slopes where probably no army had ever passed before. After them went the mountain battery, sliding and plunging horses jerking the leaders off their feet.

With the bridge as a centre, our division was pressing in on the retreat from one flank and the Twelfth from the other. We trusted that the Twelfth was nearer than ourselves. The Russian cavalry was moving back and forth on our side of the river; the Russian infantry stretched across the mouth of the valley, while far over the hills the infantry and gun-fire of the Twelfth pressed closer toward the pontoon. An hour before dark remained. As detachments drew off, the line of Russian infantry became thinner. Some cavalry forded the stream, and then some infantry, too, did not wait on our side of the bridge. "We are going to make them scramble for it," everybody thought, "and there will be sharp work down there in a few minutes."

"No, we're not," we knew a moment later, when one flash and seven more in succession spoke from the other side of the river to the left of the bridge. No shrapnel came in reply. The entry of the battery into the game settled it. The rest had no more dramatic interest than the last half of the ninth inning to the victorious "outs."

On the 28th the God of Battle rewarded us with a porterre box, where we could see the spectacle as a whole and in detail as well. At this point the Tangho bends sharply. By Anping it passes for a time due north; a mile from Anping it runs almost due east. From a high peak in the stream, enclosed angle which concealed the waiting enemy, with irregular slopes mounting to a high ridge at his back.

Far to the west, on some rocky summit, I could see the glitter of a heliograph sending messages to and from all parts of the Russian line, which must fall back systematically lest some fraction or other find itself surrounded. We did not know then that the heliograph was on the hill of Chusan, which was the centre of the actual frontal defence of Liao-Yang itself. We named it "Kuropatkin's eye," and we were glad to be so near to the gentleman himself; so near to a decisive battle.

In the kowliang of the river bottom, on the opposite side from the Russian position, snuggled the Japanese infantry. Welcome was the hot August sun to dry clothes that had been wet for two days—welcome until ten in the morning. By noon it was hell, and the uniforms were wet again, not from rain or mist, but from perspiration. Over-night, while the infantry marched to its place, the guns had buried themselves in positions on the high ground nearest the river. My favourite mountain battery was set to look after a trench on the opposite bluff. In five minutes it had captured that trench of a company of infantry.

These big Russians had a good mile to go in the range of shrapnel fire. They were being kicked upstairs instead of downstairs, which is harder, especially on a hot day. When for a moment the mountain battery left them alone, they would bunch together at one side or the other, where the ascent was easier. Thus they made a good target again, and bang went a shrapnel over their heads, and wearily they spread out again under the commands of their gesticulating officers. Just when they thought that they had passed out of range, a burst of blue

smoke, with scattering fragments, hurried them on like the crack of a slave-driver's whip. It was a man chase, nothing more or less, with the gunners standing as easily to their guns as spectators to their glances.

II.

The expiring range flings westward a few detached ridges and hills, which are to the vast plain what rocky island outcroppings of a precipitous coast are to the adjacent sea. Between them gleams the steel track that caused the war; that marks the course of the main armies and is the first promise in all their strategy.

Blowing eastward at right angles to the railway is the Taitsze River, which makes a break in the range. The old Peking Road runs beside it. On the southern bank is a typical Chinese provincial capital. There the Russians had many storehouses and sidings. The last of the heights forms a barrier of defence to the east and south-east. These things made Liao-Yang a battleground—these things and a fortress at the terminus of the railway which must still cling to a hope of relief.

As from a pronouny you might see a naval battle beneath, so we saw the artillery duel of August 30 and 31. The town itself waited and held its breath. The only sign of action there was the military balloon, a yellow ball that rose higher than the old pagoda tower. To the southward you saw the movement of hospital and ammunition trains, and under the shade of groves and farmhouses the waiting units whose aspect said that the army was engaged.

The Plan of Attack.

All these were set like pattern-work within a fence of fire presently as safe from wounds and death as a library nook from a diving storm. Further on along the railroad is a camel's hump of rock, Chusan—which we of the Second Division had named "Kuropatkin's eye" from the heliograph we had seen there during the fight of the 28th. In a semicircle, of which that was the midway point, and the Taitsze River was the diameter, lay the Russian line of defence. The Second Army, which had fought its way along the railroad, was to extend over the plain to the left of the "eye" and enter Liao-Yang from that side. Eastward from the "eye" lay the hills and detached ridges which met the hills and detached ridges which merge into the range at right angles. Here is the "corner" among a chaos of heights, the Fourth Army, which had mastered the passes on the road from Takushan, came into position. On its right was the First Army, which had allowed its way with many flanking movements through the mountains, until at last it saw the plain. Shoulder to shoulder on the day the masters had set, all the problems each had had to solve became significantly past history.

That old question which we had ever asked in the months of our waiting in camp on our way from the Yalu—"Will Kuropatkin stand at Liao-Yang?"—was answered for the trouble of climbing to the top of a ridge by the flashing of five hundred guns, like the sparks from wood when a red-hot iron is drawn across it. That scene of armed strength, the most magnificent since the Germans were before Sedan, did not turn my thoughts to Kuropatkin, but to another general, the head of the Russian railroad system. The sweeping glance told you that Prince Hilkoff had "made good" with his single-track railroad.

It was strange to find the first great battle with modern arms in the suburbs of a Manchurian town, and strange to find here on this day a tribute to a Russian nobleman because he had learned railroading over vast expanses from bureau to locomotive in America; strange, too, and Oriental, that a correspondent attached to the Japanese army should see the operations of the Russian better than those of the Japanese side. For a group of foreigners had taken the place of Kuroki's army. They occupied the right end of the line resting on the Taitsze.

On the afternoon of the 29th, the Second Division had swung into position here very demonstratively, and on the night of the 29th it fell back in the quietest kind of a way, and crossing the Taitsze to join the Twelfth in Kuroki's flanking movement, left correspondents and attackers with their mentors to choose a place where they could see the plain for 20 miles around. In this relief map the only reduction to scale was the limits of our field-glances.

NEW ZEALAND RAILWAYS.
FLORAL FETE.
AT ELLERSBLIE RACECOURSE.

SATURDAY, 10th DECEMBER, 1904.

The following Additions and Alterations will be made to the Ordinary Time Table—Trains will run at frequent intervals between Auckland and Ellerslie Racecourse Platform from 10.20 a.m. until 7 p.m.

Passengers for and from Guelphing Branch by trains between the hours of 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. change trains at Penrose Junction.

Trains will run between Mt. Eden and Newmarket as required from 11.15 a.m. until 2 p.m. and from 4 p.m. until 6.30 p.m., passengers changing trains at Newmarket.

The 6.20 p.m. train from Auckland to Otahuhu will not run.

Special train will leave Otahuhu at 1.10 p.m., connecting at Penrose with train to Racecourse and Auckland.

A Special Train will leave Auckland for Mercer at 7.50 p.m., Penrose 8.20, arriving Mercer 10.15 p.m.

The 10.55 a.m. train Auckland to Helensville, the 12.30 p.m. train Helensville to Auckland, and the 6.10 p.m. train Auckland to Henderson will not run.

A Special Train will leave Auckland for Henderson at 8.20 p.m., arriving Henderson 9.25 p.m.

Trains will leave Racecourse Platform for Auckland from 4 p.m.

Return Fare from Auckland, Newmarket, and Mt. Eden (including Admission to Fete), 1/6.

Tickets may be purchased on 8th December.

The Auckland Goods Shed will be Closed from 10 a.m. on December 10th.

BY ORDER.

NEW ZEALAND RAILWAYS.
XMAS AND NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS.

Holiday Excursion Tickets will be issued from any station to any station on the Auckland Section from Saturday, 17th December, until Monday, 2nd January, 1905, inclusive, available for return up to Saturday, 18th February, 1905.

EXTRA EXPRESS TRAINS.

From Wednesday, 21st December, until Monday, 9th January, 1905, an extra Express Train will leave Auckland at 9 a.m. daily for Rotoma, Te Aroha, and Paeroa, arriving Te Aroha 2.20 p.m., Paeroa 3.5 p.m., and Rotoma 4.45 p.m.

From Thursday, 22nd December, until Tuesday, 16th January, 1905, an extra Express Train will leave Rotoma for Auckland at 10.5 a.m. daily, arriving Auckland 5.38 p.m. This train will connect at Morrinsville with trains for Tuzes Branch.

For full particulars as to train arrangements see posters and future advertisements.

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