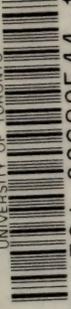


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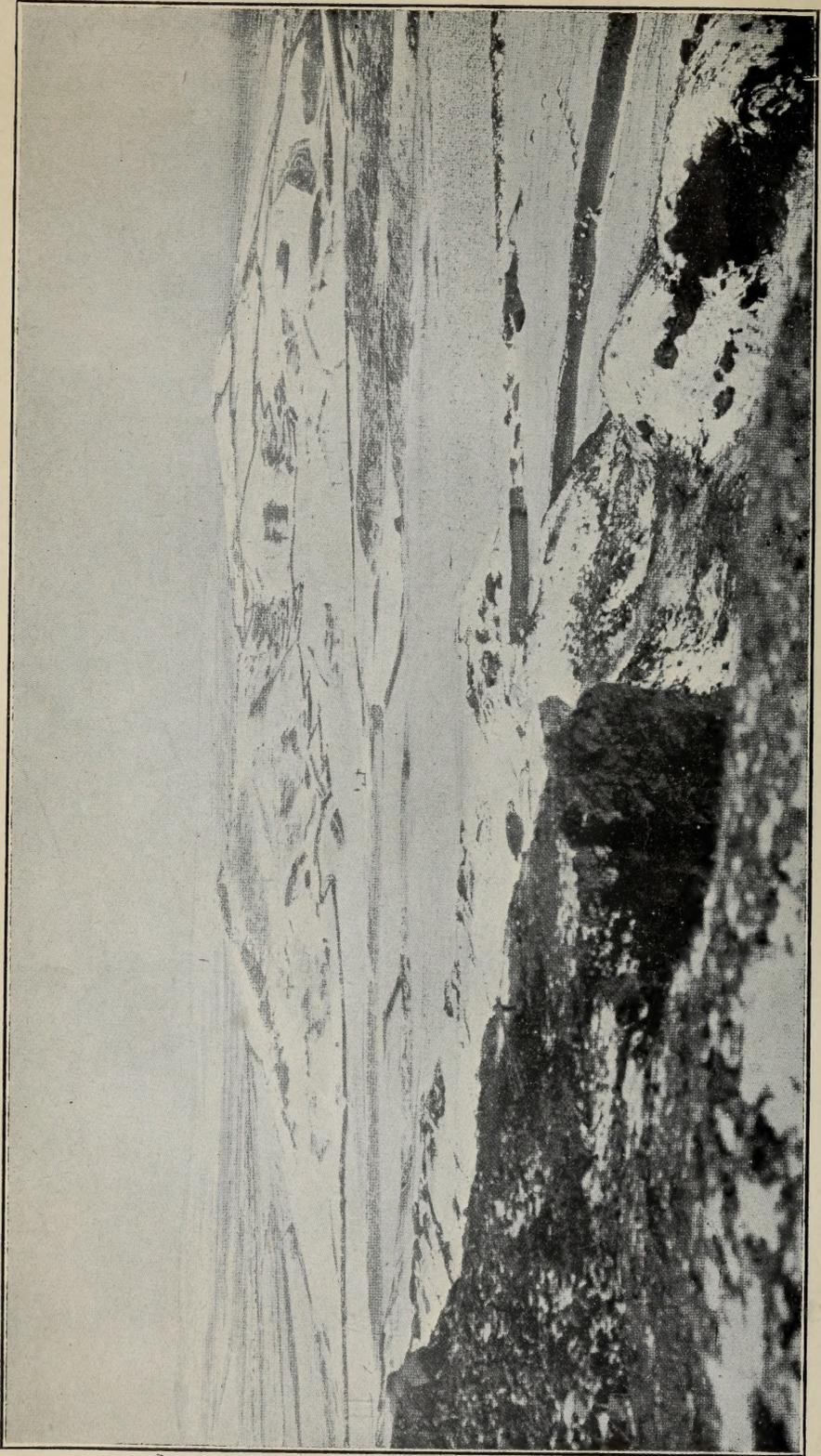


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THE BATTLE OF MUKDEN.



A VIEW FROM THE JAPANESE SIDE OF THE RUSSIAN POSITION ON PUTILOV AND ONE TREE HILLS.

[Taken in December, 1904.]

The preparation of this Volume was completed in 1914, but publication has been unavoidably delayed owing to the late war.

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OFFICIAL HISTORY
(NAVAL AND MILITARY)
OF
THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.
SAN-DE-PU, MUKDEN, The SEA of JAPAN.

PREPARED BY
THE HISTORICAL SECTION OF THE COMMITTEE
OF IMPERIAL DEFENCE.



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 22ND } North Sea.
 OCTOBER 25TH ... Admiral Alexeiev superseded by General Kuropatkin as commander-in-chief of land and sea forces.
 OCTOBER 30TH- } SECOND GENERAL ASSAULT UPON PORT ARTHUR.
 31ST }
 NOVEMBER 10TH... The Russian Field Force organized in three armies.
 NOVEMBER 26TH... THIRD GENERAL ASSAULT UPON PORT ARTHUR.
 DECEMBER 5TH ... CAPTURE OF 203 METRE HILL.
 DECEMBER 5TH- } DESTRUCTION OF THE RUSSIAN SHIPS IN PORT ARTHUR.
 9TH }
 DECEMBER 9TH- } Torpedo attacks upon the Russian battleship *Sevastopol*
 16TH } outside Port Arthur.
 DECEMBER 15TH... General Kondratenko killed at Port Arthur.
 DECEMBER 29TH... The Russian Second Pacific Squadron arrives at Madagascar.

1905.

- JANUARY 2ND ... SURRENDER OF PORT ARTHUR.
 JANUARY 9TH- } GENERAL MISHCHENKO'S RAID ON NEWCHUANG.
 16TH }
 JANUARY 25TH- } BATTLE OF SAN-DE-PU.
 29TH }
 FEBRUARY 15TH... The Russian Third Pacific Squadron leaves Libau.
 FEBRUARY 18TH- } BATTLE OF MUKDEN.
 MARCH 10TH }
 FEBRUARY 26TH... REPORT UPON THE DOGGER BANK INCIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION PUBLISHED.
 MARCH 1ST ... A Japanese division lands in North-Eastern Korea.
 MARCH 10TH ... The Japanese enter Mukden.
 MARCH 16TH ... THE RUSSIAN SECOND PACIFIC SQUADRON LEAVES MADAGASCAR.
 The Japanese enter Tieh-ling.
 General Kuropatkin superseded by General Linevich.

1905.

- MARCH 22ND ... The Russians halt at Hsi-ping-kai.
 APRIL 14TH ... THE RUSSIAN SECOND PACIFIC SQUADRON ARRIVES AT
 KAMRANH BAY.
 MAY 9TH... ... Junction of the Russian Second and Third Pacific
 Squadrons outside Van Fong Bay.
 MAY 14TH ... Admiral Rozhestvenski sails from Van Fong Bay.
 MAY 23RD ... Death of Admiral von Felkerzam.
 MAY 27TH-28TH BATTLE OF THE SEA OF JAPAN.
 JUNE 8TH ... The President of the United States urges Russia and
 Japan to negotiate for peace.
 JULY 4TH- } JAPANESE EXPEDITION TO SAKHALIN.
 AUGUST 30TH }
 AUGUST 9TH ... First Session of Peace Conference.
 SEPTEMBER 5TH ... TREATY OF PORTSMOUTH SIGNED.
 SEPTEMBER 13TH Armistice between the Japanese and Russian armies in
 Manchuria (became effective from noon on September
 16th).
 SEPTEMBER 18TH Agreement relating to the delimitation of the sphere of
 armistice on sea.
 OCTOBER 14TH ... TREATY OF PEACE RATIFIED.
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DIFFERENT NAMES FOR SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL ACTIONS DESCRIBED IN THIS
VOLUME.

Date.	English.	Russian.	Japanese.	French.	German.	Austrian.	Italian.
1905. January 9-16.	The raid on Newchuang (General Mishchenko's Raid).	The raid on Inkou.	The raid on { Syuso Eiko Newchwang. }	The raid on Inkéou.	The raid on Yin kou.	The raid on Inkou.	The raid on Incou.
January 25-28.	Sau-de-pu (Hei-kou-tai).	Sandepu.	Kokodai (Hei-kou-tai).	{ Sandepou. San-de-Pou. }	San de pu.	Sandepu.	Sandepù.
February 18- March 10.	} Mukden.	Mukden.	Hoten.	Moukden.	Mukden.	Mukden.	Mukden.
May 27.	The Sea of Japan. (Tsushima).	Tzusima.	The Sea of Japan. Nihon Kai Kaisen.	Tsoushima.	Tsusshima.	Tsusima.	Tsuscina.
July-August.	Sakhalin.	Sakhalin.	Karafuto.	Sakhaline.	Sachalin.	Sackalin.	Sakalin.

PREFACE.

JUNE, 1914.

THE third and final volume of this history comprises, as regards land operations, the accounts of the Russian cavalry raid on Newchuang and the battles of San-de-pu and Mukden. As regards naval events, it contains the account of the voyage of the Baltic Fleet and that of the battle of the Sea of Japan. Separate comments on each of these form part of the volume; and included in it will also be found the comments on the siege and defence of Port Arthur, which, for lack of space, were held over from Volume II. The subsidiary operations occurring during the whole war are also described.

As regards illustrations, the thanks of the Committee of Imperial Defence are due to the Russian General Staff for permission to reproduce the photograph of the Hai-cheng railway bridge, and to Mr. K. Ogawa, of Tokio, for Plates Nos. 47, 50, 53, and 57. For the sketches of the battles of San-de-pu and Mukden the Committee are indebted to Major B. Vincent, 6th (Innis-killing) Dragoons and to Major H. J. P. Browne, 5th Gúrkha Rifles; also to Mr. Norman Wilkinson, R.B.A., for his paintings of the battle of the Sea of Japan, which have been reproduced.

The appendices to this volume are bound up in separate pamphlet form and are included in the case of maps.

In addition to the Reports by British Officers, the principal works consulted in the preparation of this volume are:—

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THE OFFICIAL HISTORY OF THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR.

(NAVAL AND MILITARY.)

CHAPTER LVII.

THE MAIN OPERATIONS ON LAND UP TO THE END OF 1904—THE SITUATION AFTER THE BATTLE OF THE SHA HO—THE DISPATCH OF THE RUSSIAN SECOND PACIFIC SQUADRON FROM EUROPE.

(Plan 45 and Charts XIII, XIV and XV.)

WHILE the desperate struggle was being waged round Port Arthur during the months of November and December, 1904, in the operations of the field armies there occurred another of those pauses which were so marked a characteristic of the campaign.

The main operations. The situation on land from the battle of the Sha Ho till the end of 1904.

The battle of the Sha Ho had not altered the strategic situation, the main features of which had, indeed, only been accentuated by the failure of the Russians. So long as Port Arthur held out it remained imperative for the Russian commander to make a fresh effort to relieve the place, whilst its decreasing powers of resistance daily added urgency to the necessity for the attempt. The Japanese, on the other hand, still had no reason for trying to precipitate matters in the field; their more immediate task was to press on with the capture of the fortress, the fall of which would probably not only strike a decisive blow at their enemy's sea power, but would automatically bring to Marshal Oyama a very large accession of strength not otherwise obtainable. Thus, in spite of the fact that General Kuropatkin's numbers were being steadily increased, every day that now passed in inaction was on the whole detrimental to the Russian cause. With this great difference in the circumstances of the two sides the period up to the end of the year was spent by both armies almost entirely in recuperation. Condemned to inaction by the exhaustion conse-

quent on a fortnight's hard fighting, they were reduced to the task of maintaining their respective positions whilst making every effort to prepare for a renewal of the struggle. For some weeks, therefore, after the last shot had been fired in the battle of the Sha Ho practically all activity at the front was confined to strengthening the fortification of the lines held and to providing additional defences, whilst behind the firing lines both sides devoted their energies to replenishing losses in men and *matériel*, accumulating fresh stores of supplies and reorganizing the auxiliary services.

There is no doubt that the battle had proved a severe ordeal for General Kuropatkin's troops. The majority of the officers were not long in regaining confidence, but in spite of the well-known moral stamina of the Russian soldier it was some weeks before the rank and file recovered from the depressing influence of their recent defeat. The Russians. *Moral.* Wastage. Indeed, a feeling seems temporarily to have gained ground that the army was faced with a task beyond its powers. The two months' fighting, which included the battles of Liao-yang and the Sha Ho, had exacted a heavy toll from its strength, and at the beginning of November, before the wastage had been repaired, the number of infantry actually disposed upon the positions amounted to no more than nine hundred and forty-two officers and ninety thousand five hundred bayonets.* Many of the regiments now counted but little more than a thousand, and in one case the total strength of a regiment had sunk so low as eight hundred and sixty-six men. The number of guns also had been reduced, the field pieces now available only amounting to nine hundred and fifty-nine.† Of cavalry there were less than one hundred and seventy squadrons. Though of no material importance and not in any way modifying the strategical or tactical situation, the various reconnaissances and raids carried out during this long period of waiting were in one respect of decided value :

* This is exclusive of the troops which were in rear of the front line at this time and, presumably, mainly in the General Reserve :—The 1st East Siberian Rifle Division of the 1st Siberian Corps, the 17th and 18th East Siberian Rifle Regiments of the 2nd Siberian Corps, and one regiment of the 6th Siberian Corps.

† Of quick-firing guns, on the positions or with detached forces, five hundred and eighty ; in the artillery reserve, eighty-two ; under repair, ninety-seven. There were also in the artillery reserve forty-eight field guns of old pattern, thirty-six mortars, forty-eight mountain guns, forty-eight horse artillery guns, and twenty horse mountain guns.

they were beneficial in reviving the confidence of the troops, the frequent collisions and minor engagements providing a counter-acting influence against stagnation, and a good preparation for the reassumption of the offensive. For some time the possibility of Port Arthur not being able to withstand the onslaughts of General Nogi and the probable date of its fall were an unceasing source of speculation amongst the Russian soldiers along the Sha Ho. This subject, however, was for a time quite overshadowed by rumours of an extension of hostilities likely to be caused by the Dogger Bank incident which had marked the first stage of the voyage of the Second Pacific Squadron.*

The line upon which the Russians found themselves disposed after the battle of the Sha Ho and upon which they remained stationary for four months, was not, speaking generally, one which had been previously selected either for offence or defence. When

The Russian lines. fighting had ceased the combatants had been left in more or less close proximity to each other. Naturally their first efforts had then been to strengthen the localities held by them, and as time went on without any important operation being undertaken this strengthening continued. In fact the distinctive feature of the campaign during the months of November and December was the immense amount of field fortification carried out by both sides. The works grew in size and elaboration, their number being added to by the occasional struggles for minor tactical localities, each of which was at once placed in a state of defence by the victors. And it followed that the Russian defences, being for the most part growths of fortuitous origin instead of the development along predetermined lines of some definite scheme, became a complicated network of fortification which was not particularly well adapted even for passive defence, still less so for a more active policy. The position consisted of an almost continuous line of entrenchments stretching for a distance of some thirty-five miles, over which were crowded redoubts, lunettes and lengths of fire trench extending between defended villages. The field of fire from these works was in many cases bad, and in their arrangement little attention had been paid to the necessity for mutual support by fire, while manœuvre was rendered almost impossible by the maze of entanglements and other obstacles which grew up.

In those sections of the defences which were within rifle range

* The Dogger Bank incident occurred on the 21st October See pp. 26-7.
(4726b)

of the Japanese the troops lived actually in the trenches; but in other portions the front line works were as a rule only occupied by reliefs from units accommodated in underground shelters and huts somewhat to the rear. Owing to the hardness of the soil it was generally possible to excavate the trenches with vertical sides and to provide in them recesses and splinterproof shelters for various purposes; and where the Japanese fire did not allow of food and water being brought up from the rear, cooking places were built and wells were sunk in the fire trenches. The huts, either half or wholly sunk in the ground and roofed with a thickness of earth on timber, held from thirty to fifty men each.

The organization of the Russian supply services was a great difficulty at this time. The unusually prolonged period of rain in Northern Manchuria had rendered the carriage of provisions into Harbin so difficult that many of the contracts for the supply of food-stuffs made during the spring could not be carried out. Not only did the Chinese Authorities hamper the sale of provisions to the Russian troops; but the inhabitants themselves were unwilling either to sell their vehicles or to act as drivers; and frequent local strikes of labour added fresh obstacles. It sometimes happened, therefore, that the army consumed more food than was actually being delivered at the front, with the result that the stocks in the local depots ran out and the main magazines in Harbin became almost depleted. Nor were General Kuropatkin's anxieties confined to the threatened lack of food, for the approaching winter was a factor to be reckoned with. It was not long after the battle of the Sha Ho—on the 5th November—that the first fall of snow took place, and a month later the cold became so intense that the ground was frozen to a depth of several feet.* This low temperature caused considerable delay to the traffic on the railway. It also necessitated the issue to the troops of warm clothing and felt-lined boots, and of the latter there was not yet a sufficient stock.†

The problem of improving the communications now demanded serious attention. In November the branch railway to the Fushun mines which had been under construction for some time

* On the 5th December the temperature fell to zero (Fahrenheit).

† General Kuropatkin stated at the end of December that the army was still 300,000 pairs short.

was finished. A whole network of horse tramways was being laid radiating out from Su-chia-tun to the batteries of heavy guns, and a line was in December under construction from Fu-shun Junction to San-lung-yu; this was being built mainly to feed General Rennenkampf's force on the east. In that month also a tramway was contemplated from the Fu-shun branch line to Kang-ta-jen-shan, and by the end of the year a broad-gauge line from Su-chia-tun to Su-hu-chia-pu was open to traffic. Many of the roads were realigned, increased in width and provided with signposts; and at convenient points were established store depots, artillery parks and field hospitals, so that soon the plain between Mukden and the front line began to resemble the suburbs of some large city.

In spite of his two defeats, the Russian commander-in-chief even at the moment of failure at the Sha Ho had no intention of making a prolonged retirement and was on general principles fully determined upon a resumption of the offensive with the view of relieving Port Arthur. Indeed, at first his idea was that this could be undertaken in November. But during that month he expressed the intention of advancing to the attack about the middle of December, when the VIIIth Corps, then on its way, should have arrived from Europe, without waiting for the XVIth Corps or the three Rifle brigades which were expected at the front at the end of January, 1905, since he estimated that by that time all the infantry companies in the army would be brought up to a strength of one hundred and fifty rifles. He anticipated being then able to put three hundred and twenty battalions against the estimated force of two hundred and twenty or two hundred and forty battalions of the Japanese. In other words, at the end of November General Kuropatkin was willing to advance so soon as he could pit two hundred and twenty-five thousand bayonets against the one hundred and seventy to one hundred and ninety thousand of the enemy, or to risk the offensive with an estimated advantage of thirty-five thousand infantry.*

* The commander-in-chief's views are contained in a telegram of the 25th November to the Emperor, which is quoted in full in Appendix 1. General Kuropatkin was now commander-in-chief, directly under the Emperor and no longer subject to the control or influence of the Viceroy.

Until the arrival of the VIIIth Corps he had at his disposal the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th Siberian Corps and the 1st, Xth and XVIIth Corps,

[Continued on next page.]

Nevertheless, in the middle of December, though the VIIIth Corps had arrived at the front nearly two weeks previously, no advance was made. Instead, General Kuropatkin resolved, before committing himself definitely to any line of action, to discuss the whole question *ab initio*, and to obtain the opinions of the commanders of the three Manchurian Armies, not only upon the nature and details of the operation, but upon the question of when it should be carried out.* The reasons for the postponement of the intended movement at this juncture were, mainly, that the railway had not been able to work up to expectations in traffic; that the number of men and, especially, the amount of stores received at the front were not sufficient to enable the troops to move forward; that partly owing to the failure of the railway and partly owing to the weather and local difficulties already mentioned the army was short of supplies, clothing, tools and transport; and that time was required in order to train the fresh drafts coming in.

Upon the 19th December, therefore, the commander-in-chief called upon each of his three army commanders to submit an appreciation of the situation, his request being in the form of a series of questions. Such obvious points as the necessity for taking into account the plight of Port Arthur and the advisability of regarding the problem from the enemy's point of view were explicitly brought to notice, and it was stated that the total garrison of Port Arthur, including seamen, had been reduced to twelve thousand bayonets after the last assault, that ammunition was failing, and that all attempts to run ammunition through the blockade had failed.† No mention, how-

General Kuro-
patkin calls for
appreciations of
the situation.

in all nine army corps. At the time of writing this dispatch he estimated that Marshal Oyama had ten reinforced divisions against him.

Though the commander-in-chief in no sense ascribed his defeats to lack of men alone, as is evinced by the memorandum issued by him on the 26th October, before the battle of the Sha Ho was completely over, it appears that public opinion in Russia itself attributed them entirely to the supposed numerical superiority of the Japanese. And this fact considerably facilitated the provision of the reinforcements which were now to be sent to the front.

The complete text of the memorandum is given in Appendix 2. The reference to the part played by the defenders of Sevastopol and being played by those of Port Arthur is somewhat curious in view of the facts that the rôle of the Russian field army was now essentially offensive and that General Kuropatkin was fully alive to the necessity for attack.

* For a description of the reorganization of the Russian forces into three separate armies which had by now been carried out, see p. 10.

† The third general assault of the 26th-27th November.

ever, was made of the capture of 203 Metre Hill which had taken place on the 5th December. This event, which was not concealed by the Japanese, was of such importance that the news of it had been at once flashed over the world. And it is almost incredible that the Russian commander-in-chief in the field should have been unaware of it fourteen days after its occurrence.

The appreciation submitted by General Grippenbergr is of special significance, since that officer had later practically to carry out his own plan. The important points in it were that its author was emphatically of opinion that no general offensive action should be undertaken until the Russian forces were in an undisputable superiority, since it was essential that they should gain a decisive victory and not a partial success; that he estimated at the moment of writing that General Kuropatkin could pit two hundred and sixty-five thousand bayonets and twenty thousand sabres against the one hundred and seventy thousand bayonets and seven thousand two hundred sabres of the Japanese; and that he considered that this superiority—ninety-five thousand bayonets and twelve thousand eight hundred sabres—was insufficient to guarantee a success of the nature required. He recommended, therefore, that no advance should be made until the balance in favour of the Russians should by the arrival of the three Rifle brigades and the XVIth Corps be brought up to one hundred and sixty thousand bayonets and thirteen thousand sabres, and urged that the Russian main attack should be against the Japanese left flank. The two other army commanders were also in favour of postponing action, and agreed with General Grippenbergr in selecting the Japanese left flank as the objective of the main attack. It is interesting to note that on the 28th December, shortly after framing this appreciation, General Grippenbergr was so impressed by information received by him as to the Japanese activity on his front that he requested the commander-in-chief's permission to attack the village of San-de-pu at once, and drive the Japanese back from Hsiao-pei-ho, so as to clear his right flank. For this he proposed to employ the 14th Division of the VIIIth Corps—General Kossakovski's force—and General V. Grekov's detachment. Permission was refused.

General Kuropatkin announced his decision on the 31st December. All action was to be deferred until the commencement of the concentration in the theatre of war of the XVIth Corps, i.e., until the arrival in Mukden of the 25th Division, it

being assumed that the 41st Division—the other division of the corps—would follow in time to be employed. By this the proposed offensive was definitely and finally postponed until some time near the end of January. In its broad aspect the scheme outlined by the commander-in-chief was that the main attack should be against the Japanese left flank.*

The general advance postponed.

But since the battle of the Sha Ho another offensive operation had been projected. By the completion of the concentration of the 4th Don Cossack Cavalry Division at Mukden on the 17th October the forces had been increased by some five thousand sabres.† This great accession to the mounted

Projected cavalry raid under General Mishchenko against the Japanese communications.

strength at once led both the commander of the 6th Siberian Corps, to which the division was attached, and General Mishchenko to contemplate employing the cavalry against the communications of the enemy. The former was of opinion that a raid should be made round the Japanese left, down the left bank of the Hun Ho, in the direction of Yen-tai, and should be carried out simultaneously with the general advance which was at the time contemplated. General Mishchenko discussed the comparative value of movements round the Japanese right or left flank and recommended the latter, to be carried out down the right bank of the Hun Ho. The scheme was considered at General Head-Quarters, where the advantages of a cavalry raid in rear of the enemy, to be executed in conjunction with a general advance, were acknowledged, though the feasibility of carrying it out by the right bank of the Hun Ho before the river froze was doubted. In the early days of November, however, when the 6th Siberian Corps was transferred from the right flank of the army to the General Reserve in the centre, the idea was for the moment abandoned.

About this time General Kuropatkin, in order to give a rest

* For the outline of the scheme which actually formed the basis of the Russian action at San-de-pu, see p. 144.

† The 4th Don Cossack Cavalry Division, under Major-General Teleshov, consisted of the following:—The 19th, 24th, 25th, 26th Don, the 1st Argun and the Amur Cossack Regiments, and the 1st Don Artillery Division: in all, 4,963 sabres and 12 guns. Portions of this force appear to have arrived in the theatre of war considerably earlier, see Vol. II, p. 247. It was now placed at the disposal of General Sobolev, the commander of the 6th Siberian Corps, and was distributed in vedette duties on the Russian right flank, on the left bank of the Hun Ho.

to the cavalry units which had been actively employed for some time, decided to place them in reserve behind his front line.* They were collected under the command of General Mishchenko, and were in the middle of November distributed round Ku-cheng-tzu, and on the 17th December, the forage in this area having become exhausted, were moved westwards to Su-hu-chia-pu.

Meanwhile, although it had been dropped temporarily, the idea of a raid had not been given up. The units of the newly arrived 4th Don Cossack Cavalry Division were anxious to be employed actively; and Major-General Teleshov, at the end of November, approached General Mishchenko with suggestions for an operation to be executed in preparation for the general advance. The matter was again considered at Head-Quarters during December, and the question of a raid round both flanks of the Japanese was brought forward by Major-General Flug. But the commander-in-chief was of opinion that the operation should be carried out in conjunction with the projected general advance and postponed any action beyond minor mounted reconnaissances until the orders for the advance should be framed. Thus, by the end of the year, the project had been under consideration for two and a half months. In the words of the Russian official historian it had been discussed:—"By the staff, by the troops, by the passengers on the railway and by 'the man in the street' of Mukden"; and the supposed commander of the force about to operate had been beset by officers and correspondents desirous of accompanying it. Though excitement on the subject died down as Christmas approached without anything having been done, there had been sufficient talk to endanger secrecy; and it seems more than probable that the Japanese must have received information upon a subject which was a common topic in the Russian camps.

The various plans of the Russians having been dealt with, it is convenient to turn to the fresh organization of their forces which was undertaken at this time. When reference was last made to

* This reserve consisted of:—

The Caucasian Cavalry Brigade ...	{	The Terek-Kuban and 2nd Daghestan Cavalry Regiments.
The Ural Cossack Brigade ...	{	The 4th and 5th Ural Cossack Regiments.
The Trans-Baikal Cossack Brigade	{	The 1st Verkhne-Udinsk and 1st Chita Cossack Regiments.

The 1st and 2nd Trans-Baikal Cossack Batteries and the 20th Horse Artillery Battery. In all, it comprised thirty-six squadrons and eighteen horse artillery guns.

the subject—during the preparation for the offensive preceding the battle of the Sha Ho—it had been the intention to form a Second Manchurian Army under the command of General Grippenbergh, in addition to that already under General Kuropatkin.* The formation of this second army, however, had not been completed, nor had its commander designate left Europe when the Russians advanced in October, though many of the units of which it was to be composed, notably the 6th Siberian Corps, were at the front during the action and were actually employed. After the battle when further heavy reinforcements had to be sent out from Russia, it was found necessary to have recourse to a fresh mobilization. And at the end of October or the beginning of November it was decided that the whole of the field troops should be re-arranged in three separate armies under General Kuropatkin as supreme commander. It so happened, therefore, that the previously contemplated division of the forces into two armies was not carried into effect. On the 10th November General Kuropatkin issued his first orders for the new arrangement, the details of which are not here quoted, for they were amended within a month.

By the 3rd December the whole of the VIIIth Corps had reached the front, with some reserve battalions and four squadrons of Cossacks, and on the 6th December the commander-in-chief issued amended orders for the new army organization.† The Western and Eastern Forces were to cease to exist as such, the commanders of these two bodies—Generals Baron Bilderling and Stakelberg—being reappointed to the units which they had formerly commanded, the XVIIth and 1st Siberian Corps respectively, and the whole force was to be divided into three

* See Vol. II, pp. 246-7.

† The VIIIth Corps was not fully concentrated until the 15th. The reserve battalions were of the 6th (Yeniseisk), 7th (Krasnoyarsk), 11th (Semipalatinsk), and 12th (Barnaul) Siberian Infantry Regiments.

These additions brought up the strength of the troops at General Kuropatkin's disposal to—

321 battalions
171½ squadrons
1,076 guns
32 machine guns
19 companies of sappers.

The infantry was still 50,000 bayonets short of establishment though 15,000 of the casualties had been replaced.

separate armies. Their composition was, on broad lines, to be as follows:—

First Manchurian Army—General Linevich.

- 1st Siberian Corps.
- 2nd Siberian Corps.
- 3rd Siberian Corps.
- 4th Siberian Corps.
- 71st Division of the 5th Siberian Corps.
- Composite Siberian Infantry Brigade.
- 5th and 6th Trans-Baikal Cossack Infantry Battalions.
- Trans-Baikal Cossack Division.
- Siberian Cossack Division.
- Primorsk Dragoon Regiment.

Second Manchurian Army—General Grippenbergh.

- VIIIth Corps (recently arrived).
- Xth Corps.
- 5th Siberian Corps (less the 71st Division).
- 4th Don Cossack Cavalry Division.
- 2nd Brigade Orenburg Cossack Division.
- 1st Orenburg Cossack Regiment.
- 1st Argun Cossack Regiment.
- Amur Cossack Regiment.
- East Siberian Pontoon Battalion.

Third Manchurian Army—General Baron Kaulbars.

- Ist Corps.
- XVIIth Corps.
- 6th Siberian Corps.
- 2nd Independent Cavalry Brigade.
- Ural Trans-Baikal Cossack Division.
- Caucasian Cavalry Brigade.
- Ussuri Cossack Regiment.
- 10th Orenburg Cossack Regiment.

This was the second reorganization which the Russian field forces had undergone within four months, since the first general action at Liao-yang, and the third change ordered. At Liao-yang their strength had been divided into two main fractions—the Southern and Eastern Groups, under Generals Zarubaiev and Bilderling respectively. At the battle of the Sha Ho there had still been two main fractions—the Western and Eastern Forces, under Generals Bilderling and Stakelberg; but one commander had then

been changed and the composition of the fractions had been altered, whilst one fraction—that under General Bilderling—had operated on the west instead of as formerly on the east. Now, in December, the forces were divided into three main portions—not one of which exactly corresponded to those formerly existing, and all of which were under commanders who were strange to the troops under them and had so far taken no part in the field operations.* There were, no doubt, reasons which rendered these changes necessary; but they cannot have failed to militate against the unity of thought and coherence of policy which are essential to the higher leading in great battles.

As regards the disposition of the troops during the winter, so many minor changes were constantly taking place that it is not possible definitely to describe the position of the field forces for the whole period between the battles of the Sha Ho and Sande-pu. The most that can be done is to select a date by which the bulk of the changes as laid down on the 6th December had been carried into effect, and to review the situation at that juncture.

Towards the latter half of December the Russians lay, generally speaking, along a continuous line at right angles to the railway and crossing it at the Sha Ho bridge. On the right, under General Grippenbergh, was the Second Manchurian Army, with its western flank protected by General Kossakovski's detachment on the right bank of the Hun Ho.† The remaining troops of this army comprised General V. Grekov's cavalry and part of the 5th Siberian Corps in the front line, from the Hun almost to the railway, and the VIIIth and Xth Corps in rear.‡ From just west of the railway the Third Manchurian Army under General Kaulbars carried on the line, with the XVIIth Corps on the right, the 6th Siberian Corps in the centre, and the Ist Corps on the left. Behind the right rear of this army—but soon to be incorporated with the Second Manchurian Army—stood the reconstituted cavalry

* General Linevich had been Governor of the Pri-Amur Command, in which post his activities had been practically limited to reconnoissance, whilst Generals Grippenbergh and Kaulbars came out direct from Russia to take up their posts. General Linevich assumed command on the 10th November, General Grippenbergh on the 13th December, and General Kaulbars on the 15th.

† This detachment amounted to 4,223 bayonets, 1,039 sabres, and 16 guns.

‡ General V. Grekov's force consisted of 3,580 sabres and 18 guns.

detachment of General Mishchenko.* The eastern portion of the line was held by General Linevich's First Manchurian Army with the 4th, 2nd, and 3rd Siberian Corps in front, in the order named, and the 1st Siberian Corps in second line. The left of this army may be taken as resting in the neighbourhood of the Kao-tai Ling, though a detachment belonging to it under General Rennenkampf was some eight miles to the south-east, guarding the mountain roads in the neighbourhood of Ching-ho-cheng.† Farther to the east again was the small command of Lieutenant-Colonel Madritov. General Head-Quarters were at Huang-shan.

Considerable difficulty was experienced in estimating the strength and disposition of the Japanese forces, more especially as very little information was obtainable as to the reinforcements or drafts that had reached the front during the war; but on a comparison of all the data available during November it was thought that not more than thirty thousand men had come up. The fact that the Japanese battalions had up to now always seemed to be at full strength was taken to indicate a corresponding weakness in their reserves. On the 19th November the following memorandum giving the latest information about the enemy was circulated by General Head-Quarters:—

Russian
information
about the
Japanese.

son of all the data available during November it was thought that not more than thirty thousand men had come up. The fact that the Japanese battalions had up to now always seemed to be at

“ Oku's army, in strength about sixty battalions and thirty squadrons, is on the left flank and is opposed to our 5th and 6th Siberian Corps, the XVIIth Corps, and part of the Xth Corps. In the centre are the 5th and 10th Divisions of Nodzu's army, in strength about thirty-two battalions, opposed by the Xth Corps and Gerngross's detachment.‡ To the east of the line Yen-tai mines—Erh-tao-kou is Kuroki's army of three divisions and several *Kobi* brigades; of these, one or two infantry divisions, with the same number of *Kobi* brigades, are opposing the detachments under Generals Zarubaiev, Mishchenko and Stakelberg;§ to the east of Pien-niu-lu-pu about two *Kobi* brigades of Kuroki's army are opposing General Rennenkampf

* 3,742 sabres; 12 guns.

† 15,920 bayonets; 3,285 sabres; 44 guns.

‡ The Xth Corps, prior to the 19th December, was in the front line on the east of the railway, and General Gerngross's detachment was on Putilov and One Tree Hills. See Vol. II, p. 484.

§ General Mishchenko was at this time still in the eastern portion of the battlefield.

and Lieutenant-Colonel Madritov. One or two divisions of Kuroki's army, twelve to twenty-four battalions, are formed as a General Reserve and are north of the Yen-tai mines. This reserve may be used either against our left flank or against our centre. Prisoners affirm that the Japanese have lost heavily in the late engagements, and that the companies are a long way short of their full strength, while documentary evidence points to a considerable percentage of sick and wounded. The Japanese army is suffering from a dearth of supplies and from the cold nights. During the fighting of the 16th October, three regiments of the 5th and 10th Divisions were driven from their positions, and in addition to losing fourteen field guns and a machine gun suffered very heavily in killed and wounded. Judging from the mental condition of the prisoners this bloody fight has exercised a staggering effect upon the Japanese."

The memorandum concluded with an expression of hope that the Japanese might receive many more such lessons in the future, especially as the Russians were superior in numbers and had greater war experience; that the lessons to be learnt from the recent reverse might be taken to heart by the troops; and that it might be made clear to them that further efforts were required in order to relieve Port Arthur, and to prevent the enemy from gaining time to make good his losses.

According to later intelligence obtained towards the end of December the Japanese forces were supposed to be distributed in three lines. Thus, as will be seen, the information regarding the enemy at the disposal of the Russians was practically correct except that the strength of their General Reserve was slightly overestimated, that no mention was made of their cavalry force holding the left flank and that, though distributed in depth, their armies were not, strictly speaking, in three lines.

About the actions of the Japanese at this time there is but little information beyond the fact that they exerted every effort to make good their losses and prepare for a resumption of hostilities. Their casualties during the battle of the Sha Ho had been far less

than those of the Russians and had also been less in relation to the total strength engaged. As compared with the Russians, however, they were in one way handicapped in the race to produce fighting men for their field army. Not only had they fewer

The Japanese reinforcements. Strength.

numbers upon which to draw : they were simultaneously involved in a siege, the conduct of which was the first consideration and was proving a severe drain on the sources of reinforcement that were available. Thus the 7th Division, which was the only regular unit to reach the theatre of war during the period between the battle of the Sha Ho and the end of the year and was the last of the regular divisions, could not be spared for Marshal Oyama's force and had been sent at once to join General Nogi's army outside Port Arthur.* Nevertheless, numerous drafts, of which no record has been published, were landed in the country and pushed up to the front, so that, as suspected by the Russians, the units in the fighting line were probably brought up to above their establishment. The total strength of the Japanese forces at the end of December appears to have been about two hundred thousand men of all arms.

Though there are no records available of Marshal Oyama's intentions at this time, it is evident from the intrinsic nature of the strategic situation and from the fact that his main forces remained inactive until attacked by the Russians in January 1905,

that, whatever his desire, he could not precipitate matters and had perforce to wait till the fall of

Port Arthur should release the Third Army before he pressed on again. Moreover, without some urgent strategic incentive, such as that which drove the Russians to action, the weather was too severe for active operations. The alternative of detaching force from the field army in order to accelerate the reduction of Port Arthur was open to serious objection. Since the Japanese armies were already outnumbered any diminution of their strength might have been dangerous, while the transport of the detachment by rail might have caused some difficulty on the railway. Moreover, it was not men that General Nogi needed so much as heavy siege artillery, of which there was none with the field armies.

The defences held by the Japanese were simple in character in comparison with those of the Russians and were adapted for active defence as well as for passive resistance. At the villages they consisted of breastworks furnished with head-cover ; while

* The 7th Division landed at Dalny on the 18th November. The 8th Division, it will be remembered, had reached Liao-yang on the 13th October during the battle of the Sha Ho. With it, or a little later, arrived a *Kobi* brigade. The 8th *Kobi* Brigade arrived shortly afterwards.

between the villages were fire trenches of low command. In front of the trenches, at distances varying from twenty to eighty yards, ran a belt of plain or barbed wire entanglement, or of abattis or *chevaux de frise* with wire interlaced. The guns were placed in pits behind or between the villages, and alternative positions were prepared so as to provide frontal or enfilade fire. The troops allotted to the defence of each section lived in bombproof shelters close behind the firing line; and so excellent were the arrangements for fuel, food, and clothing, that the men suffered but little if any discomfort, despite the rigour of the Manchurian nights.* Wood was abundant, and no difficulty was found in the construction of splinterproofs, different kinds of shelters and convenient ammunition stores. Round about the village of Lin-sheng-pu, the hostile outposts were so close that conversation on one side was often audible to the other; and by tacit agreement the men of either army were permitted to draw water from a well in the middle of the village without being molested. Elsewhere, too, both Russian and Japanese soldiers went to and from the river unarmed. Occasionally, however, national feeling triumphed over courtesy, and free fights with fists are stated to have occurred more than once upon the river bank.

There was no great change in the composition of the Japanese forces and their disposition remained much the same as it had been immediately after the end of the battle of the Sha Ho.† Towards the latter part of December it was as follows:—

Disposition of
the Japanese
armies.

The First Army extended from a hill to the west of Shang-shih-chiao-tzu, on the extreme right, through Hsia-ping-tai-tzu—Pagoda Hill being held as an advanced post—to the neighbourhood of Ho-ma-tang.

The Fourth Army carried on the line westward through Chang-ling-tzu to Ku-chia-tzu.

The Second Army stretched from Ku-chia-tzu across the Mandarin Road and the railway, crossing the Sha Ho at Lamu-tun and Lin-sheng-pu to Wan-chia-yuan-tzu on the left.

* This state was not reached until sufficient time had passed to allow for the perfection of arrangements. The description, strictly speaking, applies only to the Japanese Second Army, but it may be taken as typical of the whole line, though the defences of the other two armies were more elaborate.

† See Vol. II, p. 486.

The 1st Cavalry Brigade was strengthened by units of all arms and held a line of villages running from the west of the Second Army through Li-ta-jen-tun—San-de-pu—Hei-kou-tai—Niu-chu—Ma-ma-kai* and some minor hamlets.

The 2nd Cavalry Brigade was on the extreme left round the village of Wu-pa-niu-lu between the Hun Ho and the Pu Ho.†

The General Reserve, of the 8th Division and the 8th *Kobi* Brigade were about Yen-tai, the latter unit being transferred to Lang-tung-kou before Christmas. The 5th Division (of the Fourth Army), also directly under the commander-in-chief, was at Shih-li-ho.

General Head-Quarters were at Yen-tai.

Besides these troops in the main line there was also the 9th *Kobi* Brigade echeloned in the neighbourhood of Cheng-chang slightly behind the right. This brigade had by this time already made its influence felt by an attack on the Russian left flank on the 24th November, which will shortly be described. Its arrival in the theatre of active operations merits special note because it was the nucleus of that new Japanese army whose appearance later, during the battle of Mukden, has to a certain extent been shrouded in mystery. The 1st *Kobi* Division, of the 6th and 9th *Kobi* Brigades, originally under the command of Major-General Hasegawa, landed in the country at some time previous to the battle of the Sha Ho.‡ At first it had been charged with the protection of the northern frontier of Korea against a possible attack from the Liao-tung Peninsula, and its main body was temporarily retained at An-tung. When the battle of the Sha Ho ended with the Japanese right considerably overlapped by the Russian left the An-tung—Feng-huang-cheng—Lien-shan-kuan—Yen-tai mines line of communication of the Japanese First Army appeared to be in some danger. The 9th *Kobi* Brigade was therefore sent forward to entrench itself on

* Ma-ma-kai is spelled Ma-ma-chieh on p. 486, Vol. II, and on Strategical Map 5.

† This cavalry brigade had been on the extreme right flank of the line during the battle of the Sha Ho and was on the 17th October attached to the First Army. The exact date of its transfer to the left flank is not known, but it appeared in this quarter some weeks before the battle of San-de-pu.

‡ The 6th *Kobi* Brigade consisted of the 13th, 23rd and 48th *Kobi* Regiments, and the 9th *Kobi* Brigade of the 7th, 19th and 36th *Kobi* Regiments.

the line Ai-yang-cheng—Sai-ma-chi in order to protect the communications, while the 6th *Kobi* Brigade occupied a position about Cho-san near the Ya-lu, to defend the Korean frontier from an attack from the north. Subsequently, in November, the former brigade advanced up to Cheng-chang and entrenched itself more or less in line with the right of the army; and towards the end of December it was still in this neighbourhood.

To revert to the active operations which took place before the end of the year, although there was a succession of minor engagements and an almost daily exchange of artillery fire, the only fighting of any real importance occurred towards the end of November. The Narrative of active operations. commander of the 9th *Kobi* Brigade, which had by then been pushed up near to Cheng-chang, The Japanese attack General Rennenkampf. receiving information that there was an important Russian supply and ordnance depot at San-lung-yu, decided to attack the Russians near Ching-ho-cheng. Established in the neighbourhood of this place was part of General Rennenkampf's force, consisting of some five thousand bayonets, two thousand sabres and forty-two guns. The action began on the 24th November with a spirited assault on the Russian left and centre, during which the Japanese got home with the bayonet but were repulsed towards evening and drew off with loss. A night attack met with no better result. On the 25th the Japanese renewed the attempt, but their artillery was soon dominated by that of the Russians, and they were again driven back. About four o'clock, under cover of a violent snowstorm, they pressed forward once more, to meet with no greater success than before, and fighting ceased towards 7 p.m. The loss to the Russians during the day amounted to nine killed and fifty-seven wounded.

During the next three days the Japanese again and again renewed their efforts. On one occasion, screened by falling snow, they almost succeeded in turning the right of the Russian position; the Russian artillery fire, however, again discounted their determination and they finally drew off about midday on the 28th, leaving two hundred and thirty dead on the field. The Russians lost eleven killed and sixty-two wounded. On the Russian side a noteworthy feature of the actions of these few days was the improvement in fighting value shown by the infantry of the 5th Siberian Corps, composed chiefly of reservists, and by the Cossacks.

The news of this success at once drew from General Linevich telegraphic orders that General Rennenkampf should push down the Tai-tzu to Pen-hsi-hu, where he ought to come in touch with the flank of the 3rd Siberian Corps. This action was at first approved by the commander-in-chief, but on further consideration he became fearful lest General Rennenkampf should be cut off and countermanded the movement. General Rennenkampf, however, had already marched off in accordance with General Linevich's order, and having discovered that the Japanese had halted about eight miles south-east of Ching-ho-cheng attacked them on the 29th, drove them back a mile, and followed up next day. Though the Japanese again offered a stubborn resistance, numbers were against them, and they were once more compelled to retreat, pursued by some Mounted Scout detachments and four squadrons of the 2nd Nerchinsk Cossacks, who cut the Japanese telegraph line in the Tai-tzu valley. The retreating troops set fire to two of their own supply depots, and finally retired towards Cheng-chang, leaving fifty dead behind them. By this time General Linevich, having been apprised of General Kuropatkin's decision, recalled General Rennenkampf by telegram. The infantry were to retire at once to Ching-ho-cheng and to leave the pursuit and reconnaissance to the mounted troops. The bulk of the force accordingly fell back to that place, having lost during the week's fighting twenty-three killed and one hundred and thirty wounded.

It has been seen that though the Russian commander-in-chief was impressed with the general necessity of attacking the Japanese soon, and within two months had twice made up his mind to advance, the actual execution of the operation was finally put off till the end of the year. This was not due to the fact that he had not by December obtained the numbers originally estimated to be necessary. It rather seems that, owing to the causes described, his troops were still so deficient in all that goes to equip a properly constituted force that they were unfit to undertake the offensive. But, apart from this material reason for delay, there seems to be some doubt whether General Kuropatkin fully appreciated the value of the time factor, and did not over-estimate the power of resistance of Port Arthur. From his writings, also, it does not appear that he at any time realized the

Observations
on the
operations during
the end of 1904.

paramount importance, on account of the naval force sheltering behind its guns, of relieving the fortress.* Nevertheless, the closing days of 1904 were marked by a recrudescence of the offensive spirit, and it was fostered by the inactivity of the Japanese, which led to the belief that they had shot their bolt. That they would interfere with the projected offensive was not now considered probable. In fact, three days before making known his final decision as to the postponement of his own action General Kuropatkin instructed his three army commanders to be on their guard lest the enemy might by a sudden movement to the rear partly avoid the full force of the blow to be aimed against them. All idea of a retirement was renounced. General Grippenbergh, indeed, went so far as to promise, at the festival of the 59th (Liublin) Regiment, never to give the order to retire.

The time has now come to leave the narrative of the land operations and naval events which took place in the theatre of war during 1904, and to turn to the great strategic action which had for eight months loomed in the background as a prospective menace to the whole of the Japanese plan of campaign and had for two and a half months been actually in progress—the movement of a fresh Russian fleet to the Far East. Though at the end of the year this fleet was still very far from the principal scene of activity, its growing influence upon the course of the campaign has been clearly seen.

To follow the story of the Baltic Fleet, or as it is more correctly called, the Second Pacific Squadron it is necessary to revert to the outbreak of hostilities.† It will be remembered that at the beginning of the war in February 1904, the naval reinforcements which had already reached the Red Sea on their way to join the Russian Pacific Fleet in eastern waters were at once

* The necessity for doing something to assist Port Arthur in order to appease public opinion is mentioned in the *Russian Official History*.

† The official designation of this force was "The Second Squadron of the Pacific Ocean Fleet," the vessels actually in Far Eastern waters forming "The First Squadron of the Pacific Ocean Fleet." From the 2nd May to the 9th October, 1904, the First Squadron was commanded by Vice-Admiral Bezobrazov, and from the 10th October, 1904, to the 1st January, 1905, by Rear-Admiral Iessen. Both these officers were stationed at Vladivostok and their command was consequently purely nominal. After the fall of Port Arthur the First Squadron, as such, ceased to exist; but the Second Squadron retained its denomination.

recalled when news of the first engagement reached St. Petersburg.* For some weeks after this no steps were taken towards the formation of a fresh fleet, and although an impetus seems to have been given to the work on the new cruisers which were under construction, no special effort was made to hasten the completion of the battleships.† In April, however, after the loss of the *Petropavlovsk*, a more vigorous spirit animated the Russian naval policy. It was at last decided that if the command of the sea was to be kept in dispute a strong reinforcement must be sent out to the seat of war, and on the 2nd May the command of this as yet unformed naval force was entrusted to Rear-Admiral Zinovi Petrovich Rozhestvenski. This officer was then serving as chief of the Naval Head-Quarters Staff, a position which he continued to hold, Rear-Admiral Virenius being appointed to carry out the duties of the post during his absence. A week later Rear-Admiral Enkvist was selected as a junior Flag officer; on the 23rd of the month Rear-Admiral von Felkerzam received a similar appointment; and soon afterwards a special committee was appointed to deal with the work of organizing the new squadron. In the meantime a comprehensive report on the condition of the naval forces in the Far East had been received from Vice-Admiral Skrudlov, who had succeeded Admiral Makarov as commander-in-chief of the Pacific Fleet, requesting that a force more powerful than the Japanese Combined Fleet and accompanied by auxiliary vessels of all kinds should be dispatched as quickly as possible. The new commander-in-chief even specified the vessels which he wished sent out.‡

At this time the naval position in the Baltic Sea, so far as the

* See Vol. I, pp. 35 and 40. These reinforcements consisted of the *Oslyabya*, the *Dmitri Donskoi*, the *Avrora*, seven destroyers and four torpedo boats.

† Towards the end of February, 1904, a Committee was formed under the Presidency of Rear-Admiral the Grand Duke Alexander Mikhailovich for the purpose of raising money by voluntary subscription for the increase of the fleet. The fund thus started remained open until 1906, and the total sum raised amounted to £1,840,000. Of this, £1,660,000 was expended on the construction of eighteen large torpedo boat destroyers and four submarines; but none of these vessels was completed in sufficient time to take part in the war. Early in 1904, also, negotiations were opened with the Chilian and Argentine Republics with the object of purchasing certain armoured cruisers belonging to those countries, and they continued throughout the year. In the autumn great hopes were entertained that the purchases would be effected, and it was not until January, 1905, that the two Powers definitely refused to part with the vessels.

‡ Admiral Skrudlov reached Vladivostok on the 22nd May. See Vol. I, p. 370.

number and classes and the condition of the Russian ships were concerned, was as follows:—

Battleships.—The *Oslyabya*, a modern first-class battleship, sister to the *Peresvyet*, was at Libau almost ready for sea. The *Imperator Alexandr III*, a new first-class battleship of nearly the same class as the *Tzesarevich*, was lying at Cronstadt ready for sea should her trials—already commenced—prove satisfactory. Her sisters, the *Borodino* and *Knyaz Suvorov*, which had been launched in September 1901 and September 1902, respectively, were incomplete, but it was hoped that they would be finished late in the summer. The *Orel*, another of the same class launched in July 1902, was still in the hands of her builders at St. Petersburg, but with hard work might be made ready by the autumn; while the *Slava*, the last of her class, which had been launched in August 1903, could not be got ready until the following year. In addition to these modern vessels there were in the Baltic four other battleships of older design and less power:—The *Sisoi Veliki*, *Navarin*, *Imperator Nikolai I*, and *Imperator Alexandr II*, all undergoing repairs which might be completed during the summer.

Cruisers.—Of modern first-class cruisers there were two—the *Aurora*, of the same type as the *Pallada*, ready for sea, and the *Oleg*, of the *Bogatuir* class, which had been launched the previous year and was being pressed forward. Of an older type were the *Svyetlana*, a second-class protected cruiser launched in 1896, whose boilers were under repair, the *Pamyat Azova*, *Admiral Kornilov*, *Admiral Nakhimov*, *Dmitri Donskoi*, and *Vladimir Monomakh* built in the eighties, all slow of speed and not carrying modern guns. Two small modern cruisers, the *Zhemchug* and *Izumrud* of the *Novik* type, launched the previous autumn were under completion at St. Petersburg.

Armoured Coast Defence Vessels.—The *General Admiral Apraxin*, *Admiral Ushakov* and *Admiral Senyavin* were comparatively new ships and were armed with modern guns; but, since they had been built for service in home waters, they were not included in the Second Pacific Squadron.

Destroyers.—There were about thirty torpedo boat destroyers and torpedo boats which might possibly be got ready to go out with the squadron.

Auxiliaries.—The transport *Kamchatka* was being fitted out as a

repair ship, and a number of fast merchant vessels, several of which were armed, were purchased in order to act as fleet auxiliaries.*

Besides her naval strength in the Baltic, Russia possessed a force in the Black Sea. This consisted of seven battleships five of which were rated as first-class, although only three were modern vessels, and a number of destroyers and torpedo boats ready for sea. By her treaty obligations, however, she was prohibited from passing these vessels through the Dardanelles.

The difficulties of fitting out the new squadron were increased by the dearth of skilled workmen, since the Baltic yards had been denuded of many of their best men, who had been sent to Port Arthur and Vladivostok. Moreover it was far from easy to find

trained officers and crews, and many important posts, particularly in the engineering branch, had to be filled by reservists who had received but little sea training. On paper the list of ships looked formidable, but to weld them into a real

fighting force capable of acting together and fit to meet the tried fleet under Admiral Togo was an almost superhuman task. While the new vessels required exhaustive trials, the crews needed months of steady training for which there was no time: it is therefore hardly a matter for wonder that the squadron was unfortunate from the very first. On the 21st May the *Orel* for some unexplained reason nearly capsized, taking a list of twenty-three degrees and shipping so much water that she could not be got into dock for a week.† During the month of June the *Navarin*, *Admiral Nakhimov*, and *Sisoi Veliki* were commissioned, and on the 25th August Admiral Rozhestvenski was able to take a certain number of his ships out of Cronstadt and to carry out manœuvres lasting five days.‡ On their way back to Cronstadt these ships

* It was originally intended that four of these vessels—the *Don*, *Ural*, *Terek* and *Kuban*—should be sent out to the Far East in company with the *Smolensk* and *Peterburg* of the Volunteer Fleet in order to operate with the Vladivostok cruisers against the Japanese communications. This idea, however, was abandoned and the vessels were sent for a trial cruise to the Atlantic Ocean and the Red Sea respectively.

† The *Orel* had met with a series of mishaps in the previous autumn.

‡ Battleships: *Knyaz Suvorov* (Flag), *Imperator Alexandr III*, *Osl'yabya* (Flag of Rear-Admiral von Felkerzam), *Sisoi Veliki*, *Navarin*.

Cruisers: *Admiral Nakhimov*, *Avrora*, *Dmitri Donskoi*, *Svyetlana*.

Dispatch Vessel: *Almaz* (Flag of Rear-Admiral Enkvist).

Destroyers: *Blestyashchi*, *Bezuprechni*, *Byedovi*, *Bodri*, *Buistri*, *Burni*, *Bravi*.

Transports: *Kitai*, *Koreya*, *Knyaz Gorchakov*.

coaled and filled up with provisions and stores; and on the 8th September they were inspected by the Emperor. Three days later they left for Reval, where they were joined by the *Borodino* and soon afterwards by the *Zhemchug*, *Izumrud*, *Kamchatka* and *Anaduir*. The *Orel* was the last of the battleships to join the flag, and with her arrival the Second Pacific Squadron was complete except for the first-class protected cruiser *Oleg*. During her trials, this vessel had cracked one of her cylinders so badly that she could not be made ready for sea for several weeks. The *Izumrud* too was found to be in such an unfinished condition that the admiral preferred to leave her behind to follow on with the *Oleg*. On the 9th and 10th October the squadron was again inspected by the Emperor at Reval, and on Tuesday, the 11th, it left for Libau, its last port of call in Russia.

Of the many difficulties which Admiral Rozhestvenski would be called upon to surmount during his voyage to the Far East, that of providing his squadron with sufficient supplies, particularly of coal, was perhaps the most serious. Except in the case of Great Britain, which country had laid down certain rules as to supplies to belligerents and definitely limited the amount of coal which could be taken on board, the attitude of the neutral Powers was as yet a matter of conjecture. Therefore, since British ports could be of no assistance and France was known to hold less rigid views upon the rights of belligerents, it was decided to fall back upon her generosity wherever it was not possible to make use of ports belonging to less powerful nations which would not be likely to raise the questions of neutrality in an acute form; but coaling operations were to be carried on so far as possible outside territorial waters. In accordance with this plan Tangier, in Morocco, was chosen as the first rendezvous. For the supply of coal a contract was placed with the Hamburg-Amerika Line, and this company dispatched colliers to await the squadron at the various ports of call. Between September, 1904, and January, 1905, the number of these vessels that left Cardiff was fifty-two, while eighteen sailed from Emden.

On Saturday, the 15th October 1904, the Second Pacific Squadron, in four divisions, set out from Libau on its long voyage.* Two

*

SECOND PACIFIC SQUADRON.

Battleships: *Knyaz Suvorov* (Flag of Vice-Admiral Rozhestvenski), *Imperator Alexandr III*, *Borodino*, *Orel*, *Osl'yabya* (Flag of Vice-Admiral von Felkerzam), *Sisoi Veliki*, *Navarin*.

days later it anchored at the southern entrance to the Great Belt, where, after a day's delay caused by the weather and the exposed nature of the anchorage, it succeeded in coaling,

Departure of the squadron from Libau, 15th October, 1904. opportunity being also taken of this halt to repair the *Buistri* which on the passage had damaged her bow in a collision with the *Oslyabya*. Vague

reports to the effect that the Japanese were intending to mine the waters in the path of the squadron and had collected a flotilla of torpedo boats with a view to attacking it on its voyage out had by now reached Admiral Rozhestvenski, and he arranged, as a precautionary measure, that the narrow waters of the Great Belt should be swept ahead of the squadron. The *Rus* and the ice-breaker *Yermak*, the latter of which had accompanied the squadron so far, were detailed for this work, but when they started on the 19th the delay caused by the inexperience of their crews was so great that the admiral finally dispensed with their services. Nevertheless, the squadron passed through the Great Belt safely and anchored off the Skaw on the morning of the 20th. Here it was organized in six groups, which were to act independently during the passage through the North Sea and English Channel. The destroyers, in two flotillas, each accompanied by a transport, were to proceed to Suda Bay in Crete, calling on the way at Cherbourg and Algiers.* The cruisers, also in two divisions, and the older battleships were to go to Tangier, calling at Arosa Bay or Vigo; while the new battleships, after putting in at Brest, were to proceed to Tangier.

While off the Skaw Admiral Rozhestvenski learnt from the captain of the transport *Bakan* that four suspicious looking vessels resembling torpedo boats had been seen during the night. This information, which seemed to corroborate the rumours already received, put the Russians on the qui vive for an attack, and

First-Class Cruisers: *Admiral Nakhimov*, *Dmitri Donskoi* (Flag of Rear-Admiral Enkvist), *Svyetlana*, *Avrora*.

Third-Class Cruisers: *Zhemchug*, *Almaz* (fitted out as a dispatch vessel).

Torpedo Boat Destroyers: *Blestyashchi*, *Bezuprechni*, *Bodri*, *Byedovi*, *Buistri*, *Buini*, *Bravi*, *Prozorlivi*.

Fleet Auxiliaries: *Kamchatka* (repair ship), *Anaduir* (for coal and provisions), *Koreya* (? ammunition), *Kitai*, *Knyaz Gorchakov* (stores), *Rus* (ocean tug), *Meteor* (fresh water), *Malaiya*.

The *Rus*, originally the *Roland*, had been purchased by the Russian Government and renamed.

Vice-Admiral Rozhestvenski was promoted to that rank on the 17th October.

* The *Prozorlivi* was found to have leaky condensers and was sent back from the Skaw with the *Yermak*.

orders were given to leave the Skaw twenty-four hours earlier than had originally been intended. Accordingly, at 4 p.m. on the 20th, the destroyer flotillas left the anchorage. They were followed by a cruiser division under Captain Shein, consisting of the *Svyetlana*, *Zhemchug*, and *Almaz*, and at 5 p.m. by Rear-Admiral Enkvist's cruiser division composed of the *Dmitri Donskoi*, *Avrora*, and *Kamchatka*. About twenty-five miles in rear of Admiral Enkvist followed Admiral von Felkerzam with the *Oslabya*, *Sisoi Veliki*, *Navarin*, *Admiral Nakhimov* and two transports, whilst the rear of the fleet was brought up by the commander-in-chief with his four new battleships and the transport *Anadvir*, which sailed at 10 p.m., timed to be twenty-five miles behind Admiral von Felkerzam.* The two destroyer flotillas were ordered to steam at twelve knots, and all the other divisions at a speed of ten knots.

During the night of the 20th and throughout the following day the weather was so thick that great difficulty was experienced in keeping touch, and on the morning of the 21st it was discovered that the *Kamchatka* had dropped astern of the whole squadron, with one engine disabled. It was also found that the battleship divisions were not more than six miles apart and during the clearer intervals were in sight of one another. At 8.45 p.m. the commander-in-chief received wireless messages from the *Kamchatka*, which had by this time fallen some forty miles astern, to the effect that she was being attacked by torpedo boats; but three hours later, in reply to an inquiry, she telegraphed that they were no longer visible.† The Russians were now almost convinced that an attack was imminent. When between midnight and 1 a.m. they fell in with a fleet of British steam-tractors fishing to the eastward of the Dogger Bank and at the same time overtook the *Dmitri Donskoi* and *Avrora*, which had dropped out of position, their suspicions seemed to be confirmed, and they at once opened fire and kept it up for some minutes. One trawler, the *Crane*, was sunk, and five more were hit; others were damaged by the explosion of shell, and in the fishing fleet two men were killed and six wounded. The *Avrora* was also unfortunate; she was hit

The Dogger
Bank incident,
21st—22nd October.

* The four new battleships were the *Knyaz Suvorov*, *Imperator Alexandr III*, *Borodino* and *Orel*.

† It was afterwards discovered that a Swedish merchant vessel, the *Aldebaran*, had been fired upon at the time and place given in the *Kamchatka's* signals.

five times, and had two wounded, one of whom, the chaplain of the ship, subsequently died. After this outburst the Russian battleships proceeded on their way, nearly all those on board being firmly convinced that they had beaten off an attack by Japanese torpedo boats which had attempted to conceal their identity by mingling with the fishing vessels.

When the damaged trawlers returned to Hull with their report of the occurrence, British feeling for a time ran high, and the incident gave rise to strong diplomatic representations. Finally, by mutual consent of the two Governments, the whole circumstances were referred to an International Commission of Inquiry, and four officers from the squadron, one of whom was Commander Klado, were landed at Vigo and left behind to give evidence.*

After passing through the Strait of Dover the second division of battleships under Admiral von Felkerzam anchored off Brighton and took in coal, leaving at 7.30 p.m. on the 23rd after a few hour's stay, without communicating with the shore. Soon after noon on the 24th the first division approached Brest with the intention of entering; but upon encountering fog which showed no signs of lifting Admiral Rozhestvenski decided not to wait and shaped course for Vigo, where he arrived on the 26th. Meanwhile the destroyers had called at Cherbourg on the 23rd and had left on the following day. On the 28th one flotilla with its escort arrived at Tangier, followed some twenty-four hours later by the other flotilla and by the divisions under Admirals von Felkerzam and Enkvist as well as by Captain Shein's cruisers which had put into Arosa Bay on the 26th on account of a breakdown to the *Zhemchug*. Thus, with the exception of Admiral Rozhestvenski's own division, the whole squadron as constituted on leaving the Skaw had now arrived at Tangier. That division lay coaling at Vigo, where after some delay the Spanish Authorities had permitted it to take in four hundred tons of coal per ship. The destroyers wasted no time at Tangier, each flotilla leaving on the day following its arrival for Suda Bay, where they both put in on the 9th November, one having called en route at Bizerta and the other at Algiers. On the 1st November Admiral Rozhestvenski's division left Vigo, and on the 3rd reached Tangier, where more coal was taken in. It had previously been decided that the new battleships and some of the cruisers should make

* The report of this Commission is given in Appendix 30.

their way round the Cape of Good Hope under the commander-in-chief, while the old battleships accompanied by the lighter cruisers under Admiral von Felkerzam should proceed through the Suez Canal to Madagascar, where the two sections were to effect a junction. The ships which had not been ready to start with the rest of the squadron were expected to join at Madagascar; and the entire fleet was then to sail for the Far East in a united body. The reasons for thus separating the squadron into two parts were due to fears that the large ships might not be able to pass through the Suez Canal.*

The two sections parted company on Thursday the 3rd November when Admiral von Felkerzam sailed for Suda Bay.† Two days later the commander-in-chief with the main force left for Dakar in Senegambia.‡ Throughout the voyage to Madagascar this division sailed in two columns in line ahead, preceded by the three cruisers under Admiral Enkvist, the five battleships forming the starboard column and the transports the port column. The French merchant vessel *Espérance* carrying a thousand tons of frozen meat and other provisions also accompanied the division. The voyage to Dakar was made at an average speed of nine and a half knots, and took seven days. It passed without incident, except that a break-down of the *Malaiya* delayed the squadron five hours and an accident to the steering gear of the *Suvorov* nearly caused her to collide with the *Kamchatka* and for a time threw the squadron into confusion. At Dakar two colliers

Arrival
of Admiral
Rozhestvenski
at Dakar,
12th November.

* The draught of these ships had proved to be considerably greater than had been designed.

† Admiral von Felkerzam's division consisted of the following vessels:—

Battleships: *Sisoï Veliki* (Flag), *Navarin*.

Protected Cruisers: *Svyetlana*, *Zhemchug*.

Dispatch vessel: *Almaz*.

The seven destroyers.

Transports: *Kitai*, *Knyaz Gorchakov*, *Merkuri*, *Yupiter*, and the Volunteer ships *Vladimir*, *Yaroslavl*, *Kiev*, *Tambov* and *Voronezh* (the last seven vessels joined the division at Suda Bay from the Black Sea).

‡ The main force consisted of:—

Battleships: *Knyaz Suvorov*, *Imperator Alexandr III*, *Borodino*, *Orel*, *Oslabya*.

Armoured Cruisers: *Admiral Nakhimov*, *Dmitri Donskoi*.

Protected Cruiser: *Avrora*.

Repair Ship: *Kamchatka*.

Transports: *Anaduir*, *Koreya*, *Malaiya*, *Meteor*.

Ocean Tug: *Rus*.

Hospital Ship: *Orel* (this vessel had joined at Tangier from Toulon).

were awaiting the arrival of the fleet, but the French officer in command requested Admiral Rozhestvenski to leave, as coaling could not be permitted. In spite of this protest, however, the colliers at once came alongside, and coaling operations were very soon in full swing and continued for the greater part of two days.

The position of the local authorities at this time was one of great difficulty. The French declaration of neutrality is somewhat ambiguously worded, and the Government had apparently given no definite instructions with regard to the treatment of belligerents. Indeed, the facilities afforded to the Russian fleet by the use of French ports formed the subject of vigorous protests by the Japanese right up to the end of the voyage of the Second Pacific Squadron. It must, however, be admitted that the rights of belligerents in neutral ports had never been clearly defined; and the only point upon which all nations were agreed was that such ports shall not be used as a base of operations or for taking in warlike stores.

On this occasion every battleship took in on an average about sixteen hundred tons of coal, bringing the amount of fuel on board up to two thousand tons. Since this quantity was far too great to be carried in the bunkers, a large amount of coal had to be stowed on the decks. This course, now started, was henceforth adopted whenever the fleet put to sea, and it much hampered the systematic training of which the crews were so much in need.

The squadron left Dakar on the 16th November for Gaboon River, another French port about two thousand miles farther south.

As before temporary break-downs caused some delay, and on this occasion so much difficulty was experienced in making a landfall

that the squadron passed its destination and had

Arrival of Admiral Rozhestvenski at Gaboon River, 26th November; Great Fish Bay, 6th December; Angra Pequena, 11th December.	to return after the <i>Rus</i> had been sent to locate the lighthouse. Finally it came to anchor on the evening of the 26th about four and a half miles from the nearest land and ten miles from the mouth of the river—no doubt much to the relief of the local authorities who had received instructions that the Russian vessels were not to
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be permitted to enter. Here each battleship took in some fourteen hundred tons of coal from colliers which had been awaiting their arrival. On the afternoon of the 1st December course was shaped for Great Fish Bay, in Portuguese territory, distant about a thousand miles, which was reached on the 6th December.

A Portuguese gunboat steamed out to meet the Russian fleet, and her captain informed Admiral Rozhestvenski that he could not be permitted to coal in territorial waters. Great Fish Bay, however is wide, and the Russian commander surmounted the difficulty by anchoring more than three miles from the shore, where he claimed, with what justification it is not easy to say, that he was free to do as he pleased. A delay of less than twenty-four hours sufficed to replenish supplies of fuel, and the fleet then sailed for Angra Pequena, a German port in Great Namaqualand. The weather, which had hitherto been favourable, changed as the squadron neared Angra Pequena, and strong winds, increasing to a gale from the southward, were encountered. With some difficulty, owing to parting cables, the squadron was brought to anchor in Shearwater Bay on the afternoon of the 11th; but since the shelter obtainable was not sufficient for all the ships, some of the cruisers and transports were sent off to seek another anchorage. Here no protest was made, but a gale prevented coaling for some days, and it was not until the 15th that operations were in full swing.

While at Angra Pequena the Russian commander received information which boded ill for the success of his venture. A steamer arriving from Cape Town brought newspapers containing an account of the capture of 203 Metre Hill, and a staff officer who had served on board one of the Russian vessels of the Port Arthur Fleet and had later returned to Russia at once announced that the First Pacific Squadron was doomed. Indeed, the prospect of ultimate success for Admiral Rozhestvenski's mission, never very bright, now appeared less encouraging than ever. Nevertheless, on the 17th, with every ship loaded with coal to its utmost capacity, he started on the two thousand seven hundred miles passage to St. Mary in Madagascar. The Cape of Good Hope was passed on the 19th, and soon afterwards the squadron encountered a severe gale from the westward with a high sea in which the heavily laden ships behaved well, although some damage was done to boats and to the deck cargoes. During the period of calm weather which followed, good progress was made, and on Thursday, the 29th December, the Russian vessels anchored in the strait between St. Mary Island and the mainland of Madagascar, having completed the passage from Angra Pequena at a speed of just under nine and a half knots and reached the appointed rendezvous after a voyage of nearly eight weeks. The

Arrival of Admiral
Rozhestvenski
at Madagascar,
29th December.

worst fears of those on board for the fate of their consorts in Port Arthur were soon confirmed, for the hospital ship *Orel* arrived on the same day as the rest of the fleet with the news of the destruction of the First Pacific Squadron.* On the following day the *Rus* was dispatched to Tamatave to find out whether anything had been heard of Admiral von Felkerzam. She returned on the 31st with the news that the other division of the fleet was at Nossi Bé on the north-west coast of the island. But it was not possible at once to effect a junction because bad weather delayed coaling operations.

Admiral von Felkerzam's division, which had arrived at Suda Bay on the 10th November, left on the 21st. After calling at Port Said it had passed through the canal to Suez, where some of the ships coaled from their own colliers, and Jibuti, in French Somaliland, was reached on the 3rd December. His ships left Jibuti on the 14th of that month, and are reported to have coaled on the 17th at Alula, near Cape Guardafui, prior to the long run to Nossi Bé where anchor was dropped on the 28th.

Though both the main sections of the Baltic Fleet had thus successfully completed the first part of the long journey to the Far East, the vessels which had not been ready to leave Russia with Admiral Rozhstvenski and had been expected to overtake him had made very little progress.† The voyage of Admiral von Felkerzam's division, Jibuti, in French Somaliland, was reached on the 3rd December. His ships left Jibuti on the 14th of that month, and are reported to have coaled on the 17th at Alula, near Cape Guardafui, prior to the long run to Nossi Bé where anchor was dropped on the 28th.

Though both the main sections of the Baltic Fleet had thus successfully completed the first part of the long journey to the Far East, the vessels which had not been ready to leave Russia with Admiral Rozhstvenski and had been expected to overtake him had made very little progress.†

The voyage of the reinforcing squadron. They left Libau on the 16th November; but delays began before they were out of the Baltic. The first occurred when they were still in the Great Belt, where fog hindered progress so much that it was not until midnight on the 20th–21st that they anchored off the Skaw. From this point, until it arrived at Tangier the force split up, the *Dnyepyr* and *Rion* each escorting a detachment of destroyers, while the *Oleg* and *Izumrud* with the *Okean* acted independently. Hindered by bad weather and accidents to the destroyers, the last of the vessels did not get away from the Skaw until the 24th November.

* The *Orel* had proceeded independently from Great Fish Bay to Cape Town where she arrived on the 12th December and remained for a week.

† This reinforcing squadron—officially known as the "Overtaking Squadron"—was under Captain Dobrotvorski and consisted of the cruisers *Oleg* (Flag) and *Izumrud*, the destroyers *Gromki*, *Grozni*, *Prozorlivi*, *Pronzitelvi*, *Ryezvi*, the armed Volunteer ships *Peterburg* and *Smolensk*, which had been added to the navy under the names of *Dnyepyr* and *Rion* and the armed transport *Okean*.

The *Rion*, *Prozorlivi*, and *Ryzvi* reached Tangier on the 1st December, after dropping the *Pronzitelni* at Brest for repairs. Two days later the *Dnyepri* arrived with her two destroyers, and on the 4th the two cruisers came in with the *Okean*. Soon afterwards the *Rion* and two destroyers left Tangier. They reached Algiers on the 6th, where it was found that the *Prozorlivi* required docking—the cause of another vexatious delay. Meanwhile, the other ships, with the exception of the *Okean* which was sent home from Tangier, proceeded to Suda Bay, where after a stay of more than a fortnight they were joined on the 28th by the *Rion* and *Ryzvi*, which had been compelled to leave the *Prozorlivi* at Algiers. During the passage to Crete the *Izumrud* had developed a number of defects—due to the manner in which work had been hurried in completing her for sea. Consequently the squadron was unable to leave Suda Bay until the 8th January, 1905.

At the close of 1904, therefore, when the Russian naval power in the Far East had been almost entirely destroyed, their naval reinforcement was still thousands of miles away, the two main portions at Madagascar, the third in the Mediterranean.

How the prospect of its arrival influenced Japanese action on land, in precipitating the destruction of the Russian ships in Port Arthur has already been seen.* About the middle of December two expeditions were dispatched to obtain early information of its probable route. On the 13th of the month the two armed transports *Hong Kong Maru* and *Nippon Maru* left Sasebo on a reconnaissance to the Malay Archipelago. These vessels sailed down the coast of Cochin China, reaching Singapore by the 22nd, and at the end of the year were at Batavia. On the 15th December the cruiser *Nitaka* left Yokosuka on a voyage along the Chinese coast. From the mouth of the Yang-tse River, she steamed south, searching the different ports as far as Hong Kong; she then crossed over to the Island of Luzon and proceeded to the Pescadores where she was at the end of December. Towards the latter part of the month, so soon as the First Pacific Squadron was finally placed out of action, Admiral Togo was instructed to leave a portion of his fleet before Port Arthur and in the Strait of Korea and to send the remainder to Japan. He, himself, with Vice-Admiral Kamimura and their respective staffs, left the fleet and reached Tokio on the 30th.

Japanese
measures to meet
the Second
Pacific Squadron.

* See Vol. II, p. 585.

CHAPTER LVIII.

COMMENTS ON THE SIEGE AND DEFENCE OF PORT ARTHUR.

(Plates 10, 11 and 15, Vol. I; 29 to 36 and 39 to 46, Vol. II.)

Plans 5, 14, 15 and 18, Vol. I; 39 to 40, Vol. II.)

THE strategical aspect of the action of the Russians in holding Port Arthur and of that of the Japanese in attacking it has already been reviewed at some length, and the course pursued by both nations has been adjudged to have been correct.* But before commenting upon the defence and siege it is necessary to refer again to the nature of the particular rôle in the campaign played by the fortress.

Russia was not ready for war in 1904, and whatever might have been the ultimate advantages to her of withdrawing her army from the Kuan-tung and Liao-tung Peninsulas and her fleet from the China Seas, and of waiting till she could mass such strength on land and sea as to crush Japan, the adoption of that course would have entailed the temporary abandonment of all her aspirations in the Far East and the reversal of her policy of years, would have been tantamount to giving away under threat, would have resulted in an immense loss of prestige throughout Asia, and was on sentimental and political grounds impossible. Indeed it does not appear to have been seriously entertained.† Whether she was well advised to have allowed her scheme of territorial expansion to outrun her preparations for meeting the liabilities it involved is a matter which concerns her previous policy; but when war became imminent she was committed to the retention of her

* See the Naval Comments, Chapter XXV, and the Military Comments, Chapter XXVI, Volume I.

† It is stated that this policy was recommended to the Emperor by General Dragomirov the day after war was declared.—*Revue du Génie Militaire*, March, 1906.

squadron in eastern waters and therefore to the defence of Port Arthur.

If her naval force on the spot had been sufficiently strong to engage and defeat that of Japan in a decisive battle at an early stage in the war Russia would have attained her object, and there would have been no campaign in Manchuria. But, owing to the slow progress made in her own scheme of construction of 1898, she had not by the beginning of 1904 regained the advantage won two years earlier by the Japanese in the addition to their navy of the ships which the war indemnity received from China had enabled them to build. And there was no immediate prospect of any material change in the relative local strength of the two nations. Nevertheless, the opinion of the Russian Naval Staff at Port Arthur, expressed so late as October, 1903, was that with their existing naval force on the spot the Russians could not be beaten "either in the Bay of Korea or the Yellow Sea."* In face of this somewhat limited, if not negative, view of the chance of success of the fleet in a general offensive action it was not considered advisable to attempt to seize the initiative, and the rôle of the First Pacific Squadron was limited to keeping in dispute the command of local waters, to hampering the transfer of Japanese troops to the shores of the Yellow Sea, to denying to them landing places on the mainland, and by the action of the cruisers based on Vladivostok to forcing upon Japan a division of naval strength. This policy was in accordance with the view of the local Naval Authorities—that so long as the Russian fleet was in being the Japanese would be unable to land on the coast of the Bay of Korea or on that of the Yellow Sea.

For a campaign on land the prime necessity before the Russians was to gain the time necessary to bring into play in the distant theatre of operations the vast superiority of military strength which they possessed. If, as was suggested at different periods, the area of concentration selected had been in the neighbourhood of Harbin, a considerable part of the required time would have been gained through the delay imposed on the invading armies by the distance they would have to traverse before

* The Bay of Korea referred to is the indentation of the coast line on the north-east of the Yellow Sea and not the Gulf of Korea, or Broughton Bay, on the east coast of the Korean Peninsula.

they could get into touch with the Russian main force. But, on account of the unreadiness of Port Arthur, of the fact that the place was not expected to be able to prolong its resistance to a determined attack until the main army was completely concentrated and ready to advance, and of the consequent necessity for not massing that army so far north as to preclude all attempts or threats to relieve the fortress, the area of concentration finally chosen was round Liao-yang. This greatly shortened the distance which any invading troops would have to cover before they met those of the defenders and correspondingly reduced the time for concentration that would be available to the latter when once the Japanese should have landed. Thus the greater share of the important duty of gaining time depended on the power of the Russian naval force on the spot to prevent or hamper the deployment of the Japanese on the mainland.

Port Arthur had therefore a two-fold task to perform. Its first duty, as a sea fortress and naval base, lay in giving protection and support to the Russian First Pacific Squadron and so enabling it to carry out its rôle of gaining time, and in maintaining that squadron in being until any fresh naval force that might be sent out from Europe should arrive. Its second duty as a land fortress, was to prolong its resistance in order to force upon the Japanese the greatest diversion of strength from their field armies for so long a period as possible.

That it failed to carry out part of its first duty, since it did not preserve the First Pacific Squadron until that under Admiral Rozhstvenski appeared upon the scene, is strictly speaking true — though it was mostly due to the late dispatch and slow progress of the latter force that the surrender took place so long as four months before its arrival. But in spite of the fact that its performance did in this respect fall short of what was required the fortress carried out a most valuable service in protecting the First Pacific Squadron for nearly ten months and thereby offering it an opportunity of playing the part which had been assigned to it. And, as has been seen, the effect that the mere presence of the Russian war vessels in harbour was able to produce on the Japanese operations was far-reaching. It was not the fault of Port Arthur that the squadron did not achieve more by direct action at sea, or that it permitted itself to be trapped in port without having obtained its object. On

the other hand it was certainly in part due to the weakness of the fortress that the paradoxical situation was reached of a naval base being defended by the men and armament of the ships it was supposed to support, that it was bombarded from the sea whilst the coast defences were practically intact, and that the squadron in harbour was destroyed from the land side before any of the forts of the main line of defence were captured.*

It can be claimed, however, that in keeping the Russian flag flying for eleven months Port Arthur was successful in carrying out its second duty. Though the fortress was not in itself the main cause of the great division of the Japanese forces, since, apart from the sentiment attached to its possession, the fleet it contained was undoubtedly the factor which compelled the Japanese to attack the place so fiercely, its strength and the protracted nature of the defence forced regular siege operations upon them and so caused the division of their strength to be prolonged until hostilities had continued for over a year. The effort to take the place monopolized a whole Japanese army for seven months, during which period two great land battles were fought in the main theatre of operations, and caused the absence of that army from a third battle.† Whilst the original strength in field troops of the garrison amounted to thirty-one battalions of infantry, one squadron of cavalry, and sixty-seven field guns, the number of Japanese engaged in the siege while the battles of Liao-yang and the Sha Ho were fought was approximately fifty-one battalions, three squadrons, and one hundred and eighty field guns, a total exceeding that of the besieged by twenty battalions and one hundred and thirteen field guns. Later, at the time of the surrender, the field troops employed in siege operations had increased in number to sixty-three battalions, three squadrons, and two hundred and four field guns.

On the whole, in regard to this detachment of strength from the Japanese main armies, it does not seem too much to say that if only one-half of those at the time engaged in the Kuan-tung Peninsula had been at Marshal Oyama's disposal at Liao-yang it is likely that the result of the battle might have been more decidedly in favour of the Japanese, since it was chiefly lack of numbers

* These points are considered in greater detail later.

† Including casualties, reinforcements and drafts, the siege from first to last absorbed nearly 200,000 of the Japanese troops.

that limited the extent of their success. A similar definite statement cannot be made about the Sha Ho. At San-de-pu, as will be seen later, it is doubtful if Marshal Oyama would have pressed the action unless the whole of General Nogi's army had been with him. But for four months, from October, 1904, until January, 1905, the resistance made by the fortress was instrumental in increasing materially the numerical preponderance of the Russian field forces. And this fact is not vitiated by the inability of General Kuropatkin to make use of the advantage thus given him.

That Port Arthur fell when it did can be ascribed in the first place to the determined nature of the attack to which it was subjected, and then, as regards the defence, to failings in the command, to the inadequacy of the scheme in accordance with which the place had been strengthened, to the unreadiness of its fortifications for the test they were forced to undergo, and to the exhaustion of the garrison. It was not due to lack of supplies nor the nature of the resistance, which was of the most desperate character. To explain how it happened that Russia's chief naval base in the Far East was as unprepared as it was to meet attack necessitates a retrospective summary of her previous policy in regard to it.

The question of fortifying Port Arthur was at once raised after its occupation in March, 1898, when the commander of the Russian forces in the Far East condemned the defences constructed by the Chinese and recommended that they should be demolished; and the matter was considered by a special defence committee which was formed to deal with the subject. The first action to be taken, however, was to rearm the place with guns transferred from Vladivostok, of which twenty were mounted within six months of the occupation. In October of that year suggestions were put forward by General Kononovich-Gorbatski for the construction of a strong fortress defended by permanent works capable of sustaining a prolonged siege, since in case of a war with Great Britain or Japan Port Arthur would be at once cut off by sea. The garrison was to include twenty battalions of infantry and six battalions of garrison artillery, whilst the armament was to consist of 593 guns and 82 mortars. The proposal was negatived by General Kuropatkin, who was then Minister of War, and the whole question was reconsidered by the defence committee, the decision arrived at being

that the number of troops to be maintained in Kuan-tung should not exceed the garrison then there, 11,300 men, and that the organization of the defences should not be on too costly a scale or such as to provoke apprehension. The preparation of a detailed scheme was entrusted to Colonel Velichko of the Engineers.

Colonel Velichko set about his task in the summer of 1899, but, as will be seen, had to frame his project under hampering conditions. The project prepared by him was estimated to cost £1,594,000, and with slight modifications was approved by the Emperor in January, 1900, to be completed by the end of 1909.* As finally passed, it included both coast and land defences. The former were to consist of twenty-seven coast batteries of permanent type. The latter were to comprise two lines of defence. On the outer, or main, line were to be eight permanent forts, nine fortifications, six permanent batteries, and four redoubts; the inner, or second, line, about four and one-third miles in length, was to be formed by a continuous enceinte furnished with four redoubts.†

For the next two and a half years the execution of the scheme proceeded but slowly. It was completely suspended during the operations undertaken to suppress the Boxer Rising in 1900 and was delayed by an outbreak of cholera in 1902, and there were other influences continuously at work during this period which militated against progress, the chief of which was the sparing allotment of funds. During 1903, however, greater efforts were made to hasten matters in view of the isolation of Kuan-tung that would be brought about by the evacuation of Manchuria agreed to in the treaty of the 8th April, 1902, and also owing to the representations of Admiral Alexeiev, the newly appointed Viceroy of the Far East, who expressed himself as extremely dissatisfied with the state of both Port Arthur and Vladivostok. He considered that neither fortress would be ready to be counted on as a secure naval base until the end of 1904, and impressed upon the Government the urgent necessity for expediting preparations. While Secretary of State Bezobrazov, who visited Kuan-tung during the year, was as emphatic as the

* The original estimate was for £949,000, but this was found to be insufficient.

† The "fortifications" were intermediate works of practically permanent type.

Viceroy in regard to the necessity for pressing on with the work of fortification, General Kuropatkin, after inspecting the fortress on his way back from Japan, appears to have been less perturbed about the defences than he was about the need for increasing the garrison. In August, 1903, he wrote—

“ . . . our frontiers in the Far East are now more secure. We need have no fear on account of the Pri-Amur region and need not be disturbed about the fate of Port Arthur.”

The view of General Stessel in January, 1904, was that while Port Arthur was almost impregnable by attack from the sea and was strong enough on land to prevent its capture by *vive force* yet the land defences were far from ready and not what were required for a modern fortress.

But to leave the various opinions held upon the question of preparation and to turn to results, the total expenditure on military constructive work in the Province of Kuan-tung during the six years preceding the war amounted to £1,185,000, of which the fortification of Port Arthur absorbed £491,200 of the £1,594,000 estimated. This comparative smallness of the outlay on military precautionary measures was to a great extent due to the inability of those controlling the national purse strings to appreciate the true danger of the strategic situation, and therefore to gauge the relative importance of expenditure on military works of an unproductive nature as compared with that on works which it was hoped would yield a return. This is proved by the fact that during the same period £2,733,000 was spent upon the creation of the unprotected commercial port of Dalny.* Whilst the expenditure lavished on the latter place affected the resisting power of Port Arthur indirectly, by reducing the allotment of funds so necessary to equip the fortress for war, it also exerted a directly adverse influence upon the duration of the defence, since the only result of the construction of the commercial port was to provide the Japanese with an invaluable base for their siege and field operations which they could not otherwise have obtained.

That the aspirations of the Russians in undertaking the development of Dalny should have ended thus disastrously to them was so remarkable a result of all their efforts as to justify

* *The Russian Official History (Naval).*

a short account of the genesis of the place. One of their main objects in obtaining the lease of the Kuan-tung Peninsula in 1898 had been the acquisition of an ice-free terminus for their trans-continental railway system. But it was realized even before Kuan-tung was taken over that for this purpose Port Arthur had obvious drawbacks, and until 1899 the small town of Ta-lien-wan on the north shore of Ta-lien Bay was regarded as the most suitable spot. In that year, however, it was decided that Dalny, on the opposite side of the bay, afforded greater facilities, and in 1900 the creation of a port at that place was started in earnest. It was to be an undefended "free port" for the reason that if unfortified it would in case of hostilities be less likely to be the scene of operations and would suffer less from interruption to its trade. With some interruption during the Boxer Rising, work was carried on at high pressure up to the verge of hostilities, for it was hoped that Dalny would tap a large trade area and attract the bulk of the business which had hitherto passed through Newchuang and would eventually become one of the greatest commercial centres in the Far East, ranking with Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Yokohama. Since the influx of a large cosmopolitan population was expected and desired, it was intended to construct a town and to develop the place on a generous scale.* The Government was convinced that hostilities would be avoided, and in spite of the protests of the Military Authorities in Kuan-tung continued to devote more money and attention to the execution of this peaceful project than to the carrying out of defensive measures for which the necessity seemed doubtful, and entrusted the organization and construction of Dalny to a civil department—the Ministry of Finance.

Nevertheless, there was no lack of warnings from the Military Authorities on the spot, who appreciated the fact that the safety of the new naval base was bound up with the question of the defence of the whole of Kuan-tung and were alive to the danger of creating a well-equipped but undefended port behind the key of the Peninsula at Nan Shan. Discussion on the subject continued

* The harbour was to be dredged, and three moles, a breakwater, a quay, a patent slip, two dry docks and warehouses were to be constructed; and amongst the public buildings of the town were to be a cathedral, four churches, a museum, Government offices, a hotel, four banks, a theatre, police barracks, a fire station, municipal offices, a covered market, a stock exchange and schools.

right up to the end of 1903, and many suggestions were made for the construction of coast and land defences. The Minister of War realized the risks that were being run, but was not in favour of fortifying Dalny, owing to the expense, and because such a course would entail the provision of another large garrison in addition to that of Port Arthur, though final decision in the matter, however, was apparently no more within his province than it was within that of the local Military Authorities. The only defensive measures eventually determined upon were to prepare the quays for demolition by explosives, to lay two mine-fields in Ta-lien Bay, to construct two coast batteries to fire over its waters and to station two regiments of infantry near the town. By the time that war broke out some troops were round Dalny, and the mine-fields were laid immediately afterwards; the latter, however, remained uncovered by guns until the beginning of May, 1904, when two batteries were constructed, armed and supplied with ammunition, one near Ta-lien-wan and the other near Dalny. On the land side Dalny remained defenceless and absolutely dependent on the resistance that the Russians could make at Nan Shan. As has been seen, the result was that when they fell back from the isthmus the port was evacuated so hastily that the projected destruction of the quays was not carried out and the whole place fell into the hands of the Japanese practically as it stood.*

So far as the siege of Port Arthur was concerned, the principal advantage conferred on the Japanese by the capture of Dalny lay in the facilities for landing their 11-inch howitzers and ammunition. Had the port not existed, or had its use been denied to them, they would have been forced to improvise arrangements for disembarking heavy ordnance, progress would have been hampered and the capture of the fortress might have been postponed. In another direction also, the existence of Dalny seems to have been detrimental to the defence. It was one of the points on the coast of the Kuan-tung Peninsula at which a landing was possible. And it was partly the fear of being cut off from Port Arthur by a hostile landing in rear of their position that curtailed the resistance of the Russians at Nan Shan.

* Actually the dock gates were removed and sunk in the harbour; but they were soon recovered by the Japanese. The bridges on the branch line of railway were also destroyed.

To leave the question of preparation, the actual land operations of the Russians may be divided broadly into the exterior defence—made before the capture by the Japanese of the Feng-huang Shan section of the last advanced position on the 31st July completed the close investment—and the defence of the fortress proper. Though the Japanese did not open formal siege works until the following month, the defence of the fortress can be assumed to have begun on the 1st August, after the besiegers had arrived within artillery range of the permanent works.* The exterior operations, again, fall naturally into two divisions, those which took place between the disembarkation of the Japanese Second Army and the isolation of the fortress by the battle of Nan Shan on the 26th May, and those which took place between that time and the 31st July. Before they are reviewed it will be of assistance to recapitulate the course of events up to the latter date.

The bulk of General Oku's Second Army landed unopposed between the 5th and 13th May. After some skirmishes to the north of the isthmus the advanced troops of the Kuan-tung garrison unsuccessfully opposed him at Chin-chou on the 25th and Nan Shan on the 26th May. Abandoning Dalny and leaving behind them possible defensive positions at An-tzu Shan and near Nan-kuan-ling, the Russians then retreated in haste and some disorder half-way to Port Arthur, to an unprepared defensive line at the "Position of the Passes." They spent two months in fortifying this line without interfering with the Japanese, who after seizing Dalny on the 30th May also acted on the defensive whilst their Third Army was being organized. On the 26th June the latter moved forward and captured the dominating height of Chien Shan and some other points in advance of the Russian line. The defenders then made their first attempt at offence and regained part of the position lost. A month later, again, General Nogi, who had opened up Dalny and had been largely reinforced, especially by artillery, felt strong enough to push the advance seriously. He attacked on the 26th July, and on the morning of the 28th the Russians retired to the last of their advanced positions,

* The seizure of Feng-huang Shan has generally been taken as the commencement of the close investment; but it is important to bear in mind that so far as isolation—which is the essential characteristic of the investment of a fortress—is concerned, that of Port Arthur really began on the 14th May, two days before General Oku captured Shih-san-li-tai, and was definitely completed on the 26th. After that date, though the fortress was not strictly blockaded by sea, it was impossible for the garrison to replace any losses.

which extended from the vicinity of Louisa Bay eastwards along Feng-huang Shan, or the Wolf Hills, and thence southwards to Ta-ku Shan and Hsiao-ku Shan. This line was also unprepared for defence; and two days later, on being assailed suddenly, the defenders fell back from the Feng-huang Shan portion of it on to the fortress itself. By the night of the 31st the Japanese were firmly in occupation of this section, which gave them an excellent artillery position on the north of the fortress.*

Thus the time taken by the Japanese to arrive within artillery range of the permanent works of the defence on this side amounted to about two and a half months after they had landed, and some nine weeks after the battle of Nan Shan. And though the total delay imposed on them by the action of the defenders in front of the fortress obviously cannot be summed up merely in the time taken to overcome the opposition offered, the actual resistance made by the Russians at Chin-chou and Nan Shan, at the Passes and on Feng-huang Shan cost the Japanese less than four days of fighting. Since the Russians were not able to replenish their numbers, operations on advanced positions outside the main line of works could only be justified by the infliction of serious delay to the attackers or of heavier loss than that suffered. By their resistance they did cause considerable loss to the enemy, but it cannot be said that their efforts were otherwise effective.

In allowing the Japanese Second Army to land without molestation they missed the first chance of assisting to prolong the life of Port Arthur. The causes of their inaction at sea on this occasion have already been given.† One reason why no attempt to interfere on land was made by the Russian Southern Force was that a hostile disembarkation near Kai-ping or Newchuang seemed probable; and the Kuan-tung advanced

* Outside permanent works the defenders still held the following advanced positions on the 1st August: on the east, the hills of Ta-ku Shan and Hsiao-ku Shan; on the north, the group of works near Shui-shih-ying which covered the valley of the Lun Ho and comprised the Waterworks, Temple and Railway Redoubts, height 305 and Kan-ta Shan; and on the north-west, the whole of the outlying works within the line from Head-Quarter Hill to Solovev Hill on the shores of Pigeon Bay; these included Head-Quarter Hill, heights 426, 305, 590 and 331, Flank Hill, 174 Metre Hill, Namako Yama, Akasaka Yama, 203 Metre Hill and Division Hill.

† Vol. I, p. 139.

troops did not interpose because a landing on the peninsula behind Nan Shan was feared. At this period the plan of the distribution of the garrison of Kuan-tung was roughly that the advanced troops, consisting of the 4th East Siberian Rifle Division, under General Fock, should oppose the Japanese advance, whilst the 7th East Siberian Rifle Division, under General Kondratenko, should guard the fortress itself. The next opportunity of delaying the Japanese occurred at Chin-chou and Nan Shan—the narrow neck which had rightly been looked upon as the key of the Kuan-tung Peninsula. That this chance was not better exploited by the Russians was to a great extent due to the fear of a landing in rear, more especially in Ying-cheng-tzu Bay, which led to doubts as to the advisability of defending the isthmus to the end or of withdrawing the advanced troops to Port Arthur before they should be cut off. The fact that the Nan Shan position was fortified against attack from both North and South throws an interesting sidelight on the views that were held as to the direction from which danger threatened. On the whole it seems that the heights near Ta-fang-shen, somewhat to the south of Nan Shan, would have given better opportunities for a protracted defence.* From this line the attacking Japanese could have been brought under converging artillery fire when crossing the narrowest part of the isthmus; it offered better facilities for the concealment of guns; while one or two heavy pieces mounted on the flanks might have done much to check the intervention of the Japanese flotilla.

The halt of the Russians on the "Position of the Passes" was apparently unpremeditated, and there were again divided counsels as to the advisability of resisting. Sound though it was in motive, being a measure calculated to hinder the Japanese, the occupation of this line seems in the circumstances to have been ill-advised, for it did not delay them to any material extent, while it reacted adversely on the Russian operations which immediately followed. The position was not so strong as that abandoned at the isthmus. It was too extended for the number of troops available to hold it; it had in front of it rugged ground affording good cover; and it was too far from Port Arthur for any assistance to be derived from the heavy artillery of the fortress. More-

* Ta-fang-shen is the junction of the Ta-lien-wan branch line with the main railway to Port Arthur.

over, it had not been prepared for defence beforehand, and the time and labour spent during June and July in fortifying it might have been better employed in strengthening portions of the last advanced position, which were to some extent under the guns of the fortress and in every way better suited for the purpose of a stout resistance.*

It is clear, according to the verdict of the court martial by which General Stessel was tried, that the defence of Port Arthur could have been continued for some time longer than it was; but the points gained by the Japanese on the night of the 1st January so dominated the whole place that further resistance must have been short-lived. On the other hand, it seems that the life of the fortress might have been prolonged, and the besieging army retained for some time further, if more effective measures had been taken by the Russians to postpone the commencement of the siege. They had ample time after the outbreak of war in which to arrange for delaying action; and it is thought that they would have done better, if no offensive of a serious nature was possible, to confine their main advance operations to a determined resistance on a strongly fortified position near Nan Shan, and on the third line actually taken up, which should also have been strongly fortified. Between these two lines their efforts should have been limited to harassing the advance and organization of the enemy by numerous small attacks and actions of a strictly rear-guard nature. That the resistance made on the positions actually held was not of a more obstinate nature may have been partly due to the influence exerted on the troops by the permanent works behind. But the main reason for its generally half-hearted nature lay deeper—in the leadership. The consciousness of the potentialities of the situation produced at sea and a realization that the Japanese had the power of striking anywhere on the peninsula led to apprehensions and doubts which were fatal to the execution of a definite plan.

In regard to the defence of the fortress proper, it will be convenient to deal first with the place as a coast fortress, since the sea defences were the first to be put to the test and had almost performed their part by the time that the land works came into

* The position on Feng-huang Shan was so unready that the foreground had not been cleared. See Vol. I, p. 317, and *My Experiences at Nan Shan and Port Arthur*, pp. 86-7. Hsiao-ku Shan and Ta-ku Shan were also unfortified.

play.* It may be said at once that in their organization of Port Arthur in its dual capacity the Russians do not appear to have estimated at their proper relative value the dangers to the place from land and sea respectively, and that the armament allotted to the sea front was in number of guns unnecessarily strong, amounting as it did to approximately one hundred and twenty pieces. In spite of its size, however, its composition and disposition were not altogether the best suited to the duty it was likely to have to carry out. Of the various forms of naval attack to which the fortress was liable, bombardment of the port may be considered first. Against such attack the port was not easy to defend, since the target for the hostile guns was practically on the coast line, which did not allow any material advantage of range to the defending artillery; and it was actually bombarded on four different occasions. To judge from this, therefore, notwithstanding the total number of guns, the defences were not entirely effective in protecting the naval base. But they were successful in that they forced the Japanese warships to engage at such long range that observation of fire was impossible, and the harm done by the bombardments was immaterial.† This deterrent effect of the defending artillery was produced almost entirely by the five 10-inch guns in Electric Cliff Battery, which were the only weapons of sufficient power and range to compete with the heavy armament of the larger Japanese vessels. Though the number of these guns was sufficient for the purpose, the fact that the Japanese fleet was on three occasions able to bombard from

* A description of the land defences, is given in Vol. I, Chap. XX, and Vol. II, Chaps. XIX and XX, and Part III of the *Official History*, "The Siege of Port Arthur," published in 1909. The coast works, however, have been described in Part III alone, and a brief account of them is given here for reference. Of the twenty-seven batteries contemplated in the original scheme twenty-one were in existence, of which nine—Nos. 2, 6, 7, 9, 13 (Golden Hill), 15 (Electric Cliff), 16, 19 and 21 were permanent concrete structures. Six of these were complete. The remaining twelve batteries were remodelled Chinese earthworks, nine of them being complete and the others not begun. The place of No. 11 was taken by Artillery Battery, and the guns were removed from No. 19 to No. 22, and after the bombardment of the 22nd March, 1904, from near Pigeon Bay, some naval guns were mounted on the Lao-tieh Shan. The five 10-inch guns in Electric Cliff Battery and the 6-inch guns were modern weapons. The defence had really to rely almost entirely on the armament of the permanent works, since the mounting of that of the old earthen batteries did not permit of accurate shooting.

† It is not certain to what extent this was due to the submarine mines.

water that was dead to them shows that their disposition might have been better. These pieces would have been more wisely disposed had they been divided between two or more batteries situated farther to the north-east and on Lao-tieh Shan.* That the cost and labour of mounting heavy ordnance on Lao-tieh Shan itself and the trouble of guarding it in so isolated a position would have been repaid by the gain in range and the covering of the water south-west of the promontory is suggested by the fact that so early as March the Russians were forced by the existence of this dead water to place some 6-inch guns above the lighthouse. It is not certain to what extent they were used, but they did not prevent a repetition of the bombardment from this direction.

Again, it is not easy to justify the inclusion of so many howitzers in the heavy armament of the coast defences.† If the 10-inch guns succeeded in their object the larger hostile vessels would never be within range of the howitzers, whereas, even if the guns failed to keep the fleet at a respectful distance, there was too slight a chance of Admiral Togo risking his irreplaceable battle-ships in a fight at shorter range with the shore batteries to warrant the emplacement of this large number of high angle pieces. Against either block ships or torpedo craft these were practically useless, though a few suitably placed might have denied the dead water south-west of Lao-tieh Shan to the Japanese. The omission of the greater number of these pieces would have simplified and reduced the cost of the coast defences without sensibly weakening them; and their addition to the armament of the land side would have conferred upon the defence an element of strength which was lacking.

Against attempts at blocking the entrance to the harbour the defence would have been all the stronger for a greater concentration of medium pieces of a quick-firing type disposed in conjunction with suitable defence lights along the course that would be taken by block ships. For though the scheme of defence lighting was to a great extent extemporized, and the lights were few in number,

* General Kononovich-Gorbatski, who was the officer sent out to study the defence of the fortress in 1898, suggested the inclusion of sixteen 11-inch, twelve 10-inch, and twenty-four 6-inch guns in the armament of the coast front. He did not, however, recommend the mounting of howitzers.

† At the time of the isolation of the fortress, of the fifty pieces of 8.3-inch calibre and upwards mounted thirty-two were howitzers.

an analysis of the fate of the blocking vessels sent in by the Japanese tends to show that their failure was more due to the dazzling effect of the Russian searchlights than it was to gun fire. As it was, the fire which could be brought against these vessels was greatly increased by that of the guns of the *Retvizan*.* For the prevention of the penetration of torpedo craft into the inner harbour the light quick-firing guns also were at first too widely dispersed. As regards both blocking and torpedo attacks on the ships in the inner harbour, one of the first acts of Admiral Makarov after his arrival early in March was to strengthen the boom and gun defence of the entrance. That the Japanese made no attempt to torpedo the Russian vessels lying inside was probably in part due to the presence in the gullet of the *Retvizan* and afterwards to the two booms and the gunboats stationed at the entrance. Upon the disposition of the defences generally it is impossible to say more without further detailed topographical knowledge than is available. In design the permanent batteries which were completed were fairly well adapted for their object, as were the mine-fields; but the boom and light defence suffered from the fact that they were improvised.

So far the coast defences have been discussed only from the point of view of the protection afforded by them to the port. And in most cases the term "port" would include a harbour or area where vessels could lie sheltered and yet be ready to move at once. Owing, however, to the narrowness and shallowness of the gullet at Port Arthur and to the consequent slowness of ingress and egress, any vessels lying inside the port were for tactical purposes practically immobilized; and it was necessary for them to assemble outside before they could operate. For any active fleet, therefore, the real harbour of Port Arthur was the roadstead. It is true that the batteries of the fortress did not give much protection to the First Pacific Squadron when it was at anchor there. But to defend ships lying in an open roadstead is hardly the rôle of coast works, and in this case, though the height of the cliffs enabled the batteries to be placed at such an elevation that they could fire over a squadron assembled below, the shape of the coast-line

* The *Retvizan* grounded in the gullet on the 9th February and remained there for a month, taking part in the repulse of the two first attempts to block. It was in order to replace her armament that the two 4·7-inch guns were brought down and mounted on each side of the gullet on the 8th March.

afforded no advantage in range to the guns, and rendered the roadstead an open one. Nevertheless, it is thought that some protection against the attack of torpedo craft upon a fleet in this position might have been furnished by light and medium quick-firing guns emplaced at a low level near Batteries 18 and 8, though it would have been imperfect owing to the difficulty of lighting up the water outside the anchorage. The necessity for such defence was apparently not anticipated by the Russians, and the armament was not disposed to provide it.

Putting on one side the deterrent effect exercised by the coast defences, the extent to which they actually came into play can perhaps best be gauged by an analysis of the naval operations which took place within range of the fortress guns. In the repulse of the Japanese torpedo craft on the night of the 8th-9th February, and in the artillery action between the fleets which ensued next day—the objective of attack in both cases being the ships of the First Pacific Squadron out in the roadstead—the shore batteries were able to take some part. But though the squadron again came out of port it did not give another similar opportunity to the Japanese until its return from the sortie on the 23rd June; and for four and a half months there was no occasion for the coast batteries to intervene in its defence when outside the harbour. There was, also, for the same period no target for the Japanese torpedo craft—unless they penetrated the inner harbour—except the guard vessels and the battleship *Retvizan* in the gullet. On the night of the 13th-14th February, the Japanese made the first of a series of attacks on these ships, in the repelling of all of which the shore batteries co-operated. When Admiral Togo realized that the First Pacific Squadron had been driven into port and that there did not appear to be much chance of its coming out for some time, he changed his system of operating to an endeavour to close the entrance. The first blocking expedition was carried out on the night of the 23rd-24th February, and against this, as against the two other similar attempts, the guns of the coast defences co-operated. On the 25th, any doubts that may have existed in the minds of the Japanese as to the failure of the first attempt to seal the harbour, were finally banished by the appearance outside of the three Russian cruisers, *Askold*, *Novik*, and *Bayan*, and they bombarded these vessels, the inner harbour and the docks, the

coast defences replying. On that night they again tried to torpedo the *Retvizan* and the guard vessels. This was the first of the four bombardments of the port carried out, and for a fortnight afterwards there was a respite in the active operations. After a reconnaissance by destroyers on the night of the 9th-10th March, the Japanese on the following day bombarded the port for the second time, on this occasion by means of indirect fire over Lao-tieh Shan, from the dead water to the south-west of the promontory. The reply to this made by Admiral Makarov was to lay mines to the south-west of Lao-tieh Shan and to establish on the hill an observing station connected by telephone with head-quarters, so that the Russian ships might bring indirect fire upon any vessels again attempting to engage from this quarter.

On the nights of the 16th, 21st, and 22nd, the roadstead was again reconnoitred by the attacking destroyers under fire from the batteries; and on the 22nd the port was bombarded for the third time, again by indirect fire from behind Lao-tieh Shan, the Russian battleships being alone able to reply. On the night of the 26th-27th March was made the second attempt to block. When it failed the Japanese endeavoured to obtain the desired result by other means, and on the 12th April they commenced to lay mines. It was not long before their action bore fruit, for on the next day the Russians suffered the irreparable loss of Admiral Makarov. On the 15th the inner harbour was for the fourth and last time bombarded from beyond Lao-tieh Shan, the Japanese ships being hidden from all the defence guns except those recently mounted on that hill, which apparently did not fire with any great effect. On the 2nd and 3rd May, the Japanese made their third, last and most determined attempt to block, in order to confine the Russian vessels in port so as to safeguard the landing of the Japanese Second Army. On this occasion the coast batteries were assisted by the booms and the mine-fields which had been laid in the outer anchorage. Save for one or two limited sorties of the Russian squadron, there was a respite in active operations for some seven weeks, during which the Japanese contented themselves with laying mines and patrolling, losing in the course of the latter operation the battleships *Hatsuse* and *Yashima*.

The night of the 23rd-24th June witnessed a succession of torpedo attacks, similar in nature to those carried out on the

night of the 8th-9th February, against the Russian squadron when it was lying in the roadstead after its return from its sortie, the shore batteries joining in the defence as opportunity offered. There was then a lull during June and July punctuated by attempts to torpedo the guardships. After the Russians had been finally driven into port on the 10th August, as a result of the battle of the Yellow Sea, the operations of both Russians and Japanese were confined almost entirely to mine warfare and the action of destroyers. On the 25th August some of the coast defences themselves were for the first time the object of attack, Batteries 21 and 22 being shelled by the cruisers *Nisshin* and *Kasuga* without being able to reply. The last operations carried out by the Japanese were the series of attempts made between the 9th and 16th December to torpedo the battleship *Sevastopol* in White Wolf Bay. The chief point worthy of remark in connexion with these attacks is the fact that the *Sevastopol's* position was such that she was protected by only two 6-inch guns of the shore armament, and that two light quick-firing guns and a searchlight had to be landed specially for her defence.

From this summary it is seen that the greater part of the action which actually fell to the lot of the fixed defences was such as could best have been performed by the medium and light quick-firing portion of the armament. The heavier pieces were not often required, and after June there was no chance of their employment against a large target, except on the 25th August, when they could not reply to the ships attacking. During that month some of them were turned landwards against the Japanese siege works.

But as has proved to be the case with so many coast fortresses it was from the land that Port Arthur was most vulnerable; and it was on that side that the place was really the weaker. Apart from unreadiness and apart from any shortcomings in the organization and conduct of the defence, as a land fortress Port Arthur failed to reach the degree of strength which it might have attained and which its importance warranted. Its chief defect was that it did not succeed in fulfilling one of the main objects for which it existed. To every fortress, as opposed to a barrier fort or a pure pivot of manœuvre, is assigned the duty of protecting some place, or "kernel," which is of value to the defenders, whether it be town, arsenal, naval base or other

strategic point. And to this end the place is generally surrounded with a ring of forts disposed and designed to protect the kernel from bombardment for so long as they remain uncaptured. Round Port Arthur there was a girdle of works, some of a permanent type, others less strong, on the main line of defence; and the kernel consisted of the docks, workshops and inner harbour—all that went to make up the naval base. But while the first of the forts to fall—Fort Chi-kuan—was not captured until the 19th December the basin was under shell fire so early as the 7th August, a week after the defenders had been driven in from their advanced position on the north and before they had been forced back to the main line of defence all round; and it was intermittently under fire until the end of the siege. In short, the Japanese were able to do on the 7th August what the forts should have prevented them doing until after the 19th December. So far as it can be expressed in terms of time, therefore, and time is usually the essential factor in fortress warfare, the defences failed in their duty in this respect by three months. The bombardment by the Japanese, it is true, was not effective until suitable observation points were gained by the besiegers, i.e., Namako Yama on the 20th September and 203 Metre Hill on the 5th December, but the capture of the latter point enabled them to destroy the Russian fleet whilst the forts were still holding out. The fault lay in the original selection of the main line of defence, which, from Fort Pai-yin on the south-east to Fort Cha-kua-tzu on the west, was not far enough out from the town.*

There were two lines which might have served for the girdle of forts.† One was that taken up originally by the Chinese, and adopted by the Russians. The other was farther out, extending for a distance of some twelve miles from the north of Louisa Bay along Feng-huang Shan, then turning southwards and including Ta-ku Shan and Hsiao-ku Shan. From Eight Ships Bay to the village of Chou-chia-tun the latter line commanded low-lying ground in front; while from Chou-chia-tun to Ta Ho Bay it was faced by hills of a similar height. Its disadvantages were that

* Fort Pai-yin was some four thousand yards from the entrance to the basin, and Fort Cha-kua-tzu was about six thousand yards from the same point.

† See Part III of the *Official History*, "The Siege of Port Arthur."

the northern portion of it was very far out and that if it had been held another line of works would have been necessary on the west of the fortress either against attack from the sea in that direction or against a force landing in Pigeon or Louisa Bays. The advantage of holding it would have been that the place itself would have been secured against bombardment from the north and north-east until Feng-huang Shan itself had been captured. The same cannot be said definitely of the eastern portion, for on that side the country to the east of the Ta Ho is so rugged and affords so many concealed positions for artillery that even had the commanding heights of Ta-ku Shan and Hsiao-ku Shan been strongly held and crowned with permanent works, it is doubtful whether the port would have been guaranteed against bombardment. Short, however, of placing their main defensive line so far forward as Feng-huang Shan and Louisa Bay it appears that the Russians would have been well advised to have included in it Hsiao-ku Shan and Ta-ku Shan, which were good observation points, the latter flanking the valley of the Ta Ho and the north-east front of the fortress, and also some of the heights within the 203 Metre Hill group of hills on the north-west.

It is not possible to give an opinion as to which of the latter should have been held, but 203 Metre Hill itself was so important a point that the measures taken for its defence should have been such as to render it at least as difficult of capture as the three permanent works whose resistance forced underground warfare on the Japanese. The neglect to start fortifying Hsiao-ku Shan, Ta-ku Shan and 203 Metre Hill, especially the last, was a defect which cost the Russians dear* Feng-huang Shan might have been held as an advanced position; but it should have been strongly fortified with field works and obstinately defended. To say more about the selection of a main defensive line other than that taken up is not possible, the suggestions made being due to the fact that for the purpose of protecting the naval base from bombardment the line held failed signally, in spite of the strength of the individual works upon it and the obstinate resistance made by them.

* The fortification of 203 Metre Hill was not seriously taken in hand until the early days of June, when the 5th East Siberian Rifle Regiment arrived on it, and that of Ta-ku Shan and Hsiao-ku Shan was begun only on the 31st July.

The Russians had originally been inclined to take up one farther out. The committee which considered the question of fortifying Port Arthur in 1898 recommended that the main line of resistance should be extended to Feng-huang Shan, while the line suggested by General Kononovich-Gorbatski in the same year included Ta-ku Shan—Erh-lung Shan—Temple Redoubts—the 203 Metre Hill Group—Head-Quarter Hill—False Hill—White Wolf Hill. This was the scheme already alluded to which was not approved. General Kuropatkin favoured a reduction of the proposed garrison to 11,300 men, with 150 field guns, and a more restricted perimeter with a main line of stormproof works closer in. His ideas both as to the garrison and the perimeter of the defences were adopted by the committee, and formed the basis of the project which was prepared by General Velichko and eventually carried out. The garrison was fixed at 11,300 men and the armament was to consist of 552 guns.* Not only, therefore, were the hands of the designer of the fortress tied directly as to the distance out of the main defences, but he was further indirectly hampered by having to select a perimeter which would fit the number of the garrison.

That the line adopted was not the most suitable is admitted by the official historians, who give this note upon the subject:—†

“In completing the description of the southern section of the area of operations (Kuan-tung) we are forced to the conclusion that Port Arthur is a natural stronghold. The line of heights Hsiao-ku Shan—Ta-ku Shan—Feng-huang Shan—174 Metre Hill—the 203 Metre Hill Group—Lao-tieh Shan is eminently suited for the first line of permanent forts and batteries, while the line of heights nearer Port Arthur might serve for a second line of defence. The harbour was not naturally a convenient anchorage for large war vessels; but that it might have been improved so as to satisfy all requirements is shown by the course of events.”

Both the coast and the land defences of Port Arthur suffered from the same fault—that they did not prevent bombardment of the naval base. But whereas the bombardment from the sea did

* This was apparently reduced afterwards to 542 guns.

† *Russian Official History*, Vol. VIII, Part 1, p. 36.

practically no harm, that from the land settled the fate of the First Pacific Squadron.

Nevertheless, apart from the initial error, which could not then be rectified, in placing the girdle of forts, the Russians were fortunate in being granted a comparatively long period after the outbreak of hostilities in which to put their house in order and make up for previous neglect. It was not until more than three months after the outbreak of war that Port Arthur was isolated by the seizure of the railway; and this period was available for the improvement and completion of the fortifications, for the collection of supplies, and strengthening the garrison and armament. So far as reinforcement of personnel is concerned, during this time the number of troops in Port Arthur and Kuan-tung was increased from an approximate fighting strength of 24,000 men to some 41,000, or, including the Naval Brigade and the Volunteers, to a total of some 48,000.* The size of this garrison forms an interesting contrast with that which had been previously considered sufficient. During this period, also, ammunition was collected; but the armament itself was not increased, except for some guns of small calibre. The work of accumulating supplies, however, does not appear to have been carried out so thoroughly as it might have been, for while stocks were being poured in by land and sea the fortress was treated as a depot upon which the field troops were able to draw. When once the place was isolated on land any increase to the garrison or any further accumulation of supplies—save by means of the vessels which ran the blockade—became impossible; but there were still more than two months during which the Russians were able to carry on the completion of the defences undisturbed. Indeed, this work continued at great pressure and almost without intermission for the five months from the outbreak of war until the close investment, the daily number of troops and Chinese coolies employed varying from 14,000 in February to 9,000 in June and July. Greatly as the Russians had neglected to fortify Port Arthur beforehand, it cannot be said that they did not do their best to remedy the unreadiness of the place once operations had started, and the fortress owed a considerable part of the length

* That the 9th, 11th, and 12th East Siberian Rifle Regiments had been sent off in January to form part of the 3rd East Siberian Rifle Division under General Kashtalinski was a serious disadvantage, for these seasoned units had local knowledge.

of its resistance to the measures taken between February and August, 1904.

But in spite of all the efforts made both before and after the siege began, the defensive arrangements suffered from many material defects. All the forts, except No. 6, had been brought more or less to a state of completion. But though they were relied on as infantry fire positions, their straight parapets were not well adapted to provide a grazing fire over the foreground, which was very irregular, and the unfinished state of their glacis added to their ineffectiveness in this direction. There was thus much ground within close range which was dead to fire from the main parapets, and the disposition of the intermediate provisional works and fire trenches did not altogether remedy this weakness. The forts, as well as many of the improvised works, were very conspicuous. The casemate accommodation was not conveniently arranged, and had not sufficient exits; and the thickness of concrete, which had been designed against 6-inch shells, was not enough to resist those of the 11-inch howitzers. There was at first no protection for the garrisons in close propinquity to the parapets; head-cover or overhead-cover was lacking; and there were no traverses, recesses, or paradors. From this it may be gathered that the Russians did not at first realize the searching nature of the concentrated fire which could be poured upon a conspicuous target. Considering that the forts, with their flanked deep ditches, were of a stormproof type calculated to force an approach underground before they were captured, it is somewhat surprising that they were not originally equipped with envelopes of permanent countermining galleries, or that a rudimentary system of countermines was not started by the Russians before the Japanese went below ground.

The second line of defence and the various supplementary works constructed after hostilities had begun were of the greatest value. The Chinese Wall also performed service in two ways—as a continuous enceinte which helped greatly to stem the attempts of the enemy to rush the intervals between the main works, especially during the first general assault, and as a species of screened lateral communication behind the main line. The construction of the inner continuous parapet round the town, on the other hand, was an unjustifiable waste of labour, for the line was untenable so soon as the heights above it were lost. It has been explained, however, that it was not intended as a keep to be held when the main line

of works should be captured, but merely as a barrier against a sudden rush to gain the town which might penetrate between the main works.

The communications were inadequate in number and in many cases very exposed, especially the roads leading towards 203 Metre Hill. Indeed, this was partly responsible for the comparative immobility of the defence artillery, and, therefore, to some extent discounted the advantage that the Russians might have enjoyed from the fact that they were acting on interior lines. The bombproof shelters provided were few in number and large in size, whereas it seems that it would have been better if they had been more numerous and smaller. Whilst there were no balloons, there were not enough observation stations, and they were insufficiently protected. The means of telephonic communication were also inadequate to the needs of the defence, and there was no separate system for fire control. Since the wires, also, were entirely above ground, much interruption was caused by the enemy's fire. Obstacles played an important part in the defence, as it must have been foreseen that they would, but stores of materials for their construction were lacking, and the entanglements that were put up were comparatively inefficient owing to the difficulty of driving stakes into the rocky soil. The Russians in many cases also committed the mistake of placing their obstacles where they were not under fire from any point of the defence. Nevertheless, they proved of immense value in checking the Japanese.

The organization of the defence was the reverse of simple. General Kondratenko was in control of the whole of the land front, which in the beginning of August was divided into two main sectors. Sector I, under Major-General Gorbatovski, comprised the main line of resistance from the extreme south-east, south of Fort Pai-yin, round to, and inclusive of, Fort Ta-yang-kou North, and also the advanced points which were then held in front of that portion of the main line—Ta-ku Shan, Hsiao-ku Shan and the various works on the north in the vicinity of Shui-shih-ying village. Sector II, at first under Major-General Tserpitski and then under Colonel Irman, comprised the remainder of the main line to White Wolf Hills, and included the advanced points on the north-west, which can be described collectively as the 203 Metre

Hill group, and were in front of the Sector I.* Topographically, therefore, there was considerable overlapping of authority, since the nearest source from which reinforcements required for the 203 Metre Hill group of works could be drawn were the troops in rear, which were in another defence sector. Of Sector I the portion of the main line west of the Lun Ho, from that river to Fort Ta-yang-kou North inclusive, with the Shui-shih-ying group of works, was entrusted to Colonel Semenov. Here again there was overlapping, since the advanced works of Colonel Semenov's command were in front of that portion of the main line directly under General Gorbatovski. The commands of General Gorbatovski, Colonel Semenov, and Colonel Irman were, as has been described, known as the Eastern, Northern or Western fronts, and each front was divided into three subsections.

As regards the distribution of the garrison, of the thirty thousand rifles and sixty-seven field guns which formed its total strength at the beginning of the siege, some eight thousand rifles and twenty-three guns were allotted to the advanced positions, sixteen thousand rifles and twenty guns to the main defence line, and six thousand rifles and twenty-four guns were in General Reserve. But the units were mixed up and were not distributed on any system. Points worthy of remark are that the officer commanding the land defences had no reserve at his disposal and that Generals Stessel and Smirnov both had the power of drawing upon the General Reserve of the fortress. It is interesting, in view of the opinion sometimes expressed that the second line troops are good enough for fighting behind defences, to note that the bulk of the garrison consisted of first line units. Indeed, it is doubtful if any but the best troops could have withstood the furious attacks of the Japanese.

Allusion has already been made to the confusion brought about by the presence of both Generals Stessel and Smirnov; but the division of authority and friction had caused such an adverse effect on the conduct of the defence that a further reference to the origin of the system of command is justified.†

* These consisted of:—Head-Quarter Hill, 174 Metre Hill, Division Hill, Namako Yama, Akasaka Yama, 203 Metre Hill.

† See pp. 323-4, Vol. I, and pp. 575-7, Vol. II. On p. 323, Vol. I, it is stated that General Smirnov was responsible for the defence of the fortified zone. This is not strictly correct. He was Governor and Commandant of the fortress. General Stessel was in control of the fortified zone of Kuan-tung.

When war broke out the supreme authority over the Russian land and sea forces in the Far East, also the senior officer in Port Arthur until the 5th May, was the Viceroy, Admiral Alexeiev, the governor of the fortress being Lieutenant-General Stessel. In February, 1904, after hostilities had started, the latter officer was appointed to the command of the 3rd Siberian Corps, which had just been formed, and Lieutenant-General Smirnov was sent out from Russia as governor of Port Arthur. There was then some difference of opinion between the Viceroy and the commander-in-chief as to the respective claims of Generals Stessel and Smirnov and Admiral Makarov to be entrusted with the defence of the fortress, and the Emperor decided that General Stessel should be in command of the fortified zone, or rayon, from Chin-chou to Port Arthur, that he was to be responsible for the defence of the fortress and that all the troops should be under his control. The exact delegation of authority was left to the Viceroy. But General Smirnov was governor as well as commandant, and in conveying the Imperial decision the Viceroy did not clearly define the division of authority between the governor of the fortress and the general in command of the fortified zone—if and when the two areas should coincide.

When driven back into Port Arthur, General Stessel, as senior officer, seized the command and retained it in spite of his recall by the commander-in-chief later on. The real cause of the trouble, therefore, seems to have been the lack of precision in the instructions issued from head-quarters, which gave rise to friction between two officers who were both jealous of their rights. The continual intervention also of General Fock, who was deprived of the command of the 4th East Siberian Rifle Division three weeks after the beginning of the siege and thenceforward had no definite position in the fortress hierarchy, did not tend to make matters run smoothly. Friction, however, was not confined to the military forces, for there was great ill-feeling and jealousy between the army and navy, which seriously affected the efficiency of the defence. The army continually criticized the navy for not leaving harbour and at the same time demanded that armament and stores should be landed from the ships for the land defence. The naval authorities, on the other hand, though they could not decide to leave port, were averse to handing over armament and equipment to the military. There appears to have been much mutual recrimination between the two Services.

The garrison was far larger than the number contemplated at the time when the organization of the fortress was put in hand, but the armament was short of that originally proposed. By the time that the siege commenced, however, this deficiency in numbers was more than made up by mounting several of the Chinese pieces captured at Tientsin during the Boxer Rising, and by landing naval guns from the fleet. Half-way through August the armament, exclusive of field artillery and machine guns, had been brought up to a total of 586 pieces, of which 465 belonged to the land defence.* As has been described, not only were the heaviest guns—those of 10-inch calibre—allotted to the coast batteries, and quite rightly so, but of forty-four heavy howitzers of over 9-inch calibre, thirty-two were also devoted to the armament of the sea front. As a consequence, the land defence suffered from the lack of heavy high-angle pieces with which to search out the attacking batteries by indirect fire. It therefore devolved to a great extent upon the direct-fire guns, which were nearly all extremely exposed, to engage the Japanese artillery, which was firing from concealed positions,—with disastrous results to the former. Indeed, in spite of the lack of heavy metal in the siege train of the attackers at first, matters were so much in their favour that there can be said to have been no prolonged long range artillery fight. A large number of the Russian heavy guns were either dismantled or damaged by the bombardment preceding the first assault, or during the course of the assault. This does not imply that they were permanently silenced, for several of them were remounted and others were replaced—sometimes by pieces of a different calibre; but the mixture of armament which resulted did not conduce to efficiency in practice.†

* The armament originally contemplated consisted of 552 or 542 fortress guns. On the 14th August the defence was nominally in possession of the following:—

			Fortress guns.	Field guns.	Machine guns.
Land Front	...	...	220	67	57
Coast Front	...	...	121	—	5
			<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
			341	67	62
Chinese guns	...	...	44	—	—
Naval guns	...	...	201	—	5
			<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
			586	67	67
			<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

† In the Sung-shu Supporting Battery there were in October guns of five different calibres.

It was owing to the weakness in high-angle pieces on the land side, and to the fact that after the 10th August there was not much action on the part of the Japanese to call for the seaward employment of heavy artillery, that many of the guns of the sea front were turned against the besiegers on land. During the August assault the armament of several of the coast batteries was thus employed. Disadvantageous as was the exposed position of much of the Russian land armament, the emplacement of heavy guns in the infantry works was nothing short of a mistake. Not only were they so conspicuous as to be put out of action in a very short time, but their presence attracted a concentration of fire which the works might otherwise have escaped. Moreover, since the works had presumably been placed so as to develop rifle fire to the utmost, their sites were not necessarily the best for artillery. For guns in such exposed positions to have withstood the bombardment to which they were subjected would have necessitated the employment of armour. The direction in which the Russian artillery was most effective was in the close defence. In this, valuable assistance was afforded by the lighter pieces placed so as to meet attempts at assault by short range and cross fire and to flank the intervals between the main works.* The intersected ground, which afforded much cover from guns at a distance, was such as to give special scope for action of this nature. On the whole it may be said that the defence owed more to its light guns than to its heavy armament, and that the experience of Port Arthur points to the necessity in fortress warfare of having a large number of such weapons on mobile mountings.

An organized system of artillery command was not instituted until September. The whole area outside the fortress was then divided into sectors, which, however, did not correspond with those of the infantry defence. Fire direction was carried out by means of squared maps, the principal observing stations after the loss of Ta-ku Shan being Lao-tieh Shan, Wang-tai, two points behind Fort Pai-yin and Kan-ta Shan. The shooting does not appear to have been of a high quality, and there was more

* It was largely owing to the action of such pieces and of machine guns that the Japanese stormers were repulsed at the Chinese Wall on the night of the 23rd-24th August, in spite of the fact that the Russian machine guns were mounted on heavy carriages or unwieldy tripods. A very large number of light quick-firing guns were landed by the fleet.

than one occasion when the Russian gunners fired on their own infantry. In spite of the care taken latterly to husband all resources, the reserves of ammunition, especially for the heavier guns, proved to be insufficient, and this was severely felt during the fighting for 203 Metre Hill. The shortage may have in part been due to the fact that a considerable amount of ammunition was wasted at the beginning of the siege, when, owing to the lack of a proper system of control, long-range fire was opened upon the slightest pretext at insignificant targets. The service of the guns was handicapped by the complications caused by the many varieties of ammunition in use, and by the difficulty of carrying out supply by day along the exposed roads leading to the batteries. The stock of smokeless powder also was limited. While the Chinese guns were generally inferior to those of the Japanese, the Russians were placed at a disadvantage by the fact that certain of their time fuses did not permit of a sufficiently long-range shrapnel fire.

The defenders were greatly handicapped by the small number of engineers included in the garrison. The total number of engineer units of different sorts amounted to four companies, which was disproportionate to the size of the garrison and quite inadequate to carry on the technical duties of the defence of a fortress of the size of Port Arthur. Moreover, none of the units was specially trained in fortress warfare. Unlike the Japanese the Russians were not able to increase the number of their technical troops.

Though the fortress was not attacked on land until almost five months after it had been assailed from the sea, exactly that period was to pass before it surrendered. Before the events of this last period are reviewed it will be advisable to recapitulate their course; and the simplest form for such recapitulation is a record of the main steps taken by the besiegers who, acting as they were on the offensive, initiated all the progress made. Beginning the bombardment of the port seven days after the completion of the close investment, the Japanese next set about preparing the way for an attempt to capture the fortress summarily. This resulted in the seizure after two days' fighting of the two advanced points Ta-ku Shan and Hsiao-ku Shan on the night of the 8th-9th August. Their possession of these hills ensured the safety of the left flank of the projected assault. To guard it on the right, however, it was necessary to carry certain of the advanced defences on the

north-west, and by the 20th August the following points had been wrested from the Russians:—Head-Quarter Hill, Flank Hill and 174 Metre Hill, Heights 426, 305 and 331, Ridge 590, and Kan-ta Shan, while the outposts of the investing line had been pushed round to the shores of Pigeon Bay. The Waterworks and Temple Redoubts on the north, though attacked, were not taken.

Without pressing further in this quarter the Japanese then launched their first general assault, preceded on the 19th and 20th by a bombardment chiefly directed against the works to be stormed. This operation, which really amounted to an attempt to rush the fortress, lasted almost continuously from the 20th to the 24th; but the only tangible result gained by the attackers after immense loss was the capture of the two Pan-lung Redoubts. On the night of the 26th–27th the defenders made a sortie against West Pan-lung. The failure of their first attempt to precipitate the capture of the fortress convinced the Japanese of the necessity of advancing by regular approach. At the beginning of September siege operations were started and were continued for over two months before the assault was repeated. After nearly a month's digging the besiegers made another attack on the Waterworks Redoubt which, together with the four Temple Redoubts, fell to them on the 20th September, as did Namako Yama and the Railway Redoubt, the latter without fighting, all of these points being on the last advanced position of the defenders. But the first effort to take 203 Metre Hill, which lasted from the 20th to the 23rd September, was unsuccessful.

In the beginning of October the besiegers were reinforced by several heavy siege pieces and some companies of sappers; and the arrival of the 11-inch howitzers and the capture of Namako Yama enabled them to begin shelling the fleet in earnest. On the night of the 2nd–3rd the Russians made two sorties, one near Pigeon Bay and one from Fort Chi-kuan, without material result. Pushing their approaches forward and so gradually gaining ground, the Japanese captured "G" on the 16th and also the Erh-lung advanced trench, which was close to the ditch; by this time also they had arrived on the glacis of Fort Chi-kuan. About the middle of the month they started to mine, the first galleries being driven against Forts Chi-kuan, Erh-lung and Sung-shu in order to destroy their counterscarps and flanking defences. By the 26th the besiegers had seized the Sung-shu advanced trench and

the Erh-lung glacis trench, and on the night of the 28th the defenders made sorties from both these works, that from the former being nearly successful. On the following night the Japanese moved their line of investment forward near Pigeon Bay, capturing Solovev Hill for a short time. Though the ditches of the forts were not yet dead, they had arrived at the crest of the glacis of Forts Chi-kuan and Erh-lung, while their advanced parallel was some two hundred yards from the ditch of Sung-shu, and considered that they were close enough to repeat the attempt which had failed some nine weeks earlier. On the 30th October they made their second general assault on the main line of defence, on Q, Fort Chi-kuan, P, Fort Erh-lung and Fort Sung-shu. The attack on the three permanent works failed absolutely, but P, G, and Koku were taken.

For the first two weeks in November practically all activity on the part of the Japanese was confined to a subterranean advance against the "front of attack," and above ground there was a lull. On the 17th the counterscarp galleries of Fort Sung-shu were blown up, as were those of Fort Erh-lung on the 20th, and the attackers gained that of Fort Chi-kuan about the same time. The ditches of the three forts being now dead, the third and last general assault on the front of attack was carried out on the 26th November, not quite a month after the previous effort. But not one work was gained, while the forlorn hope carried out on that night against the Sung-shu Supporting Battery also failed. After the repulse of this third attempt to carry the north-east of the fortress and the consequent failure to obtain Wang-tai as a point from which to direct the fire of their guns upon the Russian ships, the Japanese turned their attention to the north-west, where, beyond the main line of defence, the garrison still held Akasaka Yama and 203 Metre Hill—an alternative observation point superior to Wang-tai. In this direction the besiegers had made progress by sap since their repulse in September, and on the 28th November they pressed the attack. On the 5th December Akasaka Yama and 203 Metre Hill succumbed after eight days almost continuous fighting, and the possession of the latter enabled the Japanese to destroy all the Russian large vessels, except one, before the 8th. Meanwhile, since the third general assault the operations against the front of attack had been confined to an approach underground. On the 18th December the mines under Fort Chi-kuan were fired, and next day the fort was captured. On

the 28th Fort Erh-lung was taken after operations of the same nature, Fort Sung-shu fell on the 30th. Some days before this, on the west, the Japanese had won Solovev Hill. On the 1st January, 1905, they crossed a portion of the Chinese Wall, and by nightfall had seized the following points:—Fort Chi-kuan, Wang-tai, H, I, Fort Erh-lung and Fort Sung-shu. That night the Russians blew up Chi-kuan Battery and evacuated that work and N; both were at once occupied by the Japanese, as were N, Q and R. By daybreak on the 2nd January the besiegers were in possession of the following works on the second line of defence:—I, H, Wang-tai, N, Q and R. The surrender then took place.

Tenacious as was the resistance made and gallant as was the conduct of the troops, the defence, as a whole, failed in the very direction in which that of Sevastopol excelled—in activity. The acquiescence of the Russians in the advance of the enemy along the peninsula and their retirement from the Feng-huang Shan line directly back to the fortress without disputing the ground in between have already been remarked, and the passiveness which marked their action up to the moment of investment continued to characterize it up to the end of the siege. This must be ascribed chiefly to faults in leadership, which included inexperience and the lack of a comprehensive broad outlook. It is believed that General Stessel admittedly knew nothing of siege warfare. He was, nevertheless, disinclined to give ear to those of his subordinates who did, and preferred to have recourse to councils of war, of which several were held during the course of the siege. Contrary to their proverbial reputation, however, these councils seem not to have been entirely inclined to prudence. But the result of such a course was that there was no master-mind in supreme control to lead the garrison and to regulate and co-ordinate its efforts. This caused incoherence in the defence operations and rendered them entirely dependent on the action of the attackers.*

Up to the end of August, when the execution of such enterprises upon the initiative of subordinate commanders was forbidden by head-quarters, several sorties of a minor nature were undertaken, some of which were successful; but they were only attempted on a small scale. Generally speaking, the offensive

* The one man who wielded most influence and whose personality for so long inspired the defence—General Kondratenko—was not in control.

action of the Russians partook rather of the nature of "offensive returns" made to regain lost ground than of "counter-attacks" launched to harass the besiegers and delay their progress. The most noteworthy examples of the former were the series of attempts made at the end of August to recapture the two Pan-lung Redoubts by storm. These finally changed to an approach by counter-sap and counter-mine.

The use made by the Russians of their reserves in forestalling and beating back attacks was, in some cases, extremely good, in spite of the exposed nature of the roads and the inferior telephonic communications. But in others there seems to have been some hesitation to move reserves until the direction of the real blow was revealed. This was due to the large arc upon which the Japanese massed and threatened. As a consequence, there were occasions when the garrisons of works were left alone to bear the brunt of the most desperate assaults, and no attempt was made to reinforce them effectively until it was too late, with the result that instead of a prolongation of defence an attempt at recapture was entailed. The tenacity in resistance shown by such isolated bodies of troops was, as a rule, beyond all praise. In one particular direction of activity the defence of Port Arthur offers a contrast to that of Sevastopol, i.e., in the fact that the defenders carried out extremely little counter-sapping or counter-mining in order to interfere with the attack. The most notable example of such action was the approach undertaken against the Pan-lung Redoubts already alluded to. Reference has also been made to the fact that there were no envelopes of permanent counter-mines round the forts, but their absence need not have precluded the driving of galleries before October, in preparation for those of the Japanese. In regard to mining, however, it seems that in accordance with the ideas prevalent as to the obsolete nature of such a system of warfare the Russians, like the Japanese, were neither trained in it nor prepared for it.

In considering the conduct of operations by the Japanese the first point that arises is the length of time they allowed to elapse before they isolated the fortress on land, when the disadvantage of delay must have been obvious. This was due in the first place to their initial strategy, according to which the movement against Port Arthur was to be subsequent to the consolidation of their position in Korea, and secondly to the fact that until the beginning of May they did not regard the command of local waters which

they had gained as being sufficiently secure for an attempt to land an army within a short distance of a hostile fleet which was still in being and possibly active. As has been seen, Admiral Togo's third attempt to block Port Arthur was carried out for the express purpose of preventing any sortie of the First Pacific Squadron which might interfere with the disembarkation of the Japanese Second Army. So soon as there was reason to believe that the harbour was sealed the disembarkation of that army commenced, and within three weeks of the landing of its first unit it succeeded in cutting off the Russians on the Kuan-tung Peninsula. The caution of the Japanese in this direction was entirely justified, for they could not know of the state of paralysis into which the First Pacific Squadron had been thrown. At the same time, in the light of after knowledge, it seems that they would have been perfectly safe, so far as any real danger from that squadron was concerned, if they had started their land operations against Port Arthur much earlier. In fact, had they been able to throw a large force on shore immediately after the naval attack on the night of the 8th-9th February it is possible that they might have seized the fortress, such was its state of unreadiness.

The next feature to claim attention is the slowness of their advance along the Kuan-tung Peninsula after the battle of Nan Shan, notwithstanding the ineffective opposition encountered. For this there were several reasons. After having succeeded in cutting off Port Arthur, General Oku was unable to press the Russians, owing to the necessity for meeting the threat of General Stakelberg's movement down to Te-li-ssu, which was replied to by the detachment northwards of three divisions, thus leaving two only—the 1st and 11th—in Kuan-tung. General Nogi then had to wait for his communications and supply services to be arranged and for his army to be reinforced and organized, in which directions he was somewhat hampered by the absence of locomotives on the railway and by questions of mobilization.* The delay was aggravated by the sinking of the *Hitachi Maru*, conveying siege artillery and railway material, by the disablement of the *Sado Maru*, carrying stores of all kinds, and by the sortie of the First Pacific Squadron on the 23rd June. However, once General Nogi felt strong enough

* The Japanese Third Army was not formed into a siege force until after the failure of the first general assault.

to continue his advance it was only five days before he seized Feng-huang Shan.

After that had been done there was no question of slowness on the part of the besiegers, and it did not take them long to decide upon the front to be assailed.* Within one week they had seized the two points—Hsiao-ku Shan and Ta-ku Shan—on the eastern portion of the last advanced position of the defenders, which might have interfered with the next operation they contemplated, and within three weeks launched a most violent direct attack against the strongest front of the fortress. The main features of the course of their active operations after the investment may be summarized as having consisted of three separate abortive attempts to carry the north-eastern front by storm, the successful attack of a vital point on the north-west—203 Metre Hill—and then the capture of the three main works on the north-east after they had been mined and blown up.

That they should have attempted to carry the fortress by storm so soon has been the subject of much criticism. At the time the besieging army was not very much stronger than that of the defenders, indeed not so strong, if the assistance that permanent works bestow be taken into account, and it had no properly constituted siege train.† It is true that owing to the intersected nature of the terrain the Japanese had been able to approach closer than if the ground had been more open and had pushed considerable numbers of infantry up the numerous watercourses into dead ground in front of the glacis of the works. But these ravines were in the nature of end-on approaches, which only gave facilities for isolated attacks and did not afford a continuous lateral position from which to launch a coherent assault on a broad front; and the Japanese had by then made no attempt to establish such a position close up to the fortress. The line covering the artillery was in fact both their first and last “parallel” at the time, and ran from close in front of the Waterworks Redoubt through Pa-li-chuang, Wu-chia-fang and Wang-chia-tun to Ta-ku Shan and Hsiao-ku Shan, at a distance of about six hundred yards from the forts. Finally, not

* The selection of the point of attack has already been commented on, see Vol. I, pp. 325-6.

† The first general assault amounted to an attempt by a force of three divisions and two brigades to capture by direct attack a fortress garrisoned by two divisions.

more than one day's general bombardment had been carried out by the time that the assaulting columns were sent forward.* On the whole, therefore, the conditions were not favourable for the execution of an operation of the nature attempted, and it seems that the Japanese should have realized that it was bound to fail if the Russians made any resistance worthy of the name.

But the only alternative to essaying to take the place summarily was to lay siege to it, and immense strategic advantages would be gained by the Japanese, if they were successful in the former, in the early completion of the operations in the Kuan-tung Peninsula and the release of the Third Army to swell the main forces. Indeed, although Marshal Oyama was unable to postpone his advance at Liao-yang until the general assault on the fortress did actually take place, there is little doubt that every effort was made by the Japanese to deal with Port Arthur before the first great battle of the war. They at first neither contemplated nor were prepared to undertake siege operations, and it is certain that they had no conception of the difficulty of the task in front of them. Lacking experience or tradition of siege warfare, influenced by current theories as to the possibility of capturing fortresses by *attaque brusquée*, rendered confident by their own easy success against the Chinese ten years before and by the repeated retirements of the Russians before their troops from the Ya-lu onwards, ignorant of the real strength of the permanent forts whose existence was known to them, to a great extent unaware of the creation of the many intermediate defences which had been constructed since the war began, and last, but not least, impelled by the necessity for completing the operations in the Kuan-tung Peninsula as soon as possible, they had not only made up their minds to try to take Port Arthur at once, but were confident of success. And the attack on a line of permanent defences was, so far as can be seen, treated as being much the same as that on a field position.

Nevertheless, despite what seems to have been its premature nature, and despite the failure of its chief purpose, the first general assault very nearly succeeded, for on the night of the 23rd-24th August the stormers penetrated the main line of defence,

* It is not at all certain, even if the Japanese had at this time been in possession of a heavy siege train, that they would have waited to carry out a much longer bombardment.

lapped round the gorge of Fort Chi-kuan, surged over the Chinese Wall, and engaged at close quarters the defenders of Wang-tai and H battery. That the October assault, after the 11-inch howitzers had been bombarding for one month, and the attempt made in November, after these pieces had been at work for nearly two months, did not carry the Japanese so near to success as their effort in August, rather contributes to the conclusion that it was not so much the lack of battering by artillery that caused their failure on the first occasion as exhaustion and insufficient strength. One critic indeed suggests that if they had had in August another division with which to press the advantage gained between Forts Chi-kuan and Erh-lung they might have split up the defence and won the fortress.* In regard to the course of this assault the chief points to be noted are: the insufficiency of the preliminary reconnaissance; the amount of dead ground in front of the Russian works, in which the Japanese were able to collect; the concealment afforded them by the *kao-liang*; the difficulty of reinforcing, especially at night, by the ravines, which were so devious that many units lost their way; and the extreme gallantry displayed. It was probably the confusion which occurred during the night fighting on this occasion and the difficulty of supporting by artillery fire, that forced the Japanese to make their later assaults during daylight. The plans for the first general assault were well laid. The batteries succeeded in opening fire suddenly for the preliminary bombardment, and during the day supported the stormers most effectively; but the operation degenerated into a series of gallant but disconnected attacks. Having started all round, from Louisa Bay to Chi-kuan South-East, the advance finally contracted to a narrow front, being chiefly pressed against the two Pan-lung Redoubts. This enabled the Russians to concentrate to meet the attack. It is not known if the attempt on the North-West was undertaken to assist that on the North-East, but if so the two should have been better synchronized. In regard to the two Pan-lung Redoubts it is doubtful if their capture alone justified the immense loss suffered in effecting it, but the Japanese were undoubtedly right in making every effort to retain the works when once seized, for they formed invaluable starting points later on.

Narrowly as Wang-tai escaped capture during the August assault, that on 203 Metre Hill on the 20th-23rd September

* Général C. de Grandprey.

only failed because the Japanese could not support it, either with men or heavy artillery. It seems possible that if they had pushed closer up by siege approach before they attempted to take the hill and then carried out the assault simultaneously with that on the Waterworks and Temple Redoubts, combined with an application of pressure on the North-East, they might have gained this observation point earlier than they did eventually.

It is certain that the failure of the first general assault came as a serious disappointment to the Japanese, and was a great setback to their operations. But from the nature of their next attempt, it seems that either they had not by then appreciated the difficulty of storming permanent works provided with deep ditches, or that they were so pressed for time that they could not afford to apply fully the lessons to be learned from their first failure. In August their purpose had been to capture Wang-tai by an irruption over the main line of defences: at the end of October the works on the main line seem rather to have been their first objectives. Notwithstanding, however, the fact that on the latter occasion the assaulting columns started from points much closer to the main defensive line, which they had attained after nearly two months laborious excavation, and that the heavy artillery had battered the forts for a month, the deep ditches of the latter had not been neutralized by the destruction of the flanking defence. The result of the assault was that the three semi-permanent works G, P, and Kobu were carried, and Q, Chi-kuan Battery and the three forts were not. The repulse was generally brought about by the cross fire poured by the defenders of the neighbouring works into and in front of the points assailed; but in the case of Forts Erh-lung and Sung-shu it was to a great extent due to the impossibility of crossing the ditches. When the third general assault was made the stormers had a still shorter distance to cross, and the ditches of the forts were dead; but by that time the fire of the defenders was better organized, and from the retrenchments or cavaliers of the forts and from various supporting points it was overwhelming. On this occasion the Japanese did not gain any of the works, though they established themselves close to the Chinese Wall.

In fact, though progress was made and the attack was better consolidated after each of these two sanguinary failures to storm, by neither of them was the fortress placed in such danger

as it had been on the nights of the 22nd-23rd, 23rd-24th August. Nevertheless, it was only at the end of the third general assault, after they had lost some twenty-four thousand men in three great efforts to gain the front of attack, that the Japanese realized that until they destroyed the permanent works piecemeal there was not much chance of gaining them. It is somewhat remarkable that with the exception of the forlorn hope launched against the Sung-shu Supporting Battery on the night of the 26th-27th November, the two last assaults were made during daylight. Another noteworthy point in connexion with the conduct of all the assaults is the system of decentralization by which each unit had assigned to it some definite objective which was rarely changed. The outstanding departure from this system was the night attack on the Sung-shu Supporting Battery, the failure of which has been ascribed by Japanese authorities well qualified to judge to have been very largely due to the mixture of units by which it was attempted.

As a siege force the Japanese Third Army was at first weak in heavy artillery, especially howitzers. At the time of the first general assault, beyond the normal complement of thirty-six field or mountain guns with each division, and an extra field artillery brigade of seventy-two guns, it possessed a siege train of two hundred pieces varying from guns of 4-inch calibre up to howitzers and mortars of 6-inch calibre.* This train had to some extent to be extemporized owing to the loss of the siege artillery on the *Hitachi Maru*, and had been strengthened by the addition of naval 4.7-inch and 12-pounder guns mounted on improvised land carriages. It is not known what pieces intended for the siege train were lost; but from the fact that the Japanese undertook their first assault without waiting to batter the defences to any great extent with the artillery they had, it appears that the necessity for the employment of heavy guns against permanent works was not realized, and that possibly the siege train originally organized would not have been adequate to the task before it. Their failure, however, was not without its effect, and before the attempt was repeated their artillery had been increased by the addition of eighteen 11-inch howitzers, four naval 6-inch guns and some naval 12-pounders. The denudation of the coast-

* See Vol. I, foot-note (+), p. 359, and Appendix M.

defences of Japan of these howitzers, whatever may have been the confidence of the Japanese that they would never be required to act against the Russian fleet, and the immense trouble entailed in their transport to their positions round Port Arthur are evidence of the need for a heavy siege train felt by the besiegers after their first attempt to assault. As has been explained, their artillery had one great advantage in its contest against the guns of the defence, for except at first it was hardly ever exposed in an effort to carry out direct fire.* The besiegers were also able better to ensure a concentration of fire whilst maintaining a dispersion of the guns. They had yet another advantage in that their artillery did not include pieces of so many different types and calibres.

In regard to the results attained, though the Japanese artillery was well served and very soon gained the mastery over that of the defence, the actual material damage done to the Russian permanent works was not great, in spite of the weight of the metal employed and the fact that the thickness of the concrete in these works had not been designed to resist such heavy projectiles as were fired against it. This was possibly in part due to the fact that the 11-inch howitzer shells were intended for firing against ships and did not carry so large a bursting charge as their calibre would suggest. Upon the town the bombardment had little effect when once the moral effect had worn off. The most valuable work done by the besiegers' guns, apart from the destruction of the Russian ships, was that of co-operating in the infantry attacks, which were most efficiently supported. The knowledge gradually gained of the ground, the practice obtained by firing for long periods at the same target, and the steepness of the slopes permitted of supporting fire being carried on until the stormers had practically reached their objective. The prolongation of fire to sweep the exposed rear slopes of the Russian positions and so prevent reinforcement was also well timed and effective. Somewhat remarkable was the use made of light pieces carried up to positions so soon as the latter had been gained by the infantry. This was done on several occasions, notably in the case of the fighting in the counterscarp gallery of Fort Chi-kuan.

* Nevertheless, the statement which has been made in some quarters that the Russians did not succeed in discovering the position of any of the Japanese 11-inch howitzer batteries is not correct.

Like the Russians, though not nearly to the same extent, the Japanese also suffered from a lack of engineers, of which there were during August only the nine companies belonging to the three divisions. The losses amongst this arm were naturally extremely heavy from the very first, and in September the number of companies was increased by two companies of *Kobi* engineers, while in November three companies were attached to the three divisions and three more came up with the 7th Division, this bringing the total number of engineer companies with the Third Army to seventeen. It was possibly in part owing to the disproportionately small number of engineers at first with General Nogi, and to the great wastage amongst them, as well as to the lack of proper technical equipment for the work required, that the actual siege approaches both above and below ground did not make quicker progress, though the hardness of the soil rendered excavation a matter of great difficulty. About the mining operations, which were not started till about the middle of October, there is little to be said. Though the Japanese had to force their way through material which consisted largely of rock and frequently required blasting, they had a comparatively short distance to drive their galleries, and were not seriously disturbed by any countermining on the part of the enemy. It is an open question whether they might not have succeeded in getting across the ditches of the three forts with less loss than they actually suffered if they had approached underground on a broader front, with a larger number of galleries, and had blown in a greater length of the counterscarp.

Of the conduct of the siege generally it may be said that the operations were characterized by haste. As has already been pointed out, this was primarily due to the necessities of the strategic situation, but it was at first fostered by the ignorance of the Japanese of siege warfare, and led to immense sacrifice of life, part of which, it is thought, might have been avoided. The motive which inspired the first general assault in August was indubitably strong, and success would have been an ample justification for the great losses certain to be incurred in what was at the time a somewhat venturesome attempt. But, though they came near it, the Japanese had no grounds for counting on success, and did not gain it; and it is difficult to say whether the limited results attained were worth the sacrifice entailed. The repetition of the operation in October, though undertaken under more favourable conditions, was also

premature, since the ditches of the Russian forts were still not dead. The attack on 203 Metre Hill in December has already been commented on, and gallant as it was, it suffered from some of the faults which characterized the first general assault.* In this case again the losses were very great, but the operation succeeded. The extent to which the efforts of the Japanese were dominated by the desire to gain the two observation points—Wang-tai and 203 Metre Hill—which would enable them to destroy the First Pacific Squadron is a point of special interest in their conduct of the siege.

A remarkable feature of the fighting was the desperate nature of the struggle at close quarters, and the reversion of both sides to methods which might almost be classified as mediæval. Owing to the length of time which the combatants had to spend almost within touch of each other but unable to expose themselves in order to use their rifles, recourse was had to grenades which could be thrown over the intervening cover by hand or be projected from improvised mortars. The experience gained at Port Arthur has in many armies led to the reintroduction of the grenade in different forms.

To turn from the conduct of the siege and defence to the more general subject of its duration, from the commencement of the close investment Port Arthur held out for one hundred and fifty-four days. As compared with the length of some of the defences in history, that of Sevastopol, for instance, which lasted for three hundred and fifty-six days, this was not a long time.† It has been argued that the surrender might possibly have been deferred either by a postponement of the commencement of the siege or by a prolongation of the defence. An investigation into the probable effect on the campaign of such a result, however brought about, and even if it should have prevented the departure northwards of the Japanese Third Army for only so short a period as two weeks, is therefore not without interest, even though it entail some anticipation of events. Since, as will be seen later, it is almost certain that Marshal Oyama would not have attacked at Mukden until all General Nogi's troops were in position to take part in it, a delay of two weeks in the arrival of the latter would have

* See Vol. II, pp. 624-6.

† At Sevastopol the defenders lost in round numbers 30,000 men, and the attackers 40,000. At Port Arthur the losses of the defenders were 24,000, whilst those of the attackers amounted to 60,000.

enabled General Kuropatkin to repeat his attack on San-de-pu, as he intended to do and was actually prevented from doing by the advance of the Japanese. There is no reason to suppose, however, that the repetition of that attack would have brought any better results to the Russians than did the action which took place from the 25th to the 28th January, for their prospects of success in February were no better than they had been. And had the Russians again failed and remained in their defensive positions, the Japanese would probably have fought the battle of Mukden, but they would have been forced by the delay in the arrival of the Third Army to undertake their advance later than they did, at a season when a thaw might have somewhat handicapped their enveloping movement. What the result would have been it is not possible to estimate.

On the other hand a point which will bear consideration is whether the period of the detachment of the Japanese Third Army from the Japanese main forces might not have been curtailed. Since the First Pacific Squadron was the real strategic objective of General Nogi's troops, as well as of the Japanese fleet, it may seem that Marshal Oyama might have broken off the siege so soon as the Russian ships were definitely known to be destroyed and have brought part of the Third Army up to join him, leaving a portion of it to watch and contain the exhausted defenders of Port Arthur. This transfer would certainly have greatly strengthened his position, which was theoretically most precarious during the latter part of December, 1904, and the whole of January, 1905, on account of the great numerical superiority of the Russians: it would also have been strategically sound if it would have enabled him to undertake the next great operation contemplated. But, as has been remarked, it is doubtful if he could have commenced the attack at Mukden with the assistance of a portion only of General Nogi's force; and there were reasons against transferring even a portion of it northwards.

In the first place such a move would have anticipated the release of the whole army by a short time only, for though the last vessel of the First Pacific Squadron, with the exception of the *Sevastopol* and some small craft, was sunk on the 9th December, it was probably some days before the besiegers were able to ascertain definitely whether this was done voluntarily by the Russians or was caused by their own fire. Therefore, even if the Japanese had remained content with the extinction of

practically the whole of the Russian squadron without waiting for the end of the last battleship they would not have been free to commence moving their troops away from Port Arthur till half-way through December, or approximately two weeks before the fortress fell. Secondly, even if it had been possible, there would have been great difficulties, apart from any interference on the part of the garrison, in withdrawing a large fraction of the wearied besieging troops suddenly and quickly. Thirdly, not only would any relaxation of effort by the Japanese at such a moment have been in opposition to the strong sentimental reasons which had inspired their heroic attempts to gain the fortress, but the immense moral effect of its actual capture, the news of which re-echoed throughout the world, would not have come into play so soon as it did. Serious as were the apparent risks run by their field armies in December, 1904, and January, 1905, the results prove that the Japanese were in the circumstances correct in prosecuting the siege, even after they had gained their strategic object, until the prize upon which they had set their hearts was in their grasp.

In regard to the material side of fortress warfare, one thing that the experience of Port Arthur proved definitely was the value of permanent forts. This is seen from a comparison of the resistance made by Forts Chi-kuan, Erh-lung and Sung-shu, with that of some of the provisionally defended points. At Fort Chi-kuan, after about two months' siege operations, called for by the necessity for destroying the flanking defence of the ditch, the Japanese reached the edge of the counterscarp. From that time it took them fifty days, until the 19th December, before they captured the work, in spite of two desperate assaults, one made before the ditch was dead and the other afterwards. And before they finally gained it they had to mine and blow up the main parapet. In the case of Fort Erh-lung, where the attackers had crowned the glacis two days earlier than they had at Fort Chi-kuan, it took them sixty-one days from that time to gain the fort. Fort Sung-shu, where the Japanese arrived near the edge of the glacis on the 30th October, resisted for fifty-two days. On the other hand, the East and West Pan-lung Redoubts fell after less than three days' fighting, while the Waterworks Redoubt after having resisted one serious attempt against it and having imposed an advance by sap on the attackers, finally succumbed after less than one day's assault. Naturally, the defence made

by these provisional works, which were not vital points—though the two Pan-lung Redoubts were almost in the main line of defence—cannot be compared with that of the permanent forts. But 203 Metre Hill, although a part of the advanced position and not in the main line of defence, was of such vital importance to both sides that the contest for its possession was more desperate than that for any other locality of the fortress; and its resistance does offer some comparison. In September it successfully withstood an assault lasting three days and forced the Japanese to undertake siege approaches. It was not until the 28th November, or more than two months later, that they made a further active effort to seize this point, which had been meanwhile strengthened as far as was possible with improvised works. Strong as it was towards the end, and heroic as was its defence, it eventually fell after eight days' combined bombardment and assault.

There is no doubt that the shortness of its final resistance was partly due to the fury of the attack of the Japanese, who were forced by strategic reasons to take the hill at all costs; to the immense artillery concentration brought against what were hardly more than heavy field defences, which also prevented reinforcement; and to the fact that the hill was isolated. But there is also no doubt that the great difference between the duration of the defence made by it and that made by the forts on the north-east after the attackers had reached assaulting distance was mainly due to the flanked deep ditches of the forts. And not only did the permanent works withstand attack for a longer time: the combined strength of their garrisons was less than that of 203 Metre Hill, and their defence cost fewer lives. The latter fact can to a great extent be attributed to the existence of casemates in the forts and to their absence on the hill, where there were only field bombproofs, and is again a point in favour of permanent works. On the whole the defence of Port Arthur was a triumphant vindication of the stormproof permanent fort provided with a flanked deep ditch.

In the operations round the fortress the value to either side of reconnaissance was enhanced by the stationary nature of most of the objects about which information was required—such as the fortifications and artillery positions both of the attack and the defence—since this quality precluded the immediate falsification of the information gained by the sudden changes in disposition which are apt to occur when the objects reconnoitred are

mobile. Any means of securing the observation of artillery fire was also of especial value owing to the part played by that arm on both sides. There would consequently have been great scope for the employment of air-craft in those two directions. This applies, however, almost entirely to mobile air-craft, such as free balloons, airships and aeroplanes, for the rugged nature of the country, with its steep hills and valleys, was such as to militate somewhat against the efficacy of captive balloons, which can only rise above their own lines. The Russians had no means of making aerial reconnaissances, their balloon intended for Port Arthur having been captured at sea at the very beginning of the war. The Japanese, on the other hand, made some use of a captive balloon during August; but not many ascents were made and apparently not much importance was attached to the results obtained, for the balloon was sent northwards in September, after an observing point had been gained in Namako Yama.* If both sides had been furnished with efficient air services at the beginning of the siege there would doubtless have ensued a struggle to obtain the command of the air, which would probably have ended in favour of the Japanese, whose resources would not have been so limited as were those of the besieged, and who could at once have made good their losses. Though the Russians suffered the more, from ignorance of the enemy's dispositions, especially in respect to artillery positions, it cannot be said that an air service would have benefited them more than the Japanese. To appreciate what the latter might have gained by the power of reconnoitring from the air, it is only necessary to turn to the immense sacrifices made by them to obtain an observing station from which the fire of their guns could be directed on the Russian fleet.

In the dropping of explosives, also, airships might have been of service, particularly to the besiegers, since their attacks were immediately directed against stationary objects of some size, and their ulterior objectives—the naval base and the squadron in harbour—were also stationary and of a nature to form a good target. But to contemplate the action of air-craft presupposes the employment of an anti-aircraft armament which would probably have been chiefly effective against airships; and experience on the relative power of these means of offence and defence

* It is not known whether this was the balloon captured from the Russians.

is so limited that any attempt to investigate the possible results of their action can hardly be of value.

It may be said, in conclusion, that the example of Port Arthur proves that the siege and defence of a fortress is in essentials what it has always been, since success or failure depends mostly on the spirit shown by either side; that artillery, whatever its power, produces less actual effect than might have been expected; that a determined defender is not beaten even when the besieging sappers have established themselves on the parapets of his forts; that the artillery and engineers can only open the road; and that the final arbitrament is, as formerly, with the infantry. And, whatever may have been the neglect in preparation, the mistakes in organization, the failings in leadership, and the errors of commission or omission on either side, the struggle will remain for all time as an example of heroic devotion and supreme valour.

CHAPTER LIX.

OPERATIONS IN THE SUBSIDIARY PORTIONS OF THE THEATRE OF WAR DURING 1904—RUSSIAN FEARS OF CHINESE INTERVENTION.

(Strategical Map 6.)

It has been seen how the cardinal point of the plan pursued by the Russians, indeed the factor which really shaped the course of the campaign up to the point to which the narrative has been carried, was their initial decision to hold the fortress of Port

Arthur and to make it their primary naval base in the Far East. It was this policy which controlled the selection of the area of concentration for their field armies, causing it to be fixed so far south as Liao-yang, and consequently governed the actions of the Japanese who, after the attainment of their geographical objective in Korea, elected to pursue the double strategic objective presented by the Russian field army and naval base. The final retirement of the First Pacific Squadron behind the guns of Port Arthur magnified the value of the possession of the fortress in the eyes of either side; and by further curtailing General Kuropatkin's freedom of action and inducing the Japanese to make a more concentrated effort in the Kuan-tung Peninsula it served only to confirm the original limitation of the area of activity on land.

Insomuch, therefore, as this history of the operations has so far been solely concerned with the main strategy of both sides, it has been confined to a description of the events occurring in a very small fraction of the whole possible theatre of war.* But, though the year 1904 was remarkable for the absence of any operations of a diversionary or subsidiary nature, there were other quarters besides the main theatre where hostilities were possible and were expected; and a retrospective survey of the progress of

* Western Korea, the Liao-tung Peninsula and Southern Manchuria.
(4726b)

events in these quarters during the year will be given before the main thread of the narrative is taken further.

The directions in which such activity might have been expected were two. Firstly, there was the region on the west, at the head of the Gulf of Liao-tung. Previous to the outbreak of war the Russian General Staff had not admitted the possibility of the

Japanese obtaining the local command of the sea, and any hostile action on the west of Liao-tung had not been contemplated as being practicable, in the face of the powerful Russian squadron based on Port Arthur. But the sudden and quite unexpected naval reverse sustained at the very opening of hostilities not only upset at once all calculations as to the limitations which would be imposed on Japanese strategy by the presence of the First Pacific Squadron, but caused a revulsion of opinion as to the potentialities of the situation thus brought about, which was in truth hardly justified by the actual advantage gained by the Japanese—great though that was. So soon as war started hostile action at the head of the Gulf of Liao-tung was looked upon as being probable and was at moments even considered to be imminent. What was most feared was a landing on the west coast of the Liao-tung Peninsula, either at Newchuang or between that place, Kai-ping and Hsiung-yao-cheng, by which a strong force of Japanese might be thrown on the flank of the Russian zone of concentration near Liao-yang and on the line of communication of the advanced troops in the south.* It was also considered possible, though not very much importance was attached to the idea, that by means of a secret understanding with China, or in violation of a neutrality which she was powerless to protect, the Japanese might land troops in Chinese territory on the west coast of the gulf, near Kin-chu-fu or Shan-hai-kuan, and thence advance via Hsin-min-tun towards Mukden, behind the area of concentration.†

Immediate steps were therefore taken for the protection of Newchuang itself, and within three days of the surprise attack at Port Arthur its small garrison of one company of infantry was strengthened by the arrival of the 11th East Siberian Rifle

* For some time it was thought quite possible that the Japanese Third Army might land here. See Vol. I, p. 155, foot-note (†).

† At one period it was rumoured that a Japanese army some 100,000 strong was on the point of landing at Kin-chu-fu.

Regiment. Thenceforth, until it was abandoned by the Russians, the town was held by a force of varying strength which at the moment of evacuation amounted to four battalions, half a squadron, and eight guns.* The Port of Newchuang (Ying-kou). Amongst the steps taken for the protection of the place was the repair of the existing fort, work upon which was started in March.† But the fact that Newchuang was a treaty port restricted, for fear of causing international complications, the measures which could be taken for its defence. However, in April two mine-fields were laid down and a third was prepared, an "Examination Service" was established and night traffic was prevented by extinguishing the lights. As already mentioned the gunboat *Sivuch* remained in harbour until the 25th July, when the garrison marched out; but during May her guns were landed and were transferred to Liao-yang.‡ The great advantage that the possession of this important commercial port, with all its facilities for disembarkation, would confer on the Japanese was especially appreciated by the Viceroy; and in the frequent discussions which occurred between him and the Russian commander-in-chief during the first three months of hostilities one of the main reasons against retirement put forward by Admiral Alexeiev was that it would entail the abandonment of Newchuang to the enemy.§ Later on, in July, he seems to have attached somewhat less importance to the possession of the place than General Kuropatkin did, especially if its retention should be allowed to militate against making an effort to drive the Japanese from the railway.

The protection of the coast towards Kai-ping and Hsiung-yao-cheng was entrusted to detachments from the Southern Force, and for some time a reserve for these detachments The shores of the Gulf of Liao-tung. was maintained at Hai-cheng; and in order that The Liao Ho. reinforcements might be conveyed quickly either to the south or west two trains were continuously held in readiness at Ta-shih-chiao junction. In May, after

* On the 14th July the units in garrison were the 11th (Semipalatinsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment, one battalion of the 33rd East Siberian Rifle Regiment, half a squadron of the 11th Orenburg Cossack Regiment, and eight guns of the 4th Siberian Artillery Division.

† Its armament in the middle of the month consisted of four 6-inch guns, eight light guns and two old Chinese guns.

‡ See Vol. I, p. 212, and Vol. II, p. 231.

§ The population of Newchuang was 80,000.

personally inspecting Newchuang, General Kuropatkin gave orders for a scheme to be prepared by which both the 1st and 2nd Siberian Corps could be concentrated on the coast in case of necessity. The suspicions regarding the intentions of the Japanese seem to have been confirmed by the demonstration made by a portion of their fleet on the 16th May and by the reconnaissance carried out on the 7th-8th June for the purpose of landing supplies near Tower Hill, when the Japanese vessels bombarded the coast in order to cover their sounding operations. Protection against an irruption of the enemy through Chinese territory to the north and west of Newchuang was provided by the Liao Ho Detachment, which was also charged with the duty of watching the railway line between the port and Hsin-min-tun and noting the movements of Chinese troops. In February this force consisted of four companies, four and a half squadrons, and four guns, distributed along the Liao Ho. By April it had grown in strength to one battalion, one regiment of Cossacks and two guns, with six squadrons and two guns of the Frontier Guards, and it constituted a strategic flank guard under the command of Major-General Kossakovski.* Later it was again increased in strength and its main body was established at Ta-wan on the Liao Ho.

The intrinsically dangerous nature of the situation in which the southernmost portions of the Southern Force were placed, up to the time of the retirement to Hai-cheng, by being thrust forward along a peninsula in the face of an enemy who was thought to have gained the control of local waters, was realized by the Russians and delayed their movement towards Port Arthur, but that force did not withdraw until the 25th July when compelled so to do by the defeat at Ta-shih-chiao. On the other hand the actual risks incurred were less than was supposed, for Admiral Togo's attempts to block Port Arthur had not been so successful as to release his fleet. Moreover, there is no available evidence to show that the Japanese contemplated any diversions on the west, and beyond the naval demonstration made as a feint towards Kai-ping on the 16th May they attempted none. In fact up till the beginning of July doubts as to the extent to which the Russian squadron was sealed up in Port Arthur and consequently as to

* About the 11th July the units composing this detachment consisted of three battalions of the 4th (Verkhne-Udinsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment, two squadrons of the Amur Cossack Regiment, two companies, five squadrons and four guns of the Frontier Guards.

the extent to which their own navy had gained the control of local waters would have prevented any attempt, even had such been intended, to send transports unescorted up the Gulf of Liao-tung; and the navy was in no position to spare ships for escort duties. The eventual landings at Hsiung-yao-cheng and Kai-ping in order to facilitate the supply of the Second Army, and the seizure of Newchuang were only rendered possible by the progress of the Second and Fourth Armies and really formed part of the Japanese main advance.*

On the east the area open to subsidiary operations was of far greater extent, and comprised the whole of the coast of the Maritime Province, the north-east coast of Korea, and the Island of Sakhalin.†

On the east. the portions of the mainland really concerned may be said to have been the region at the mouth of the Amur, including the town of Nikolaievsk, the Southern Ussuri District, containing Vladivostok, and the Korean coast as far south as Gensan. Between Nikolaievsk and Vladivostok were spots where landings might have been effected, but this coast is ice-bound for from three to four months in the year and the country inland is so wild and inhospitable, consisting as it does almost entirely of mountains, swamps, and forests, that it is practically impassable for a large force. In Southern Ussuri, besides points in the neighbourhood of Vladivostok, Possiet Bay

* Similarly the question of the subsequent landing of larger forces discussed on pp. 414-16, Vol. I, is not one of subsidiary operations.

† The Maritime Province, Littoral Province, or Primorsk (*Primorskaya Oblast*), is the whole strip of coast along the east side of Siberia north of Korea. It is divided geographically into two portions, the southern portion—the Ussuri Maritime Region (*Ussurisko-Primorski Krai*) extending from Possiet Bay up to Nikolaievsk, and the northern portion—the Okhotsk Kamchatka Region (*Okhotsko-Kamchatki Krai*) extending from Nikolaievsk round the shore of the Okhotsk Sea to Kamchatka. The Ussuri Maritime Region was at the time of the war subdivided into four administrative areas, of which the southernmost was the Southern Ussuri District (*Yuzhno-Ussuriski Okrug*) containing Vladivostok.

The exact extent and the boundaries of these different Russian provinces are not clearly shown on all maps, and a short description of them is now given in addition to that on p. 29, Vol. I. From a reference to Strategical Map 6 it will be seen that the northern boundary of Manchuria is formed by the Amur and Argun Rivers. The Russian territory lying to the north of those rivers, extending from Lake Baikal to the Sea of Japan, at the time of the war included the Trans-Baikal Province, or Trans-Baikalia, the Amur Province, the Maritime Province and Sakhalin, and composed the Pri-Amur Command, one of the eleven large military commands into which the Russian Empire was divided.

was a possible place for a landing. South of Possiet Bay, along the north-east coast of Korea, Gashkevich Bay and Port Lazarev (Gensan)—of which the latter was by far the most important—were the only points to cause the Russians any anxiety.

In this direction, again, though the actual scope of the operations carried out on the coast was almost entirely dependent on the policy of the Japanese—since they at once seized the initiative—chief interest lies in the fears and intentions of the Russians and in the measures undertaken by them to meet eventualities, for in spite of Russian ideas to the contrary there is no direct evidence available to show that the Japanese ever intended any diversions in this quarter during 1904. Their action was limited to that of the navy.* Nevertheless, the Russians feared both an attack on Vladivostok and, at the earlier stages of the war, an advance on Kirin and Harbin, carried out by troops landing on the east coast.† At sea, the detachment of four cruisers based on Vladivostok was employed in threatening the sea communications of the Japanese and also their coast-line, whilst preventing diversionary action on their part.‡

Thus it was for defensive reasons, owing to uncertainty as to the Japanese plan of campaign, that so large a Russian force was originally retained in the Southern Ussuri District instead of being sent to swell the numbers of the field forces in Southern Manchuria.§ And to vaguely formulated plans of assuming the offensive on the east were due the continual efforts made during 1904—chiefly by the Viceroy—to keep back in Northern Manchuria a proportion of the reinforcements which came up

* The Japanese naval operations in this quarter are described in Chapters IX, X, XXIII, and XXIV, and are reviewed in Chapter XXV, Vol. I.

† At different times the Russians themselves contemplated offensive action on the east of the Japanese armies. See pp. 96-7.

‡ Rear-Admiral Baron Stakelberg, who at the time commanded the Vladivostok Squadron, received orders in January, 1904, to act against the coast of Japan and to guard against attempts to land between Possiet Bay and Gensan. These orders, however, were given at a period when the Russians considered that they could prevent any landings on the shores of the Yellow Sea. The operations of this squadron are described in Chapters IX, X, XXIII, and XXIV, and are reviewed in Chapter XXV, Vol. I.

§ The policy of retaining so large a proportion of force in this quarter after the Japanese plan of campaign had been developed has been criticized in the Military Comments in Vol. I, Chapter XXVI, pp. 418, 423. It is, however, not correct to count the two divisions and twenty squadrons as being in Vladivostok. They were in the Southern Ussuri District.

from Europe. As regards the fear of Japanese action on the east coast, it is interesting to note that though the Russian plan of campaign was based on the assumption that the Japanese could not obtain the command of the Yellow Sea and could not therefore land except in Korea, south of a line drawn from Chinampo to Gensan, yet it was at first admitted as possible that they might attack Vladivostok. The contingency of several Japanese divisions landing at Gashkevich Bay and advancing towards Kirin and Harbin was also discussed, the proposed reply to such a move being the withdrawal northwards of the Army of Manchuria which was to be concentrated in the Liao-yang—Hai-cheng area. It was also mooted as a possibility that if Japan were acting in alliance with Great Britain she might seize Gensan and use it as an intermediate base for a blockade and attack on Vladivostok.* It must not be forgotten, however, that in these speculations as to Vladivostok made before the Japanese had shown their hand any operation against the fortress was considered more in the light of an alternative to a main advance in the south of Liao-tung than as a subsidiary to it.

In the beginning of 1904 Russia's main strength in the Far East, exclusive of the garrison of the Kuan-tung Peninsula and the scattered detachments in Southern Manchuria, was collected between Lake Baikal and the east coast, the bulk being in the Southern Ussuri District, round Vladivostok.† These forces formed part of the Pri-Amur Military Command under General Linevich. When war broke out the greater portion of these troops was at once transferred southwards to form the Manchurian Army to be concentrated round Liao-yang; and, with the exception of certain garrisons in Trans-Baikal, the Amur Province and Sakhalin, the residue was collected in the Maritime Province. There was a small garrison at Nikolaievsk. Otherwise the troops in the Maritime Province were broadly speaking divided into the garrison of Vladivostok—a purely defensive body—and the Southern Ussuri Force, which was to act as an exterior mobile

* On the 8th February, 1904, General Kuropatkin himself mentioned, in an appreciation on the strategy of the Japanese, the possibility of the Japanese fleet forming a junction with the British or American fleets.

† The original distribution of the Russian forces at the outbreak of war is given on p. 30, Vol. I, and is shown in Strategic Map 1. A fuller statement based upon records which have since become available is given in Appendix 3 of this volume.

reserve to Vladivostok and also to prevent landings farther to the south, both on the coast of Southern Ussuri and in Northern Korea.* The passive parts in the war played by Nikolaievsk and Vladivostok will be reviewed before the somewhat more active operations of the mobile troops.

Nikolaievsk, a small town of some seven thousand inhabitants, and originally the capital of the Maritime Province, is some twenty-two miles from the mouth of the River Amur.† It was the centre of the summer import trade of the Amur basin and also of the local fish-curing industry, and had been from 1854 till 1873 the head-quarters of the Russian Pacific Fleet. When Vladivostok in the latter year became Russia's chief naval base in the Far East Nikolaievsk ceased to have any strategic importance, and its dockyard and defence works were allowed to fall into a state of decay. In 1903 the defences consisted of four antiquated batteries guarding the mouth of the river. In anticipation of war with Japan, several schemes had been made for rearming and modernizing them, but by the time that war broke out nothing had actually been done. After hostilities had commenced the matter was taken in hand and a modern armament was provided. The garrison consisted of one battalion of fortress infantry, one company of fortress artillery and one mining company. No military operations, however, took place.

The acquisition of Vladivostok in 1860 had marked a definite step forward in Russia's search for a maritime outlet upon the shores of the Pacific. Possessed of a fine harbour, which was almost landlocked, and of many local advantages, this military settlement in 1873 replaced Nikolaievsk as the Russian naval head-quarters in the Far East. At first the place made slow progress, and it was not until 1882 that it attained the dignity of a municipality; but early in the following year it was converted into a strongly fortified naval station, and in 1890 became the seat of government of the Maritime Province. In 1893 it rose to the rank of a third-class

* In all, eighteen battalions, six squadrons, twenty-four field guns, eight mountain guns, two and a half battalions of fortress artillery, one artillery detachment, one battalion of fortress infantry and five companies of sappers.

† From 1857 till 1880 the seat of government of the Maritime Province was at Nikolaievsk and from 1880 to 1890 at Khabarovsk. In 1890 it was transferred to Vladivostok.

fortress, and in 1896 to that of a fortress of the second class, while four years later the completion of the Trans-Siberian railway system and the development of inland navigation placed it in direct steam communication with St. Petersburg, and converted it into an important strategic point in the Empire.* A brief account of the port as it existed at the outbreak of war has already been given in the description of the Russian naval bases.† The essential factors are that it contained a dry dock six hundred feet long and a floating dock capable of lifting a vessel of four thousand tons, and was equipped to carry out the ordinary refitting and minor repairs to ships of war. There were, however, two points which discounted its value. For at least three months of the year the harbour was closed by ice, which necessitated the employment of a powerful ice-breaking steamer to keep a channel open; and, what was far more serious, its sea approaches were commanded by Japan. The occupation in 1898 of Port Arthur—always ice-free and without the strategic drawback of Vladivostok—naturally caused the latter to lose much of its value as a naval base, and condemned it to be in a strategic sense of secondary importance so long as the fortress on the Kuan-tung Peninsula remained in Russian hands. And, as time passed, Vladivostok sank more and more in relative military value, for much was done to develop Port Arthur, in spite of the fact that the conversion of Dalny into a commercial port monopolized the greater part of the funds which should have been spent on that fortress.‡ Between 1898 and the outbreak of hostilities Port Arthur was connected by rail with Harbin, a scheme of land defence was partly organized, and the fortress was established as Russia's chief naval base in the Far East.§

Yet, eclipsed as it had been by its southern rival, Vladivostok was by no means a negligible factor. To consider its significance from a naval point of view first: it was an alternative fortified

* Vladivostok to Khabarovsk—by rail.

Khabarovsk to Strietensk—by river steamer.

Strietensk to Lake Baikal—by rail.

Lake Baikal—steamer.

Lake Baikal to St. Petersburg—by rail.

The schedule running time was nineteen days. Subsequently an all-rail route via Harbin became available for Vladivostok.

† Vol. I, p. 38.

‡ Commercially, also, being hampered by a tariff, it suffered from the competition of the free port of Dalny.

§ The Russian policy in this respect is discussed on p. 393, Vol. I.

base for Russia's fleet in the Far East, and in the event of the capture or blockade of Port Arthur would be the only port of call for any naval reinforcements sent out from Europe; it was also of service as a base from which to attack the sea communications of an enemy attempting to land troops on the mainland. For these reasons alone it was invaluable. With Vladivostok in Russian hands, also, the Japanese would be deprived of the use of a port for any landing operations of a diversionary nature in the east, and it was a convenient *point d'appui* for the Russian protective troops on the coast.

Owing to the strained relations with Japan, certain steps had been taken in the autumn of 1903 to place the fortress in a state of readiness for war. Additional military roads had been commenced, several 6-inch guns from the reserve armament had been taken out of store and mounted in the defences, and, in order to assist in the work of the scouting vessels and in operating the naval mine-fields, wireless telegraph stations had been installed so as to place head-quarters in communication with the guardships and war signal stations. Yet on the outbreak of hostilities the fortress was neither fully equipped as a naval base nor ready as regards defence. The land front, lying from two to four miles from the town itself, was commanded by heights which were unheld, whilst on the sea front there were but few coast batteries defending Ussuri Bay or Russki Island. On the land side, also, there were undefended intervals; not a few of the works were badly sited as well as being of semi-permanent type and old design; and some were without flanking defence for the ditches. Further, the interior of the fortress was not stormproof, owing to the possibility of approach afforded in winter by the ice in Amur Bay. Nor was the garrison large enough, for, short of the established scale of armament as was the number of guns, there were not sufficient artillerymen to man them all. In short, though it was not so tested, Vladivostok was at the outbreak of war certainly less prepared to withstand a serious attack than Port Arthur.

When, on the 9th February, 1904, the fortress was by order of the Viceroy declared to be in a state of war, its garrison consisted of eight battalions of infantry, two battalions of fortress artillery, two sapper companies, one mining company and two

detachments of engineers.* In all eight thousand six hundred and fifty men were under arms at the moment of mobilization. The commandant of the place was Lieutenant-General Voronetz.

The first semblance of hostilities occurred on the 25th February, when a Japanese squadron of ten ships steamed toward Russki Island. These vessels, however, withdrew without opening fire and by noon were hull down on the horizon. Hardly more

important results attended the approach of a similar number of warships a fortnight later.

Vladivostok. On the morning of the 6th March a Japanese squadron of five armoured and two unarmoured cruisers was sighted to the southward of Askold Island. About 1.50 p.m. they opened fire upon two of the coast works and the roadstead. The fortress artillery could make no effective reply, owing to lack of guns in the right place, and after about an hour's bombardment the ships steamed away, having inflicted on the Russians a loss of one seaman wounded. On the following day, the squadron entered Ussuri Bay, but made no attack; and very shortly afterwards Vladivostok was declared in a stage of siege.†

During March the garrison was increased by the arrival of reinforcements; the construction of batteries proceeded steadily; and the mining of Ussuri and Amur Bays was completed. Nevertheless the place was still far from being in a position to make a prolonged resistance, and Colonel Pestich of the General Staff, who had been sent by the Viceroy to inspect it, reported on the 13th April in distinctly unfavourable terms. Indeed, the only encouraging feature brought out was that there was a sufficiency of stores in case of investment or siege. At this time the total strength of the garrison had increased to between seventeen and eighteen thousand soldiers, three thousand seamen, and some four hundred volunteers of whom sixty were mounted. By the end of

* The following troops formed the garrison :—(1) The Staff of the fortress. (2) The 8th East Siberian Rifle Brigade consisting of the 29th, 30th, 31st and 32nd East Siberian Rifle Regiments, each of two battalions. In accordance with the scheme of expansion of the East Siberian Rifle Brigades, these regiments were subsequently raised to three-battalion establishment and the brigade became the 8th East Siberian Rifle Division. (3) The 1st and 2nd Battalions Vladivostok Fortress Artillery. (4) The 1st and 2nd Vladivostok Sapper Companies. (5) The Vladivostok Mining Company. (6) The Military Telegraph Detachment. (7) Gendarmerie Detachment. (8) Intendant Establishment :—(a) Supply magazine and (b) Steam flour mill. (9) Artillery Magazines. (10) Engineer Fortress Depot. (11) Local hospital and two field reserve hospitals.

† See Vol. I, pp. 80-1.

April the most urgent of the fortification work had been carried out and more optimistic views began to be held of the capacity for a serious resistance. During May the armament was strengthened by eight Canet guns which were removed from the cruiser *Bogatuir*, ashore on Bruce Point.* Several heavy guns, also, which had been intended for Port Arthur and had been prevented from reaching that place by the advance of the enemy, were received.

By the middle of August, though Vladivostok had not been threatened, the danger which loomed over Port Arthur had commenced to react on the position of the northern fortress. At this time, on land, the defenders of Port Arthur had been forced back within the line of permanent works and the close investment had been completed, while the First Pacific Squadron, foiled in its attempt to break through to Vladivostok, had been driven back into port with loss. The prospect of Vladivostok becoming Russia's sole naval base in the Far East was now considerably closer and the potential value of the place was much increased. And a realization of this fact was probably the cause of the numerous appeals for reinforcements which were sent out about this time; though hardly any of them were complied with. The Viceroy inspected the fortress during the month, and reported to the Emperor on the 5th September that the artillery armament was inadequate and antiquated, only twenty-six of the guns in the coast batteries of Amur Bay and the small calibre guns for the flank defence of the ditches on the land front being modern; that the reserve of artillery ammunition was too small; and that the garrison was insufficient in numbers. In spite of this opinion, however, no field troops could be spared for the garrison, though later in the autumn a battalion of fortress artillery was sent to it, and orders were issued for the mobilization in Russia and dispatch to the place of two more battalions. Towards the end of September the naval force was increased by the arrival by rail from Europe of four submarines in sections; and by the end of October the fortress had been placed in wireless connexion with the outside world, and a pigeon post had been established with Nikolsk Ussuriski and Spasskoe. No operations took place, however.

In regard to Southern Ussuri generally, the regular troops in the district outside Vladivostok, consisting of the 6th, 7th

* See Vol. I, p. 370.

and 8th East Siberian Rifle Regiments of the 2nd East Siberian Rifle Brigade* were, as has been said, organized into what was known as the Southern Ussuri Force under Major-General Anasimov. At the beginning of March this force was divided between Possiet, Barabash and Shkotovo, with a reserve at Razdolnoe. By the middle of the month a corps of volunteers nine thousand strong had been raised by the orders of Major-General Kolyubakin, the Military Governor of the Maritime Province, for the protection of the populated portions of the province which had been declared to be in a state of siege, and between April and June, in accordance with the general scheme of expansion of the Siberian Rifle Brigades, each of the three two-battalion regiments of the 2nd East Siberian Rifle Brigade was increased by one battalion, and the brigade became the 2nd East Siberian Rifle Division. Later the strength of this division was brought up to four regiments by the addition of the 41st East Siberian Rifle Regiment.† During the summer the troops in the district were reinforced by the 9th Orenburg Cossack Regiment, various important changes were made in their dispositions, and some units were dispatched on reconnaissance duties into Korea. Since the Japanese made no attempt to land in this quarter no operations of any kind took place in Southern Ussuri, and the Russian troops stationed there were employed in various minor operations in Northern Korea.

At first sight the situation of Southern Ussuri in reference to Korea seems to have been one which might have afforded to the Russians an opportunity for an advance in force down the coast against the Japanese land communications; and, as will be described,

an operation of this nature on a large scale was contemplated, but was never carried out.

Indeed, as the main operations developed, there was not much scope for it, for the nearest Japanese line of communication—that of the First Army—was a long way from Southern Ussuri, and the intervening country was of a most rugged nature and was unmapped. In North-Eastern Korea itself,

* The 5th East Siberian Rifle Regiment of this brigade was in Port Arthur where it remained. The 24th East Siberian Rifle Regiment also formed part of this force at first, but it was very soon transferred to the field army in Manchuria.

† For the change in the organization of the East Siberian Rifle units by which the original brigades were expanded into divisions and renumbered, see Appendix 4.

the sole place of any military importance was Gensan.* But the only good road to that place or, indeed, into Korea ran close to the coast; and the Japanese, by having obtained the command of local waters at the outset of the campaign, were in a position, so soon as landing became possible, to frustrate any movement of the Russians southward along this road by disembarking troops in rear of the force attempting it. Moreover, at the season when the campaign started the roads were either in a very bad state or impassable owing to the floods caused by the melting snow.

The campaign had not been in progress long, however, before rumours of Japanese landings on the east coast led to the dispatch from Southern Ussuri into Northern Korea of a small Russian mounted force under Colonel Pavlov. No enemy being found this detachment confined itself to reconnoitring and laying a telegraph line from Savelovka to Nikolsk Ussuriski and from Kyung-song to Krasnoe Selo. Probably induced by the report of some similar reconnaissance, the Japanese on the 25th April made the disastrous expedition from Gensan to Iwon already described.† In the middle of June the cavalry detachment with the Southern Ussuri Force was increased in strength and, under the new name of the Pri-Amur Mixed Cossack Brigade, was placed under the command of Major-General Bernov.‡ Its operations were to be supported by the 3rd Battalion of the 7th East Siberian Rifle Regiment which occupied Pu-rong towards the middle of July. On the 8th and 9th August a detachment consisting of four squadrons under Colonel Pavlov made a reconnaissance of Gensan. After some fighting it was estimated that the place was held by some two thousand three hundred *Kobi* troops, and the Russians retired to Ham-heung to await the arrival of the remainder of the Mixed Cossack Brigade. General Bernov with this brigade reached Song-chin on the 26th August. He was joined there a month later by Colonel Pavlov's force, and on the 29th September pushed on to Puk-chung, where he was greeted with the information

* It will be remembered that so soon as the news of the attack on Port Arthur reached Vladivostok on the 9th February, the Russian cruiser squadron was at once sent down to reconnoitre Gensan in case the Japanese might attempt to land there. See Vol. I, p. 64. For the part played by Gensan in the naval operations generally, see Vol. I, pp. 98-9, 375.

† Vol. I, p. 98.

‡ It now consisted of six squadrons of the 1st Nerchinsk Cossacks, four squadrons of the 6th Siberian Cossacks, four squadrons of the 9th Siberian Cossacks, six horse mountain guns, a section of mounted sappers, and two Flying Red Cross detachments.

obtained by secret service agents that a force of one thousand Japanese, with two guns, was in Ham-heung.

The Russian operations were under the direct control of General Linevich whose orders indicate that nothing more than a demonstration calculated to impress the inhabitants was intended. In a dispatch from him received by General Bernov about this time permission was given "to have a look at Ham-heung if the Japanese retired from it," and this expression is fairly typical of the light in which the operations in this quarter were regarded. This was due to the fact that the Russians were relying mostly on the Vladivostok Squadron for the protection of this coast. Until the end of the year they made no further attempt to press forward on land. Indeed the units of the Pri-Amur Mixed Cossack Brigade underwent a course of winter training, which was only interrupted in the last days of December by some skirmishing with the enemy near Hon-won.

In regard to the intentions of the Japanese, as has been stated, there is no evidence to show that they contemplated landing at Gensan or any other point on the east coast of Korea. As events developed any such action would not have been of much assistance

to them, and if attempted would have been prevented by the Russian Vladivostok Squadron. Gensan was originally occupied by the Japanese in February from the land side and was held more as a safeguard against Russian activity and in order to protect the numerous Japanese settlers than for any other reason.* Of the original regular garrison sent there from Seoul the 38th Regiment was set free in time to take its place with the rest of the 4th Division at the battle of Te-li-ssu, whilst the battalion of the 37th Regiment was relieved in time to fight at the Sha Ho; and it is probable that these regular troops were relieved by *Kobi* units which continued to hold the place, as was discovered by the Russian reconnaissance made in August. In September General Hasegawa was transferred from the First Army to take over the Military Governorship of Korea, and on the 23rd October Ham-heung was occupied by a force of some seven hundred men.

Any account of the intention of the Russians to advance upon Korea in force round the right flank of the Japanese armies, to which allusion has been made, necessitates a reference to the early

* See Vol. I, p. 71.

part of the war; and it should not perhaps with strict accuracy be included in the category of subsidiary operations, for had the scheme ever been carried into effect it would have been executed in conjunction with the Manchurian Army, and would have been part of the Russian main operations. But since the only result of its having been contemplated was similar to that of the Russian anxiety about Vladivostok and

Russian
offensive
intentions on
the east of
the theatre
of war.

Southern Ussuri—in that it amounted to the reduction of General Kuropatkin's field army at different periods by a certain proportion of force, it can logically be considered at this point. Without reverting to the strategic schemes formulated before the outbreak of war, the participation of an eastern force in the Russian operations was under consideration by General Kuropatkin so late as the 15th February, 1904, just previous to his appointment as commander in the field. On that date, when still Minister of War, he submitted a memorandum to the Emperor upon the Russian plan of campaign and, in reference to the ultimate assumption of the offensive by the Russians against the Japanese who might be holding Korea, proposed that a considerable force should march from Vladivostok down the coast to Gensan and inland as far as Mao-erh-cheng on the Ya-lu.* It is important to note that this expression of opinion as to the course to be adopted when the Russians should have amassed sufficient numbers to act on the offensive was made after the preconceived notions on the strategic situation had been completely upset by the unexpected naval reverse of the 9th February; and it seems in part to have been responsible for the various proposals for an eastern advance on Korea made later during 1904. For some time, however, there was no further mention of this movement; indeed, as has been seen, the forces left in the Maritime Province were only such as were considered sufficient for the defence of Vladivostok and the region near it. But there was a gradual recrudescence of the scheme during the time that the Viceroy remained in supreme control.†

* This memorandum is quoted *in extenso* in Appendix 5. The day after its submission to the Emperor General Kuropatkin was ordered to hold himself in readiness to proceed to the Far East. Two days later he was appointed to the command of the Russian forces.

† Passing reference has been made to the limitations imposed on General Kuropatkin by the unpractical division of authority between him and Admiral Alexeiev. Until he was recalled to Russia in October, 1904, the

In April, as a result of rumours of the intended landing of a Japanese army of thirty-six to forty-eight battalions at Possiet or Gashkevich Bay, the Viceroy reported to St. Petersburg the necessity for collecting a strategic reserve at Harbin. The War Minister in reply suggested the retention at that place of the 1st Siberian Infantry Division whilst a proportion of the garrison of Vladivostok might be sent instead to join the field army after being replaced by locally raised militia. The Viceroy concurred, but requested direct orders on the subject from the Emperor, since he knew that General Kuropatkin would disapprove of such a scheme. The Imperial authority was given on the 19th and 21st April in spite of the commander-in-chief's strongly expressed wish that these troops should be sent on to Mukden.* It appears, however, that both the War Minister and the Viceroy looked upon the reserve thus started as a centrally situated mobile force under the control of the latter, but capable of being moved to the south or east. In the middle of May, when the Japanese had shown their hand, the units of this division were gradually sent forward to Mukden and farther south, as promised; but the Viceroy still remained impressed with the advisability of collecting a force with which to carry out an offensive advance, and at the end of the month sent the divisional cavalry of the 4th Siberian Division from Harbin to Nikolsk Ussuriski, with the express object of forming an independent detachment for the purpose of moving against

Viceroy was really commander-in-chief of the Russian forces in the theatre of war, in so far as can be gathered from the wording of the Imperial rescript of the 8th March, 1904, by which the powers of General Kuropatkin were defined. It ran as follows:—

“As regards the command of the army operating against the Japanese in Manchuria, I entrust you with all the powers conferred on the commander of an army by the regulations for the direction of troops on active service; but you will be guided generally by the instructions of the Viceroy.”

This subordination of the commander-in-chief to the Viceroy was confirmed by a telegram from the Emperor received by the Viceroy on the 20th April, in reply to his offer to tend his resignation owing to the divergence of opinion between himself and General Kuropatkin and the appointment of Vice-Admiral Skrudlov to the command of the fleet. The concluding words of this message were:—“ . . . Both General Kuropatkin and Vice-Admiral Skrudlov are subordinate to you in your capacity of Imperial Lieutenant and Generalissimo.” But in a telegram from the Emperor to the commander-in-chief of the same date the latter's position relative to that of the Viceroy was by no means so clearly laid down.

* General Kuropatkin protested against the proposed course under seven separate headings.

Northern Korea in co-operation with an advance of the Army of Manchuria southwards.*

Half-way through July Colonel Madritov's detachment out on the east of the main force was reinforced by the Viceroy with a view to its forming a connecting link between General Kuropatkin's troops and a strong column which was to come down from the Maritime Province; and towards the end of the month the method of co-operation of this column was elaborated in considerable detail, its strength being mentioned as from thirty-two to thirty-four battalions.† When, after the defeat of Liao-yang, it was decided to form a Second Manchurian Army, the rôle which was at first proposed for it was an offensive movement towards Korea, to be carried out in conjunction with the original Army of Manchuria. However, as has been seen, the necessity for at once making some effort towards relieving Port Arthur was so great that the Russians advanced to the battle of the Sha Ho before the troops for the Second Army arrived. After that battle, in the period during which the Viceroy still had a voice in the disposition of the troops, he so far moderated his views as to favour the dispatch of a much smaller force down into Korea, to carry out what was no more than a raid against the Japanese communications. When General Kuropatkin assumed the supreme command the idea of an eastern advance appears to have been dropped for a time. The only action in this direction during 1904 was that carried out by the small detachment from the Southern Ussuri Force.

To leave the mainland and to turn to Sakhalin. This island is some 590 miles long and from 17 to 100 miles broad, with a long backbone or ridge of mountains running from north to south and traversed by three passes. There are no good anchorages, and the greater part of the island is covered by primeval forest so dense that the natives depend upon the rivers for communication, travelling in canoes in summer, on dog and reindeer sledges during the winter. In the interior the heat in summer is very severe. In winter, though the temperature falls considerably short of the degree of cold experienced in the extreme north of Siberia, the Strait of Tartary is closed to navigation, and from the middle of November until

* The cavalry of the 4th Siberian Division consisted of the 6th and 9th Siberian Cossack Regiments.

† See the *Russian Official History*, Vol. III, Part 1, Annexures 13 and 14.

May communication with the mainland is cut off, save by cable, excepting during two months when the ice is sufficiently thick for the mails to be carried on sledges to Nikolaievsk. The temperature falls below freezing-point on about two hundred days in the year, and for six months the island is covered with snow varying from one to three feet in depth.

Although information about Sakhalin is to be found in the record of a Japanese expedition made in 1613, so little was known about the place that so late as 1846 the Russian Lieutenant Gevrilov, who conducted an expedition of exploration, stated that it was a peninsula. It was not until three years later that Count Muraviev discovered that it was an island. Russian connexion with the place dates from 1852, when its importance as guarding the entrance of the River Amur, where the flag had been planted the year before, was recognized. So great did the activity of the Russian settlers then become that the Japanese, whose fishers and traders had thronged the coasts for decades back, became seriously alarmed. At first an amicable arrangement for joint ownership by the two nations was entered upon; but this was found to be unworkable, and in 1875 Japan ceded her claim to the southern half of the island, receiving in compensation the Kurile Islands and an annual payment for a fixed term of years. In 1858 the Russian Government began to make use of the island as a penal settlement, and after all attempts at settling free colonists had failed finally sanctioned civil marriages between the prisoners, with the result that the Russian population gradually came to consist almost entirely of officials and convicts and descendants of the latter. In addition to the Russians, the island is inhabited by five different peoples, of whom the Ainus are regarded as the aboriginal race. In 1898 the total population was estimated to be thirty-six thousand.

This sparsely populated, mountainous, and almost desolate island was not considered by the Russians to be of any real strategic value. But it had for a long time been looked upon as a place which the Japanese might endeavour to seize on account of its fisheries and its coal mines. They had long coveted the former owing to the dependence of the population of Northern Japan upon fish for food, while the coal would be useful should they occupy the island as an intermediate base for operations against the lower Amur region. The moral advantage, also, to the Japanese of regaining their former possession would be very great. Nevertheless, in 1899 the idea of defending the island had been given up by Russia owing

to the small numbers of the forces that she had available in the Far East. The question, however, was again brought up in 1901 and 1902. Up to the beginning of 1903 no plan for the defence of the island had been prepared, and although General Linevich—the Governor of the Pri-Amur Province—considered it necessary to organize the defence of Alexandrovskaja and Korsakovsk, and was supported in this opinion by the recommendations of a Military Commission which visited the island in that year, no steps, beyond the preparation of various schemes, were taken to carry his suggestions into effect.* On the 10th February, 1904, the day that mobilization was ordered, nothing had been done in the way of erecting defences, while the garrison, of a total strength of some one thousand five hundred men, with six guns, was split up into detachments, at Alexandrovskaja, Due, Ruikovsk, Korsakovsk, and Tuimovo, head-quarters being at Alexandrovskaja.

On the following day the Viceroy gave orders for the formation of volunteer levies from the free men, ticket-of-leave men and even from selected convicts actually undergoing sentence, the inducement held out to the two latter categories of men to enlist being the promised remission of sentences. In all, twelve detachments, each of a strength of two hundred men, were raised, and were located, eight in northern, and four in southern Sakhalin. These irregulars were armed with the Berdan rifle, and were attached to the existing local units; but as might be expected, their military value was not of the highest, for many of the men were old, weak, and afflicted with physical defects which rendered them unfit for service. During the summer the fighting strength of the garrison was somewhat increased by the arrival of some old pattern horse artillery guns.

As was the case in the other subsidiary areas of the theatre of war, the actual military operations which took place in Sakhalin up till the end of the year 1904 were of an insignificant nature. On the 20th August, as already described, the Russian cruiser *Novik*, which had called at Korsakovsk for supplies, bound for Vladivostok after the battle of the Yellow Sea, was attacked by two Japanese war vessels and so badly damaged that she was sunk by her commander.†

Narrative
of events.

* The capital, Alexandrovskaja, on the west coast of the island, must not be confused with Alexandrovsk on the mainland almost opposite.

† Vol. I, pp. 348-9

On the following day the Japanese cruiser *Chitose* entered the harbour and fired a few shots at the partially submerged *Novik* and the settlement at Korsakovsk. On the 30th August the crew of the *Novik*, with the exception of a party of specialists left behind to dismantle the ship, set out on a four hundred mile march to Alexandrovskaja on their way to Nikolaievsk and Vladivostok. The detachment left behind constructed and manned a shore battery of two 4·7-inch guns and two 3-pounders disembarked from the damaged vessel. On the 6th September two Japanese vessels, reported to be transports, appeared off Korsakovsk, and sent off boat detachments to blow up the wreck of the *Novik*. This attempt was frustrated by rifle fire from the shore, and the Japanese withdrew, leaving nine unexploded charges in the submerged cruiser. Nothing further happened during the year.

In spite of China's engagements to preserve a strict neutrality the persistent rumours as to the possibility of her intervening as the ally of Japan at the beginning of the war caused considerable anxiety to the Russian commanders in the field. A report

Russian anxiety
as to interven-
tion by China.

that she was only waiting for Port Arthur to be definitely blockaded by sea and for the ice on the rivers to melt in order to throw in her lot with the Japanese, and that one portion of her

forces would hold the line of the Liao Ho whilst another under General Ma advanced towards Mukden, was the cause of a diplomatic representation by Russia on the 26th February to request that the reinforcement of the Chinese troops on the frontier should cease. In March General Ma was supposed to have concentrated twenty thousand regular troops at a point west of the Newchuang—Hsin-min-tun railway, some one hundred and thirty miles from Liao-yang; and it was thought by the Russians that this force might act—ostensibly without the authority of its Government. For a short time, indeed, Admiral Alexeiev seriously entertained the idea of making a rapid attack upon the Chinese and of destroying the Hsin-min-tun railway down to a point as far south as the bridge over the Ta-ling Ho. But more moderate counsels prevailed, and it was decided to do nothing of a provocative nature which might precipitate hostilities with a fresh enemy, at least until the concentration of the Russians had been completed, for the vulnerability of their long line of rail communication running parallel to the frontier was obvious. The scope of the Liao Ho Detachment on the west was, as regards the

Chinese, limited to the passive action already mentioned, and specific instructions were issued that the contemplated destruction of the Hsin-min-tun railway was not to be carried out without direct orders from the Viceroy. The uneasiness of the Russians as to possible intervention in force by the Chinese were gradually allayed, but the various attacks on posts on the railway in Southern Manchuria and the attempts to cut the line made by bands of Hun-hu-tzu were supposed to have been connived at, if not originated by, the local Chinese Authorities; and about the beginning of May a second energetic diplomatic protest was made at Peking. It was also suspected, probably not without reason, that Japanese officers and men in disguise were acting with the raiding bands of brigands.

CHAPTER LX.

THE SITUATION AT THE BEGINNING OF 1905, AFTER THE FALL OF
PORT ARTHUR—NAVAL OPERATIONS DURING JANUARY—
OPERATIONS ON LAND UP TO THE BATTLE OF SAN-DE-PU—
THE RUSSIAN CAVALRY RAID ON NEWCHUANG.

(Plate 48, Plan 46 and Chart XV.)

To revert to the main operations, with the dawn of 1905, as has already been described, occurred the event which completely altered the whole situation. Port Arthur fell. At sea, supremacy had already been secured for Japan—temporarily at least—by the destruction of the Russian First Pacific Squadron a

The effect of the fall of Port Arthur on the strategic situation. few days before, and her command of local waters had been rendered absolute until a fresh hostile naval force should appear upon the scene. But the

actual surrender of the fortress still further simplified the naval position, and in other respects modified the threat contained in the arrival of any such reinforcement. In the first place the cessation of the blockade gave to the Japanese navy not only a respite after nearly a year's active service of the most trying nature but also the opportunity for the much needed repairs which would enable Admiral Togo's vessels to meet the Baltic Fleet—Russia's last available means of naval offence—on more than equal terms of readiness. Secondly, that squadron on arriving in the theatre of war would now only have one goal, Vladivostok, for which to make. On land, also, the surrender conferred a great advantage on the Japanese. General Nogi's army was at last set free to take its place in line with the field forces at the front, and thus to some extent to reduce the numerical inferiority under which Marshal Oyama had all along suffered. It is true that since the battle of the Sha Ho the Russians had received reinforcements which in numbers outweighed this solid accretion to the strength of the Japanese, but against mere numbers must be set the fighting value of the veterans of Port Arthur as compared with that of the untried troops from Europe, of which the Russian

reinforcements were composed. But, over and above these advantages by sea and land, not least of the benefits gained by Japan was the very real increase of prestige resulting from the capture of Port Arthur, which was all the greater by reason of the cession of the fortress which had been forced on her in 1895. The renunciation at the moment of triumph ten years earlier of the richest spoil of victory had been a humiliation. But now its memory served as a background against which the present victory shone out the more brightly before the eyes of the world. From its very nature and duration the siege of a fortress necessarily attracts a large amount of attention; and, except in cases where it is undertaken for the purpose of masking, the object of each side is so evident and the issue, when reached, is so clear that the success of the victors cannot, whatever its strategic significance, be explained away by those sophistries which are sometimes employed by a losing side to minimize a defeat in the field. Either the besieged place is taken or it is not. In regard to Port Arthur there was no room for doubt. Although its prolonged resistance had been of value to the Russians and honourable to the defenders, its capture was an unmistakable triumph for the Japanese. But, while it conferred upon Japan the triple advantage of temporary but absolute security of sea communication, power to reinforce her field armies, and increased prestige, it was not without benefit to her opponents, for it at last gave to them, to some extent, the strategic independence which they had been denied so long as the fortress was in their hands.

Before the actions on land of either side in face of this fresh situation are considered it will be advisable to describe the position at sea.

After the surrender, except for the vessels in Vladivostok, whose effective strength had by October been reduced to one cruiser and six torpedo boats—a force by itself impotent—the Russian ensign had ceased to fly in the Far East.*

Naval operations during January 1905. So hopeless indeed did the situation appear to the Russians. Admiral Iessen that the only use he made of the *Rossiya* during January was to send her to Amur Bay to prevent

* The fate of the six Russian destroyers which left Port Arthur on the 1st January, just before the end—the *Statni*, *Serditi*, *Vlastni*, *Skori*, *Smyeli*, and *Boiki*—has been related. See Vol. II, p. 638. Though Vladivostok was now ice-bound, the services of the ice-breaker stationed there were hardly brought into requisition. See Vol. I, p. 391, and Vol. II, p. 639.

a hostile landing over the ice on Russki Island, the possibility of which was causing some anxiety at this time. Russia's only hope at sea now rested on Admiral Rozhestvenski's fleet, which was too far off to intervene actively for some weeks at least. The situation of the Second Pacific Squadron at the close of the year has been described, and throughout January it stayed at Madagascar, while by the end of the month the Third Pacific Squadron had not left Russia. Until the Baltic Fleet, consisting of these two squadrons either acting in combination or separately, should arrive in the zone of operations the Russians were locally powerless.

During January a conference was held at Tokio, at which it was decided that so soon as it was ready the Japanese fleet should concentrate in the Strait of Korea. The refitting of the ships was started as the vessels came in, and the Japanese dockyards were soon busy working against time, replacing worn guns and carrying out the extensive repairs to the machinery and boilers required after nearly a year's strenuous work. The battleships and armoured cruisers were the first to be taken in hand, then, so soon as workmen could be spared, the protected cruisers and torpedo craft were overhauled, for which purpose the services of private firms were requisitioned as well as those of the government yards. In order to prevent the Vladivostok cruisers from attempting to pass into the Pacific Ocean through one of the northern channels Rear-Admiral Misu sailed north with the armoured cruisers *Adzuma* and *Asama* to guard the Tsugaru Strait and at the same time to keep a look-out for vessels carrying contraband destined for Vladivostok. He arrived at Hakodate on the 5th January and there took over the command of the two coast defence vessels *Takao* and *Musashi* and of the 4th Flotilla of torpedo boats, which had been in these waters since the beginning of the war.* On the 22nd Rear-Admiral Shimamura took over this command from Vice-Admiral Misu.† Of the two reconnoitring expeditions which had been sent out the *Niitaka* proceeded from the Pescadores, where she had spent the end of the year, back to Luzon, and returned to Sasebo on the 11th January. The *Hong Kong Maru* and the *Nippon Maru*,

* On the 12th January the *Takao* was sent to join the Third Squadron.

† The latter officer had been promoted on the 12th January and appointed to the First Squadron.

which had reached Batavia by the 31st December, continued their cruise from that place to Borneo and Cambodia. They touched at the Pescadores on their return voyage and reached Sasebo on the 18th. During the remainder of the month no further measures were undertaken to discover Admiral Rozhestvenski's probable movements.

Until they were actually reinforced by the Third Army the situation of the Japanese field armies remained much as it was before, and there was no immediate change in Marshal Oyama's policy of waiting and maintaining the position he was occupying.

Operations
on land. With regard to the dispatch northwards of the Third Army, however, there was some delay.*

The Japanese. While only a portion of it was actually required to take over the fortress and guard the prisoners until these duties could be assumed by fresh troops from Japan, its depleted ranks had to be filled, and the whole army required rest after its extremely arduous duties. It is believed, also, that the railway was unable, in addition to its ordinary traffic, to convey this large body of troops as well as the heavy artillery and ammunition, which was almost at once entrained for the north. For about three weeks, therefore, the army remained in the neighbourhood of Port Arthur, General Nogi making his formal entry into the fortress on the 13th January. The reinforcement of the Japanese First, Second and Fourth Armies proceeded steadily, subject only to the number of men in Japan available for transfer to the front.

When the news of General Stessel's capitulation reached General Kuropatkin's head-quarters it was at once realized how seriously, apart from the loss of the fortress, the situation on land had altered to the disadvantage of the Russians, owing to the liberation of the

The Russians. besieging Japanese army and to its possible early appearance on the battlefield. But the fact that the chief motive of the long-projected advance—the relief of Port Arthur—no longer existed caused no alteration in the main policy already decided upon, and the idea of a forward movement was still entertained. If this were to be carried out, however, it was a question whether the Japanese Third Army would not be able to come to Marshal Oyama's assistance before the Russian reinforcements which were awaited could arrive. In the beginning

* See Vol. II, p. 694. Although the army did not enter the fortress, it did not, as there stated, start for the front immediately.

of January it was estimated by the Russian Head-Quarters Staff that the 1st, 2nd and 5th Rifle Brigades, which had reached the theatre of war, would not be actually on the field till the 12th of the month, while of the long-expected divisions of the XVIth Corps the 25th Division would not arrive on the scene until the 19th, and the 41st Division until the 28th January.* On the other hand General Nogi's army was thought to consist of the 1st, 7th, 9th, 11th, and the Formosa Division and the 4th and 13th *Kobi* Brigades, of which the four first-named divisions were likely to be sent northwards.† The number of battalions therefore that might join Marshal Oyama was taken as approximately forty-eight, of a total of thirty thousand to thirty-five thousand bayonets.‡ And it was estimated that the leading units of this force might reach Liao-yang about the middle of January, that the whole of it might be concentrated in that neighbourhood within one month of the fall of Port Arthur, or about the beginning of February, and that it would probably be used to strengthen the Japanese left. At this time the inclination at General Head-Quarters was not to await either division of the XVIth Corps, but to advance so soon as the Rifle brigades arrived, and to strengthen the striking force against the Japanese left by transferring the 3rd Siberian Corps from the First to the Second Manchurian Army. On the 4th of the month a considerable change in the distribution of the forces was ordered. The 1st Corps was to be transferred from the Third Manchurian Army in the centre to the First Manchurian Army in the east. In the Third Manchurian Army the place of the 1st Corps was to be taken by the 5th Siberian Corps from the Second Manchurian Army in the west, and the 1st, 2nd, and 5th Rifle Brigades, which together with their artillery were to be formed into a Provisional Rifle Corps, were to join the Second Manchurian Army. General Mishchenko's force was at the same time to be attached to the Third Manchurian Army in the centre; but the reason for this is not apparent, and the change appears to have been merely an administrative one, for the force remained in the rayon of the Second Manchurian Army.

* The three Rifle brigades totalled twenty-four battalions, or about eighteen thousand bayonets, while the XVIth Corps amounted to thirty-two battalions, or about twenty-five thousand bayonets.

† See Vol. I, p. 19.

‡ By some Russian authorities the addition of General Nogi's force was taken to mean an increase of five divisions, or from seventy thousand to eighty thousand bayonets.

General Kuropatkin, however, at this time suspected that Marshal Oyama might be tempted to forestall him and attack Russian even before General Nogi's army came up, and precautions on the 4th January he issued orders as to the against attack. procedure to be adopted in case the Russians were themselves forced on the defensive.

"In the event of the enemy assuming the offensive, the armies will offer a determined resistance upon the positions now held by them.

The First Army, consisting of the 1st Corps, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Siberian Corps, will stubbornly defend the section of the position from Putilov Hill to the Kao-tai Ling (inclusive).

The 1st Siberian Corps will form a local reserve to the corps of the fighting line of the First Army, and will be at the immediate disposal of the commander of that army.

The Third Army, consisting of the XVIIth Corps, 5th and 6th Siberian Corps, will defend the section of the position from San-chia-tzu as far as Putilov Hill (exclusive).

The Second Army, consisting of the VIIIth and Xth Corps, and the Provisional Rifle Corps, will form the General Reserve at my immediate disposal, and will remain, until further orders, upon the positions now held by it, in complete readiness to march."

Thus, though their purpose of assuming the offensive was not abandoned by the Russians and continued to be discussed, their first action after the fall of Port Arthur was to prepare to act temporarily on the defensive.

But an early advance on the part of the Russians was not the only method of ensuring that Marshal Oyama should not be reinforced before they attacked him. It was possible to delay the arrival of Japanese reinforcements by cutting the communication between Port Arthur and Liao-yang; and the idea of the cavalry raid which had been under consideration for two months and had just been postponed until the general advance, was now

The Russian raid on Newchuang (Ying-kou).

revived as an independent preliminary operation for the express purpose of destroying the railway. On the 3rd January the subject was reopened by Major-General Evert, the Quartermaster-General of the army, who recommended an independent cavalry operation. The chief of staff, while approving generally, was still

of opinion that the cavalry should act in conjunction with the rest of the army. The commander-in-chief, however, now inclined to the Quartermaster-General's view and on the 4th January brought the matter to a head by the following characteristic note to the chief of staff:—

“Consider! Would it not be better for us to make a raid on Ying-kou, damaging the railway en route? *

Mishchenko to be the chief.

Troops to be employed:—

Mishchenko's six regiments.

Three regiments of Dons.

Three regiments of Dragoons.

Three to four squadrons of Frontier Guards.

Three to ten scout detachments.

Four to six Horse Batteries. ×

Pack transport with supplies.

Two to three regiments to be temporarily taken from the First Army in order to reinforce the cavalry on the right flank.

The raid not to be prolonged beyond ten days.

It will be necessary to take several old pattern field guns, or a whole battery—mounting the detachments—in order to set alight to stores and to batter down walls.

Possible disadvantages of this action.—Premature alarm. Hurried reinforcement of Ying-kou from Port Arthur.

Possible advantages.—A delay to Nogi's concentration. A concentration of Japanese troops towards the rear in fear of a repetition of a raid.”

On the 5th January, after a consultation with the commander-in-chief, General Mishchenko submitted his proposals for the raid, and on the following day General Kuropatkin issued definite orders based on the scheme submitted.† According to these the raiding force was to be commanded by General Mishchenko and was to consist of seventy-two and a half squadrons, four scout detachments and twenty-two guns. But the chief point worthy of note is that the destruction of the railway was given the place of honour amongst the objects of the operation, and was specifically emphasized as being of the greatest importance. It was not mentioned casually as a subsidiary task, as had been the case in

* Ying-kou is the Russian name for Newchuang; see Vol. II, p. 214.

† See Appendices 6 and 7.

the commander-in-chief's note of the 4th and in the proposals put forward by General Mishchenko.

On the 7th, however, General Kuropatkin wrote to General Mishchenko as follows:—

“Most honoured Pavel Ivanovich,

I am sending to you a statement showing the distribution of troops in rear of the Japanese armies. Should there be only a small garrison at Ying-kou, it would be very important to make a sudden attack on that point first.

You are to insist that all regiments proceeding with you should be fully up to strength. May God help you!

It is necessary to mount the men accompanying the baggage as soon as possible, otherwise it will delay your movements.”

By the last sentence of the first paragraph of this letter it seems that the main objective of the operation, if not intentionally altered, had been somewhat confused.

The village of Ssu-fang-tai was selected as the point of concentration for the units to compose the raiding force, and they were collected at that place on the morning of the 8th, one brigade of cavalry having made an unnecessary detour to the south on its way to the rendezvous and attracted the attention of the Japanese artillery, with the probable result that the coming operation was still further advertised to the enemy. Here General Mishchenko called a conference of officers and explained that the general object of the raid was to advance in three or four columns between the Liao Ho and Hun Ho, to cross the latter near Ka-li-ho and then to move via Niu-chuang on to Newchuang, sending out detachments en route to cut the railway. The information about the Japanese was that they were holding various villages above Ma-ma-kai along the Hun Ho, and that a reserve of three thousand infantry and some guns was concentrated near Hsiao-pei-ho.*

The composition of the force was not exactly as had been detailed by General Kuropatkin. It was divided into a Western

* It was decided that it would be impossible to locate the halting places for each night beforehand, owing to the inaccuracy of the maps, and that so far as Niu-chuang the hour for the night halt should be specified and that commanders should occupy the villages to which they happened to be nearest at that time. Niu-chuang is twenty-five miles north-east of Newchuang. See Vol. II, p. 214.

Column, under Major-General Samsonov, a Centre Column, under Major-General Abramov, an Eastern Column, under Major-General Teleshov, and in all amounted to sixty-eight squadrons of cavalry, three squadrons of Frontier Guards, four detachments of Mounted Scouts, twenty-two guns, one Red Cross detachment, and one thousand five hundred pack animals.* The total fighting strength was from seven thousand to seven thousand five hundred horsemen. As escort to the pack transport was allotted the 1st Chita Cossack Regiment, from the Centre Column, and one squadron of Frontier Guards. The pack transport consisted of five divisions, one of mules and four of horses, while the regimental transport included six hundred horses. In all, on the person, on the regimental pack animals, and on the pack transport were carried rations for seven days for the men and food for five days for the animals. For the demolition of the railway six composite squadrons were formed, one from the Frontier Guards, and one each from the Ural, Trans-Baikal and Don Cossacks and the Caucasian and Dragoon regiments, each squadron being accompanied by a sapper officer and some mounted sappers carrying explosives.

On the afternoon of the 8th General Mishchenko's force left Ssu-fang-tai for its destinations for that night close by, from which it was to start its march on the morrow. The Western Column marched almost south-west and bivouacked at Tsao-li-kan-tzu; the Centre Column, proceeding more to the south, spent the night at the villages of Chan-ti-nao-pu and Lun-kuan; and the Eastern Column halted round Tzu-yang-pu-tzu and Pi-yang-pu-tzu. The pack transport remained at Ssu-fang-tai. Meanwhile arrangements had been made to organize a detachment of mounted troops to support General Mishchenko if necessary. It was at first proposed to employ an infantry division for this purpose, but on the 8th January orders were issued for the formation, under Major-General Kossakovski, of a mounted force of eight squadrons, ten detachments of Mounted Scouts, and two guns,

* These figures differ somewhat from the totals laid down by the commander-in-chief. For instance, the total number of Mounted Scout detachments allotted to the expedition was six, and it is believed that there was a second Red Cross detachment, but its allocation is not known. The organization of the force varied slightly from day to day, the above figures being those for the 10th January. For further details, see Appendix 8.

collected from all three armies.* These troops were to concentrate at Ssu-fang-tai by the 12th, to maintain touch with General Mishchenko by means of mounted Chinese, and to be in readiness to move on the 14th or 15th towards Ta-wan and the line of the Liao Ho generally. Since a Japanese raid was thought probable at this time it was intended to include General Kossakovski's and General V. Grekov's detachments in a force of forty-four squadrons and twenty-two guns, which would be employed against any such operation of the enemy.

The area to be traversed by the raiders was approximately that bordering on the Liao Ho, Hun Ho and Tai-tzu Ho, between Ssu-fang-tai and Newchuang, or a strip about eighty miles in length. It consists of a flat open plain containing no features larger than rolling sandhills and intersected by the three rivers mentioned and some of their tributaries. The soil is extremely fertile and for the greater part highly cultivated, but except round the villages it is quite bare of trees. There are considerable extents of marsh in the low-lying stretches near the rivers, more especially near their confluence south-east of Sha-lin. Of the rivers the Liao Ho varied at the time of the raid between three hundred and fifty and seven hundred feet in breadth, the Hun Ho between one hundred and two hundred feet, and the Tai-tzu Ho between two hundred and three hundred and fifty feet. The water-level in the Hun Ho was not much below the level of the surrounding plain, but in the other two streams it was in some cases as much as thirty-five feet lower, and the banks were steep. The currents are sluggish and in January the ice on the rivers was sufficiently thick to carry troops, so that the only difficulty in crossing them consisted in the steepness of their banks. The frozen marshes also offered no obstacle, except that the slipperiness of the ice caused delay. The numerous tracks between villages were hard and in good order, and there was nothing to prevent the troops marching anywhere across the flat country except the inundation dikes near the rivers. This district is one of the most

* From the First Manchurian Army, four squadrons from the Siberian and Trans-Baikal Cossack Divisions, two Mounted Scout detachments from the 1st Corps, two from the 2nd and two from the 4th Siberian Corps: from the Third Manchurian Army, two Mounted Scout detachments from the XVIIth Corps: from the Second Manchurian Army, four squadrons from General V. Grekov's Orenburg Cossack Division, two Mounted Scout detachments from the Xth Corps. Two horse artillery guns.

thickly populated of the province; and the villages, the greater number of which are along the river banks, being of the same type as those farther east and in nearly all cases surrounded with an embankment or mud wall, serving as a barrier against floods and a fortification against brigands, form useful tactical points. In spite of the fact that the Japanese had to some extent been tapping this area for supplies since October, and that the export trade through Newchuang had continued during the war, the resources of the country were by no means exhausted in January, and would, contrary to the fears of General Kuropatkin, have afforded ample sustenance to a force of the size of that under General Mishchenko. Generally speaking, the open flat country with its absence of obstacles was eminently suitable for the movement of mounted troops, and the calm, clear weather of the earlier part of January 1905 was not so cold as to be unfavourable to an operation of the nature contemplated.

The expedition made a start at 8 a.m. on Monday the 9th January. The Western Column, diverging from the others, crossed the Pu Ho at Hsi-kuan-tai and the Liao Ho at Kao-li-ma and marched down the right bank of the Liao and reached Ta-lin-pu-tzu before night without incident. The Centre Column trended south-west, crossing the Pu Ho at A-sui-niu, and capturing near Ta-wan a convoy of wagons going eastward. It spent the night at the latter place, where it was joined by the transport column. Keeping farther to the eastward, the Eastern Column crossed the Pu Ho near Liang-chiao-pu, and succeeded in capturing three small hostile convoys bound eastward for the Japanese supply depot at Pei-ta-kou and in cutting a telegraph line.* It passed the night near Ta-wan. The pack transport column did not leave Ssu-fang-tai till the morning and proceeded to Ta-wan via Kao-li-ma. Even so early as this it showed what a drag it was going to prove, for although it started at 7.30 a.m., Ta-wan was not reached till 10 p.m. Progress was rendered very slow by the fact that the animals started tired and not all their leaders were mounted. In order to lighten the loads orders were given that half of the rations carried should be issued to the men; but owing to the abundance of the food found in the villages this was not done. During this day the distance marched by the columns averaged over

* It is not known what line this was.

twenty-three miles, covered at a rate of two and one-third miles per hour, the horses being saddled for twelve hours.

Next day the march was resumed, and the Western Column, crossing to the left bank of the Liao Ho and converging towards the two other columns overtook them just before the midday halt at Ka-li-ho, after having seen a small body of Japanese cavalry to

The 10th
January.

the south-east.* The Centre and Eastern Columns reached Ka-li-ho about noon, the former after having driven out of that village a party of some two hundred Hun-hu-tzu, and the latter after having had a brush near the village of Miao-chia-kou with some bands of these brigands who were escorting a convoy going east and retreated to the left bank of the Tai-tzu. Signs had not been wanting that the progress of the expedition was being watched by the enemy, for during the morning several columns of smoke which might well have been from signal bonfires were seen to the eastward. At 2 p.m. all three columns continued the march towards Niu-chuang, proceeding almost due south between the Hun and Tai-tzu Rivers towards Lia-tou-wo-tzu and Mu-chia-tou between which villages it was intended to cross to the east of the Tai-tzu. It was on this afternoon's march that the Russians encountered the first opposition, in an action which, in spite of the urgent need for haste, seems rather to have been courted than avoided.

About half-way between Ka-li-ho and Mu-chia-tou was a detached post of the Japanese. Part of a company of *Kobi* infantry and a few cavalry which had been sent out a week before from the railway had just occupied and placed in a state of defence the small village of Wu-chia-tzu, a block of buildings within an enclosure not far to the north of it, known as the distillery of San-ta-kan, and some isolated houses a few hundred yards to the north of the latter.

At 3 p.m., as the advanced patrols of the Russian Western and Centre Columns approached San-ta-kan, the Japanese retired from the detached buildings to the village of Wu-chia-tzu, and some of the Primorsk Dragoons and Mounted Scouts at once gave chase and then dismounted and opened fire on San-ta-kan.

* It is possible that this may have been a portion of Lieutenant-Colonel Naganuma's column which had started from Su-ma-pu on a raid northwards on the previous day and crossed the track of the Russians a few hours after they had passed. See p. 119.

Meanwhile, the advanced guard of the Centre Column, consisting of some squadrons of the Verkhne-Udinsk Cossacks and Mounted Scouts came up on the north-east and joined in the action, at first by carrying out a charge right up to the walls of the distillery, which only resulted in some loss without useful result, and then by dismounted action. At 4 p.m. Major-General Baumgarten—the commander of the advanced guard of the Centre Column—ordered up the 1st Chita Cossacks and one battery of artillery. So soon as General Mishchenko heard of this attack he gave verbal orders for the action to be broken off at once, but when he learned that some of the men who had been wounded in the charge were still lying under the walls of the distillery and that the body of Lieutenant Burtin, an officer of the French army, attached to the 1st Verkhne-Udinsk Cossacks, could not be recovered, he issued orders that the place should be shelled and Lieutenant Burtin's body recovered "at all costs." This attack was carried out by troops from the Centre Column, and after a hand-to-hand fight the distillery was finally captured and burned and the French officer's body recovered some time after darkness had set in. Most of the Japanese, however, managed to escape south-eastwards. The Eastern Column, which had not been engaged, reached Mu-chia-tou and La-shan-kou at 7 p.m. at which places it spent the night, while the other two columns did not arrive at their destinations — Lia-tou-wo-tzu and near Hsiao-shan-kou — until 1 a.m. on the 11th, the pack transport also being very late. Considerable delay had been caused by this action at San-ta-kan, and the force had lost eight officers and men killed, and forty-four officers and men wounded.* The latter could not be left behind for fear of the Hun-hu-tzu and had to be conveyed with the expedition in improvised ambulance wagons. During the day the distance covered was about twenty-three miles, and the horses of the Eastern and Centre Columns had been under saddle for eighteen hours. According to information which reached the Russians this evening, Niu-chuang had been reinforced by 300 men, Hai-cheng by 4,500, and Newchuang by 2,000.

Arrangements had been made during the midday halt at Ka-li-ho to dispatch parties to cut the main line of railway, and between

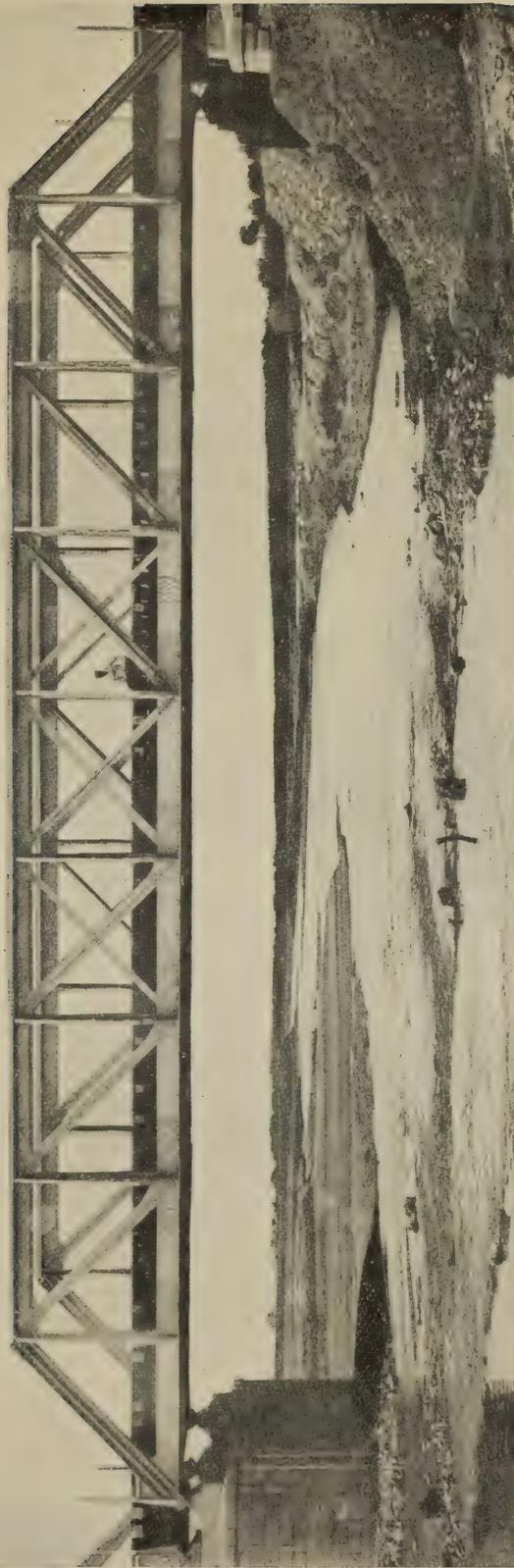
* Owing to the occurrences of the day General Mishchenko on the night of the 10th issued a special order against unnecessary attacks and pointed out the futility of mounted action against an enemy behind banks or in villages.

6 and 7 p.m. two detachments, each apparently two squadrons strong, left the force for that purpose. One, formed from the 4th Don Cossack Division and the Caucasian Cavalry Brigade, started for one of the railway bridges north of Hai-cheng.* The other, from the Ural and Trans-Baikal Cossack Brigades, made for a point on the line between one and two miles north of that town. The performances of these two detachments are described later.

The lesson of the delay caused by the unnecessary attack on San-ta-kan was taken to heart, and on the 11th it was decided to avoid Niu-chuang, which was directly on the route, unless it was found to be only weakly held. After a small party had been sent on to reconnoitre this town and other parties had set out to prepare crossing-places over the Tai-tzu Ho near Kao-li-fan the main columns started south between 7 and 8 a.m., marching in close touch with each other. After some skirmishes between the advanced guards and small bodies of the enemy, in which several convoys were captured and burned, Niu-chuang was approached early in the afternoon. The Russians were fired on from the enclosures on the outskirts of the town, and at one time it was thought that the artillery would have to be brought up to drive out the Japanese, but the garrison, which consisted of the 4th Company of the 33rd *Kobi* Regiment, a few cavalry and some fugitives from San-ta-kan, retired to the east and across the Hai-cheng Ho towards An-shan-chan and Hai-cheng, and to Newchuang. Though the Western and Eastern Columns skirted the town on either side, a portion of the Centre Column, apparently owing to a mistaken verbal order, passed through the place. The Eastern Column captured some cattle and cut the Japanese telephone and telegraph lines from Niu-chuang to Hai-cheng. The night was passed by the Western Column at Lao-shan-kan, by the Centre Column at Chun-chia-tun, and the Eastern Column round Hsin-kai-hui. During the 11th the force had covered twenty-one miles at an average rate of two and one-third miles per hour, the horses being under saddle from ten to thirteen hours, and the day had been rich in spoil, for the total of Chinese carts carrying supplies captured now amounted to over five hundred and fifty.

It was during this afternoon that the Eastern Column was

* The objective of this detachment is so described in the *Russian Official History*. The actual bridge which it was intended to attack is not known.



RAILWAY BRIDGE OVER THE HAI-CHENG HO.

(North shore span.)

To face p. 116.)

[This bridge was two hundred and forty-five yards long and consisted of seven spans each of one hundred and five feet.]

rejoined near Niu-chuang by the two detachments which had been sent out to cut the railway on the previous day. The first—of Don Cossacks and Caucasians—had crossed the Tai-tzu on its eastward journey about 8.30 p.m. on the 10th

Attempts to
destroy the
railway.

On the night
of the 10th.

At midnight a short halt was called, and it was ascertained from a Chinese guide that the railway was about six miles distant and that it was held by infantry piquets and patrolled by mounted men. Pushing on, the Russians were

disappointed to find at 2.30 a.m. that they were still six miles from their objective. About 4 a.m. they saw a train in the distance proceeding southwards and shortly afterwards reached the railway. However, no bridge could be found and it was decided to cut the rails. This was done by means of twenty-five charges distributed over a distance of some five hundred yards. At 5.45 a.m., when a train approached the gap, the Russians retired, and at daybreak found themselves some seven miles from the railway and about eight from Hai-cheng. After a rest they proceeded south-west and finally, after considerable wandering, met the Eastern Column as mentioned. The second detachment, of the Ural and Trans-Baikal Cossacks, reached the railway about one mile north of Hai-cheng, but also failed to find any bridge and therefore placed the explosives under the rails. This had just been done when a train approaching from the north exploded the charges and was derailed. Since by this time it was after 5 a.m. the officer in command decided to retire instead of searching further for a bridge, and the party left the neighbourhood of the railway and rested at a village some six miles distant until 10 a.m. It then marched westward, and came up with the main force at the same time and place as the first detachment. During their absence the two detachments each covered a considerable distance, but as regards results the expeditions were ineffectual, for the damage done to the railway was repaired by the Japanese in six hours.*

It had been the intention to dispatch other parties to cut the line during the day of the 11th, but this was not done till the main force had reached its night halting places south of Niu-chuang. At 11.30 p.m. two small parties of dragoons were sent

* It is stated in the *Russian Official History* that each party travelled one hundred and twenty miles in the twenty-two hours that they were away. This does not agree with the map and is apparently an error.

out and succeeded in reaching the Ta-shih-chiao—Newchuang branch line and in cutting the rails in four places.* According to the Russians through connexion was not re-established until 4 p.m. on the 12th and the Japanese reinforcements for Newchuang were delayed from passing until then. At midnight a stronger detachment composed of dragoons and Frontier Guards started off towards a point north of Ta-shih-chiao station, but it lost its way in the dark and returned without even finding the railway. It was then sent back and succeeded in cutting the line for a distance of seven hundred yards and in demolishing the telegraph, somewhere to the north of Ta-shih-chiao.†

During the night of the 11th, while at Chun-chia-tun, some sixteen miles from the eastern railway station of Newchuang, which he looked upon as his main objective, General Mishchenko settled upon his plan for the culminating act of the raid—the capture and destruction of the Japanese store depot at that station—which was to take place next day. Briefly, the action proposed was that the three columns should advance during the morning to within striking distance of the railway station (to the line Hou-kao-hen—Ta-kao-hen—Hou-tzu-ya-fu-tzu), and then, at 4 p.m., under cover of artillery fire and a demonstration from the east, should make an assault on the station from the north-west. In accordance with this scheme the troops moved off between 8 and 8.30 a.m., and after some skirmishing about noon reached the villages specified for the halt, which were only some eight miles from their objective. Before their further action is described, however, it will be as well to review the measures taken by the Japanese to meet the attack which was now so close.

As regards the protective dispositions behind the left flank of the Japanese at the beginning of the year all that can be said is that they were meagre. Their front on the west of the main fortified line which extended to Wan-chia-yuan-tzu consisted of the defended villages along the line of the Hun Ho held by the strengthened 1st Cavalry Brigade, and ended practically at Hei-kou-tai, while more to the south and west, in the neighbourhood of Hsiao-pei-ho, were the 2nd Cavalry Brigade and the

The Japanese
measures to
meet the raid.

* One Japanese account states that the line was cut at 7 a.m. on the 12th.

† These latter expeditions are not shown on the map.

1st Battalion of the 5th *Kobi* Regiment. Still farther south the only troops west of the railway were the 1st Cavalry Regiment—the greater part of which had come up from the 1st Division outside Port Arthur during November—stationed at Tu-tai-tzu,* the 4th Company of the 33rd *Kobi* Regiment at Niu-chuang, with its detachments holding villages to the north, various bodies of Hun-hu-tzu acting for the Japanese, and the garrison of Newchuang itself, which consisted of the 1st Company of the 33rd *Kobi* Regiment and a few details. The composition of the garrisons at Ta-shih-chiao and Hai-cheng is not known; they could not have been strong, however, because the intention of the Japanese at this time, if the Russians should press down this flank, was to send troops by rail from north and south to the threatened area. In the field army the 8th *Kobi* Brigade about Ku-cheng-tzu and Lang-tung-kou and the 8th Division at Yen-tai station were to furnish these reinforcements, while in the south there was the whole of the Third Army to draw upon.

Whatever suspicions may have been roused amongst the Japanese it does not appear that much importance was attached to them, for scarcely any precautions had been taken to guard the railway against a hostile action in force. Since the middle of December, 1904, also, there had been an intention to take advantage of the period of inactivity on the part of the armies and dispatch two independent columns northwards to act against the Russian main artery of communications. Nevertheless, in the beginning of the New Year, reports as to the enemy's designs were confirmed by the information obtained from prisoners taken from a small Russian force which had raided the railway between Anshan-chan and Hai-cheng; and about the 3rd January, as related, a company of *Kobi* infantry with some mounted men was sent out westwards from Liao-yang to hold observation posts near the Tai-tzu and Hun Rivers.† On the 9th—the day upon which General Mishchenko left the neighbourhood of Ssu-fang-tai upon his southward journey—the first of the Japanese raiding columns under Lieutenant-Colonel Naganuma, started westwards from Suma-pu on an expedition round the Russian right. On the following day it crossed the track of the Russian raiders and without

* This place cannot be located. It is not far from Niu-chuang, and there are more villages than one of this name in the neighbourhood.

† It was part of this force that the Russians encountered at San-ta-kan on the 10th. See p. 114.

stopping sent back information that a large hostile force had marched southwards.* The dispatch of this force at this moment appears to have been a coincidence and not to have been caused by any knowledge of the Russian movement. On the 10th, also, the 1st Cavalry Regiment fell back from Niu-chuang to Hai-cheng, and next day some of the fugitives of the Niu-chuang garrison arrived at the same place. By the 11th, therefore, it was realized that a serious hostile operation was on foot, and it was on this date that the first active measures were taken by the Japanese to counter it and to send reinforcements to the threatened points.† From the south the 2nd Battalion of the 8th *Kobi* Regiment, from the 4th *Kobi* Brigade near Port Arthur, was dispatched by train to Hai-cheng, and on the 12th it was diverted at Ta-shih-chiao towards Newchuang, where it arrived just before the attack began. From the north was sent off on the 11th the 17th *Kobi* Regiment of the 8th *Kobi* Brigade from near Lang-tung-kou: it reached Liao-yang at 5 p.m. and apparently entrained for Hai-cheng; but whether it remained at Hai-cheng or marched west is not known. From the north also was dispatched a force under Colonel Tsugawa, consisting of three battalions of the 5th Regiment and the 3rd Battalion of the 31st Regiment from the 4th Brigade of the 8th Division in General Reserve.‡ Starting from near Yen-tai station on the 11th, these troops were carried by rail to a point between Sha-ho and An-shan-chan and then continued by road towards Newchuang, via Ken-chuang-tzu and Niu-chuang. Before reaching Ken-chuang-tzu, where they arrived on the 12th,

* For the further progress of Lieutenant-Colonel Naganuma's column, see Chapter LXVI.

† Accounts differ considerably as to the actual units moved. According to the *Austrian Official Account (Einzelschriften über den Russisch-Japanischen Krieg, Band VII, Heft 54-55)*, which contains a most detailed account of the measures taken by the Japanese at this time, the 5th *Kobi* Regiment was entrained at Liao-yang on the morning of the 11th, detrained at An-shan-chan at midnight of the 11th-12th, then, owing to news of General Mishchenko's proximity to Hai-cheng, again entrained and sent on to that place, where it arrived on the morning of the 12th. Here the 2nd Battalion was left as a garrison, while the 1st proceeded on towards Newchuang by rail and arrived during the Russian attack. Confirmation of the movement of this unit, one battalion of which appears to have been at Hsiao-pei-ho and the other at Lang-tung-kou, is lacking; and, as will be seen later, it is thought that it was part of the 8th *Kobi* Regiment from Port Arthur which arrived by rail in time to intervene in the defence of Newchuang.

‡ One Japanese map shows a battalion of the 41st *Kobi* Regiment with Colonel Tsugawa's force.

they were reinforced by the 1st Cavalry Regiment from Hai-cheng and two batteries which were on their way north from Port Arthur.* On the 12th, also, were dispatched by train from Port Arthur one battalion each from the 7th and 9th Divisions. They are reported to have reached their destinations—Hai-cheng and Newchuang—on the same day. If this was the case the battalion to arrive at the latter place could not have got there till night.

Thus, by about midday on Thursday the 12th January, when the Russians were within close striking distance of Newchuang, the Japanese had brought up to within thirty miles of that point one cavalry regiment, two batteries of artillery, and four battalions of infantry; on its way thither was one *Kobi* battalion; near Hai-cheng were two *Kobi* battalions; and on the way up from Port Arthur were two battalions of regulars.

Ever since Newchuang had been occupied by the Japanese in the end of the previous July it had been used continuously as a base from which supplies were distributed, by the river junk service so long as the rivers remained unfrozen, and afterwards by road,

Newchuang. and by rail through Ta-shih-chiao; and very large

Garrison and
defences.

stocks had therefore been accumulated at the port.†

The town itself lies on the left bank of the Liao

Ho some thirteen miles above its mouth. Close

to Niu-chia-tun, a village on the left bank some three miles north of the town, is the eastern railway station—the terminus of the branch line from Ta-shih-chiao. On the right bank of the river, almost opposite, is the western station—the terminus of the branch to Newchuang of the main line of the Chinese Northern Railway running from Peking to Hsin-min-tun. The store depot extended along the left bank of the river near the eastern railway station, which it included, and consisted of a number of buildings and sheds. The latter had been originally placed in a state of defence during the Russian occupation, and the work had been carried on by the Japanese. The defended area, which included the station and the various buildings round it, was enclosed by a continuous

* The *Austrian Official Account* gives these as the 8th Cavalry Regiment and the 1st Division of the 8th Artillery Regiment.

† See Vol. II, p. 230, *et seq.*

In January, according to the official estimate of the Russians, they amounted in value to £2,125,000. In the *Intendantski Zhurnal* of April 1912, Colonel Shenanski placed the value at £2,000,000, while a French writer, Commandant de Fonclare, in his book, *Un Soldat*, puts the figure at £800,000.

parapet and deep ditch, with a wire entanglement outside.* To the north-east of the station is rising ground, while to the north-east of the village of Ta-kuan-shan is a stretch of marsh interspersed with small lakes. At the time of the attack all this area was frozen and presented a surface of smooth ice upon which it was difficult to move.

The garrison, consisting of the 1st Company of the 33rd *Kobi* Regiment, a few cavalry, about two hundred armed men of the Transport Corps, and some of the Auxiliary Transport Corps, was under the command of Major Miyasaki.† Though work had been going on for some time the defences were not ready by the 10th, when information of the Russian advance first came in, and every effort was made to press matters forward by employing coolie labour. On the night of the 11th the 4th Company of the 33rd *Kobi* Regiment arrived from Niu-chuang, bringing news of the capture of that place. At the sound of firing on the morning of the 12th the Chinese coolies threw down their tools and loads and stopped work; and about 7 a.m., when an explosion was heard in the east, Major Miyasaki sent out a party to repair the line, supposing that the railway to Ta-shih-chiao had been cut. At 2 p.m. it was reported that a large body of horsemen was advancing from the direction of Huan-tai; and a little later intelligence came in that another hostile force was approaching from the north. Before 4.30 p.m. a train arrived from the east bringing three companies of the 8th *Kobi* Regiment which had been diverted on their way north at Ta-shih-chiao station.‡ Thus before the attack actually took place the garrison had been strengthened by about seven hundred infantry. Soon after 4.30 p.m. the action was started by a Russian battery opening fire upon the store depot.

To return now to the Russians: shortly after midday on the

* The Japanese are reported to have poured water over the parapets. This froze and rendered the slopes unclimbable.

† According to the *Austrian Official Account* so soon as definite news of the impending attack was received measures were taken to protect the town of Newchuang itself. A Town Guard was formed of the forty Japanese military police, Chinese police, and some four hundred of the Japanese inhabitants who volunteered. Since there were only seventy rifles available for issue the majority of the Town Guard was armed with pistols and swords. The force was organized on the morning of the 12th and disbanded the next day.

‡ The arrival of this train shows that the Russian attempt to cut the line on the night of the 11th-12th had not been effective. The civilian driver of the train at once took it back empty to Ta-shih-chiao in order to bring up further reinforcements, but it was derailed, see p. 124.

12th General Mishchenko called a conference of commanding officers at Ta-kao-hen and explained the details of his plan of attack, which was as follows:—Firstly, Newchuang was to be isolated by cutting the railway between it and Ta-shih-chiao. This was to be done by a force of five squadrons from the Eastern Column under Colonel Count Shuvalov, which was to move off at 2 p.m. A bombardment of the depot was to be carried out by the whole of the guns of the force from near the neighbourhood of Tien-shih-chiao-tzu, where most of the reserves were to be placed; and a demonstration was to be made by fifteen squadrons also detached from the Eastern Column, under Major-General Stoyanov, which were to cross the railway and advance west between Niu-chia-tun and the station. The demonstration was to cease so soon as the main attack commenced, and the troops carrying it out were then to rejoin their own column. The main attack on the station depot was to be made by a composite force of fifteen squadrons collected from all the regiments present and four Mounted Scout detachments, under Colonel Khoranov, which was to move off at 3 p.m. round the north of the marsh and lakes near Ta-kuan-shan and to attack so soon as the bombardment ceased.* In reserve were to be the remainder of the Western Column—eleven squadrons, the 20th Horse Artillery Battery, and the old pattern field battery—which was to march at 3 p.m. to the neighbourhood of Tien-shih-chiao-tzu; the remainder of the Eastern Column, including the detachments under Major-General Stoyanov and Colonel Count Shuvalov—of twenty squadrons and the 1st and 2nd Trans-Baikal Batteries—was to move at the same time to near the same place; and the remainder of the Centre Column—eleven squadrons—was to proceed at 3.30 p.m. to the north of that village. The cumbrous pack transport column was to park some two and a half miles to the north of Tien-shih-chiao-tzu under the escort of six squadrons. After the action the units were to assemble near the village of Ta-kao-hen.

Thus, out of a total of seventy-one squadrons and four Mounted Scout detachments available, only fifteen squadrons and the Scouts were to be employed in the actual attack. The remaining fifty-six squadrons were to be occupied in demonstrating, as a

* Colonel Khoranov had only joined the raiding force on the previous day.

reserve, and in protection duties. The strength of the striking force was between one thousand and one thousand one hundred men—about equal to that of the defenders.

The detachment under Colonel Count Shuvalov was delayed by having to wait for pyroxylin and only reached the village of Hsiao-lao-chan close to the railway, about 4 p.m., in time to open fire on the train conveying the three companies of the 8th *Kobi* Regiment which was passing. A battalion of Japanese was then reported to be approaching from the south-east, but the Russians kept back whatever number of the enemy were advancing sufficiently long to enable them to cut the line in five places in time to derail the empty train returning to Ta-shih-chiao. They then withdrew northwards. The Eastern Column reached its appointed place in reserve at 4 p.m.; and its guns also opened fire on the train without result. The Western Column also reached its destination to time, and between 4 and 5 p.m. the artillery of all columns was in position near Huan-tai and began to bombard the station. The firing continued for some time, and the guns withdrew northward to the Western Column in reserve about 6.30 p.m., the only result after an expenditure of about twelve hundred rounds being to set alight a storehouse filled with straw. However, fears as to the possible effect of the fire of the Russian guns next day caused the Japanese commander to dispatch two parties to attempt their capture, but on the development of the assault these parties were withdrawn. The Western Column, after turning some Japanese out of the village of Huan-tai, which was then occupied by the escort to the artillery shelling the station, remained between that village and Tien-shih-chiao-tzu, sending detached parties forward to Hou-yu-fan, Ta-kuan-shan and the station, which managed to get near the station enclosure and remain there till the guns opened fire. This column remained where it was until it received the order about 6.30 p.m. to retire to Lien-san-tun. Meanwhile Major-General Stoyanov's force had moved forward when the guns were taking ground and had crossed the railway and turned westwards in order to make its demonstration, but on encountering some opposition on the south it contented itself with carrying on a fire action at some distance from the station and finally rejoined the Left Column in reserve when the general order to retire was given. The Centre Column arrived near Tien-shih-chiao-tzu as arranged, and halted there for some time, keeping touch with Colonel Khoranov's striking

force on the north. Shortly after the bombardment ceased, about 6.30 p.m., the three columns were ordered to retire to Lien-san-tun, the Western Column to leave behind three squadrons to keep touch with Colonel Khoranov's main attacking force and to co-operate with its movement against the station. The troops moved amidst much confusion, being mixed up with the pack transport, and did not reach Lien-san-tun until 2 a.m. on the 13th.

Thus between 6 and 7 p.m. the whole of the Russians except the force actually carrying out the main assault and the three squadrons detailed to co-operate, had begun to retire from the neighbourhood of the place to be attacked.

Colonel Khoranov's force, meanwhile, had started on its journey at 3 p.m. It was divided into four sections and was accompanied by a demolition detachment carrying explosives and kerosine oil, and furnished with specific instructions as to the buildings to be destroyed. On reaching a village about two and a half miles north of the station it halted while the bombardment was going on. About 6 p.m., during the halt, whilst final arrangements were being made for the attack, two messages were received from General Mishchenko. In the first Colonel Khoranov was ordered to attack when the guns should cease fire, and in the second he was informed that there was no one at the station, that the artillery was about to cease fire, and that he was to assault at once and blow up or burn everything in the station. The advance was at once resumed on foot, and the small attacking force was still further reduced by three squadrons of dragoons which were left behind in the village as horse-holders. Owing to the slipperiness of the ground progress was very slow. When about eight hundred yards from the station the Russians became visible in the light of the conflagration then raging and came under a heavy rifle fire from the front and right flank. They rushed forward with a cheer, but the units became mixed and some of the men took cover and opened fire whilst others went on. In spite of all efforts to advance farther the fire of the defenders and the entanglements and other obstacles strewn round the enclosure proved too much, and at 7.40 p.m. Colonel Khoranov gave the order to retire. General Mishchenko heard of the failure of the attack at 9.40 p.m. and sent a regiment to cover the withdrawal of Colonel Khoranov's force which, however, moved off without any pursuit being attempted. Meanwhile, the detachment from the Western

The main
assault.

Column left behind to co-operate did not receive the order to retire, and portions of it reached the station enclosure just as the main attack was beaten off. The three squadrons stayed till 5 a.m. on the 13th in the village of Huan-tai, and then fell back to the main body. During this attack the Russian losses in killed, wounded, and missing amounted to twenty-four officers and two hundred and sixty-nine men.

That night General Mishchenko got news of the Japanese movements towards Niu-chuang and of the reinforcement of the troops along the railway, and also heard a rumour that five Japanese battalions were now pressing forward from the railway near Ta-shih-chiao. Fearing lest his retreat might be cut off by the enemy or be hampered by the thawing of the ice at the river-crossings and realizing that his progress would be impeded by a number of wounded, he decided to withdraw, and at 11 p.m. issued orders for retirement northwards.

Owing to the reported presence of the enemy to the east the route to be followed by the whole force was to be farther to the west than that adopted for the advance; but the relative position of the three columns was to remain the same as it had been, and their composition was only varied to the extent of transferring the Mounted Scout detachments from the Centre to the Western Column, the 20th Horse Artillery Battery and the half-battery of old pattern field guns from the Western to the Centre Column, and the 1st Trans-Baikal Battery from the latter to the Eastern Column. The main road between Newchuang and Niu-chuang was to be followed for a certain distance and then the whole force was to bear to the north-west, to cross the Liao Ho between the villages of San-cha-ho on the east and Tun-hui-yan on the west and to spend the night on the right bank of that river. As it happened, the Western Column was forced by a change in direction made by the Centre Column to bear more to the west and crossed the main stream of the Liao Ho to the south of Tun-hui-yan. Since its patrols reported a small party of Japanese on the right bank it was anticipated that the crossing would be disputed, but there was no opposition, and the night was spent round Ta-pei-tun. The Centre Column, with which was the convoy of wounded, was intended to cross the river at Hei-chin-wan, and an advanced detachment did so, but the ice proved weak at that point and the main body turned to the west

and crossed just north of Tun-hui-yan, near which place it spent the night. But by this sudden change of direction a gap of some five miles was formed between the Centre and Eastern Columns, and owing to a thick fog which came on during the night touch was not regained till Sha-lin was nearly reached next day. The Eastern Column got across the Liao Ho unopposed at San-cha-ho and bivouacked round Hsin-ya-pu-chan-tzu. It had been in touch with the enemy at intervals during the day, and some of the patrols on the right flank had moved round to the east of Niu-chuang and found that it was held by the Japanese and that Japanese artillery and cavalry were moving up from the south-east. On reaching Hsin-ya-pu-chan-tzu the commander of the column heard that San-tai-tzu was occupied by hostile infantry, that some of their cavalry was to the north-west, and that there was a force of three thousand on the left bank of the Liao Ho at Pe-chia-wo-pa. He therefore had some reason to fear attack, especially as his force was more or less isolated and the night was foggy, and he took precautions accordingly.

Major-General Teleshov's fears were not unjustified, for the Japanese were in fact close at hand. Colonel Tsugawa, who had arrived at Ken-chuang-tzu on the 12th, had sent forward a detachment consisting of the 3rd Battalion 31st Regiment and

Action at Hsin-ya-pu-chan-tzu on the night of 13th-14th January.

some cavalry which had reached Pe-chia-wo-pa on the Liao on the same night. On the morning of the 13th he had started east with his main force, intending to proceed to San-cha-ho, leaving one company to garrison Niu-chuang and one company

to follow up the Russians, whom he had heard were moving northwards between himself and the Liao Ho. On the night of the 13th the Japanese detachment near Pe-chia-wo-pa engaged the outposts of the Russian Eastern Column on the right bank of the Liao near Hsin-ya-pu-chan-tzu, and on the morning of the 14th the Japanese main body came up in time to join in the attack farther south near San-cha-ho. Though three of the villages on the right bank of the river were captured and held by the Japanese, the Russians, who were merely fighting a rear-guard action, got away about 9 a.m. and retired to the north-west. A Japanese detachment appears to have followed them up at some distance, but there was no real attempt at a pursuit, and Colonel Tsugawa's column moved back to the neighbourhood of Niu-chuang having lost twelve killed and sixty-four wounded.

After having successfully extricated his force from the attentions of the Japanese with a loss of eight killed and forty-four wounded Major-General Teleshov continued his march northwards, and either in order to avoid the Liao Ho, whence the enemy would be able to harass his flank, or on account of the fog, he marched across the routes of the two other columns until he was well on the west of them both and then turned north-east towards Sha-lin. The sound of the action during the morning had been heard by the two other columns, but they had not succeeded in getting into communication with Major-General Teleshov, and converged towards the north-east in order to re-establish contact with him and, if necessary, assist by attacking the Japanese. However, it was not long before it was learned that he had got clear away. The whole force concentrated near Sha-lin shortly after mid-day on the 14th, and after marching over eighteen miles halted for the night at three villages between Sha-lin and Ta-lin-pu-tzu, the horses having been under saddle for sixteen hours. During the day it had got into touch with General Kossakovski's supporting mounted force for the first time, though patrols from the latter had been so far south as Kao-li-fan on the Tai-tzu Ho. The march on the 15th passed without incident, and the columns bivouacked for the night round Ta-lin-pu-tzu, where they found the main body of the detachment under General Kossakovski, which had been sent forward from Ssu-fang-tai.

Next day the convoy of wounded having been transferred to General Kossakovski, the Western Column marched north and crossed the Liao Ho at Kao-li-ma, where it spent the night; the Centre Column crossed the river at Ta-wan and halted at A-sui-niu; the Eastern Column reached Yei-huan-ti.

The 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th January. The troops remained in these positions during the 17th and 18th. On Thursday, the 19th, the force was split up, and the units returned to their former stations, the Ural Trans-Baikal Cossack Division and the Caucasian Brigade remaining near Ssu-fang-tai under the control of the commander-in-chief. On the 16th the Russians had been narrowly missed by a second Japanese raiding column under Major Hasegawa, which reached Ta-wan a few hours after them and proceeded north. This column, which had been preparing to make an expedition to cut the railway somewhere near Tieh-ling, had been hurried off westwards from Su-ma-pu on

the 15th in order if possible to intercept and harass the retiring Russians.*

During the eight days from Monday the 9th, to Monday the 16th, January, the Russian expedition had travelled one hundred and sixty-seven miles covered at the average rate of twenty-one miles in twenty-four hours.† It had lost seven officers and

Summary of
results attained.

seventy-three men killed, thirty-three officers wounded, and two hundred and eighty-eight men wounded and missing, while the wastage in horse-flesh amounted to sixty-nine killed and eighty-nine wounded. In all, four hundred and one men and one hundred and fifty-eight horses had been put out of action. The troop-horses are stated to have returned in hard condition, but of the one thousand five hundred and fifty pack animals with which the force started, three hundred and twenty-seven had been abandoned, whilst at the end of the journey only one hundred and fifty-three were capable of carrying a load. Of the eighty-one tons of supplies and forage carried thirty-six tons had been consumed and forty-five abandoned. Nineteen prisoners had been taken; over six hundred carts had been captured—most of which were destroyed; and a large amount of the enemy's supplies had been burnt. A few telegraph and telephone lines had been cut, two trains had been wrecked, and the Japanese had been induced to move a few battalions. What information General Mishchenko had been able to gather about the movement of the Japanese Third Army is not known.

One result, however, of the raid was that the advance of that army was hastened, for on the 13th January, upon receipt of the news of the attack on Newchuang, orders were sent from Japanese head-quarters for General Nogi's troops to proceed up

to the Sha Ho. So soon as drafts to replace losses had been received, therefore, three divisions, the 1st, 7th and 9th, with the 1st and 4th *Kobi* Brigades set out northwards, mostly by road.‡

From this time onward the Third Army under General Nogi

* For the further progress of Major Hasegawa's column, see Chapter LXVI.

† This is as given in the *Russian Official History*. It appears to be an overestimate.

‡ It is not known exactly when these units started, but it could not have been at once, because they did not concentrate in the neighbourhood of Liao-yang until the 19th February. See p. 266.

comprised these divisions alone, the 11th Division, left behind near Port Arthur, now ceasing to belong to it.

While the raiding force had been making its way to and from Newchuang preparations for the general advance had been continued by Russian General Head-Quarters. On the 15th January, when the commander-in-chief heard from General Mishchenko that

Russian
preparations
to attack.

he was returning with three hundred wounded, he ordered General Kossakovski to move forward and warned General Grippenbergh to hold the VIIIth Corps in readiness to support in case the

Japanese should attack towards Ssu-fang-tai in order to cut off the raiders. Apparently anxious at this period, owing to the many rumours of a Japanese concentration opposite the Russian right, for the safety of General Kossakovski's force and his own right flank, General Grippenbergh also transferred some of his troops on his own responsibility. The chief importance of his action lies in the fact that it was unnecessary, and was subsequently considered by the Russians to have been a premature deployment which warned the Japanese of the intended attack and was to some extent responsible for its failure. He moved back three regiments of his 14th Division to Ssu-fang-tai and one regiment to Chang-tan, and ordered up the Xth Corps from behind the Third Manchurian Army to take its place in the front line between the 5th Siberian and the VIIIth Corps. On the 18th January the 1st Siberian Corps was ordered to join the Second Manchurian Army on the Hun Ho, and General Mishchenko's detachment was also placed under General Grippenbergh's orders. By the 19th the three Rifle brigades were fully concentrated and both divisions of the XVIth Corps had come up, the 25th Division on the field of battle and the 41st Division at Mukden. Great precautions were now taken to prevent the intention to attack becoming known, a line of outposts being established across the whole front to prevent all ingress to or egress from the line.

Great, however, as were the Russian efforts at secrecy the Japanese seem to have had some inkling that an advance was

The Japanese
action at
the front.

contemplated, though they did not know the precise direction of the intended blow. From the Russian movements an attack on the west seemed likely. And it was, perhaps, with the purpose of

clearing up the situation and of upsetting indirectly any scheme for operating in that quarter that Marshal Oyama caused a demon-

stration to be made against the Russian left. On the 18th January the Japanese troops on the extreme east attacked General Rennenkampf's detachment near Ching-ho-cheng. The details of this action are not known, but if it was made with the intention suggested it attained its object, as will be seen, by its influence on the Russian operations three days later.

On the 25th January—the day upon which the battle of San-de-pu commenced — the Japanese 11th Division left the neighbourhood of Port Arthur and started to march along the coast to An-tung, where it was to turn northwards and proceed

via Feng-huang-cheng to Cheng-chang. At Cheng-chang it was to join the 1st *Kobi* Division, which had been in the neighbourhood for some time, and with it to form a fifth army generally

known as the Ya-lu Army to which reference has already been made.* The creation, composition and eventual destination of this army were all subjects upon which the greatest secrecy was observed at the time. It is now known that it had been intended for some time to organize such a force to act against the Russian left. Of the two divisions of which it was to be composed, the 1st *Kobi* Division had been formed on the 12th October from the 6th and 9th *Kobi* Brigades, whose actions during November, 1904, have been described.† In January its headquarters appear to have been near Sai-ma-chi, the 6th *Kobi* Brigade being between Chyang-syang, on the Ya-lu, and Kuan-tien-cheng, and the 9th round Cheng-chang, at which place the arrival of the 11th Division was now awaited.

* See p. 17.

† See foot-note (‡), p. 17. The 1st *Kobi* Division included the following *Kobi* troops, in addition to infantry :—One regiment of cavalry, one regiment of artillery, one battalion of engineers, and one transport battalion.

The date of the first appearance of these two *Kobi* brigades in the theatre of war is uncertain. They had for some time been acting as a detached flank guard ahead and on the right of the Japanese First Army, and the greater part of the units forming them landed some time before the battle of the Sha Ho, until which period they remained in the neighbourhood of An-tung. Some of the units of the division, however, were not sent out till January, 1905.

CHAPTER LXI.

COMMENTS ON THE RUSSIAN CAVALRY RAID ON NEWCHUANG.

THE independent expedition of the Russian cavalry carried out in January, 1905, can be said to have failed entirely in its purpose. Materially it achieved nothing commensurate with the opportunity presented, the force employed, or the hopes entertained. What should have been its chief object was not effected, for the enemy's communications were not seriously interrupted. What was incorrectly made its primary aim was also not attained, inasmuch as the Japanese supply depot at Newchuang was neither captured nor destroyed. Morally its effect was, if anything, more harmful than beneficial to the Russian cause. The Russians were made to suffer another failure. On the other hand, the Japanese had been forced to move but a small number of troops; had not been thrown into alarm; and must have been enlightened as to the slight extent they need in the future fear any effort on the part of the Russians to exploit their great superiority in mounted men. To the student the significance of the operation lies in the lessons it affords of the many ways in which failure was courted, and in the illustration it furnishes of the preponderance in cavalry of the Russians. General Mishchenko's raid formed a striking contrast to the exploits of Stuart during the American Civil War, of Gurko in the Russo-Turkish War, and of De Wet in the war in South Africa.

There is no doubt that during the winter of 1904-05 the Russian circumstances were unusually favourable for an enterprise of the nature of that entrusted to General Mishchenko. For a period of two and a half months the two hostile armies lay opposite each other practically inactive, each almost entirely dependent upon one main line of communications: that from the Japanese front running back obliquely in a manner which laid it open to attack from the west without necessitating any excessive detour on the part of the force carrying

out the attack. As has been described, also, the country over which any body of troops having the railway line between Liao-yang and Ta-shih-chiao as its objective would have to traverse was eminently suitable for the movement of mounted men. It was flat and was covered by a network of tracks, while the rivers by which it was intersected could hardly be considered as obstacles so long as the cold weather lasted. And though the fact was not appreciated by the Russians, who consequently did not benefit by it, the populous and fertile area between the Liao Ho and the railway was still full of supplies. On the other hand the population was on the whole unfriendly to the Russians, but the inhabitants were really impotent seriously to prejudice an irruption southwards made in any force. Lastly, since November, 1904, when the arrival of the 4th Don Cossack Division swelled the existing number of cavalry at the disposal of the Russians, their superiority in mounted troops became such as is unlikely to occur again in war. Indeed, it was so overwhelming that it demanded that some advantage should be taken of it.

But up to the end of the year 1904 the one thing lacking was a definite purpose for a raid. It is true that something might have been effected, at any time after the battle of the Sha Ho up to the end of the year, by operations against the Japanese communications. But so long as the Japanese Third Army was chained to the heights round Port Arthur the most that could have been done by such activity would have been to cause temporary inconvenience to the Japanese and to delay the normal flow of the comparatively small reinforcements and the supplies proceeding to their field armies. Any Russian action at that period, therefore, would not have been very valuable. It might also have been premature and harmful, since it would almost certainly have alarmed the Japanese and have caused them to take precautions which would have militated against the success of any similar enterprise undertaken at the really crucial period which was approaching—when Port Arthur should have fallen. When, however, that had happened and it became a question of General Nogi's troops being set free to reinforce the armies facing General Kuropatkin, the potential value of a raid became immense. To the power to act which the Russians had for weeks possessed was now added a motive for acting. On this ground the postponement of the cavalry operation until after Port Arthur had fallen was right.

Whether the correct moment for it was selected by the Russians is open to question. At this period the situation was really dominated by the length of time which must elapse before the Japanese Third Army could be moved northwards; for, since the Russians were bent upon the offensive, it was of the utmost importance to them to carry it out before Marshal Oyama should be reinforced by any large number of General Nogi's troops. The movement of the latter being a matter beyond General Kuropatkin's control, there were theoretically open to him two courses whereby he might force matters and so reap the benefit of the situation which, so far as the balance of strength was concerned, was at the time in his favour. The first was to forestall the impending increase to Marshal Oyama's armies by an early attack. The second was to delay the arrival of the Japanese reinforcing troops. For reasons which need not be recounted here the Russian commander-in-chief did not alter the date for the advance, which had already been fixed, and decided upon the second alternative—to retard the hostile reinforcements by acting against the Japanese communications. The precise time for doing this, however, was a matter for adjustment between influences that were to some extent conflicting.

To consider the question from the point of view of its more immediate object—the interruption of the Japanese communications—the raid had to be carried out early enough to anticipate the transfer of General Nogi's troops northwards, which, it must be remembered, was in the early days of January thought likely to begin about the middle of the month and to be completed about its end. General Mishchenko's force actually started south on the 9th January and reached the main line of railway on the night of the 10th, before any of the units of the Japanese Third Army had commenced to move. So far, therefore, as the need for anticipating the movement of that army is concerned the early start was to some extent justified. But it was not necessary.

When, however, the subject is regarded from the larger point of view, and it is remembered that however independent its method of execution the ultimate purpose of the raid was essentially co-operative—to assist the action of the main Russian forces—it seems to have been undertaken prematurely. For that purpose it was not sufficient that the Japanese

communications should be subjected to a temporary interruption carried out so early that it could be made good in time for the passage of reinforcements before the rival armies met. It was essential that any retardation to the advance of the Japanese Third Army should be protracted until it was too late for that army to intervene in the coming battle. If the detachment undertaking the duty was not able, or was not intended, to seize a point in the communications, create an interruption on a large scale, maintain that interruption by force and so prolong the delay caused, it should not have started until the last moment, so that the temporary obstacle created by it should so far as possible synchronize with the Russian main effort.* General Mishchenko, however, set out on his mission ten days before the earliest estimated date upon which the Russian army would move, and his troops reached this one of their two objectives—the railway—eight days before that date.† Acting, as the force was, with a restricted rôle, bound to return to its starting point within ten days, and so precluded from stopping and actively preventing the repair of any material damage done by it, it could hardly have been expected, even if it made the best use of its opportunities, to cause an interruption the effect of which would have lasted until the general action commenced. Admittedly it was a difficult matter to arrange with exactitude, for if in these circumstances co-operation demanded as late action as possible, the necessity for interception, as has been said, required that it should not be deferred till too late.

The Russians naturally were not in possession of exact information as to the intended time of movements of General Nogi's troops, but even according to their own appreciation of the situation it appears that the independent mission of the cavalry might have been deferred for at least a week with a far better prospect of helping their main offensive and with little danger of failing to intercept the Japanese Third Army. And as regards the return of General Mishchenko's force in time to take part in

* Special stress had been laid upon this point by Major-General Evert, when the question of the raid was opened again after the fall of Port Arthur. And General Mishchenko himself was also in favour of simultaneous action.

† The general advance was not to take place until the arrival at the front of the 25th Division of the XVIth Corps, which was not expected earlier than the 19th January. It was actually begun on the 25th or fifteen days after General Mishchenko started and nine days after he returned.

the battle of San-de-pu it is open to question whether its influence, if it had been actively handled, in rear of the Japanese front line would not have been of as much assistance as any action in closer touch with the main forces. Why the raid was actually carried out so early is not clear. So far as is known the final impetus was given to the project by the Russian commander-in-chief's note of the 4th January which shows signs of conveying a decision reached hastily—a sudden happy thought.* But it was in General Mishchenko's scheme, submitted next day, that the first mention of the 9th as the date for the start occurs, though no reasons are given for the choice.† It may perhaps be urged in this connexion that since practically no portion of the Japanese Third Army did in fact come up in time to take part in the battle of San-de-pu, which began on the 25th January and ended on the 29th, that there could not have been much at fault with the raid. That the Japanese Third Army did not intervene in the battle is true. But it was not due to the action of the Russian cavalry, which, quite apart from any faults of execution, was a purely disconnected operation.

So far, in this discussion, the raid has all along been considered under the assumption that its proper object was the interruption of the Japanese main communications: in other words that General Mishchenko's objective should have been the railway line somewhere between Port Arthur and the front. In the circumstances, which need not be recapitulated, it certainly does seem that it was of incomparably greater importance to the Russians that the movement northwards of General Nogi's force should be prevented, or sufficiently delayed, than that the supply depot at Newchuang should be destroyed. The preservation of Newchuang and all that it contained, whatever its monetary value, was not vital to the Japanese. The port was closed by ice and had been so for some weeks, and the stock of supplies collected there was only the unexpended balance of what had been imported before the harbour was frozen. So long as the main line of railway was in working order the Japanese field armies were sufficiently independent of this auxiliary base to

* See p. 109.

† According to Colonel Prince Vadbolski, General Mishchenko was secretly informed by the commander-in-chief just before he set out that the general advance would not take place until seven or eight days after the expedition returned. This makes the reason for the early start all the more difficult to fathom.

render it quite a minor objective to the enemy. And yet, though this statement of the relative significance of the two possible objectives for the Russian cavalry expresses the view which was for some time held by the Russian Head-Quarter Staff, there is room for considerable doubt as to what the commander-in-chief himself regarded as the proper rôle for General Mishchenko's force at the time he dispatched it. When the idea of a raid was first mooted an attack against communications was mentioned vaguely in connexion with action in rear of the enemy. That the project was reopened so early in January, 1905, was admittedly due to the prospect of the intervention of General Nogi's army and to the necessity for retarding its advance; and at this time the railway was accepted as the proper general objective, the bridge near Hai-cheng being mentioned as the special objective suitable for attack in order to cause an obstruction. Nevertheless, in General Kuropatkin's note of the 4th January Newchuang assumed the place of the primary objective.* Possibly impressed by the representations of his staff or by General Mishchenko's own scheme, submitted on the following day, General Kuropatkin on the 6th again laid stress on cutting the railway. But a day later he was at pains to impress upon the commander of the expedition that if Newchuang was found to be weakly held an attack upon that place was to take precedence. It is clear that the latter started with two objects—to capture the Japanese supply depot and to damage the railway, and that he paid greater attention to the first, which was in fact far the less important; but in the light of his instructions it is not surprising that he acted under an erroneous conception of the course to be pursued. Of the necessity for the cavalry force to obtain information about the enemy's movements there was practically no mention in the preliminary discussions.

Before the actual conduct of the expedition is touched upon there are one or two other points—besides its apparently premature execution and the incorrect choice of objective—which merit remark. The first is the publicity with which all the preliminaries were conducted. This has already been alluded to, and it was such as to have considerably discounted the chances of an

* It must be pointed out, however, that General Evert seems again to have formed a correct appreciation of the necessities of the situation and to have pressed for the interruption to the Japanese communications as being all-important.

operation of this nature, which for success depends so much on the element of surprise. But curiously enough this lack of secrecy does not seem to have militated against the enterprise, which did not fail owing to any precautions taken by the Japanese. That they were aware that the Russians intended some move is certain; but there is no evidence to show that they undertook any serious measures beforehand to guard against it. From the fact that their counter-movements were not initiated until the 11th January, or on the third day after General Mishchenko set out, it may be inferred that they were either ignorant of the exact date upon which he was to move or were relying upon the railway to enable them to move troops after he had started sufficiently quickly to be of service. The second point is that though the Russians had held the country for years they had not reconnoitred it properly in advance and either had prepared no maps or had none ready for use of the route to be followed. This was partially responsible for the slow rate of the advance, and for the fact that the detachments sent out to destroy the railway could not find their way to the bridges on what had been a Russian line. It was also responsible for the ignorance about the supply capabilities of the area to be crossed, and so led to the unnecessary incumbrance of the raiders with the huge pack train which delayed them so much. Lastly, though General Mishchenko was nominally given a free hand in the conduct of the expedition he was instructed to return within ten days, which, counting from the day he set out, would bring him back on the 19th. This was presumably specified in order that his large cavalry force should be available to join in the Russian general advance which might take place at any time after that date. But, as has been pointed out, to allow him to start so early when under this restriction was bound to militate against the strategic value of his efforts.

Although General Mishchenko was handicapped in the ways that have been pointed out there were several particulars in which the actual conduct of the expedition was such as to render its failure likely. In the first place the improbability of his effecting a surprise, brought about by the previous lack of secrecy, was much increased by the slowness with which his force advanced. The distance from the starting points near Ssu-fang-tai to the three villages* selected for the final concentration within striking

* Hou-kao-hen, Ta-kao-hen, Hou-tzu-ya-fu-tzu.

distance of the accepted objective—the Japanese supply depot at Newchuang—was under seventy miles, and to cover it took the Russian cavalry from the morning of the 9th January until noon on the 12th, or three and a half days. And even if this is taken to work out, as officially stated, to a rate of twenty-one miles a day—which appears to be an overestimate—it was not beyond the marching power of good infantry, and not up to the capability of a mounted force even so large as that under General Mishchenko. There is no doubt that the presence of the pack transport was largely responsible for the poor progress made: but after the first day's march it must have been apparent to the commander of the force what a drag this transport was going to prove, and on discovering from the stocks of supplies in the villages and captured convoys that it was unnecessary to carry so much food with the expedition it might have been open to him to send back a large portion of the transport accompanying his force. Possibly such action was precluded as being beyond General Mishchenko's powers. But the second factor which conduced to slowness was within the commander's control, for, apart from the slowness of the marching there were some quite uncalled for delays, such as those caused by skirmishes, the attack on San-ta-kan and the action round Niu-chuang. As regards the hostile convoys, though their capture was not necessary in order to obtain food, it may have been prudent to take prisoner the escorts in order to prevent the news of the raid being spread; but there was no excuse for attacking walled villages which were fortified and required artillery for their reduction, and whose capture could not possibly repay the valuable time lost in effecting it. They should have been avoided or masked by a small force to prevent the escape of the garrison with information. Again, every action, every skirmish, implied the chance of casualties, and every wounded man added to the dead weight to be carried, for none could be left behind owing to the presence of the roving brigands. The net result of the dilatory approach of the Russians, which has been characterized as "a processional march" by one of the officers taking part in the expedition,* was that the Japanese, whose possession of a railway running round two sides of the area of operations gave them an advantage equivalent to that of acting on interior lines, received definite news of the approach of the raiders by the evening of the 10th. They were

* Lieutenant-Colonel Svyeshnikov.

thus able to commence concentrating troops to meet the Russians thirty-six hours before the latter arrived within striking distance of the point they were aiming at.

Again, there was the final delay when the force arrived within striking distance of Newchuang about noon on the 12th. It was a halt deliberately made, apparently for the purpose of giving a rest to the troops, of allowing time for the elaboration of a plan of attack and of postponing that attack until 4 p.m. or within two hours of darkness. This seems to have been an error of judgment on the part of the commander difficult to justify. The troops had made only a short march during the morning and should have needed no rest; the plan of attack could have been worked out in sufficient detail the night before; while the deferring of the attack until so late an hour that it could not in the most favourable circumstances have been finished before dark, instead of being a valid reason for the halt at midday of the 12th January, appears rather to have been one of its worst consequences. General Mishchenko's greatest chance of success lay in attacking as quickly as possible in order to forestall any reinforcements which might be on their way to the town. And it was important for the Russians that they should act during daylight, for all the disadvantages of a night operation would tell against them far more than against the defenders. The result of this loss of three hours was that the Japanese garrison was reinforced by some hundreds of infantry in the nick of time, and that the assault was not carried out till dark.

The attack on Newchuang was neither well organized nor well carried out. Of the whole strength available fifteen squadrons and four Mounted Scout detachments, or considerably less than one-fourth, were to form the striking force to carry out the actual assault, almost the same number being allotted to a demonstration—it cannot be called a holding attack—while to five squadrons was entrusted the duty of isolating the place. In reserve and as escort were at first to be thirty-six squadrons, which number was to be increased so soon as the assault commenced by the fifteen squadrons told off for the demonstration. In this distribution the proportion of strength allotted to the striking force appears to have been too small, while the reserves were unnecessarily large for the requirements of the case, which were a sudden overwhelming blow from all directions. The arrangement by which the demonstration was to cease so soon as the real attack started

was such as to deprive it of nearly all its co-operative value. As events were to prove, the attempt to isolate the place which was such an essential for the success of the Russians, failed absolutely, for either through mismanagement or mischance Colonel Count Shuvalov's detachment only reached the branch line from Ta-shih-chiao in time to witness the passage of the train conveying the Japanese reinforcements to the town. As instructed, the troops carrying out the demonstration withdrew to the reserve, but without seriously engaging or occupying the attention of the defenders. And it is not surprising that the assault failed: it was carried out by a literally mixed force, being composed of units collected from every regiment present, and was commanded by an officer who had only just joined the expedition. The assaulting columns, still further reduced in numbers by three squadrons which were left behind to act as horse-holders, made a gallant attempt to capture the station enclosure. But acting in the dark as they were, across ground partly covered with ice and strewn with obstacles, and at the moment of assault unsupported by their own artillery fire, they fell into confusion. The commander, Colonel Khoranov, therefore, possibly puzzled by the messages he had just received from General Mishchenko and realizing that he was not to be supported by the rest of the main force, which was in fact then withdrawing to Lien-san-tun, on his own initiative gave up the attempt.* General Mishchenko's action in ordering the withdrawal of the bulk of his force to Lien-san-tun while the assault was actually in progress and before its result was known is only explicable on the grounds, as suggested in his second letter to Colonel Khoranov, that he thought that no resistance would be met with by the assaulting detachment and that it could at once burn the supply depot and follow the main body. That he was more anxious about the safe return of his force than about the success of the operation he had come so far to carry out is evident from the reason for his order to retreat issued that night. The withdrawal northwards was conducted with the skill which the Russians showed in all their retirements.

There remain to be considered the steps taken by the Russians

* See p. 125. The tenor of the second of the messages sent by General Mishchenko to Colonel Khoranov just before his attack is indeed not easy to understand, for a trainful of Japanese troops had been seen to steam into Newchuang station.

to interrupt the Japanese communications. Accepting the fact that General Mishchenko, whether against his own convictions or not, undertook the raid with the intention of carrying this out as a purely secondary duty, and the fact that in the conditions under which he started there was no scope for a determined attempt to cut the railway thoroughly and prevent its repair for any length of time, it seems that the Russians might have done more than blow up a few lengths of rail, which is a futile performance when the side to which the railway belongs possesses any engineering skill or resources. As was the original intention, the demolition detachments should have taken as their objectives the bridges, which are practically the only vulnerable spots in a railway. They should have been strong enough to overcome a determined resistance and to capture at least one bridge, if necessary cutting the rail at points a few miles on each side to delay the arrival of Japanese reinforcements until the structure was effectively destroyed. This would probably have entailed severe fighting and heavy casualties, but the raiding force was very large and well provided with artillery, and the Russians could have afforded to lose mounted men in so good a cause. When it is borne in mind that during the attack on Newchuang some thirty-six squadrons were kept practically idle, it seems that a considerable force could have been spared to act against the railway without prejudicing what General Mishchenko looked upon as his main duty. Had even one span of a large bridge such as that over the Hai-cheng Ho, near Hai-cheng, been brought down, it would have been from three to five days from the time that any repair work was started before through rail communication could have been re-established, even presuming that the Japanese were thoroughly well prepared and equipped to carry out hasty railway reconstruction. Had the Russians been able to hold the gap made and prevent repairs being undertaken for a day or two, the block in the Japanese communications would have been so much the longer. That the small parties sent out did not find the bridges they were sent out to destroy was, as has been said, due to bad preparation, ignorance of the country, and darkness; that they did not press on until they found something worth destroying was due to their weakness. What they effected was hardly enough to cause the Japanese inconvenience.

As regards the actual information about the enemy which General Mishchenko was able to give to the Russian commander-

in-chief not much is known. That it could not have been of great value is evident from the latter's ignorance of the whereabouts of the Japanese Third Army at the battle of San-de-pu. However, as has been pointed out, little stress was laid upon the necessity for reconnoissance before the expedition started, and no great endeavours to collect intelligence were made. The hasty visits of the demolition parties to the railway were not of a nature to enable much information to be gleaned of what was happening on the line.

Of the measures taken by the Japanese to meet the raid there is little to be said. Whatever may have been the information of the Russian intentions at Marshal Oyama's disposal he appears not to have taken any serious steps beforehand to protect his communications, but to have relied on the railway to enable him to concentrate troops where required. On the whole the Japanese may be said to have been fortunate. The strength of the detachments already guarding the line is not known; but it was not due to them or, as has been pointed out, to the active measures taken at the time, that the railway escaped serious damage. Moreover, had General Mishchenko pressed on to New-chuang earlier than he did, the reinforcements sent to the place would have been too late. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that when the Japanese did move up troops they did not do so with a view to the mere passive defence of localities, but boldly pushed out a mixed force to engage or cut off the raiders. Though they did not succeed in doing this, the moral effect of the attempt was not without result: it caused the retreat of General Mishchenko before his task was done, and before the time allotted to him for its execution had expired.

CHAPTER LXII.

THE BATTLE OF SAN-DE-PU*—GENERAL OUTLINE—OPERATIONS ON THE 25TH AND 26TH JANUARY—THE CAPTURE OF HEI-KOU-TAI BY THE RUSSIANS AND THEIR FAILURE TO TAKE SAN-DE-PU.

(Plate 49 and Plans 47, 48, 49 and 50.)

THE attempt to retard the Japanese Third Army having failed, there was no room for further delay in undertaking an attack if the Russians wished to carry it through before Marshal Oyama was reinforced. Nor was there any longer reason for waiting, since the last of the reinforcements expected by General Kuropatkin—the 41st Division of the XVIth Corps—was now at the front. On the 19th January, therefore, three days after General Mishchenko's return, the commander-in-chief concluded his plans and communicated them to his three army commanders in a circular memorandum. The main object of the advance was to force the Japanese across the Tai-tzu Ho with as great loss as possible, whilst the immediate objective was to be the Japanese Second Army, the left flank of which was to be enveloped. And it was in accordance with this general plan that tasks were assigned to the three Manchurian Armies as follows:—

The Russian offensive.

The Second Manchurian Army was to occupy the enemy's fortified line San-de-pu—Li-ta-jen-tun—Ta-tai—Ching-ya-tzu,† and subsequently the line of the River Sha between Ta-tung-shan-pu and Chung-lu-yen-tai. Further movements were to depend on the action of the enemy and the degree of success attained by the Third Manchurian Army, but they were to

* The battle described in this and subsequent chapters is known by the name of San-de-pu or Hei-kou-tai. The former nomenclature is now adopted in this history as being topographically more correct and more in agreement with general usage. In Vol. II, San-de-pu is referred to as Shen-tan-pu.

† This place cannot be identified.

imply an advance towards the line Shih-li-ho—Shuang-tai-tzu. The high ground south of the former village was to be occupied, and a strong screen was to be thrown out in order to cover the army from the south.

The Third Manchurian Army was in the first instance to attack the enemy's trenches on the line Chang-liang-pu—Lin-sheng-pu, and then to operate against the line of the Sha Ho between Hung-ling-pu and Lin-sheng-pu both inclusive. The developments of the action and the success or otherwise of the Second Manchurian Army were to govern any further advance towards the line Hung-pao-shan—Hou-tai.

The First Manchurian Army was to co-operate in any attack on the Hou-tai hillock carried out by the Third Manchurian Army and to seize the heights about Chang-ling-tzu and Kuo-shan-ssu. If all went well with the other armies the advance of the First Army was to be continued southwards towards the Shih-li Ho.

During the advance the Second Manchurian Army was to guard the right flank and the First Manchurian Army the left flank.

As a General Reserve under his own immediate control General Kuropatkin retained five divisions—the XVIth Corps, the 3rd Siberian Corps, and the 72nd Division of the 6th Siberian Corps.*

Operations were to be begun by the Second Manchurian Army and the date of its advance was fixed for the 25th January.

Stress was laid upon the necessity for co-operation and mutual support, and these instructions contained in addition a number of elementary tactical precepts, the enunciation of which to officers of the seniority of those to whom they were issued seems to have been rather out of place at such a moment.

Two days later, on the 21st, the commander-in-chief circulated to his army commanders a fresh order supplementary to that of the 19th. Instructions as to the conduct of the advance, and the latest intelligence of the enemy's dispositions and numbers, occupied the greater part of this communication, and the plan of operations already outlined was adhered to generally.† One passage dealing

* The 3rd Siberian Corps was without the 10th and 12th East Siberian Rifle Regiments, and with the exception of the XVIth Corps all the units of the General Reserve were apparently in their former sections of defence when the order was issued.

† For the intelligence about the Japanese now circulated, see p. 148.

with the part to be played by the Second Manchurian Army, however, seems to have restricted the nature of the action of that army and to have so modified it from that laid down two days before that it is quoted in full:—

“In order that the operations may not assume a more extended form than is advisable until complete information is obtained of the strength and dispositions of the enemy, the infantry of the Second Army should not, unless it is absolutely unavoidable, after completing the first stage in its advance, which consists of the capture of the enemy’s advanced positions at San-de-pu, Li-ta-jen-tun, and the group of villages Hei-lin-tai, Ta-tai, Pao-hsiang-tun, press on beyond the line Ma-tzu-an-tzu — Hei-kou-tai — Tao-ta-jen-tun — Hou-tsin-kuan-tun.* Speaking generally, the advance should not be carried farther than some two and a half miles south of the line to be captured.

“In carrying out the rôle assigned to it the Second Army must not become too extended for a rapid concentration in case of a Japanese attack in force.”

That General Kuropatkin’s decision to attack at this time, however, was not entirely whole-hearted is shown by the fact that on two occasions after he had issued his orders of the 19th he was almost diverted from his purpose by more or less insignificant events. On the 20th January General Grippenbergr received a telegram from General Mishchenko, who was on the right, announcing that a Japanese column of about two thousand five hundred infantry, three squadrons and a few guns was moving in a north-westerly direction towards the River Liao.† Next day, upon receiving General Grippenbergr’s personal report of the measures he had taken, General Kuropatkin proposed a postponement of the advance for two days and an attack against this Japanese column. General Grippenbergr, however, upon returning to his command, resolved to adhere to the written orders he had received. But the demonstration by the Japanese had caused the commander-in-chief, apparently against the wishes of General Grippenbergr, to dispatch the 14th Division of the VIIIth Corps to assist General Mishchenko, and—to anticipate slightly—

* This village is not shown on the map. It is about two miles west of Ta-tung-shan-pu.

† So far as is known this force was part or all of the Japanese reinforced 2nd Cavalry Brigade; the number of infantry, however, must have been exaggerated.

that division only returned to take its place in the line of battle at 5 a.m. on the 25th, thoroughly worn out by three days' marching and counter-marching. On the 21st, also, the Japanese attack on Ching-ho-cheng of three days before bore fruit,* for upon hearing of it General Kuropatkin ordered two brigades of the Provisional Rifle Corps to be sent from the Second Manchurian Army to the left flank. When the news of this projected move came to the ears of General Gripenberg he at once made a strong protest. As a result his army was left intact and the 72nd Division from the General Reserve was sent in place of the two Rifle brigades. But at General Head-Quarters the situation was for a time considered so alarming that the advisability of cancelling the advance of the Second Manchurian Army was seriously contemplated.

On the 23rd January the leading units of the 1st Siberian Corps reached the Second Manchurian Army from the left wing; and when it was in position the forces of General Kuropatkin lay in the form of an arc slightly overlapping the Japanese front and approximately bisected by the line of railway. General Gripenberg's Second Army occupied a position on both sides of the Hun Ho. The 1st Siberian Corps was on the right bank and faced south-east. The VIIIth Corps lay astride the river. On the left bank and facing south was the Xth Corps. The Provisional Rifle Corps occupied a second line, in rear, also astride of the river, while upon the extreme right of the army were the detachments of Generals Mishchenko and Kossakovski.†

As regards actual numbers, when the battle began, the strength of the Russian field armies in position, exclusive of the XVIth Corps which arrived just before and during the battle and was placed in General Reserve, amounted to:—

346 battalions	...	...	291,209 bayonets.
167 squadrons	...	...	20,846 sabres.
144 batteries	...	...	978 quick-firing guns, 102 old pattern field guns and howitzers.
16½ battalions of engineers			10,103 sappers.
48 machine guns.			

* See p. 131.

† See Appendix 9.

Of this total the Second Manchurian Army, which was to carry out the main attack, had in the front line the following:—

117 battalions	...	...	96,098 bayonets.
73 squadrons	...	...	8,882 sabres.
412 Q.F. guns, old pattern field guns and howitzers.			
2 $\frac{7}{8}$ battalions of engineers.			
1 pontoon battalion.			
1 balloon company.			
1 telegraph company.			
24 machine guns.			

On the 4th January General Head-Quarters had placed the total strength of the three Japanese armies opposed to them at 260,000; but a week later this estimate seems to have been reduced considerably.* Towards the middle of the month it was thought that Marshal Oyama's forces might be reinforced at the end of January by the arrival of General Nogi's army, of 72 battalions, 434 guns and from 3 to 6 squadrons, which would be placed on the Japanese left. In General Kuropatkin's circular order of the 21st to his army commanders the general distribution of the Japanese forces was given correctly, but no estimate of their total numbers was furnished. It was stated that the destination of any troops coming up from Port Arthur was not known; that the Japanese 9th *Kobi* Brigade had been located near Cheng-chang and along the Tai-tzu Ho;† that both wings had been heavily reinforced; and that the enemy's right flank consisted of 20,000 men, whilst on their left, between Hei-lin-tai and the Hun Ho there were supposed to be massed 25,000. With the Japanese General Reserve was incorrectly placed the 10th Division and the 3rd *Kobi* Brigade, actually in the front line, and the 6th *Kobi* Brigade, which was with the 1st *Kobi* Division away in the east at Cheng-chang. Though the various estimates of the enemy's strength made at this time differed considerably, they all erred on the side of exaggeration; and if any credence was placed in their own figures by the Russians they could not, at the time of their attack, have counted on possessing the numerical preponderance deemed necessary a month earlier.‡

* This may have been an estimate of the total after the Japanese Third Army should have arrived.

† Cheng-chang is south-east of Ching-ho-cheng.

‡ See p. 7.

The Japanese armies, amounting, it is believed, to a total of between 170,000 and 180,000 combatants, occupied the same positions which they held in December, the western end of their continuous fortified line being the left of the 4th Division at

Disposition and strength of the Japanese. Wan-chia-yuan-tzu.* Beyond this their front was carried on to the west and south-west through San-de-pu and Hei-kou-tai to Ma-ma-kai by detachments from the reinforced 1st Cavalry Brigade, the 9th Regiment, the 31st *Kobi* Regiment and the 1st Battalion of the 2nd *Kobi* Regiment, which held fortified villages. The total of these detachments in the front line amounted approximately to 18 squadrons, 4 battalions, some engineers, 6 field pieces and some machineguns, but the actual strength of the garrisons of the different villages is not known.† Across the Hun Ho about Hsiao-pei-ho was the 2nd Cavalry Brigade also reinforced by a few infantry and machine guns. It formed the extreme left of the Japanese. Behind the front line, at Yang-chia-wan, in Second Army reserve, was the 3rd Division which was moved back from the front of that army on the 23rd January and replaced in the front line by the 6th Division. The General Reserve at Marshal Oyama's disposal consisted of the 5th Division at Shih-li-ho, the 8th Division round Yen-tai, and the 8th *Kobi* Brigade attached to the latter. This brigade had been guarding the supply depot at Lang-tung-kou since December and from there had pushed forward the 31st *Kobi* Regiment to Ku-cheng-tzu.

Thus, to meet the main attack of the Second Manchurian Army of 117 battalions, 73 squadrons and 412 guns, the Japanese had, including the 2nd Cavalry Brigade at Hsiao-pei-ho, in the front line from Wan-chia-yuan-tzu to that place—a distance of some eighteen miles—a force of 4 battalions, 24 squadrons, 12 guns; while behind the front line, at varying distances from the village

* See p. 16 and Appendix 10.

† The 1st Cavalry Brigade had been reinforced by two squadrons of divisional cavalry from each of the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th Divisions.

The garrisons of three of the more important villages are believed on the 24th January to have been approximately as follows:—

Li-ta-jen-tun: head-quarters of the 1st Cavalry Brigade, some companies of the 9th Regiment and 31st *Kobi* Regiment, a few engineers, four guns and some machine guns.

San-de-pu: two companies of the 2nd, and one company of the 31st *Kobi* Regiments, four squadrons, two guns, a detachment of engineers and some machine guns, under Colonel Toyobe.

Hei-kou-tai: one company of the 31st *Kobi* Regiment, two squadrons of the 5th Cavalry Regiment, two machine guns, under Colonel Tanada

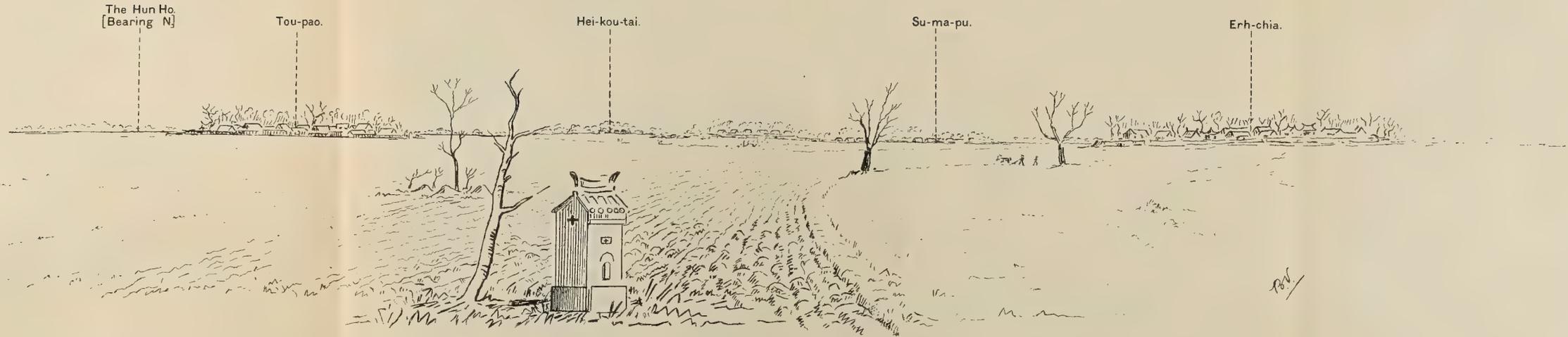
of San-de-pu, which was to prove the central point of the Russian onslaught, were the following forces in reserve:—At Lang-tung-kou—six miles away—the bulk of a *Kōbi* brigade; at Yang-chia-wan—ten miles off—a division; and at Shih-li-ho and Yen-tai—each about fifteen miles distant—two more divisions; totalling in all 41 battalions, 5 squadrons, 108 guns, 3 battalions of engineers, 3 bridging trains and several machine guns.*

Of the Japanese information about the Russians not much is known; but it is believed that they considerably underestimated the strength of the Russian right. As has been stated the enemy's activity in that quarter since the 13th January had been observed; and it had been noticed that the captive balloon had been moved westwards. From the statement of some captured Russian soldiers that General Kuropatkin intended to move against the Japanese left it was surmised that the supply depot at Lang-tung-kou might be his objective. That an attack in force against the left flank was intended was apparently not appreciated, and the only measure of precaution taken by Marshal Oyama seems to have been the transfer of the 3rd Division to Yang-chia-wan.

The ground upon which the operations were to take place comprised the country surrounding the villages of San-de-pu and Hei-kou-tai, both of which places have given their names to the battle. The terrain is singularly flat and open, the only features above the level of the plain being the numerous small villages, a few trees scattered here and there, and occasional series of low mounds denoting Chinese burial-grounds. The frozen walls of the houses as well as those surrounding the villages gave good cover, being impenetrable to shrapnel shell and rifle bullet. The steep banks of the Hun Ho were then ten to twenty feet above the frozen stream and therefore difficult of passage for all arms except at the prepared crossing-places.† From the point of view of military operations the country had both good and bad points. On the one hand the innumerable villages and wells facilitated

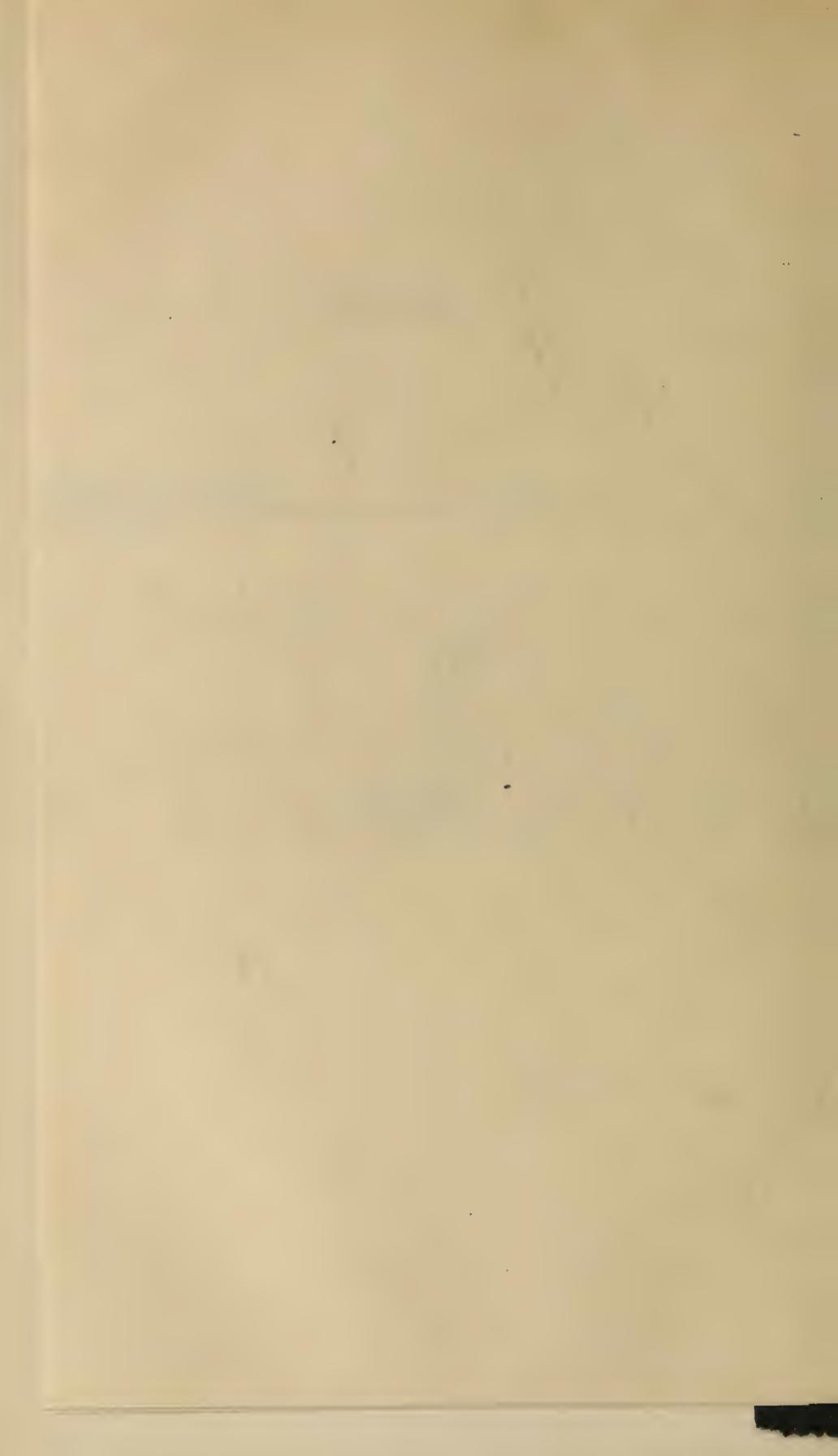
* This total does not include thirty-six guns of the 13th Artillery Regiment of the artillery reserve of the Second Army. The total number of machine guns is not known, but the number with the Japanese troops had recently been increased.

† There is some doubt as to the condition of the Hun Ho during the battle. In a lecture delivered at the Japanese Staff College in November, 1908, it was stated that the river was frozen solid and offered no obstacle to the passage of all arms. According to the *Russian Official History*, however, the ice was not bearing at the end of January. The maximum temperature



THE BATTLE OF SAN-DE-PU.

View taken from the south-west of Tou-pao, looking from north to south-east.



quartering, and the flatness and hard surface of the frozen ground as well as the absence of any obstacles more serious than the river-beds rendered movement easy, while on the other hand reconnaissance was difficult owing to the absence of any conspicuous features in the landscape. The hardness of the soil made entrenching almost impossible, for the weather at the time of the battle was extremely severe, the temperature usually falling below zero (F.) at night, and remaining below freezing point during the day. A bitter wind and driving snow were to add much to the sufferings of the troops of both sides, fuel being exceedingly difficult to obtain.

Early on the morning of the 24th, during which day the Second Manchurian Army was to complete the deployment which had been partly carried out during the previous week, General Grippen-
 berg's orders to
 the Second Man-
 churian Army.

that he was ready to advance at dawn next morning.* The 1st Siberian Corps was to attack on the front Tu-tai-tzu—Huang-la-ta-tzu, two villages on the Russian side of the Hun Ho held as advanced posts by the Japanese, after which it was to push on across the river and seize Hei-kou-tai as a preliminary to the effort against San-de-pu which was to be made by the VIIIth Corps after Hei-kou-tai had been won. It was then to detach a force to assist the VIIIth Corps on the left which, advancing on the front Tu-tai-tzu—Chang-tan, was to move to the assault of San-de-pu with one division so soon as Hei-kou-tai had been seized, while its other division was to co-operate with its artillery. Still farther to the left the Xth Corps was to help on the attack on San-de-pu by shelling the villages to its own front. The Provisional Rifle Corps cantoned on either side of the Hun Ho was to form the army reserve. Of the two detached forces General Kossakovski's was to undertake protective duties on the Russian right south of Ssu-fang-tai, between the Hun and the Liao Ho, while General Mishchenko's cavalry was, in addition, to co-operate in the attack on Huang-la-ta-tzu and then to push out in reconnaissance to the south of, and round, the

reached during the period 26th–30th January was, it may be noted, 17° Fahrenheit. During four of these nights the thermometer dropped to zero (F.). But a mild spell which had occurred early in the month had probably caused weakness in some portions of the ice.

* See Appendix 11.

Japanese left flank towards Lang-tung-kou and Ta-tung-shan-pu.* It is important to note that although the village of San-de-pu was the chief objective it was only to be attacked after Hei-kou-tai had been taken. In other words the main operation, that of the VIIIth Corps, was to be carried out separately; was to be contingent on the success of the subsidiary action of the 1st Siberian Corps; and was only to be supported by the indirect and distant co-operation of the Xth Corps on its left.

This disjointed and partial plan of action did not promise well, and General Gripenberg's chances of success were further reduced by a remarkable suppression of subordinate initiative by General Kuropatkin. On the eve of the attack the three army commanders were informed by the commander-in-chief that their powers of moving units without referring to General Head-Quarters were limited to the movement of regiments. General Gripenberg was also instructed to report progress every two hours during his advance, and to submit fuller reports twice a day.

For the execution of its task General Stakelberg divided the 1st Siberian Corps into a right and a left column under Lieutenant-General Gerngross and Colonel Muskhelov respectively.† The objective of the former was Huang-la-ta-tzu and Hei-kou-tai, while the left column was to capture Tu-tai-tzu. The corps reserve was under Major-General Kondratovich.‡

The battle lasted for four days, from Wednesday, the 25th, to Saturday, the 28th January. It was so short in point of time that no subdivision of the account of it seems necessary. Nor can it be separated into any well-defined phases, for the action continued to follow the same course from beginning to end.

General outline
of the battle.

It was a fight between the Russian Second Manchurian Army alone and a steadily increasing force of Japanese. On the 25th the Russians assailed the enemy's

* Five bridging companies of engineers were detailed to maintain the crossings over the Hun Ho. For the Second Manchurian Army there were two pontoon bridges, two trestle bridges and two special passages across the ice. It does not seem, however, that movements over the river were confined to these points. The captive balloon was ordered to Hsin-tai-tzu. The whole of the artillery of the Third Manchurian Army, which was to co-operate, was placed under the control of Lieutenant-General Ivanov.

† *Right Column.*—The 1st East Siberian Rifle Division with its artillery; two field batteries, and a machine gun company. *Left Column.*—The 34th Siberian Rifle Regiment; two howitzer batteries, and two Mounted Scout detachments.

‡ The 9th East Siberian Rifle Division (less the 34th East Siberian Rifle Regiment) and two squadrons of the Primorsk Dragoon Regiment.

weak left flank by an attack which came to some extent as a surprise to the Japanese, carried some villages and gained some ground, but did not capture San-de-pu. On the 26th they continued their offensive, but confined it to the attack on San-de-pu, without success. The Japanese, having been strengthened locally, now replied by active resistance in the same quarter of the field. On the 27th the Russians still continued the offensive, but not against the point upon the capture of which their advance was made to depend. The Japanese, having brought up increased forces, became more active in their defence. On the 28th the Russian offensive was paralysed by the local counter-pressure of the Japanese in the quarter threatened, and General Kuropatkin broke off the action for fear of a more general counter-attack by the enemy between the Second and Third Manchurian Armies. The Japanese advanced a limited distance on the 29th, but contented themselves with repelling the Russian attack and did not press.

At midnight of the 24th-25th the right column of the 1st Siberian Corps moved off and at four o'clock next morning reached Huang-la-ta-tzu. The village was at once assaulted by two battalions, the third being in reserve, and was in Russian hands by six o'clock, at which hour the forty-six guns of the right column, which had remained for the night at Tsu-yu-ta, came up. Almost immediately afterwards the corps commander, who was himself directing the operations of both columns, arrived upon the scene. The Russians had forty casualties, while the stubbornness of the Japanese resistance can be gauged by the fact that of a garrison amounting only to one company sixty were killed. The left column had no difficulty in capturing Tu-tai-tzu, which was rushed at 3 a.m., nor in beating off a counter-attack made soon afterwards. Colonel Muskhelov then sent for his howitzer batteries, and on arrival these opened fire on Hei-kou-tai to prepare the attack of the right column against that village. It is an interesting sidelight upon the state of the Russian guns to note that though no Japanese artillery replied from Hei-kou-tai throughout the whole day, by four o'clock in the afternoon in two of the Russian batteries there were sixteen broken wheels, which necessitated the withdrawal of the pieces affected.

So far the 1st Siberian Corps had met with success; and

Operations on
the 25th January.
The 1st Siberian
Corps captures
Huang-la-ta-tzu
and Tu-tai-tzu.

about 7 a.m. the sound of guns to the left showed that the 15th Division of the VIIIth Corps and the Xth Corps were presumably also performing the task allotted to them in army orders. On the immediate right of the 1st Siberian Corps General Kossakovski had played a passive rôle, but one that was in harmony with his instructions. The only hitch in the operations had been in the inaction of General Mishchenko's force. That commander had not yet received the order to co-operate and had accordingly continued his previous day's work and had followed up a minor demonstration which had been made by the Japanese cavalry against the Russian right.

Having captured Huang-la-ta-tzu, General Gerngross's column now turned to Hei-kou-tai. That village, the garrison of which was under Colonel Tanada, the commander of the Japanese 5th Cavalry Regiment, was surrounded by a solid and high mud wall which had been placed in a state of defence. Though the steep and broken banks of the Hun Ho and the numerous obstacles encircling the village made approach a matter of considerable difficulty, by 9 a.m. the Russians were in position to open the attack. The assaulting line was composed of the 2nd East Siberian Rifle Regiment, the 1st East Siberian Rifle Regiment being held in reserve, while the remaining infantry of the division moved southwards to check a possible counter-movement of the Japanese from the south and south-east. All the artillery of the column took up a position south of Huang-la-ta-tzu and joined in the preparatory bombardment being carried out by the howitzers of the left column from Tu-tai-tzu. Under this combined covering fire the infantry worked their way along the River Hun, making such good use of the high steep banks as cover that it was not until they were forced to debouch from the river-bed that they came under the rifles of the defenders. Their progress was now temporarily checked, and as a precautionary measure General Stakelberg moved forward the corps reserve to Huang-la-ta-tzu, where it arrived at 11 a.m. Two hours later the machine guns were called up to assist the firing line, and the artillery was directed to take up a fresh position nearer its target.

While the right column had thus been initiating its attack against Hei-kou-tai, the left column had, after the capture of Tu-tai-tzu, moved down the Hun Ho; but it soon came under a sudden outburst of fire from the village of Tou-pao. To assist this

column General Stakelberg sent forward from his corps reserve the 35th East Siberian Rifle Regiment and two batteries; and these guns opened fire against Tou-pao with such effect that it was soon in flames. A reinforcement of one regiment from the corps reserve was also sent to General Gerngross about this time and the left column was placed under his orders. By evening the artillery had set fire to Hei-kou-tai, and as darkness fell the 35th East Siberian Rifle Regiment occupied Tou-pao. This assisted the efforts of the right column against Hei-kou-tai, and at 10 p.m. the leading companies of the 2nd East Siberian Rifle Regiment entered the village, which in a few moments was in Russian hands. The 1st East Siberian Rifle Division bivouacked there.

The brunt of the day's fighting was borne by the 1st Siberian Corps, but on its left the VIIIth Corps had not been altogether inactive. At 5 a.m. the 14th Division returned from its bootless errand southwards, and after a few hours' rest was again called upon.* At 9.30 a.m. the 56th (Jitomir) Regiment advanced and succeeded in occupying Ma-leng-tzu about five o'clock without meeting with much opposition. There it came into touch with the 55th (Podolia) Regiment which had started later and occupied Wang-chia-wo-peng. The remaining two regiments of the division followed in support.† After nightfall the two regiments in the front line pushed on towards San-de-pu; but when a heavy rifle fire greeted the approach of their scouts all idea of capturing the village was given up and the regiments fell back again to Wang-chia-wo-peng. The artillery of the 15th Division maintained a bombardment against San-de-pu all day long; but the weather was foggy with a strong breeze, and it was impossible to observe the result of the fire.‡

To the left of the VIIIth Corps the Xth Corps, whose position during the day ran east and west through Yang-shu-lin-tzu, played a purely passive part except for slight artillery co-operation. The scout detachments did indeed occupy some villages in front, and their action led the corps commander to apply during the morning

* See p. 146.

† This action on the part of these units of the VIIIth Corps was apparently in anticipation of the fall of Hei-kou-tai until which the attempt on San-de-pu by the VIIIth Corps was to be deferred.

‡ With the divisional guns and some attached to the division seventy-two pieces in all were firing on San-de-pu.

for General Grippenbergs permission to advance; but this was refused.

Of the other forces forming part of the Second Manchurian Army the Provisional Rifle Corps remained inactive in army reserve until 4.30 p.m. when the 2nd and 5th Rifle Brigades were ordered off to Chang-tan, where they arrived at dawn on the following day. On the right of the army General Mishchenko received army orders for the 25th only at midday, by which time he was engaged with the Japanese 2nd Cavalry Brigade and had occupied Ma-ma-kai. For some time he was unable to break off the fight in accordance with his orders; but he finally concentrated his force about 9 p.m. some two miles back and thereby got into touch with General Kossakovski. That commander, who had been separated from General Mishchenko during the morning, had also resolved to attack Ma-ma-kai and Chi-tai-tzu and so protect the right of the Second Manchurian Army. He moved forward at 9 p.m., and by 2 a.m. on the 26th occupied both villages. Ma-ma-kai was thus occupied for the second time. By then, however, the anxiety which he had felt at the apparent exposure of the right flank of the army had been allayed by having gained touch with General Mishchenko. The Japanese cavalry fell back to Hsiao-pei-ho.

During the day the troops of the Third and First Manchurian Armies did nothing more than open the rifle and artillery fire which during the winter was part of the normal day's routine. Of the former army the 5th Siberian and XVIIth Corps, which were comparatively close to the units of the Second Manchurian Army attacking San-de-pu, opened a fiercer fire than usual; but there was no direct co-operation.

In the operations of the day that have been described the fighting on the Japanese side was carried out by the troops on the spot in the villages attacked. So far as local reinforcement was concerned, in response to urgent demands for help received from

Hei-kou-tai and San-de-pu, one battalion of the 31st *Kobi* Regiment had been sent to each place from Ku-cheng-tzu. It is not known at what time this was done, but the battalion sent to

Hei-kou-tai was too late to effect its object and meeting the

The Provisional
Rifle Corps.

General
Mishchenko's
detachment.

General
Kossakovski's
detachment.

The Third and
First Manchu-
rian Armies.

Marshal Oyama
moves up the
8th Division.

garrison retiring from that place returned with it to Ku-cheng-tzu about midnight. Marshal Oyama, however, had received early news of the Russian advance and during the morning decided to move up the 8th Division from the General Reserve to oppose the Russian threat, so far developed only against his left. This division under General Tatsumi actually left Yen-tai for Ku-cheng-tzu at 11 a.m. in anticipation of orders, and after a fatiguing march, the last stage of which was made in a snowstorm, its leading units reached that place at 11 p.m. The garrison of Hei-kou-tai and the units of the 8th *Kobi* Brigade which had by then returned to Ku-cheng-tzu came under the divisional commander's orders.

With the close of the 25th January the first day of the battle had passed, with a slight territorial gain to the attackers which did not make up for the time lost by them. On this day, when it was of vital import for the Russian plan that the attack should be

pressed before the enemy could reinforce the threatened point, the Second Manchurian Army had pushed forward its right wing some two or three miles in the face of resistance which was negligible, except at Hei-kou-tai, and had captured four villages. It had not only failed in carrying out its real task for the day, to take San-de-pu, but had not even attempted it. Of the only army set in motion one corps—the Provisional Rifle Corps—had remained in reserve, the Xth Corps and 15th Division had, except for artillery co-operation, remained idle; while one corps and one division—the 1st Siberian Corps and 14th Division, less than one-half the total infantry—had alone been actively engaged. The gallant defence made by the small garrison of Hei-kou-tai against the 1st Siberian Corps had prevented the capture of that place until evening and had thus delayed the whole of the envelopment which was at first contingent upon it, whilst the co-operative activity of Generals Mishchenko and Kossakovski on the extreme right had been designedly restrained. The other two Russian armies had made no effort to help the Second Manchurian Army indirectly by pressing the enemy to their front. The result of the resistance made at Hei-kou-tai, of the slow action of the Second Manchurian Army and of the lack of co-operative activity on the part of the other two great fractions of the Russian forces was that Marshal Oyama was given both the time and the freedom to begin to reinforce his threatened flank. Not only had troops from the 8th *Kobi* Brigade been thrown forward from close by into

Summary of the
25th January.

the front line and to stiffen the garrison of San-de-pu, which village was to prove the crucial point of the battle; but during the night a whole division was to reach the scene of action to take part in the fighting next day. For the operations of the 26th the strength of the Russian attacking force was to remain as before. The Japanese, on the other hand, would be stronger than they had been by more than a division. So far the Russians had lost some of their initial advantage.

The insignificance of the results obtained on the 25th left no option to the commander of the Second Manchurian Army but to continue the movement which had been initiated, in the hopes of making greater progress next day. Late that night he issued

The Second
Manchurian
Army.
Orders for the
26th January.

his orders for the 26th in which the rôles assigned to the various units were as follows:—

The VIIIth Corps was to capture San-de-pu, Pei-tai-tzu and Hsiao-tai-tzu. These villages were to be occupied by the 14th Division. The 15th Division was to continue the advance and capture La-pa-tai and Han-shan-tai.

The 1st Siberian Corps was, after the capture of San-de-pu by the VIIIth Corps, to move south-east of that village to secure the right flank of the VIIIth Corps, but was not to cross the line Ta-tai—Tao-ta-jen-tun.

The Xth Corps was to open a heavy artillery fire on Fuchia-chuang-tzu, Hei-lin-tai and Li-ta-jen-tun and afterwards capture those villages.

The Provisional Rifle Corps was to remain in army reserve.

General Mishchenko's detachment and *General Kossakovski's detachment* were to continue to cover the right flank and rear of the attacking troops.

In addition to the action outlined in these orders, General Grippenberg took special precautions in anticipation of any advance in force which the Japanese might make against the Xth Corps, and about midnight dispatched to the commander of that corps a note in which he empowered him to apply direct to the 1st Brigade of the Provisional Rifle Corps at Ta-wang-kuan-pu for support, should the enemy advance in force against him during the night.

The orders, however, did not meet with the approval of General Kuropatkin, who was of opinion that there was no necessity

for giving the Second Manchurian Army a definite objective and that General Grippenbergr was contemplating an advance on too broad a front and without sufficient cohesion. During the forenoon of the 26th he telegraphed his views to the commander of the Second Manchurian Army and at 1.20 p.m. sent a second telegram requesting that the latter would confine his operations to San-de-pu and the immediate vicinity and not attack either Hei-lin-tai or Ta-tai without further consultation with General Head-Quarters, so as to secure co-operation by the Third and First Manchurian Armies. General Kossakovski's action of the previous day, also, in having pushed forward to Ma-ma-kai and Chi-tai-tzu, drew an expression of the commander-in-chief's disapproval which caused General Grippenbergr to telegraph to General Kossakovski to retire to his original position. In the light of this correspondence, the commander of the Second Manchurian Army can scarcely be said to have enjoyed the freedom from interference which he might not unreasonably have expected.

The real objective for the 26th January was the village of San-de-pu, the attack on which was assigned to the 14th Division of the VIIIth Corps. The general commanding that division, Lieutenant-General Rusanov, laid his plans as follows.

Operations on the 26th January. The VIIIth Corps advances on San-de-pu. The 55th (Podolia) Regiment was to move on the north-west corner of San-de-pu from the direction of Wang-chia-wo-peng, while the 56th (Jitomir) Regiment was to approach from the south and seize the southern portion of the village. The 1st Brigade of the division was to follow in reserve behind the Jitomir Regiment; and the divisional artillery, in two groups, was to support the attack by fire from Chang-tan-ho-nan. At 7.30 a.m. the Podolia Regiment moved off through a blinding snowstorm which so interfered with accurate direction that it soon lost its bearings. The regimental commander then led by compass, but during the delay the movement of the regiment had been observed by the Japanese, who opened artillery and rifle fire. The Russians then deployed and advanced with six companies in the firing line and the remaining six in support, but when the leading units reached a point some thousand yards from San-de-pu they were ordered to halt, since the Jitomir Regiment had not yet come up into line. That regiment had also moved off and had deployed on passing Liu-tiao-kou, but owing to the baffling snow had also lost direction, with the result that it was threatening the

unoccupied line between San-de-pu and Ta-tai and not the southern edge of San-de-pu. On the whole the Russians appear, not unnaturally, to have been more affected by the difficulties of the snow than were the Japanese, for at 10 a.m. the latter opened a smart artillery fire which took the Jitomir Regiment in flank. And it was not until three hours later that the regiment was able to move into position for attacking the southern edge of San-de-pu. During this advance of the 14th Division, the 41st Artillery Brigade had maintained a fire against the village, opening at 9 a.m. at a range of about three thousand yards and gradually closing in to one just over a thousand yards.

In this rather indeterminate attack a detachment from the 1st Siberian Corps, consisting of a brigade,* four batteries and some machine gun companies, under Colonel Lesh, which had been handed over to the VIIIth Corps in accordance with General Grippenberg's orders for the 25th, had endeavoured to co-operate. Starting from Hei-kou-tai at 9.30 a.m. the column moved also towards the southern front of San-de-pu, the first stage of the march being to the village of Lao-chiao, where Colonel Lesh proposed to turn northwards. After an hour's march, which was much impeded by the snow, the advanced guard occupied Lao-chiao without a shot having been fired. Behind Colonel Lesh's force, and in support of it, was the 2nd Brigade of the 1st East Siberian Rifle Division, less one battalion left as a garrison in Hei-kou-tai, and ten batteries, while a squadron of the Primorsk Dragoons was reconnoitring towards the south. The remaining division of the corps had left one battalion in Tou-pao and had concentrated at 9 a.m. at Hei-kou-tai under the immediate control of General Stakelberg.†

While halting at the fork in the road immediately west of Lao-chiao Colonel Lesh received orders from the officer commanding the VIIIth Corps to get into touch with the 14th Division and to co-operate with it against San-de-pu, and in compliance left a battalion in Lao-chiao and started for Ma-leng-tzu. But scarcely had the column moved off in the fog when firing broke out on its right flank and in rear. From the sound it was evident that a Japanese force was advancing, and the battalion left in Lao-chiao appeared to be in

Colonel Lesh's
detachment.

* The 1st Brigade of the 1st East Siberian Rifle Division.

† The 9th East Siberian Rifle Division.

imminent danger of being cut off. To obviate such a disaster Colonel Lesh at once dispatched its two sister battalions back to its aid, and pushing on with the remainder of the column arrived about one o'clock at Ma-leng-tzu, where he was shortly afterwards joined by the three battalions.

Concurrently with the fighting around Lao-chiao the 2nd Brigade of the 1st East Siberian Rifle Division following in support of Colonel Lesh's column was itself hotly assailed from the neighbourhood of Su-ma-pu by a force estimated at four battalions, which also opened fire on Hei-kou-tai. General Stakelberg thereupon dispatched one regiment of the brigade to Su-ma-pu, with orders to drive the enemy away and to seize the sand-hills which they were occupying. Another regiment was ordered to take up a defensive position in Hei-kou-tai, while Tou-pao was occupied by the 36th East Siberian Rifle Regiment and a battery. Some units were also moved up from the corps reserve, one regiment being placed between Tou-pao and Hei-kou-tai and seven companies of another being sent out towards Lao-chiao to check any hostile advance from that direction.*

About 1 p.m., upon arriving at Ma-leng-tzu, Colonel Lesh at once sent out a scout detachment and a troop of the Primorsk Dragoons, but hardly had he done so before the Japanese approached from the south-east. This movement appeared to be an attack threatening Colonel Lesh's right flank, and the VIIIth Corps commander therefore ordered the 5th Rifle Brigade and his artillery divisions to move from Chang-tan to Chang-tan-ho-nan to act as a reserve to that officer's force. Meanwhile the Japanese continued to press and threatened to cut Colonel Lesh off from the 14th Division operating against San-de-pu. So serious did the situation appear that the VIIIth Corps commander requested the commander of the Provisional Rifle Corps to fill up the gap. This was effected by moving up the 17th Rifle Regiment. Colonel Lesh's force was by now not only unable to carry out its mission of supporting the

* The situation of the 1st Siberian Corps (less Colonel Lesh's column attached to the VIIIth Corps) was at 12.0 noon as follows :—

At Huang-la-ta-tzu : The 1st Battalion of the 33rd East Siberian Rifle Regiment, the 34th East Siberian Rifle Regiment, and three batteries.

At Hei-kou-tai : The 4th East Siberian Rifle Regiment.

In front of Hei-kou-tai : The 3rd East Siberian Rifle Regiment and two batteries.

At Tou-pao : The 36th East Siberian Rifle Regiment and one battery.

The interval between Tou-pao and Hei-kou-tai was occupied by the 35th East Siberian Rifle Regiment and one battery.

VIIIth Corps, but was unable to maintain its own position without drawing on the army reserve. Such an effect, indeed, had the enemy's movements produced that about 2.30 p.m. General Muilov reported to General Gripenberg that a hostile force of not less than fifteen battalions had appeared south-east of San-de-pu. So impressed in turn was the commander of the Second Manchurian Army by this information, which reached him some two hours later, that he at once telegraphed to General Head-Quarters to say that he was suspending the attack and to beg that the Quartermaster-General and the Chief of Staff should come immediately to Chang-tan.*

It is time now to ascertain what had really been taking place behind the Japanese outposts during the morning to account for such alarm amongst the Russians. At 7 a.m. the 8th Division had assembled—the 16th Brigade and the artillery in the neighbourhood of Ku-cheng-tzu, and the 4th Brigade at Chin-chia-pu-tzu. The 8th *Kobi* Brigade was also at the former village. Since General Tatsumi had by now realized that the Russian troops now in Hei-kou-tai were not merely an advanced guard of cavalry, but comprised a force of all arms amounting possibly to a division in strength, he judged that it was a covering detachment of a much larger body. With the typical Japanese predilection for striking a timely blow he resolved to assume the offensive and to attack Hei-kou-tai at once before the enemy should develop greater strength. With this object he issued orders to the following effect:—

The Japanese 8th
Division attacks
Hei-kou-tai.

The 8th Kobi Brigade of four battalions was to form the right wing, and to attack Hei-kou-tai from the direction of Lao-chiao.†

The 4th Brigade was to form the left wing, and was to march from Chin-chia-pu-tzu to Su-ma-pu and Tou-pao and attack Hei-kou-tai from the south-west.

The 16th Brigade was to remain at Ku-cheng-tzu in order to act as a divisional reserve and to be able to move rapidly on San-de-pu, should that village, the maintenance of which was

* It is not quite clear what Japanese force was thus threatening Colonel Lesh—it may have been the Japanese 16th Brigade.

† The 1st Battalion of the 5th *Kobi* Regiment was at Hsiao-peï-ho, where it seems to have provided reinforcement for the 2nd Cavalry Brigade; the 1st Battalion of the 31st *Kobi* Regiment was in San-de-pu.

of great importance to the Japanese Second Army, be in difficulties.

The Divisional Artillery was to open fire against Hei-kou-tai and the Russian guns in the vicinity.

The Divisional Cavalry was to move to the south-west of San-chien-pao on the left flank.*

The cavalry reached its allotted line without incident; and the artillery of the division moved into position on a sand-hill south of Lao-chiao, the captured Russian battery, with its greater range, coming into action south-west of Ku-cheng-tzu.

Of the infantry now with the division, the 8th *Kobi* Brigade left Ku-cheng-tzu a little before noon, having one battalion of the 5th and one of the 31st *Kobi* Regiments in the first line and the 17th *Kobi* Regiment in reserve. Lao-chiao was reported to be held by a Russian force—probably the battalion which was left behind by Colonel Lesh to protect his rear in his march northward—but was soon occupied, the Russian garrison having evacuated it so soon as Colonel Lesh's force had got sufficiently far away. The brigade then deployed along the Hung Ho, the stream which runs immediately west of the village, and on either side of the road leading to Hei-kou-tai. At this time thirty Russian guns were counted, of which eight were on the high ground on the right bank of the Hun, eight north-east, eight east, and six south-east of Hei-kou-tai. In front of the guns, holding the sand hillocks which fringe that place on the south and south-east, and posted some five hundred to a thousand yards in front of the guns, were the infantry of the 1st Siberian Corps.† The right wing of the 8th *Kobi* Brigade was ordered to attack these troops, and emerging from the bed of the Hung Ho it deployed and advanced by rushes; but after covering a short distance it was forced to halt by artillery and rifle fire.

On the left of the 8th *Kobi* Brigade the extension of the 4th Brigade had attenuated the front of the division and left a gap of more than a mile between the two brigades. The existence of this vacant space was hidden by the falling snow, which also rendered co-operation difficult and enabled the Russians to bring both front and flanking fire to bear upon the *Kobi* troops. Matters

* Colonel Tanada's detachment, which the day before had withdrawn from Hei-kou-tai, was ordered to proceed to the same neighbourhood.

† Belonging to the 2nd Brigade of the 1st East Siberian Rifle Division, which had been following in support of Colonel Lesh.

remained in this position until about five o'clock when a fresh danger threatened the Japanese. This was the advance of a force, estimated at two battalions, from the direction of Fei-tsai-ho-tzu against the right of the 8th *Kobi* Brigade.* Though these were repulsed by the 17th *Kobi* Regiment, which had been called up to the right from the reserve, the Japanese suffered heavy losses and were only able to maintain their position with great difficulty. When darkness fell the 8th *Kobi* Brigade withdrew to Lao-chiao.

To turn now to the Japanese left wing, the 4th Brigade had also borne its share of fighting in the south-west corner of the battlefield. About 11 a.m. it left Chin-chia-pu-tzu in fighting formation and took a route which would bring it to a point between Su-ma-pu and Tou-pao. The sky was darkened by the falling snow, which deadened sound and hid the Japanese from view and enabled them to approach the enemy unperceived; but the advantages were not entirely on their side, for they twice lost their way. At length, however, the advanced troops arrived on the line Su-ma-pu—Shih chia where they suddenly came under fire from the left front. The men deployed instantly and faced the fort-like village of Tou-pao whence the shots had come. A break in the drifting clouds now caused the snow to fall less thickly for a short time, and it was seen that the enemy not only held Tou-pao, but stretched some distance to the south, and that a body of his troops was heading for Niu-chu, which place was held only by a *Kobi* battalion.† This movement was a threat against Lang-tung-kou with its depot of supplies and might bring about an envelopment of the 4th Brigade. The brigadier, Major-General Yoda, therefore, sent two companies of the 31st Regiment into Shih chia, whence they would protect the arrival of the remainder of the regiment; and finding that the enemy's infantry south of Tou-pao was in force, and being anxious to secure his left he dispatched two more companies to that flank.‡

* These Russians were of the 33rd East Siberian Rifle Regiment, from the 1st Brigade, 9th East Siberian Rifle Division round Hei-kou-tai.

† Of the 2nd *Kobi* Regiment, which seems to have been one of the units holding the villages.

‡ The position of the 4th Brigade shortly after this was as follows:—

Left Wing.—Along the line Shih chia to the river-bed three battalions of the 31st Regiment.

Centre.—The 3rd Battalion of the 5th Regiment.

Right Wing.—North-east of Su-ma-pu the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 5th Regiment.

Nevertheless, before long, matters assumed a threatening aspect. The Russian artillery fire kept increasing, while the Japanese 4th Brigade had not a gun with which to reply, for the divisional artillery placed south of Lao-chiao was too far off to afford assistance. Consequently the Russians, whose batteries up to this had been well hidden, finding that they could advance with safety, moved their guns forward to much closer range and fired upon the infantry from open positions. At three o'clock, when a strong force of Russian cavalry and horse artillery appeared upon the left flank, pushing back Colonel Tanada's detachment and the 8th Divisional cavalry, the situation of the brigade became really serious.

The Japanese 16th Brigade in divisional reserve had a double rôle to play. It was to support the attack of the 8th *Kobi* and 4th Brigades on Hei-kou-tai and also to be prepared to assist San-de-pu. In point of fact it was the defence of the latter village which claimed its attention and prevented its rendering any help to the offensive against Hei-kou-tai. When the attack of the Russian 14th Division of the VIIIth Corps against San-de-pu became apparent about 1 p.m. the commander of the 16th Brigade took four of his battalions to Ta-tai and deployed them north of that village. By the time that this was done the pressure against San-de-pu had subsided, but the Japanese battalions remained where they were till nightfall in case of further developments.

The Russian mounted force which had been making its presence felt on the extreme left of the Japanese was General Mishchenko's detachment. It had started from a village west of Ma-ma-kai at 8 a.m., moving eastward in two columns and a reserve, of which the right column headed due east from Ma-ma-kai and the left, keeping touch with the 1st Siberian Corps, approached Shih-chia.* About one o'clock the left column came into action against Niu-chu and drove out the *Kobi* troops occupying the village. An hour later the right column became engaged with another Japanese detachment which it put to flight. It bivouacked in Tung-ho-pu, Hsiu-erh-pu and the vicinity.

* *Right Column.*—The Trans-Baikal Cossack Brigade; the 4th Ural Cossack Regiment; the 1st and 4th Trans-Baikal Cossack Batteries.

Left Column.—The 2nd Brigade of the 4th Don Cossack Cavalry Division; the 20th Horse Artillery Battery; the 3rd Don Cossack Battery.

Reserve.—The Caucasian Cavalry Brigade. The reserve followed the right column.

On the southern portion of the battlefield, therefore, General Tatsumi's attempt to meet attack by counter-attack had made little actual progress. The 8th *Kobi* Brigade had been forced to fall back to Lao-chiao; the 4th Brigade was holding its ground with the greatest difficulty and with its left flank practically turned; and the divisional reserve was immobilized in the neighbourhood of Ku-cheng-tzu by the operations round San-de-pu. Nevertheless he had by his action rendered sterling service to his side, for by his attack on Hei-kou-tai he had succeeded in containing the 1st Siberian Corps and in destroying the cohesion of the Russian offensive, while the 16th Brigade in reserve had apparently caused the temporary suspension of the Russian operations against San-de-pu.

The narrative of the fighting around that village has been brought up to the point when the two portions of the 2nd Brigade of the Russian 14th Division had, after going astray, completed their deployment. It has also been related how at that time

Colonel Lesh's force from the 1st Siberian Corps, finding itself contained by the right of the Japanese 8th Division, had been unable to assist the 14th Division in its attack on San-de-pu.

The 2nd Brigade of that division was not completely in position and in touch until after three o'clock, about which hour the advance was resumed, covered as before by the fire of the 41st Artillery Brigade. A battery of siege artillery co-operated in the bombardment of San-de-pu from Chou-kuan-tun, while the 29th Artillery Brigade, which was entrenched west of that village, covered the right flank up to the Hun Ho and also fired on the village to be assaulted.* About 4 p.m. the 56th (Jitomir) Regiment, followed almost immediately by the 54th (Minsk) Regiment, acting from the south, gained what was thought to be the southern part of San-de-pu, and almost at the same moment from the north the 53rd (Volhynia) Regiment dashed forward under a hot rifle fire and occupied Pao-tai-tzu, under the impression that it was the north-west edge of San-de-pu. The situation on this flank was doubly confusing. The 55th (Podolia) Regiment, which should have been in front, was on the same alignment as the Volhynia Regiment and, finding Pao-tai-tzu now occupied by the latter, seems to have

* The siege battery fired thirty-one rounds, and the 29th Artillery Brigade fired five hundred and eighty-two rounds before dark.

pushed forward without any particular direction. The Japanese occupying the clusters of houses which were believed to constitute San-de-pu offered a stubborn resistance and when forced out set fire to heaps of *kao-liang* soaked in kerosene which had been prepared and stored within the buildings; but the 14th Division gained possession of them. About 6 p.m. a staff officer was dispatched to the commander of the VIIIth Corps to ask for reinforcements, and since the latter could not be found the commander of the Provisional Rifle Corps at once sent forward the 18th Rifle Regiment to the assistance of the 14th Division. Almost immediately afterwards the chief staff officer of that division, sharing the belief of the troops engaged, went to the commander of the VIIIth Corps and reported that San-de-pu had been captured.

Such a happy consummation was however far from being attained. No sooner had the Russians forced their way through and beyond the groups of buildings which they had seized than they were amazed to find confronting them, some five hundred yards off, an enclosed inner work consisting of another group of fortified houses surrounded by a wall and a deep ditch, in front of which ran barbed wire entanglements and abattis. This was the real San-de-pu, and from behind its fortifications a continuous fire was being directed on the wearied soldiers of the 14th Division. Disheartened by this unexpected turn of affairs the Russian regiments quickly became disorganized; many men dropped asleep in the snow, absolutely dead-beat, and in the disappointment caused by the fact that San-de-pu still lay in front of them unconquered they became too demoralized to make further efforts. Control over the exhausted units was lost, leaders could not be discovered in the darkness, and by about 2 a.m. on the 27th there was apparently nothing left for the divisional commander to do but to order a retreat. This was done and the division retired by successive companies without being molested by the enemy.*

So far as the VIIIth Corps was concerned almost all the fighting had fallen to the share of the 14th Division, for the 15th Division had done nothing except occupy Pei-tai-tzu until evening with four scout sections and two battalions of the 57th

* The units of the 14th Division retired as follows:—

- The 53rd (Volhynia) Regiment to Chang-tan-ho-nan.
- The 54th (Minsk) Regiment to Wang-chia-wo-peng.
- The 55th (Podolia) Regiment to Chang-tan.
- The 56th (Jitomir) Regiment to Ma-leng-tzu.

(Modlin) Regiment. The 60th (Zamostye) Regiment had been moved forward early in the morning to act as a reserve to the 14th Division.*

Just about the time when the discovery of the real San-de-pu was causing dismay throughout the ranks of the attacking Russian troops, the garrison of that place had been augmented by a force which had passed safely into the village through the seething barrier of bursting shells and flying bullets. This welcome reinforcement consisted of two battalions of the Japanese 33rd Regiment, a battery of artillery, and some machine guns from the 3rd Division which was then near Yang-chia-wan. These troops had been sent forward by the commander of that division, General Oshima, upon receipt of orders from General Oku, who towards noon had become anxious about the safety of the village. Stimulated by the knowledge that one of their posts was in serious danger the troops of the relieving detachment had pushed on steadily through the snow on their nine-mile march. Great was the relief of the beleaguered garrison when they arrived, for hope of help had almost been abandoned, and the defenders—ordered to fight to the last man—had steeled themselves to obey the order to the letter.

On the left of the Second Manchurian Army the Russians had acted with similar indecision and had met with the same lack of success as elsewhere. The Xth Corps, in fulfilment of the mission allotted to it in the army orders for the day, had made preparations to attack Hei-lin-tai and Fu-chia-chuang-tzu and had opened artillery fire against these villages about 10 a.m. The practice was excellent, and the villages were so severely knocked about that they were evacuated by the Japanese, and by 3 p.m. were occupied by the Russian scout detachments. Meanwhile, however, strict orders had been sent by General Kuropatkin that Hei-lin-tai was not to be attacked until San-de-pu should be captured.† As a result the commander of the Xth Corps withdrew his troops for the night to their original position.‡ Thus, although the corps cannot be said to have

* To Chang-chuang-tzu.

† In the Second Manchurian Army orders, also, the attack on Hei-lin-tai was to be contingent on the capture of San-de-pu.

‡ With outposts along the line Huang-ti—Chin-chia-tun—Fu-chia-chuang-tzu—Hei-lin-tai.

passed the day in complete inactivity, it did not exert much pressure on the enemy.

Since action on the part of the other two Russian armies was also to be contingent upon the capture of San-de-pu, they undertook no operations beyond the normal fire of daily routine.

As regards the Japanese, in case further strength was needed on the left, the 5th Division had during the day been warned to assemble at Shih-li-ho ready to march off westwards; and when Marshal Oyama realized that General Tatsumi's counter-attack

had been brought to a standstill by the superior weight of the enemy, that the 4th Brigade on its left was in somewhat of a critical position, and that there were no signs of pressure in front of

his First, Fourth or Second Armies he decided to risk denuding his General Reserve still further. He informed the commander of the 8th Division that he would be reinforced by another division, by the following afternoon at the latest, and issued an urgent order for the 5th Division to proceed to Lang-tung-kou—there to come under General Tatsumi. By this action the Japanese commander-in-chief was throwing into the fight the whole of the troops at his disposal, with the exception, possibly, of some *Kobi* units which may have been collected. In order to replace the 5th and 8th Divisions and again mass some force under his own control he sent orders during the night to the commander of the First Army to dispatch the 2nd Division to Yen-tai and to the commander of the Fourth Army to move back the 10th *Kobi* Brigade, then behind the left of that army, to Wu-li-tai-tzu. The order to march to Lang-tung-kou reached the 5th Division at 9 p.m., and at midnight it set out from Shih-li-ho on its fifteen-mile journey, leaving the head-quarters of its 9th Brigade and the 11th Regiment behind. After following the Mandarin Road south towards Liao-yang for some distance, it struck off across country towards the west. The snow which fell at intervals during the night obscured the view and hid the tracks of the leading units, and many men dropped behind exhausted; but the advanced guard managed to reach Lang-tung-kou at 8 a.m. on the 27th, much to the relief of the garrison, consisting of line of communication troops, which had received rumours of General Mishchenko's advance and was expecting an attack upon the feebly guarded store depot.

Inside San-de-pu the fire of the Russian 14th Division and the artillery had exercised no little effect. In the place itself were

the Japanese cavalry and gun horses, some seven to eight hundred in all, and since it was impossible to provide cover for so large a number, many were killed or wounded, while others, terrified by bursting shells, broke loose and added to the confusion by galloping madly to the rear. The battery of the 3rd Division—less one gun damaged and unfit for use—and the four horse artillery guns fired throughout the night; and in the early morning of the 27th the commander of the garrison gave orders that the hamlets immediately south of San-de-pu were to be rushed.* This was done, and for a short time they were included in the perimeter of defence. But after collecting the wounded and securing a few prisoners the Japanese withdrew, and since the Russians also fell back about 2.30 a.m. the hamlets remained unoccupied by either side.

A second day of the battle had now passed without material progress having been made by the Russians—except in one direction. With the failure of the 14th Division against San-de-pu may be said to have culminated their offensive, for they were never again so near success against the point upon which the development of their whole attack had been made to depend. The 15th Division had been waiting for the capture of this village—which did not occur; the Xth Corps had pushed forward only to retire; the Provisional Rifle Corps had been in army reserve; the 1st Siberian Corps had been occupied in staving off the Japanese counter-attack; and General Kossakovski's detachment had remained passive near Shang-tsui-men, protecting the right of the 1st Siberian Corps. General Mishchenko's force alone had gained ground. It had advanced some twelve miles and was in a favourable position to threaten the enemy's flank. On the Japanese side the 8th *Kobi* Brigade and the whole of the fresh reinforcement—the 8th Division—had been actively employed during the whole day in a bold counter-attack. Though General Tatsumi had not succeeded in driving back the enemy nor in recapturing Hei-kou-tai, and his left had been placed in a dangerous position by General Mishchenko's advance, he had scored a success inasmuch as the Russian attack had been held up, and the Japanese had thereby been given time. The lack of serious pressure from the enemy on the east of San-de-pu and of any pressure against the Japanese

* Though wounded in the head Colonel Toyobe had remained in command of the post.

Second Army had enabled the commander of the Japanese 3rd Division to send a reinforcement to that sorely pressed point, whilst the continued inactivity of the Third and First Manchurian Armies had made it possible for Marshal Oyama to order up the second and last division of his General Reserve in order to strengthen his left for the following day. On the 26th, therefore, the Russians had lost more of their initial advantage.

The actual course of the operations round San-de-pu on the 26th January has been described; but, owing to a misconception due partly to the general confusion of village fighting and partly to the slowness with which information was transmitted, the staffs,

both of the army commander concerned and of the Russian commander-in-chief, passed the whole night under an entirely erroneous idea of the measure of success attained by the attack, and consequently issued a series of contradictory and

overlapping orders. As has been seen, the resistance of the Japanese garrison in San-de-pu itself and the appearance of the Japanese force to the south-east shortly after midday considerably perturbed General Muilov and caused him to try to suspend the attack on the village. As a matter of fact it appears that his troops were too deeply involved in the fighting to break off. General Gripenberg, however, did not hear of the intended suspension of operations until after 4 p.m. and for two hours acted under the impression—confirmed by further information—that it had taken place. He reported it to the commander-in-chief and gave orders for the 1st Siberian Corps to prepare to repel the Japanese force reported to be advancing and to withdraw towards Hei-kou-tai, for the Xth Corps to refrain from attacking Hei-lin-tai, and for the Provisional Rifle Corps and the VIIIth Corps to prepare to resist a night attack. He also requested reinforcement from the General Reserve, which was refused by the commander-in-chief.

Equally under the impression that the attack against San-de-pu had failed General Kuropatkin at 8.30 p.m. issued general orders for the 27th for action of a defensive nature and telephoned instructions to General Gripenberg—which were not received by the latter till 1.30 a.m. on the 27th—and to the Xth Corps. But long before these orders reached the commanders concerned the whole aspect of affairs had been changed. At 6.30 p.m. General Gripenberg received the news that San-de-pu

had been captured, and during the evening prepared a fresh set of orders for the 27th applicable to the changed situation, the general purport of which was that the Second Manchurian Army was to rest on the 27th and to act merely on the defensive. The news that San-de-pu had fallen was passed on to the commander-in-chief, who first heard of it at 10 p.m. He approved generally of General Gripenberg's proposed action and in a series of telegrams transmitted a fresh set of general orders for the 27th. About three o'clock on the morning of the 27th General Gripenberg received a verbal message to the effect that, far from having been captured, San-de-pu had been evacuated by the Russians. Not giving any credence to this report, since he had received no corroboration from the commanders of the VIIIth Corps or the 14th Division, he during the course of the next three hours gave further instructions to the Second Manchurian Army in accordance with the intended cessation of the advance during the 27th. At 7 a.m. on the 27th a written message from the commander of the Provisional Rifle Corps to say that the 14th Division and 18th Rifle Regiment had retreated from San-de-pu across the Hun Ho confirmed the bad news beyond doubt and once more changed the aspect of affairs. Though General Gripenberg was not long in again changing his plan to meet the fresh situation, it was then somewhat late for the distribution of amended orders for the day.

As will be seen the confusion produced by the contradictory intelligence received during the night was not without its effect on the operations of the Second Manchurian Army on the 27th.

CHAPTER LXIII.

THE BATTLE OF SAN-DE-PU—*continued*—OPERATIONS ON THE 27TH JANUARY—THE RUSSIANS CONTINUE THE OFFENSIVE BUT REMAIN INACTIVE BEFORE SAN-DE-PU—ARRIVAL AND ACTION OF THE JAPANESE 5TH DIVISION—GENERAL STAKELBERG ATTACKS SU-MA-PU—GENERAL KUROPATKIN FEARS A JAPANESE COUNTER-ATTACK.

(Plan 51.)

ON the morning of the 27th, when he was at last in possession of the facts about San-de-pu, the commander of the Second Manchurian Army decided that another attempt must be made to capture the village, and by 8 a.m. had prepared his plans for the day. Since portions of the VIIIth Corps were quite unfitted for another day's strenuous fighting the fresh attack was to be carried out by the Provisional Rifle Corps strengthened by a brigade of the 15th Division, with the divisional artillery, while the remaining brigade of the 15th Division was to cooperate by fire.* The 14th Division of the VIIIth Corps, which had borne the brunt of the previous day's fighting, was to form the army reserve in Chang-tan, but its guns were to join in a general bombardment of the village. An exchange of guns was also ordered between Colonel Lesh and the Provisional Rifle Corps, the former receiving two quick-firing batteries in return for two of old pattern. The commander of the 1st Siberian Corps was requested to return the 2nd Rifle Brigade to its corps as early as possible, but he received no instructions as to co-operation in the projected attack, while the remaining troops of the Second Manchurian Army had no fresh tasks assigned them, being simply informed of the measures now adopted. The news of the failure

* The 5th Rifle Brigade was to fortify its positions with tools taken over from the 14th Division. The extent of its intended co-operation in the attack on San-de-pu is not clear.

General
Gripenberg's
plans for the
27th.

against San-de-pu of the previous day and night had convinced General Gripenberg of the necessity for reducing the village by artillery fire before the infantry were again launched, and the fresh attack was to be precluded by a heavy bombardment. Most unfortunately, however, some two hours before he had heard of the change of the situation he had directed that twenty-four guns should be sent from the 15th Division of the VIIIth Corps to the Xth Corps to assist the latter in the attack on Li-ta-jen-tun which was then under contemplation.* Efforts were made to recall this artillery; but the siege guns, whose fire would have been of the greatest value against the walls of San-de-pu, could not be brought back in time to take part in the bombardment.

The commander-in-chief, when informed of the true situation and of General Gripenberg's plans for the day, wished the commander of the Second Manchurian Army success in his efforts and asked for more frequent reports of progress than he had been receiving. But he did not arrange to assist his subordinate by ordering any more active co-operation by the Third and First Manchurian Armies. Thus it happened that on the third day of the battle offensive action was, as before, confined to the efforts of one Russian army alone.

At 8 a.m. the Japanese 5th Division began to reach Lang-tung-kou after its night march, and General Tatsumi was thereby enabled to rearrange the 8th Division and 8th *Kobi* Brigade more in accordance with the requirements of the situation. At this hour, also, General Oku, following the general trend of Japanese forces westwards towards what had obviously become the centre of gravity of the struggle, transferred his head-quarters from Shih-li-ho to Yang-chia-wan, moved the 3rd Division slightly south-west from the latter place to assemble near Ta-tung-shan-pu, and sent one battalion of the 18th Regiment of that division to San-tai-tzu to be within supporting distance of San-de-pu in case that village should require further reinforcement. During the morning the remainder of the 5th Division—the head-quarters of the 9th Brigade and the 11th Regiment—left the neighbourhood of Shih-li-ho, where it had been left behind, and marched down to Yen-tai, whence it was sent off westward after its division. It reached Lang-tung-kou during the night of the 27th–28th. Of the troops

* These pieces consisted of four siege guns, twelve howitzers, eight old pattern field guns.

which had been ordered up during the night of the 26th-27th to the General Reserve the 10th *Kobi* Brigade reached Wu-li-tai-tzu, and the main body of the 2nd Division, which had been requisitioned from the First Army, arrived at Lan-chi, near Yen-tai, during the day.* Both of these units were now under the direct control of Marshal Oyama.

So soon as the 5th Division came within the immediate sphere of operations General Tatsumi made up his mind to utilize this fresh force to bring pressure to bear upon another section of the Russian front, while his 8th Division was to contain that

General
Tatsumi's fresh
plan of attack.

portion of the enemy with which it was already engaged. It was now possible to strengthen the latter division, and General Tatsumi accordingly withdrew those units of his 16th Brigade which were north of Ta-tai and dispatched four battalions to fill the dangerous gap between the 8th *Kobi* Brigade and the 4th Brigade, constituting them at the same time into a separate column with its left resting upon Su-ma-pu.† The remaining battalions of the 16th Brigade were retained at Ku-cheng-tzu, since a reserve was necessary owing to the facts that the Russian cavalry was still threatening the left and rear, and the 5th Division had not yet completely arrived. To that division General Tatsumi had sent orders to push up two regiments and five batteries to Ta-tai, from which place he now intended to attack the enemy about Liu-tiao-kou. Some pressure exerted in that direction might, he conceived, have the effect of relieving the situation before Hei-kou-tai while at the same time threatening to cut the enemy's retreat should he be eventually forced to recross the Hun. At 10.30 a.m., therefore, with scarcely any time for rest and none for cooking—for the water carried by the troops had been frozen solid—the wearied soldiers of the 5th Division marched off from Lang-tung-kou. But by that time there were signs that the Russians had not yet abandoned the offensive, and a quarter of an hour earlier the 21st Regiment, accompanied by its brigade commander, Major-General Murayama, and one mountain battery, had been dispatched in haste in a westerly direction to check a Russian cavalry force advancing from Hsiu-erh-pu, against which the 8th Division had already sent out

* This consisted of eight battalions of infantry, one squadron, three batteries, one company of engineers.

† The 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 17th Regiment and the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 32nd Regiment.

a company of infantry, with the six captured Russian guns, from Ku-cheng-tzu.

This Russian force was the detachment under General Mishchenko, which had spent the night near Hsiu-erh-pu. Under the impression that San-de-pu was still in Japanese hands General Mishchenko had during the night issued orders, in accordance with those of army head-quarters for the 25th and 26th, for a reconnaissance north-east, east and south, in order to ascertain what Japanese reinforcements might be coming up.* About 9 a.m. on the 27th he received the incorrect news that San-de-pu had been captured and consequently decided to take up a more aggressive rôle, in order to interfere and, if possible, to cut off the Japanese driven out of that village, who would probably be retreating along the line Lang-tung-kou and Ta-tung-shan-pu. He therefore directed the Trans-Baikal Cossack Brigade with the 4th Ural Cossacks and 4th Trans-Baikal Cossack Battery to gain touch with the 1st Siberian Corps, while the Don Cossack Brigade with two horse artillery batteries was to seize Chang-chia-wo-pu.† A way having been forced through that village without difficulty, General Mishchenko himself immediately started for Lang-tung-kou, taking with him the Caucasian Cavalry Brigade and the 1st Trans-Baikal Cossack Battery; but the appearance of General Murayama's force around that place, and the information gleaned from the inhabitants as to the presence of large bodies of Japanese troops in the neighbourhood caused him to postpone the attack until he could concentrate his force again. Orders were therefore sent to the two detached brigades to rejoin him without delay, and in order to distract the attention of the Japanese and to gain time for this operation, the 2nd Daghestan Cavalry was sent to attack them from the rear. That regiment approached the enemy from the south-west, but appears to have advanced under a misunderstanding as to whether Lang-tung-kou itself was to be attacked or not. At any rate it failed in its mission, a charge against the Japanese guns being brought to a standstill by a ravine immediately in front of the objective, and the co-operation of the Trans-Baikal and Don Cossack Brigades, when they returned,

Action between
the detachments
of General Mish-
chenko and
General Mura-
yama.

* See pp. 151-2.

† It is not clear whether this village was held by some of Colonel Tanada's detachment, or by some of the 8th Division.

made no impression on the enemy. General Mishchenko, who had himself closely followed the action of the 2nd Daghestan Cavalry, was wounded by a bullet in the foot. He was carried out of action by his escort and was able to ride slowly from the field.

The delay in the return of the Don Cossack and Trans-Baikal Brigades was due to the fact that they had themselves become involved in a contest.* In the fighting which ensued a company of Japanese unexpectedly stumbled upon a Russian squadron, and in the desperate hand-to-hand struggle which took place all the Japanese officers were killed and twenty-five other ranks were taken prisoners. The orders of General Mishchenko, however, enjoining immediate co-operation in the attack against Lang-tung-kou caused the action in this portion of the field to be broken off; and after uniting near Lang-tung-kou the whole Russian force drew off towards the west, in consequence, it is stated, of an order received from Second Army head-quarters directing it to retire to the right of the 1st Siberian Corps. General Murayama followed up the retiring Russians to the stream running north-west from Tung-ho-pu. This spirited attack of cavalry against infantry and artillery furnished one of the rare instances of a cavalry charge occurring in the war, and although General Mishchenko's efforts did not meet with success the dash displayed by his force shows up in marked contrast to the inertia exhibited by the Russian mounted troops both at Liaoyang and the Sha Ho. And if the premisses upon which he had based his appreciation of the situation were as a matter of fact inaccurate, his policy of offence was, at any rate, sound.

Far otherwise was it round San-de-pu, where, although the capture of that village was the ostensible task, the Russian operations were limited, as will be seen, to the passive defence of their position accompanied by ineffective artillery fire. The order issued about 9 a.m. to the commander of the Provisional Rifle Corps ran as follows:—

Russian in-
activity round
San-de-pu.

“Consequent upon the evacuation of San-de-pu by the troops of the 14th Division during the night and upon the intelligence received that there is an inner work within it strongly occupied by Japanese, the army commander intends to repeat the attack upon San-de-pu, entrusting the conduct

* Probably with the former garrison of Chang-chia-wo-pu reinforced from Ku-cheng-tzu.

of operations to Your Excellency, and placing under your orders a brigade of the 15th Division, which is moving towards the village of Chang-chuang-tzu.

“Prior to the attack it will be necessary to carry out a thorough artillery preparation. The 2nd Rifle Brigade will remain for a time at the disposal of the commander of the 1st Siberian Corps, who, however, is ordered to return it when the necessity for its retention has passed.”

The vagueness of these instructions from Second Army headquarters bore fruit in the orders of the commander of the Provisional Rifle Corps which were issued some three hours later. The attack on San-de-pu was mentioned in general terms as being the task set by the army commander, but General Kutnevich did not specify how this task was to be carried out by his own corps, and only referred to the occupation and defence by it of specified sections of ground. His orders are of interest as showing how completely all sense of the offensive seems to have been lost, and are here reproduced in full :—

Orders of the
commander of
the Provisional
Rifle Corps.

Chang-tan-ho-nan,
27th January, 1905,
12.15 p.m.

In consequence of the evacuation of San-de-pu by the troops of the 14th Division during the night of the 26th–27th January, and of information received that within the village is an inner work strongly held by the Japanese, the army commander has issued orders for the renewal of the attack upon San-de-pu, and has entrusted the conduct of it to me. Prior to the attack a thorough preparation by artillery will be carried out.

Information has been received that a considerable body of the enemy is moving from the direction of the village Erh-chia against the 1st Siberian Corps.*

For carrying out the duty imposed upon me :—

(1) *Right Section :*

Colonel Lesh.

Brigade of 1st East Siberian
Rifle Division 6 battalions.

Will defend the section from the Hun Ho north-eastwards towards the villages Chiu-chan-hei-tzu and Chan-yi-tao, where it will join up with the 5th Rifle Brigade.

* As a matter of fact the Japanese troops in Erh-chia were in great danger of being cut off during the day.

(2) *Centre Section :*

Colonel Yudenich.

5th Rifle Brigade	8 battalions.
2nd Rifle Artillery Division ...	8 guns.
5th Rifle Artillery Division ...	24 guns.
6th Sapper Battalion	$\frac{1}{2}$ company.

 Total 8 battalions, 32 guns.

Will occupy the section from Chan-yi-tao northwards towards Chang-chuang-tzu with its left flank abreast of Wang-chia-wo-peng, where it will join up with the 1st Rifle Brigade.

(3) *Left Section :*

Major-General Dombrovski.

3rd and 4th Rifle Regiments ...	4 battalions.
1st Rifle Artillery Division ...	24 guns.

 Total 4 battalions, 24 guns.

Will occupy the section from the left flank of the 5th Rifle Brigade to Chang-chuang-tzu inclusive, which it will place in a state of defence.

(4) Major-General Dombrovski is appointed commander of the fighting line.

(5) *Reserve :*

Colonel Genings.

1st and 2nd Rifle Regiments ...	4 battalions.
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Will remain at my disposal and will be south of the village Wang-chia-wo-peng.

- (6) The brigade of the 15th Division which is expected from the direction of Chou-chang-kou* will take up its position south-west† of Chang-chuang-tzu.
- (7) The two old pattern field batteries expected from the 1st Siberian Corps will be placed under the orders of the corps artillery commander, Colonel Savelev, who will direct the fire of all the artillery.
- (8) The general dressing station under the orders of the medical officer of the 1st Rifle Brigade will be set up at Chang-tan.
- (9) The flanks of the fighting line are to get into touch with neighbouring units (i.e., the right flank with the 1st Siberian Corps and the left flank with the 1st Brigade of the 15th Division).
- (10) Second Line Transport will remain on the right bank of the Hun Ho. The escort will be found from soldiers temporarily unfit.

* This village cannot be identified.

† This is apparently an error in the original. South-east seems the correct reading.

- (11) The nearest parks are the 1st, 2nd, and 5th Flying Artillery Parks, which will be at Chang-tan.
- (12) Entrenching tools for strengthening the positions and placing the villages in a state of defence will be brought up to the troops from the 14th Division.
- (13) Reports should be sent to Chang-tan-ho-nan, where corps head-quarters will be.
- (14) Substitutes for command :—Major-General Dombrovski; Major-General Richter.

The inaction thus foreshadowed and subsequently translated into effect can partly be explained by the fact that General Kutnevich did not consider himself sufficiently strong to attack, insomuch as not only had his 2nd Rifle Brigade not rejoined him, but Colonel Lesh's brigade had just been ordered to revert from his corps to General Stakelberg's disposal. Early in the afternoon General Kutnevich reported these circumstances to army head-quarters, adding that he considered the task imposed upon his corps to be one of great difficulty, an expression which he evidently intended as a justification for not attacking, for beyond arranging for the reconnaissance of San-de-pu by some scouts after nightfall, he turned his particular attention to the defence of his position. By 5 p.m. General Grippenbergr realized that the attempt against San-de-pu would not be renewed and informed the commander-in-chief that it would be deferred until the 28th.

The VIIIth and Xth Corps confined their efforts to bombarding the village in preparation for General Kutnevich's expected attack which did not take place. As explained, the duty of the VIIIth Corps in this day's projected operations was two-fold.

The VIIIth and Xth Corps. The 14th Division was to be in reserve—a rôle to which its strenuous exertions of the last few days, commencing with its marching and counter-marching to the south-west corner of the battlefield, fully entitled it: of the 15th Division one brigade was to work with the Provisional Rifle Corps, while the action of the other was to be confined to artillery fire. The bombardment was actually opened on San-de-pu at about eight o'clock in the morning. Owing to the use made of an observation post erected the day before it was possible to correct ranges fairly accurately, but on account of the absence of the siege guns the firing was carried out only

with field pieces. It achieved no real results and did not even draw fire from the Japanese until dark. The commander of the Xth Corps had during the 26th been furnished with no intelligence of the doings of the VIIIth Corps until 11 p.m., when he received the false news that it had succeeded in taking San-de-pu. In view of the fact that he was to attack Li-ta-jen-tun so soon as San-de-pu was captured General Tserpitski commenced at 7.30 a.m. on the 27th to prepare the way for his infantry attack by a bombardment, for which his artillery had been specially strengthened by the transfer of guns from the VIIIth Corps. He also requested, since his own troops were much dispersed, stretching as they did from Huang-ti to Hei-lin-tai, that the VIIIth Corps might push on from San-de-pu to Huang-ti and Chin-chia-tun and thus allow him to concentrate more to his left.* The VIIIth Corps, however, was not really in San-de-pu and did not push on, and portions of the Xth Corps continued to hold both these villages. Shortly afterwards General Tserpitski heard that San-de-pu was still in the hands of the Japanese and received General Grippenbergs order to give up all offensive operations and withdraw his troops to a line running through Pao-hsiang-tun. The action of his force was, therefore, on this day confined entirely to artillery fire which was practically ineffective owing to the absence of the siege guns. The troops continued to hold the line Huang-ti—Chin-chia-tun—Hei-lin-tai, and General Tserpitski issued his orders for the action to be taken in case of a night attack by the Japanese, which in the opinion of the commander-in-chief was very probable.†

Had all the commanders in the Second Manchurian Army merely acted up to the letter of their orders, or been guided by the fact that no orders had been received, there would have been

* The bombardment by the Xth Corps was also carried out by field artillery alone, for the siege guns sent from the VIIIth Corps were on their way back to it.

† According to reports obtained from Japanese sources and to the account given by General Kuropatkin in his *Memoirs* the Xth Corps attacked the village of La-pa-tai during the night of the 27th–28th. The *Russian Official History* and the *German and Austrian Official Accounts* describe this as having taken place on the night of the 28th–29th, and from the circumstances this is considered to be more probable, since on the latter day the Xth Corps was definitely ordered to press the Japanese advancing westwards on the flank. The exact date of the attempt against this village, however, is immaterial. It had no influence on the battle and is chiefly noteworthy as being the most serious action undertaken by the Xth Corps during its course.

a complete cessation of offence in the whole of General Grippenberg's command. Fortunately for the Russians a spirit of initiative had begun to make itself felt amongst the veterans of the campaign. General Mishchenko had done his best with the force at his disposal to assist the general plan, and this commendable conduct was matched by that of the commander of the 1st Siberian Corps. While the operations of the VIIIth, Xth, and Provisional Rifle Corps on the northern part of the battlefield suffered from an inertia completely at variance with the action demanded by the situation, around Hei-kou-tai General Stakelberg displayed an initiative which showed that he fully grasped the necessities of the case. Like the other commanders of the Second Manchurian Army he had heard of the supposed capture of San-de-pu; and the orders received by him during the night based on this intelligence were in accordance with the idea of a day of rest on the 27th, being to the effect that, while maintaining complete ability to drive back the enemy in case of attack, the 1st Siberian Corps was to camp in the area Hei-kou-tai—Su-ma-pu—Lao-chiao, protected by the stream which joins the River Hun at the former village.

But there seems to have been some ambiguity in the wording of these orders. The villages named might have been regarded either as localities outside the perimeter of an area to be held by the 1st Siberian Corps and distinct from it, or as themselves being integral parts of the actual position to be occupied by the corps. Certainly the severity of the weather would indicate villages rather than an open plain as the most suitable billets while affording equal, if not better, opportunities for defence. The point would lack more than an academic interest were it not for the fact that two of the three villages—Su-ma-pu and Lao-chiao—were in the hands of the Japanese.* At any rate, General Stakelberg apparently considered that the order, when read in conjunction with the news of the fall of San-de-pu, justified an attempt to capture Su-ma-pu, and in

* The villages were in the rayon of the Japanese 8th Division whose troops were disposed as follows:—On the right about Lao-chiao and stretching south-westwards was the 8th *Kobi* Brigade; on the left, the 4th Brigade held San-chien-pao and Erh-chia as well as a line of trenches on the north side of Su-ma-pu. The 16th Brigade was preparing to move up into the centre between these two forces.

accordance with this view, before it was yet light, he sent the 3rd East Siberian Rifle Regiment to attack that place. The Japanese, however, were on the alert, and opened a heavy rifle fire which effectually checked this advance. Three companies of the 4th East Siberian Rifle Regiment were then hurried up in support; but the growing light was all in favour of the Japanese, and so far from a Russian success seeming probable there were signs that the enemy was about to retort by a counter-movement against Hei-kou-tai.

It was just at this time that General Stakelberg, before receiving the fresh orders for the 27th issued by Second Manchurian Army head-quarters, became aware that the news of the capture of San-de-pu was incorrect. Nevertheless, this intelligence, although it must have foreshadowed extra difficulties to be overcome, did not deter him from his task, and shortly after 9 a.m. he reported to General Gripenberg his action against Su-ma-pu and his intention to persevere in it.

It was clear that the attackers would have to be strengthened, and the 34th East Siberian Rifle Regiment was sent forward from Tou-pao. But the assistance which this unit was expected to afford was paralysed by an enfilade fire which a portion of the Japanese 4th Brigade brought to bear from the vicinity of Erh-chia. The value of this place to the Japanese was soon again exemplified by the experiences of the 36th East Siberian Rifle Regiment which made several attempts to move out from Tou-pao and was stopped on each occasion by flanking fire. Nevertheless, the Russian troops in Tou-pao were on their part also able to make their presence felt. By a withering rifle fire, and with the assistance of the guns west of the village, they not only rendered any advance by the Japanese 4th Brigade out of the question, but interrupted free communication between its right and left, causing a gap between the regiments of over half a mile. Shortly after midday, still determined to seize Su-ma-pu, General Stakelberg added yet another regiment to the attack, pushing it in between the two already engaged.* At the same time he sent off instructions to Colonel Lesh—whose brigade after some orders and counter-orders had been definitely restored to the 1st Siberian Corps about noon—to attack Lao-chiao from the north, and moved up two regiments as a corps reserve into Hei-kou-tai.†

* The 35th East Siberian Rifle Regiment, then on the ice of the river.

† The 6th and 8th Rifle Regiments from the 2nd Rifle Brigade.

Even with this accession of strength, the attack moved forward extremely slowly, and each step in advance was purchased at the price of heavy loss.*

Towards three o'clock the vigorous action of the 1st Siberian Corps met with a measure of success, a bayonet charge making the Russians masters of some trenches in front of Su-ma-pu. But once again was the Japanese detachment in Erh-chia to demonstrate the efficiency of enfilade fire, by checking the 36th East Siberian Rifle Regiment emerging from Tou-pao in support of the successful units fighting at Su-ma-pu. The commander of the regiment, thus repeatedly baffled, decided at last to drive the enemy out of Erh-chia. The attempt failed entirely, and after suffering severely the regiment was compelled to reoccupy its former position at Tou-pao, where it passed the remainder of the day.

About this time General Stakelberg discovered that his corps would have to deal with a new enemy, for on the left Colonel Lesh had concentrated all his four batteries and had opened fire against some Japanese troops which could be seen north of Ku-cheng-tzu. These were the main body of the Japanese 5th Division which had pushed on to Ta-tai, where it had arrived about 2.30 p.m., and was preparing to attack Liu-tiao-kou in accordance with General Tatsumi's new plan. And it is to their action that the narrative now reverts.

The ground over which the Japanese 5th Division had to

* About 2 p.m. the situation of the 1st Siberian Corps was as follow :— The 3rd, 35th, and 34th (seven companies) East Siberian Rifle Regiments were confronting Su-ma-pu in a semicircle at from 500 to 800 paces from the village. The first-mentioned regiment was facing south ; the last east and south-east.

In Tou-pao, engaged with the Japanese at Erh-chia, was the 36th East Siberian Rifle Regiment ; attached to this regiment was a battery firing upon Erh-chia and Su-ma-pu.

About half a mile south of Hei-kou-tai was the 33rd East Siberian Rifle Regiment facing east. Between this regiment and the village were two batteries firing upon Su-ma-pu.

In Fei-tsai-ho-tzu were three companies of the 34th East Siberian Rifle Regiment and towards Chiu-chan-hei-tzu was Colonel Lesh's force. Three batteries from the right bank of the Hun were in action against Japanese guns in Su-ma-pu and west of Lao-chiao.

The garrison of Hei-kou-tai consisted of some companies of the 4th East Siberian Rifle Regiment. The corps reserve was formed by the 2nd Rifle Brigade (from the Provisional Rifle Corps) in the neighbourhood of Hei-kou-tai. The 6th and 8th Rifle Regiments were on the ice of the river ; the 5th and 7th Rifle Regiments apparently on the right bank.

advance was level for three thousand yards and quite bare, while between the attackers and the villages against which they were to move were advanced detachments of Russians holding the bed of the Hung Ho, in which they were almost entirely concealed. General Kigoshi divided his force into two wings and a reserve, directing the left wing to advance from Ta-tai towards Wang-chia-wo-peng, while the right was to move on Liu-tiao-kou, the reserve standing fast at a village en route.* Behind the left wing came the five batteries of mountain guns, and so soon as the infantry had cleared Ta-tai the guns took post on the north side of that place. Snow fell while the deployment was proceeding and the Japanese were able to advance unperceived to within two thousand yards of the enemy.† The Russians consisted of the left of Colonel Lesh's force. His batteries at once came into action, and so good was the practice made that the Japanese line was for a few seconds covered with bursting shells. Without losing a moment the Japanese mountain guns replied, and the commander of the 42nd Regiment, whose men had lain down according to orders when the Russian guns began to fire, gave the word to advance by rushes. Thus the two wings pressed on, the supports merging into the firing line, but at a range of about twelve hundred yards both were met by the fire of the 1st East Siberian Rifle Regiment, which, in accordance with General Stakelberg's instructions, had been ordered by Colonel Lesh to attack Lao-chiao. The greater strength of the Japanese enabled them to advance another three or four hundred yards and to threaten the left flank of the opposing Russian regiment; and to meet this Colonel Lesh added two battalions of the 2nd East Siberian Rifle Regiment to his firing line.

Meanwhile, about half-past three, General Kigoshi had ordered up a battalion from his reserve to assist his right wing, and the guns following up the advancing line for about twelve hundred yards

* *Left Wing* : the 42nd Regiment.

Right Wing : the 1st Battalion of the 41st Regiment.

Reserve : the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 41st Regiment.

† During this advance the right wing had two companies in front line and two echeloned in rear of the right flank. The front line companies had each two sections extended at five paces interval for the firing line, and one section each similarly extended one hundred yards in rear. On the left wing two battalions were in front line with companies in column of sections at four paces interval between men and one hundred and fifty yards distance between sections. The second line was at first in line two deep.

came into action again about 4.45 p.m. Once more was the left flank of Colonel Lesh's force in danger; but the assistance of the 17th and 18th Rifle Regiments of the centre section of the Provisional Rifle Corps frustrated the Japanese advance, and the fighting died away without any further attempt at the offensive by either side. In spite of their lack of sleep on the night of the 26th, the exhausted men of the Japanese 5th Division were now called upon to entrench themselves as best they could, and for five hours they dug in the iron ground. The work was difficult; but the furrows of the *kao-liang* were of some assistance, as were the mounds of a Chinese burial-ground, while the employment of sand-bags saved some excavation. Though a strong outpost line was thrown out, the main body secured no rest, for the cold was so intense that the officers continually went round their companies waking the men up and exhorting them to try to keep awake. The men were made to change their leather shoes for Chinese straw boots, and charcoal fires were lighted in the trenches. And yet, notwithstanding these precautions four hundred of them were frost-bitten during the night. More men of the right wing were so affected than of the left, for they were disturbed by some slight counter-attacks which prevented them protecting themselves so well from the cold. Whenever they stamped their feet to keep life in them the Russians fired, so that they had to choose between bullets and frost-bite.

While the left of the 1st Siberian Corps and the Japanese 5th Division had thus reached a situation of stalemate, General Stakelberg, with the main portion of the corps, was still in front of Su-ma-pu, undaunted by the check he had received and planning how a further attempt might be made.*

General Stakelberg determines to press the attack on Su-ma-pu.

He foresaw that every man at his disposal would be required for the task, and about 3 p.m. had deprecated the return of the 2nd Rifle Brigade to its own corps, which had been requested by General Grippenbergh—whose new orders for the

7th General Stakelberg had by then received, and had kept it as portion of his force. Some hours before this, indeed, the commander of the Second Manchurian Army had begun to realize that his subordinate had departed from the tenor of his original

* Colonel Lesh's force had by this time again come under General Stakelberg's orders and was on the left of the 1st Siberian Corps. See p. 183.

orders for the 27th—to maintain a defensive attitude, and for the purpose of clearing up the situation and impressing upon General Stakelberg the absolute necessity for refraining from offensive operations had already sent General Vladimir Grekov to him.* General Stakelberg, however, was so convinced that it was by a continuation of the policy of offence alone that victory could be secured that he had declined to alter the decision that he had already formed, and had about 2 p.m. written to army head-quarters expressing his conviction that the capture of Su-ma-pu was essential to the safe retention of Hei-kou-tai; that acting on this opinion he had felt it his duty to attack; and that the losses sustained would be in vain unless the attack was resumed. The spirit of this note foreshadowed the intention revealed in a subsequent dispatch to the army commander, in which General Stakelberg declared that Su-ma-pu would be assaulted with the bayonet during the night, an undertaking which the troops under his command had begged that they might be allowed to carry out.

Before issuing his orders for the night assault General Stakelberg obtained the opinions of the nearest senior officers—General Gerngross, commanding the 1st East Siberian Rifle Division, and his chief staff officer—both of whom definitely pronounced in favour of the project. General Gerngross was then appointed to command the assault, which was to be carried out by twelve battalions, and he proceeded to draw up in the corps head-quarters in Hei-kou-tai his plan of action. The attack was to be made in two columns, which were to advance at 9.30 p.m., movement to be in line of company columns with close intervals.† There was to be no firing, and on arrival within fifty paces of the enemy the troops were to assault with the bayonet. The 6th Rifle Regiment was the first to move, since it had to advance from Hei-kou-tai—where it had been in corps reserve—to get into position in the fighting line, and after

* General V. Grekov's cavalry detachment had been broken up, part of it being distributed throughout the army and ten squadrons being retained with army head-quarters for special duties. See Appendix 9.

† *Right Column.*—Colonel Muskhelov. The 34th East Siberian Rifle Regiment and the 1st Battalion of the 6th Rifle Regiment.

Left Column.—Colonel Zemlyanitzin. The 3rd East Siberian Rifle Regiment and the 2nd Battalion of the 6th Rifle Regiment.

This night attack is not shown on Plan 51.

marching about a mile in the darkness its 1st Battalion fell in with the 34th East Siberian Rifle Regiment, the nucleus of the right column. That regiment, however, had been so sorely depleted by the fighting of the past two days that only about one hundred and eighty men could be got together to add to the 1st Battalion of the 6th Rifle Regiment. The advance on Su-ma-pu was then continued, the left column joining in. Although the night was particularly dark, direction was maintained until only some six hundred yards lay between the attackers and their goal. When at that distance the Russians were detected and a rifle and machine gun fire was at once opened by the garrison, consisting of the left wing of the Japanese 16th Brigade and three battalions of the 4th Brigade, of the 8th Division. The hard work and exposure to cold to which the Russians had been subjected for days past now told its tale, and although they at first fought desperately and inflicted heavy loss the vigour of the assault ebbed away. Some hundreds of them found their way into some outlying houses on the southern side of the village, only to meet death or capture when the Japanese discovered their presence on the following day.

The 35th East Siberian Rifle Regiment also took part in this assault on Su-ma-pu, and had at first met with some success, driving the Japanese with the bayonet out of some trenches west of the village which they held for some hours; but shortly before dawn of the 28th the garrison made a counter-attack and swept the Russians from the place.

As is the case with most night operations, especially where village fighting is involved, the confusion which occurred prevents a clear narrative or an accurate statement of what really took place. But it may be noted that a report by Marshal Oyama is quoted as showing that for a time the Russians were completely masters of the village.* Certainly, if the losses sustained by the attackers can be taken as a fair indication of results, there is nothing improbable in the statement, for of the 6th Rifle Regiment, with an establishment of 23 officers and 1,500 other ranks, 17 officers and 651 rank and file were killed or wounded, and 4 officers and 499 rank and file were returned as missing.

While the portions of the Japanese 8th Division around Su-ma-pu had managed to stave off all the Russian attempts against that village the situation of the units of the Japanese 4th Brigade

* *Conférences sur la Guerre Russo-Japonaise*, 7th Fascicule, p. 182.

in Erh-chia had been growing critical. Cut off from the rest of the division since the previous day, they had received no orders and were running short of food and ammunition. Several attempts to send ammunition under cover of night had been frustrated, for the horses carrying it were always killed by the Cossacks haunting the tracks. At last nine carts were dispatched, and although seven were captured the remaining pair got safely through. On the night of the 27th, emboldened by the continued isolation of these troops, some Russian cavalry from General Mishchenko's force—which had fallen back to the vicinity of Hsiu-erh-pu after its action at Lang-tung-kou—inaugurated an attack upon the little village of San-chien-pao. Within it was a dressing station, where some four hundred wounded had been collected. Backed by half a company of infantry, the slightly wounded and some men of the Transport Corps manned the walls, and under a major who happened to be in the village superintending the disposal of the arms of the wounded they strove to defend the place. The Russian cavalry, however, forced their way in, and the defenders took to the houses, but no misadventure befel the village or the wounded, for the assailants clattered through the street and disappeared. This incident occurred without the knowledge of the Japanese brigade commander in Erh-chia, who, deciding that to remain there longer was but to court disaster, withdrew his men at 3 a.m. on the 28th towards San-chien-pao; but although that place was less than a mile and a half away, his little force took three hours to cover the distance, for it retired with great deliberation, first transporting to the rear the wounded and the dead. The force had been severely handled during the past few days and the losses in the 31st Regiment had been very heavy. It is stated that at one time the situation was so precarious that the regimental colours were burnt and that the colonel shot himself, preferring death to surrender. Two Russian regiments from Tou-pao took possession of Erh-chia when the Japanese abandoned it.*

In addition to the 4th and 16th Brigades the 8th *Kobi* Brigade was still acting with the 8th Division, but its influence on the events of the day was slight. It attempted to advance from the vicinity of Lao-chiao at an early hour, and appears to have come

* The 8th Rifle Regiment and the 36th East Siberian Rifle Regiment.

under a superior fire from the 1st Siberian Corps and Colonel Lesh's force. But little progress was made, and by nightfall the brigade was occupying practically the same ground that it had held on the previous night.

General Kuropatkin had during the 25th and 26th January exercised a restraint upon the operations of the Second Manchurian Army which tended towards caution. On the 27th the obviously growing strength of the Japanese opposite that army, coupled to the fact that they still held San-de-pu, led him to fear that they might use that village as a pivot and direct a counter-attack in force between the Hun Ho and the right of the Third Manchurian Army against the Xth Corps which was holding an extended position. On that night, therefore, he issued instructions for the guidance of the commander of the Third Manchurian Army in case this should be attempted. The 5th Siberian Corps was to hold its ground, and to mass a force of sixteen battalions on its right between San-chia-tzu and Hsin-tai-tzu to assist the Xth Corps, the Mixed Brigade of the XVIIth Corps was, if necessary, to support this force, and a brigade consisting of the 9th (Ingermanland) Regiment and one other was to be ready to assemble behind the right flank of the Third Manchurian Army. It was probably due to this fear of a counter-attack that the commander-in-chief had refused to reinforce the Second Manchurian Army from his General Reserve.

With a view to distracting the Japanese General Kuropatkin also arranged for action against their extreme flanks and at midnight telegraphed to the commander of the First Manchurian Army to inquire if he could undertake offensive operations in conjunction with General Rennenkampf in the direction of Cheng-chang, and to General Gripenberg to detach immediately a mounted force of two or three cavalry regiments and a few guns to cut the railway between Hai-cheng and Liao-yang in order to stop the flow of the Japanese reinforcements and to cause a diversion of the enemy's strength in that direction.† Though the Japanese Third Army was not mentioned in the telegram to General Gripenberg it seems obvious that it must have been the reinforcement which it was hoped to delay. As will be seen later, however, neither of the operations now contemplated was carried out.

† Cheng-chang is south-east of Ching-ho-cheng.

General Kuropatkin fears for the safety of the Xth Corps.

Measures to prevent the intervention of the Japanese Third Army.

During the evening the Japanese 2nd Division, which had spent the day near Yen-tai, received orders to march to Lang-tung-kou, and it set out westwards at midnight. It is believed that instructions were also sent back for three regiments to be sent up from the Third Army. It is not known which these regiments were, or if they started; but they took no part in the battle.

The Japanese
2nd Division.

On the 27th the crisis of the battle had passed. The forward movement of the Russians had now lost almost all impetus. San-de-pu, the accepted crux of the situation, had not only not yet been captured, the attack upon it had not even been continued, and the village was, owing to the arrival of the Japanese 5th Division in rear of it, less likely to fall than it had been on the day before. On the south General Mishchenko's independent attempt to get round the Japanese rear had not been allowed to proceed, and farther west General Kossakovski's force had been drawn back.* While General Stakelberg's repeated essays to take Su-ma-pu had been repulsed, the Xth Corps had not pushed on. The Third and First Manchurian Armies had as before done nothing to help the Second. On the other hand, the units which the Japanese commander-in-chief had brought up from his General Reserve—the 8th and 5th Divisions—had not been able to press on far against the 1st Siberian Corps nor to take Liu-tiao-kou; but, in combination with the resistance of San-de-pu itself, they had effectually stopped the Russian advance. By the continued inaction of the Third and First Manchurian Armies the Japanese had so far been enabled to strengthen what had been the danger spot for them to some purpose, both in staving off the attack and in working upon their opponents; and for the next day's operations would have the main body of another division to throw into the fight. Unless General Kuropatkin inaugurated a general forward movement so as to apply pressure along his whole line, and did so speedily, the tables seemed likely to be turned by that very assumption of the offensive by the Japanese the prospect of which was already so much exercising his mind.

Summary of the
27th January.

* General Kossakovski had withdrawn his infantry from Ma-ma-kai and Chi-tai-tzu and replaced them with cavalry. This was done under protest in accordance with definite orders. By nightfall his force was distributed as follows:—

At Ma-ma-kai, the 19th Don Cossack Regiment.

At Chi-tai-tzu, the 24th Don Cossack Regiment.

At San-tai-tzu, the main body of the force.

CHAPTER LXIV.

THE BATTLE OF SAN-DE-PU—*continued*—OPERATIONS ON THE 28TH JANUARY—THE JAPANESE ASSUME THE OFFENSIVE—GENERAL KUROPATKIN'S ANXIETY—THE RUSSIAN RETREAT—THE END OF THE BATTLE.

(Plan 52.)

THE 28th January, however, was to witness no change in the grand tactics of the Russians. General Grippenbergs force was to continue the movement against the Japanese left, which had now for three days been held up, and the efforts of the Third and First Manchurian Armies were, as before, still to be confined to demonstration. It is true that a raid against the railway from the west was contemplated; but no actual pressure was to be put upon the Japanese except by the Second Manchurian Army. The result of this was that the pendulum swung over and General Grippenbergs troops were forced on to the defensive almost at every point, whilst the Japanese, who had been enabled to mass great weight on their left, pressed forward all along the extreme western section of their front between San-de-pu and Su-ma-pu.

The weather still remained extremely cold, and though the wind had abated to some extent the relief thus afforded was counterbalanced to some extent by an increase of moisture in the atmosphere.

Although nothing had as yet occurred to warrant alarm at Japanese General Head-Quarters, by the night of the 27th the prolonged and severe nature of the struggle round Hei-kou-tai had caused some anxiety, for it was felt that if the Russians were not soon forced back across the Hun the situation might become such as to endanger the plan for future offensive action. On that night General Tatsumi had been ordered to press the attack on the following day—not that the order was really necessary, except in confirmation of that officer's own decision, for he had anticipated

Japanese
plans.

that a continuation of the offensive was necessary and had already arranged to carry it out. As regards reinforcements available to strengthen General Tatsumi on the morning of the 28th, there were at Lang-tung-kou the 11th Regiment of the 5th Division, which had reached that place on the previous night, the main body of the 2nd Division under General Nishijima and three batteries of the 17th Field Artillery Regiment which had come up from the Japanese Third Army.*

As has been said, on the Russian side all activity was again to be confined to the Second Manchurian Army. And from the orders issued to that army at midnight on the 27th it will be seen that the partial action of the whole Russian forces was again to be reproduced by it in miniature. San-de-pu was still to be the objective of a fraction of General Grippenbergs's troops whilst the bulk of them were as before to remain practically inactive until that place had been seized. The orders for the day ran as follows:—

Chang-tan,

27th January, 1905.

11.30 p.m.

The enemy, in strength about one division, continues to hold his ground against the 1st Siberian Corps on the line Erh-chia—Su-ma-pu—Lao-chiao. The garrison of San-de-pu has received a reinforcement of about 3,000 infantry. Elsewhere no change in the enemy's disposition has been noted.

To-morrow, 28th January, the Second Manchurian Army will continue to carry out the task imposed upon it of attacking the left flank of the enemy.

The 1st Siberian Corps will hold the positions at present occupied by it so as to cover on the south the attack against San-de-pu.

The Provisional Rifle Corps, with the 2nd Brigade of the 15th Division and two companies of the 12th Sapper Battalion, will, after a thorough artillery preparation, capture San-de-pu.

The Xth Corps will before daybreak—so as to co-operate with the Provisional Rifle Corps in the attack on San-de-pu—send to Huang-ti (now occupied by two battalions) another

* So far as is known these were the only troops of General Nogi's army to take part in the battle, though the 35th Regiment of the 9th Division is believed to have reached Liao-yang from Port Arthur during the day.

infantry regiment with two batteries, for the purpose of shelling the inner work in San-de-pu, and the enemy's guns and their escort on the line San-de-pu—Hsiao-tai-tzu and in the village of La-pa-tai. In addition, two battalions are to be sent to strengthen the reserve of the 15th Division at Hsiao-han-tai-tzu.

The 14th Infantry Division will remain in reserve at Chang-tan on the right bank of the Hun Ho.

General Kossakovski's Detachment from the position Ma-tzu-an-tzu—Tsu-yu-ta will protect the rear of the right flank of the army after sending two battalions with artillery to Huang-la-ta-tzu.

General Mishchenko's Cavalry Detachment will protect the right flank of the army and will reconnoitre the area between the River Tai-tzu and the line Hei-kou-tai—Lang-tung-kou—Ta-tung-shan-pu while keeping in thorough touch with the 1st Siberian Corps.

The general supervision of artillery fire in the bombardment of San-de-pu will devolve upon the artillery commander of the VIIIth Corps.

The four squadrons of the Orenburg Cossack Division now posted along the Hun Ho will be called in and join the army reserve.

The reserve of light artillery parks will be transferred as follows:—The 2nd and 9th Parks to Hsin-tai-tzu and the three parks of the 41st, 43rd, and 1st East Siberian Brigades to Hsiao-huan-ti.

Reports to be sent to Chang-tan.

Substitutes for command:—Lieutenant-General Ruzski and Lieutenant-General Muilov.

Before morning these orders were supplemented by additional instructions, apparently brought about by a complaint from General Kutnevich, which tended to a greater concentration of effort on San-de-pu. One division of the 41st Artillery Brigade from the VIIIth Corps was to reinforce the artillery of the Provisional Rifle Corps; the 2nd Rifle Brigade was to return from the 1st Siberian Corps to the Provisional Rifle Corps by 8 a.m., its place being taken by a regiment from the 14th Division; the commander of the latter was advised to select positions for howitzer batteries and to send some field guns forward with his

infantry against San-de-pu, in order to batter down the inner walls of the village at short range; and at the same time the commander of the Xth Corps was warned to confine his bombardment to Hsiao-tai-tzu, La-pa-tai and the east of San-de-pu and not to direct it upon San-de-pu for fear of firing upon the attacking infantry of the Provisional Rifle Corps. In compliance with the commander-in-chief's telegram of the previous night, also, General Grippenbergh instructed General Teleshov to form a flying column of three cavalry regiments and a battery of horse artillery, which was to be dispatched on the 29th to act in the enemy's rear in the area Liao-yang—Hai-cheng.* While General Grippenbergh was thus making preparations he was the recipient of messages from General Headquarters which were inspired by the commander-in-chief's anxiety as to the situation of the Second Manchurian Army in case of attack by the enemy; and shortly after midday he received from General Kuropatkin a telegram which showed that the latter was considerably perturbed by the lack of information as to what was passing on the right as well as by the dispersion of the 1st Siberian Corps and its separation from the Provisional Rifle Corps brought about by what he looked upon as the uncalled-for attack of the former upon Su-ma-pu.

Although the whole of the previous day had been wasted, so far as the immediate point at issue—the capture of San-de-pu—was concerned, the commencement of operations on the 28th did not seem likely to bring about any great amelioration. About

7 a.m. General Kutnevich had to report that the
The Provisional
Rifle Corps. howitzer batteries had not arrived and were supposed to be at least a mile and a half away, and that only one siege battery was in readiness to open fire. Two sapper companies detailed to assist him, too, had not yet appeared, while an unfortunate attack made through error by the 17th and 19th Rifle Regiments during the night had prevented his scout detachments making the intended reconnaissance of San-de-pu. Worse still, the two regiments themselves were so shaken by their experience that they would be useless in the firing line for some time. It was, therefore, in a somewhat pessimistic frame of

* General Teleshov had taken over the command of General Mishchenko's detachment when the latter was wounded. See p. 177. Though, again, the Japanese Third Army was not mentioned it seems that this movement must have been intended to delay its arrival. By the 29th, however, the battle had assumed a fresh aspect and the flying column was not sent out.

mind that General Kutnevich once more set about his arrangements for the capture of San-de-pu. But he was soon relieved of the necessity of putting them into effect by being called upon to withstand attack. As will be seen later, the part played by the Provisional Rifle Corps and the brigade of the 15th Division was confined to artillery action.

Action on this day was started by the Japanese reassumption of the offensive. About 8 a.m. the artillery of the 5th Division still in position north of Ta-tai opened fire, and shortly afterwards its infantry advanced rapidly in the direction of Liu-tiao-kou.

The Japanese
continue their
attack.

The Japanese
5th Division.

And though obstinately resisted the strenuous efforts of this division proved to be the turning point of the battle. The right wing, reinforced by a battalion of the 41st Regiment, was enabled to extend its line some distance to the right and to occupy the bed of a stream where it took advantage of the cover to prepare for the final rush. At half-past nine Liu-tiao-kou was taken, the garrison, which apparently consisted merely of an advanced detachment, making off. A more obstinate resistance was met with at a small village occupied by a similar garrison, against which the left wing had moved. The Japanese advance here encountered a hot machine gun fire and could only make slow progress owing to the lack of cover. The fire of the five batteries of the divisional artillery had already concentrated upon the object of attack, and the three batteries of the 17th Artillery Regiment coming up during the morning joined in the cannonade.* The united efforts of the forty-eight guns prevailed against the inferior strength of the Russian 1st Rifle Artillery Division which replied, and at 3 p.m. the village fell. With this success the attackers apparently had to rest content, for nothing occurred later during the afternoon but an exchange of fire with the Provisional Rifle Corps, and a portion of the Japanese artillery was sent to help the 8th Division.

At 9 a.m. the centre of the 8th Division at Su-ma-pu was reinforced by the 11th Regiment from Lang-tung-kou. So soon

* It had been General Tatsumi's intention that these three batteries, which had accompanied the 11th Regiment to its place of assembly the night before, should continue with it on the 28th, but by some mistake they went to the right and joined the main body of the 5th Division north-west of Ta-tai.

as that regiment came up preparations were made to resume the attack, as ordered on the previous night, and with it the firing line of the 16th Brigade advanced against the enemy, who was still in occupation of a sand-hill east of the road from Su-ma-pu to Hei-kou-tai. No sooner had the movement begun than men began to fall, struck in the back by bullets coming from the rear. Surprised by this unexpected development the line halted, and two companies of the 16th Brigade and one of the 4th turned round and faced the village of Su-ma-pu whence the unexpected fire was proceeding. It appears that some Russians who had remained in the outskirts of the village after their attack on the previous night were now firing into the backs of the advancing Japanese infantry. Finding it useless to reply, the Japanese rushed back, forced their way within the walls, and engaged the enemy with the bayonet. A bloody fight ensued, which ended in the surrender of two hundred Russians, after a greater number had been killed. Having thus secured their rear, the Japanese again advanced. By 3 p.m. the 16th Brigade had gained three hundred yards, and, together with the 8th *Kobi* Brigade on the right, had occupied the enemy's position. The action of the Russians inside Su-ma-pu in thus opening fire could have had but one end, but it was characteristic of the fighting spirit which animated the 1st Siberian Corps throughout the battle. Possibly the fact that this corps had been transferred from another army with the object of stiffening a force largely composed of untried troops had inspired its soldiers to special efforts; and had their splendid example been followed San-de-pu might have been captured.

To revert to the Russians, when General Grippenbergh had heard of the resumption of the offensive by the Japanese he had felt forced to defer the continuation of his own attack until the situation should develop. When the enemy was seen to be pressing along the front from San-de-pu down to Su-ma-pu he decided to resist along that front with the Provisional Rifle Corps and the 1st Siberian Corps, and to relieve the pressure against it by moving against the flanks of the attack, and he issued orders to this effect during the forenoon. The 1st Siberian Corps, reinforced by the 56th (Jitomir) Regiment, was to draw back to the line Hei-kou-tai—Chiu-chan-hei-tzu, where it was to make a determined resistance; the Provisional Rifle Corps on its left was to confine its action to

The Japanese
8th Division
attacks the 1st
Siberian Corps.

General Grippen-
bergh's change
of plan.

artillery fire against the Japanese right and not to press on with its own attack on San-de-pu until further orders; and the 15th Division of the VIIIth Corps was to co-operate in a similar manner in the direction of Li-ta-jen-tun. Against the left of the Japanese General Kossakovski was to advance from Huang-la-ta-tzu with four battalions and some guns; whilst on their right the Xth Corps was to attack along the line Hsiao-tai-tzu—Huang-ti. The rôle already allotted to General Mishchenko's force was not altered. These orders were apparently received by the commanders at different times during the day; but the active portion of the scheme as a whole was never fully put into execution owing—as will be seen later—partly to the intervention of the commander-in-chief and partly to the slowness of the transmission of the orders.

Shortly after the troops of the 1st Siberian Corps had been finally driven out of Su-ma-pu it appeared to General Stakelberg that the left flank of that corps was being severely pressed by the 8th *Kobi* Brigade, and he sent a battalion from Hei-kou-tai and later four hundred men towards the threatened point.* In order to reduce the number of points held, also, he instructed the commander of the detachment holding Tou-pao to concentrate his efforts on that place and to withdraw his men from Erh-chia. About noon, by the time that these and certain other minor alterations had been carried out, General Stakelberg received General Grippenbergs's later orders for the day and was able half an hour later to report that he was in touch with the Provisional Rifle Corps and ready to carry them out.† In their new situation the troops of the 1st Siberian Corps prepared to meet a fresh onslaught by the Japanese 8th Division, but for a time all was quiet. The severity of the weather and the heavy fighting of the last few days had to a certain extent exhausted both sides. About three o'clock, however, the 8th *Kobi* Brigade made a fresh attack between Colonel Lesh's force and the 33rd East Siberian Rifle Regiment, endeavouring to drive back the latter and thus to penetrate to Hei-kou-tai. So fierce was the fighting and so numerous were the casualties amongst the

Hei-kou-tai
attacked by
the Japanese
8th Division.

* A battalion of the 33rd East Siberian Rifle Regiment which had arrived during the night at Hei-kou-tai from Huang-la-ta-tzu. Four hundred men from the 35th East Siberian Rifle Regiment.

† See the disposition of the Russian troops on Plan 52.

Russians that two companies of the garrison of Hei-kou-tai had to be told off to help dress the wounded. Again and again the Japanese came on, but they met with no success and, completely exhausted, were reduced to inaction which lasted till nightfall. Shortly after the fight had begun General Stakelberg had been reinforced by the Jitomir Regiment and two batteries of the 41st Artillery Brigade from the VIIIth Corps. The guns were moved into position on the right bank of the Hun Ho, in line with the four batteries of the 1st Siberian Corps, while the infantry joined the corps reserve which by that time had been reduced to six companies.* But to balance this accession of strength to the Russians the Japanese could place in the scale more weighty reinforcements, for the position of the 4th Brigade, so critical for many hours, had been by now re-established by the arrival of the 2nd Division, which had at 11 a.m. left Lang-tung-kou to join the left of the 8th Division.

To turn to the operations to the east of San-de-pu, in the morning the advanced troops of the Xth Corps were holding Huang-ti with six battalions and sixteen guns, and there was one battalion in each of the following villages, which had been fortified,

The Xth Corps. The attack on La-pa-tai.	Chin-chia-tun, Fu-chia-chuang-tzu, Hei-lin-tai; behind, in reserve, were nine battalions, while two battalions of the 121st (Penza) Regiment had been sent to the 15th Division. In accordance with
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the original instructions for the day General Tserpitski had started the bombardment of San-de-pu, Hsiao-tai-tzu and La-pa-tai, preparatory to the attack of the Provisional Rifle Corps on the former, but during the afternoon he received General Grippenbergs orders to take the offensive in order to relieve the pressure along the section San-de-pu—Su-ma-pu. Huang-ti was at once strengthened by three more battalions and five batteries, and preparations to advance were made. Shortly afterwards, since the Japanese pressure to the south-west had decreased, General Grippenbergs ordered the commander of the Xth Corps not to advance, but to remain on guard in case of an attack by the enemy. This message, however, did not arrive until the Xth Corps, led by General Tserpitski himself, had become engaged. The various villages in front held by the Japanese had been shelled during the morning

* Three companies of the 5th, two companies of the 6th, and one company of the 8th Rifle Regiments. On the previous day at 2 p.m. the corps reserve had consisted of thirty-two companies. See p. 184.

and the bombardment was now concentrated chiefly upon Hsiao-tai-tzu and La-pa-tai. About 5.30 p.m. two battalions of the 122nd (Tambov) Regiment succeeded in capturing the former place. La-pa-tai was next attacked by two battalions of the 123rd (Koslov) Regiment.* This was a straggling walled village held by some of the Japanese 9th Regiment and a few cavalry, reinforced during the beginning of the attack by a company of the 18th Regiment from the 3rd Division. It had been fortified and was furnished with fire trenches outside the walled enclosure. The Japanese garrison was soon driven within the latter, which was then surrounded by the Russians who made desperate efforts to force an entrance. At half-past eight they were pressing so hard that the village seemed doomed; but the attackers were driven back by hand-grenades hurled over the walls, and the garrison was shortly afterwards reinforced by three more companies of the 18th Regiment from San-tai-tzu. After one more effort to assault the place the Russians withdrew with heavy loss. During the afternoon and evening the commander-in-chief both telephoned and telegraphed direct to General Tserpitski to enjoin caution. He pointed out the danger to the flanks of the Xth Corps in case of an attack by the Japanese, which he believed probable, since the bulk of their force was not engaged against the Second Manchurian Army, and he moved two brigades of his General Reserve forward into the rayon of the 5th Siberian Corps in order to strengthen the left of General Tserpitski's extended line.

Both by the original orders for the day and those issued later the commander of the VIIIth Corps, who was without his 14th Division, in army reserve, and one brigade of his 15th Division, placed under the orders of General Kutnevich, had to carry out artillery co-operation alone. The bombardment lasted the whole day, the pieces taking part in it for longer or shorter periods being eight siege guns and the forty-eight field guns of the 29th Artillery Brigade.† The units of the corps holding Pei-tai-tzu, also, successfully withstood several attacks which continued till the small hours of the 29th.‡

On the southern portion of the battlefield some severe fighting

* See foot-note (+), p. 181.

† Only one siege battery of four guns had been with this corps at first, but a second battery of four guns had come up by the 28th.

‡ The attacks on Pei-tai-tzu are not mentioned in the accounts from the Japanese side.

took place between General Mishchenko's detachment and the Japanese 21st Regiment of the 5th Division under General Murayama. General Teleshov, the acting commander of the

former force, had, as has been seen, received orders to protect the right flank of the Second Manchurian Army, to operate in close touch with the 1st Siberian Corps, and to reconnoitre the area between the River Tai-tzu and the line

Hei-kou-tai—Lang-tung-kou—Ta-tung-shan-pu. Early in the morning, before the detachment had

left its bivouacs around Hsiu-erh-pu, scouts discovered the presence of hostile bodies along the Hung Ho. These were from the Japanese 21st Regiment which had pushed on westwards from Lang-tung-kou the evening before and had spent the night on the right bank of the stream. General Teleshov resolved to drive the enemy from the various villages which they were reported to be occupying and having decided as a first step to attack Tung-ho-pu with all his force deployed his troops against that village in two wings and a reserve.* But his artillery had scarcely opened fire before he received an order from the commander of the Second Manchurian Army to render assistance to the 1st Siberian Corps. He accordingly swung his left wing round so as to change front towards the north, leaving the right wing opposite Tung-ho-pu to contain General Murayama's detachment. The direction of his attack having now been changed, his batteries came into action south of San-chien-pao, and an advance was made upon that village. Supported by the guns, the Cossacks on the left wing moved forward in dismounted formation under a severe fire, the right wing being at the same time subjected to an equally heavy fire from General Murayama's troops in Tung-ho-pu.

While this advance was being carried out the Russian guns opened a rapid fire upon some Japanese columns which were seen moving north of that village in a north-westerly direction, and inflicted some loss. These were the troops of the Japanese 2nd Division on their way to assist the exhausted 4th Brigade. Its advanced guard at 3 p.m. had actually reached San chien-pao, whence it was to have been directed upon Erh-chia, but

* *Right Wing.*—The 2nd Brigade of the 4th Don Cossack Cavalry Division with the 3rd Don Cossack Battery.

Left Wing.—The Ural Trans-Baikal Cossack Division, the 1st and 4th Trans-Baikal Cossack Batteries, and the 20th Horse Artillery Battery.

Reserve.—The Caucasian Cavalry Brigade.

to move on to the latter place with this Russian force acting upon its left flank was clearly impossible, and accordingly three batteries of the division came into action on the east of San-chien-pao against General Mishchenko's left wing, while the infantry got into touch with the 21st Regiment, which had by now pushed back the Russian right wing endeavouring to contain it and had forced its way into Hsiu-erh-pu. Beyond that point, however, it had so far been unable to advance, having suffered severely and lost every officer of the single battery which accompanied it. The combined efforts of the 21st Regiment and the 2nd Division now had their effect, and about dark the Japanese drove back the Russian cavalry to Niu-chu, the 21st Regiment in pursuit. The Russian casualties were slight, only one man being killed and thirty wounded.

After having rendered this assistance to General Murayama, the Japanese 2nd Division continued its march to Su-ma-pu; but arrived there too late to take part in the attack by the 8th Division. Nevertheless the news that reinforcements had come up brought about a Japanese success, for the left of the 4th Brigade, which had been obliged to retire from Erh-chia at 3 a.m., were eager to attack again, and being led against the place reoccupied it. Not satisfied with this exploit and elated with success they left the village under cover of night and tried to take Tou-pao; but they were repulsed by superior numbers.

General Kossakovski's force took no part in the day's proceedings and spent practically the whole day in carrying out its passive protective rôle on the right flank. It was not until late in the evening that General Grippenbergs's instructions for the advance from Huang-la-ta-tzu against the Japanese left reached its commander. Before this could be carried out orders were received for the suspension of operations by the whole of the Second Manchurian Army and for its retirement to its original positions.

While the Russians along the Hun Ho were, during the morning of the 28th, at the most offering a stubborn resistance, the remainder of their forces west of the railway were, as on the previous three days, doing practically nothing. Completely mystified by this inaction of the Russians to his front, General Oku not unnaturally came to the conclusion that they were

General
Kossakovski's
detachment.

The Japanese
Second Army.
General Oku's
anxiety.

moving, or about to move, troops to join those opposing General Tatsumi near Hei-kou-tai, a course which might gravely imperil the situation in that quarter. He therefore issued orders at 11.20 a.m. that the artillery of the Second Army should open fire along the section of front from the Mandarin Road westward as far as Ta-tai.* This, he judged, would produce an impression that the Japanese Second Army was about to advance and would cause the enemy to hesitate before transferring force from the threatened portion of his line. To heighten the illusion he ordered up the five batteries of the 13th Artillery Regiment—then in army reserve—directing them to fire from a position close to Han-shan-tai. A little before noon these guns opened, and the Russians instantly retorted. A close watch was kept from the Japanese observing stations, and it was seen that the enemy's infantry were taken by surprise. Small parties, followed by supports, could be descried making hastily for the front trenches. The number and position of the hostile guns were also noted. Eighty were counted in the vicinity of the railway line and on both sides of it, and west of them as far as Meng-ta-pu north of Li-ta-jen-tun were ninety more, besides howitzers. Between 1 and 2 p.m. the cannonade was stopped, for by that time it was evident that no reduction had been made in the Russian artillery before the Japanese Second Army. The Japanese general appears to have congratulated himself upon the success of his ruse, and to strengthen it, just before sundown he caused the guns to reopen fire. As a matter of fact his anxiety was uncalled for, since no such transfer of troops as was suspected by him had been contemplated by the Russians.

Meanwhile General Oku had not confined his activity to a show of force calculated to work upon his enemy. He had during the day moved the 3rd Division some six miles west of Ta-tung-shan-pu, nearer to the point of danger, and from it two battalions of the 18th Regiment had been sent to strengthen the village of Ta-tai, to the north-east of Li-ta-jen-tun. The General Reserve had also been again drawn upon to strengthen the front line in the same direction, Marshal Oyama having at 10 a.m. sent off the 10th *Kobi* Brigade—the last of the large units of his newly formed reserve—from Wu-li-tai-tzu to Ta-tung-shan-pu. At

Movement
of Japanese
reserves.

* North-east of Li-ta-jen-tun.

10 p.m. it left the latter place and marched for Ta-tai, where it arrived to reinforce the 5th Division at 5 a.m. on the 29th.

Though by the advance of the Japanese 5th and 8th Divisions General Grippenberg had been forced to abandon the attack on San-de-pu for the day, and though his second plan of pressing the flanks of the Japanese had not been carried out, the situation of the Second Manchurian Army was much as it had been the day before, for the 1st Siberian Corps was holding the line assigned to it. On the evening of the 28th, therefore, he decided to continue his offensive on the morrow, and with this view issued orders to the Xth Corps to retire to its former position, leaving a garrison in Huang-ti; to confine its efforts on the 29th to artillery fire; and to mass at Hsiao-han-tai-tzu a reserve of eight battalions and two batteries which would be temporarily at the disposal of the commander of the VIIIth Corps—presumably with a view to reinforcing the troops to attack San-de-pu. The duties allotted to the detachments of Generals Mishchenko and Kossakovski were as for the 28th—reconnaissance. With a view to settling upon a line of action as regards San-de-pu, General Grippenberg in the evening held a council of war at army head-quarters in Chang-tan with the commander of the Provisional Rifle Corps and the artillery commanders of that corps and of the VIIIth Corps. At this meeting it was decided that the capture of San-de-pu had ceased to be of primary importance and that the proper objective of the Second Manchurian Army was no longer this locality—which could be masked—but the hostile forces.

The plan of action thus foreshadowed, however, was destined not to be carried into execution, for the commander-in-chief had by now come to quite other conclusions as to the requirements of the situation. His growing apprehensions as to the danger of a Japanese attack between the Hun Ho and the Third Manchurian Army had been increased by the cannonade carried out by General Oku's orders. At eight o'clock the deliberations of the council of war at Second Manchurian Army head-quarters were interrupted by the following telegram from him:—

“It has not yet been discovered from which direction the Japanese main attack will come—should they have decided

General
Grippenberg's
plans for
the 29th.

General
Kuropatkin
prescribes
caution.

to assume the offensive. At present only a comparatively insignificant portion of their force is operating against you, and any success it may have had is simply due to the lack of co-ordination in the operations of the Second Manchurian Army and to its great dispersion. These considerations render it impossible for me to detach to Your Excellency any force whatever from the General Reserve, which I am holding in readiness until the direction of the advance of the Japanese main body has been determined. Assist me without delay to clear up this point. I advise you to unite the infantry of Kossakovski's detachment to that of the 1st Siberian Corps. The 1st Siberian Corps is to remain concentrated, so as to protect the right flank of the Provisional Rifle Corps. Remember that by any advance of the Provisional Rifle Corps upon San-de-pu, a considerable gap will be formed between that corps and the 1st Siberian Corps, through which the enemy may penetrate with the object of dealing a blow upon the right flank of the Provisional Rifle Corps. For this reason if any attack upon San-de-pu is undertaken a strong screen must be placed against the enemy holding the line Lao-chiao—Ku-cheng-tzu—Ta-tai. Do not weaken unduly the section held by the Xth Corps, for I continue to apprehend an attack in force against it. To-morrow, the 29th, I will distribute in Ta-su-chia-pu and near the coal siding at Su-chia-tun twenty-four battalions of the General Reserve. I lay particular stress upon the danger of moving small bodies southwards from Huang-ti, in which direction we might meet a reverse such as has just recently happened to our troops at San-de-pu. If the enemy should make his attack to-morrow in any strength the troops of the Second Manchurian Army must avail themselves of every advantage conferred by the defensive in order to cause him as heavy a loss as possible; after the enemy is repulsed you can continue the prosecution of the task allotted to the Second Manchurian Army."

The concluding words of this message, which was in cipher, implied the postponement of the offensive—not its abandonment. But this impression was not long to remain, for shortly afterwards General Grippenberg's chief of staff was summoned to the telephone, and

General Kuro-
patkin orders
a retirement.

was amazed to hear in General Kuropatkin's own voice the following words:—*

“Withdraw forthwith from the advanced line all services. Dispatch all wounded to the rear. If there is insufficient transport the troops must carry the wounded themselves. The troops are to withdraw this very night and occupy a concentrated position.”

Any doubts which may have existed as to the exact meaning of this unexpected verbal message were soon set at rest by the receipt of two confirmatory telegrams in which it was stated that an advance in strength by the enemy against the Third Manchurian Army and part of the Xth Corps had been discovered; that this movement was construed by General Kuropatkin to be the Japanese main attack; and that since the Russian troops round San-de-pu were separated by a gap from the position of the Third Manchurian Army, the operations against that village were to be abandoned and the Second Manchurian Army was to withdraw with all its forces to the line Ssu-fang-tai—Chang-tan—Yang-shu-lin-tzu, that is to say, upon a prolongation of the front occupied by the Xth Corps. General Kuropatkin gave as a reason for his change of policy that it was doubtful if San-de-pu could be taken by tired troops who had already suffered considerably, that the further losses entailed by its capture would necessitate suspending the advance for some considerable time, and that the gap between San-de-pu and the Third Manchurian Army seemed to render the reinforcement of either of these portions of his line by the other of almost insuperable difficulty.†

This sudden surrender of the offensive inaugurated but a few days before came as a great surprise to the commander of the Second Manchurian Army, for, though General Grippenberghad received during the day several telegrams—in which the commander-in-chief spoke of the danger which the Second Manchurian Army would incur in the case of a serious attack of the enemy towards the north—these might have been considered as at the most indicating some indecision on the part of his superior. The definite order to give up the enterprise which had been so long prepared and had as yet by no means failed was received

* Owing to deafness General Grippenbergh was not able to use the instrument himself.

† By “advance,” it seems that general advance of the whole army so long discussed, must have been meant.

almost with incredulity. Nevertheless, the concluding paragraphs of the first of the two confirmatory telegrams were specific and direct. Of the VIIIth Corps the 14th Division was to proceed to Hsin-tai-tzu where it would be in rear of the other division of the corps—the 15th—on the line Chang-tan—Yang-shu-lin-tzu. The Provisional Rifle Corps was to occupy Chang-tan, General Kossakovski was to withdraw to Ssu-fang-tai, and the 1st Siberian Corps was to cross the Hun and join the Second Manchurian Army reserve. All these movements were to be carried out during the night of the 28th under the protection of rear-guards, and of the cavalry, which was left at the army commander's disposal.

The necessary instructions were soon issued and the retirement was carried out in the darkness. The first unit to move was the Provisional Rifle Corps, at about 11 p.m., followed a couple of hours afterwards by the 1st Siberian Corps. The latter was to some extent hampered by the Japanese, who made several attempts to break through its rear guards, but were driven off by artillery fire. General Kossakovski's troops got under way about dawn, and General Mishchenko's detachment remained in touch with the enemy until about 10 a.m. on the 29th, when it moved back to Tsu-yu-ta. The VIIIth and Xth Corps withdrew gradually and fell back practically to the positions occupied by them before the battle began. Tactically the retreat of the Russians was carried out without difficulty, but the extreme cold added much to the sufferings of the wounded for whose transport the means provided were quite insufficient.* In the rayon of the 1st Siberian Corps the greater part of the Jitomir Regiment was employed in collecting and carrying wounded to the rear.

On the side of the Japanese fresh troops were still making for the scene of the fight, and the 10th *Kobi* Brigade left Ta-tung-shan-pu at ten o'clock at night for Ta-tai. General Tatsumi, too, decided to make another attempt under cover of darkness to wrest Hei-kou-tai from the Russians, and about midnight the 8th and 2nd Divisions began their advance. But in the face of a severe fire the attack failed, and it was not until the 1st Siberian Corps retired in the early hours of the 29th that the village which for three days had baffled every effort of the Japanese was once more occupied

* The thermometer fell to 8° below zero (Fahr.) during the night.

by them. Their troops then followed up, the 8th Division crossing the Hun behind the village and hurrying to Tu-tai-tzu, the 2nd Division on its left, marching direct to Huang-la-ta-tzu, and the 21st Regiment striking the river farther south. At the same time the main body of the 5th Division, which, in co-operation with the 8th *Kobi* Brigade from Ta-tai, had at an early hour on the 29th driven back a Russian rear guard and occupied Fei-tsai-ho-tzu, crossed the river a little to the north of the latter village and bore somewhat to its right. The Russians meanwhile were making good their retreat; and since a prolongation of the action was contrary to the wishes of Marshal Oyama, and might lead to further serious fighting, General Tatsumi on the 29th issued orders for the troops to hold the following line:—

The 5th Division: from Liu-tiao-kou through Chan-yi-tao, Ma-leng-tzu, to Fei-tsai-ho-tzu.

The 8th Division: from the latter village across the river to a point about a mile west of Hei-kou-tai.

The 2nd Division: to the west through Huang-la-ta-tzu, and thence along the left bank some three miles, beyond which the line was to be carried by the 21st Regiment.

These movements, however, were not achieved without some recrudescence of fighting. Since the occupation of Chang-tan-ho-nan by part of the Japanese 5th Division threatened the village of Chang-tan upon the opposite bank of the Hun, now an important point in the new Russian line, a portion of the 1st Rifle Brigade of the Provisional Rifle Corps attacked the village on the 29th and expelled the Japanese with some loss. But the latter, returning to the charge on the night of the 31st January, succeeded in forcing their way back into the place, where they held their ground until Russian reinforcements came up and drove them out with great slaughter. Nevertheless a small body of the Japanese clung to an isolated group of houses and maintained a continuous fire upon the garrison until the afternoon of the 2nd February, when their ammunition became exhausted and they were finally expelled.

Fighting at
Chang-tan-
ho-nan,
29th January—
2nd February.

But before this final incident of the battle General Grippenberg had taken an unusual step. On the 30th January he had reported himself to General Head-Quarters as being sick. In reply, General Kuropatkin appointed General Muilov to succeed General Grippenberg temporarily, the latter's VIIIth

Corps to be taken over by General Ivanov. The commander of the Second Manchurian Army, however, had also on the 30th telegraphed to the War Minister requesting that he might be recalled to Russia on account of ill-health. On the following day he received the Emperor's command to report in cipher the real reason for his application. His answer was that, beyond illness, the real cause for his request was that he had been deprived of all independent powers and initiative and could not be of any service in the deplorable state of affairs which existed; and he again petitioned for recall to St. Petersburg so that he might furnish a full report of the circumstances. On the 1st February the necessary permission was accorded for him to return and two days later he left the front for St. Petersburg after having held his command for scarcely seven weeks. There had been considerable friction between the commander-in-chief and General Grippenberg ever since the deliberations of a council of war which had sat on the 10th January at which the commander of the Second Manchurian Army was supposed to have urged a retirement north instead of the offensive which had been fixed upon. His failure at San-de-pu and the constant interference of General Kuropatkin in matters which he considered were properly under his own control seem to have inspired him with disgust and the desire to throw up his appointment. General Kuropatkin, who was of opinion that this officer was largely responsible for the failure of the Russian attack, looked upon his recall as detrimental to his own authority and subversive of all discipline.

The battle also resulted in the loss of another senior officer to the Russian side, for, as will be seen later, General Stakelberg's enterprising tactics on the Russian right did not meet with approval and were to cost him his command.

CHAPTER LXV.

COMMENTS ON THE BATTLE OF SAN-DE-PU.

THE abortive battle of San-de-pu, fought during the bitter days of January, 1905, with a loss of some eleven thousand men to the Russians and some nine thousand to their opponents, was probably the most sanguinary field action of the war. The second and last essay to seize the initiative actually made by the Russians, it was ostensibly undertaken in the hope of gaining a victory that would change the course of the campaign.* When fighting ceased both sides remained practically on the positions they had previously occupied; and the battle proved a costly episode productive of no material effect upon the situation. As regards the Russians, from whose side it will be considered first, it was an opportunity missed and a sheer waste of life. Its very name bears eloquent testimony to the extent to which performance fell short of expectation. Instead of being known as "The Second Battle of the Sha Ho" or "The Battle of Mukden," either of which designations would have been warranted had the operations attained the magnitude anticipated, it will remain known to history as the battle of San-de-pu or Hei-kou-tai, the two points at the extreme flank of the long line covered by the opposing armies to which fighting was restricted.

Though the battle had not the same ulterior motive, it was the outcome of the offensive policy for the relief of Port Arthur inaugurated by General Kuropatkin at the battle of the Sha Ho, for from the time when his troops were fighting to stave off defeat along the banks of the River Sha in October, 1904, until they advanced again on the 25th January, 1905, he had not ceased to

* Six days before his armies advanced, General Kuropatkin in a circular to his army commanders expressed the opinion that the operations about to take place would have a decisive influence upon the whole course of the campaign. Whether he was in reality very hopeful of success, however, is open to some doubt. This point is discussed later.

contemplate a resumption of the offensive so unfortunately initiated. As has been pointed out, the fall of Port Arthur was an event which altered the whole aspect of the war. But this remark applies more to its strategical significance in regard to the operations as a whole than to any immediate change produced in the position on land. At first sight its most striking feature appears to have been the fact that General Kuropatkin was no longer tied by the necessity for relieving the fortress and had gained a strategic freedom which he had never before enjoyed. In the actual circumstances, however, this freedom was more nominal than real, there being reasons, as will be seen, why it could not be exploited. The essential development appears rather to have been that the Japanese Third Army was also set free, the controlling influence being the length of time which must elapse before that army could move up to join the forces under Marshal Oyama.

Omitting, for reasons which will be stated later, any consideration of the factor which had recently been introduced into the larger problem before the Russians by the approach of the Second Pacific Squadron, there were, after the 2nd January, 1905, three courses open to the Russian commander-in-chief. He could remain on the defensive on the positions he then held and leave the initiative to Marshal Oyama: he could retire to Tieh-ling, or farther north, and there wait until the flow of reinforcements from Europe should give him an incontestably overwhelming numerical superiority before he sought a decision: he could attack. The choice really lay between the second and third courses, retirement and attack. It would have been possible for General Kuropatkin to have carried out the first course; and theoretically it was open to him to have slightly weakened his front, to have massed a very large reserve, and to have awaited attack by the Japanese in order to deliver a counter-stroke in great force. But the essential point at the moment was to strike if possible before the Japanese reinforcements came up, and this object would not have been attained by waiting for Marshal Oyama to assume the initiative. Beyond the three Rifle brigades and the XVIth Corps, then on their way to the front, General Kuropatkin could look forward to no material increase to his strength for some time; and by remaining passive, within close reach of the Japanese until General Nogi's army arrived on the scene, he would have lost part of his numerical advantage and would have gained in no other way than by possibly avoiding active operations during

the winter weather. This course does not seem to have been contemplated.

As regards retirement, the arguments in its favour were that it would shorten the Russian communications and at the same time lengthen those of the Japanese, if they followed up. If they did not, time would be gained and the *moral* of the Russians raised, since the inactivity of the Japanese might be taken as a sign of exhaustion and a confession of weakness. A concentration nearer Harbin, also, would place the Russian forces in a more central position, in the remote contingency of support being required for Vladivostok. Tactically, it does not seem, in the light of later knowledge, that General Kuropatkin would have experienced much difficulty in extricating his force from its close juxtaposition to the Japanese, for it is doubtful if the latter would have interfered until they themselves were ready to advance, which they were not. This latter fact, however, was not known to the Russians, who on the 4th January were taking measures to prepare against attack, and it cannot therefore be adduced as an argument in favour of a movement to the rear. On the other hand the reasons against retirement were weighty though to some extent non-military. Politically it was undesirable, since it would imply delay, and to convey the impression of a prolongation of hostilities was specially inopportune at this moment, when marked signs of dissatisfaction at the conduct of the war were showing themselves in Russia. Morally, also, after all the pronouncements as to the intended offensive which had been made during the winter, another withdrawal would be bound to exert a depressing effect on the Russian troops and to encourage the Japanese correspondingly, while the impression produced locally by the evacuation of Mukden without fighting might be distinctly harmful.

On these two grounds therefore General Kuropatkin's best line of action at this juncture was to attack: politically, because a victorious advance would tend to allay popular feeling at home: morally, because the offensive meant the prosecution instead of the abandonment of a plan which had been under open preparation for several weeks.

Strategically, also, it was the best course for the Russians, for the broadly stated reason that they then possessed a better chance of gaining a success than they were likely to have for some time. But it must be remembered that their advantage was entirely due to a numerical superiority, part of which was temporary and

liable to be discounted by the appearance of the Japanese Third Army. The above expression of opinion as to their correct strategy, therefore, is subject to the qualification that the offensive should not have been postponed until it was possible for the bulk of that Japanese reinforcement to come up. The exact period of time for which action could have been deferred with safety cannot be definitely stated, for it is not known to what extent the transfer of the Japanese Third Army northwards could have been expedited in the event of dire necessity. The fact that practically none of its units was employed at San-de-pu, however, leads to the supposition that there were great difficulties in the way of moving General Nogi's troops for at least a month after their siege duties had ceased. In the light of after knowledge, therefore, it is clear that General Kuropatkin in reality ran no great risk in postponing his advance until near the end of January, when the last of his own expected reinforcements should have reached him. But it is not so much the true nature of the situation as it is known now that has to be considered in reviewing his action as the aspect of affairs that presented itself to him.

In December the superiority the Russians thought they possessed was some ninety-five thousand bayonets, and it can be taken to have been approximately the same in the beginning of January. Various estimates were made by them about this time of the proportion of his army which General Nogi would be likely to bring up in the immediate future: according to one of the more moderate it amounted in round numbers to some thirty-five thousand bayonets.* And, what is most important, it was thought that this force might begin to arrive on the battlefield about the middle of January and might complete its concentration by the beginning of February. The Russians also counted on receiving reinforcements which by about the 12th January would bring up their advantage to one hundred and thirteen thousand bayonets; and by the 19th, allowing for the fact that some of the Japanese Third Army might, according to the Russian calculations, by then also have arrived, to one hundred and twenty thousand bayonets. By the beginning of February, however, if, as was expected, the last of their own reinforcements and also the balance of General Nogi's troops should have reached the field, their preponderance would have decreased to about one hundred thousand bayonets. In other

* See p. 107.

words their superiority would then have fallen back approximately to what it had been a month earlier.*

In commenting upon the time selected for General Mishchenko's raid the opinion has been expressed that, the date for the Russian general advance having been fixed, the raid should have been deferred in order to synchronize with it. But it would have served the purpose of co-operation equally well if the advance had been expedited so as to take place at the moment when the cavalry was making its presence felt on the enemy's communications, in other words, about the 12th or 13th January. And, as may be seen, this would also have gone far to ensure that the Russians should be at their estimated maximum relative strength shortly after the commencement of their attack, and might have held out some prospect, according to the information upon which they were acting, that the bulk of General Nogi's army would not be thrown into the fight until after the crisis of the battle had been reached. By striking not later than half-way through January, or so soon as the Rifle brigades arrived at the front, the Russians, whatever their doubts as to the sufficiency of their original preponderance, would have taken the best means, according to their own appreciation of the situation, of making the most of the advantage they did possess.

What did happen was as follows: though the offensive had been under consideration for some weeks the original scheme for it was apparently prepared under the sole assumption that it would be carried out against the Japanese First, Second and Fourth Armies alone. Consequently, when Port Arthur fell there was no plan ready for dealing with the sudden change in the situation by means of earlier action which would beyond all doubt anticipate the appearance upon the scene of the Japanese Third Army. The existing arrangements were elaborated and adhered to, practically without alteration, the time for the advance being still left dependent upon the arrival of the Russian reinforcements instead of being governed by the new necessity for forestalling those of the enemy; and to deal with the latter the alternative of attempting to cut the Japanese communications was adopted. By the 16th January General Kuropatkin must have been aware

* See p. 7. General Grippenbergh calculated in December, 1904, that by the addition of the reinforcements then due the Russian preponderance would be increased from 95,000 to 160,000 bayonets. This seems to have been an overestimate.

of the failure of this attempt. And three days afterwards, when he issued orders for the Second Manchurian Army to advance on the 25th, it seems that he could not have done so with confidence if he attached any importance to the calculations of his own staff. There was no reason to suppose that the Japanese would not on this occasion make a determined resistance; and if the Russians persisted in their attack, it was unlikely, according to past experience, that the battle would be over in less than seven to ten days. It was, therefore, so far as General Kuropatkin knew, both possible and probable that the bulk of General Nogi's force might be thrown into the fight soon after it commenced; and he must have felt that his best opportunity for acting had passed and, since he was doubtful of the adequacy of his original numerical advantage, must have feared that he might at any moment be forced to act on the defensive. That this was the case is indeed one explanation of his subsequent conduct of the battle.

On the whole, although the offensive was demanded, an attack carried out so late and therefore under such apprehension of the intervention of the Japanese Third Army—though that army was in fact nearly two hundred and fifty miles from the field of battle—as to paralyse all vigour and lead to a premature surrender of the initiative was foredoomed to failure and was useless.*

It is of course possible that General Kuropatkin did not really intend to press for a decision at this time and made a demonstration unwillingly and against his own judgment. And if this was the case his motive for advancing may be found in the political situation in Russia. The war had been unpopular from its beginning and the series of defeats and retirements culminating in the loss of Port Arthur, Russia's vaunted stronghold in the Far East, had added to the discontent at the continuance of hostilities and had intensified the general unrest which was then at its height. Indeed on Sunday the 22nd January, not four days before the first shot of the battle of San-de-pu was

* That the Japanese, themselves, were surprised at the lateness of the time chosen for attack by the Russians is shown by the following expression of opinion made by one of the Japanese army commanders during the course of the battle:—

“Nothing could have been less opportune, it appeared to us, from their point of view than the moment they had selected: weeks had passed since the capture of Port Arthur and they must have known that by this time part of the besieging Third Army had already arrived at the front.”

fired, the popular agitation culminated in scenes of bloodshed in front of the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. It is obvious that since the final orders for the battle were issued four days before this occurrence, General Kuropatkin's final decision to fight cannot be attributed to it; but it is possible that the signs of disquiet which had been observed for some time had led the Government to urge him to make an early bid for victory in the hopes that a success in the field might counteract the discontent at home. It has even been suggested that General Grippenbergh was the bearer of instructions to this end.* But, even if it be true that General Kuropatkin's hand was thus forced, the battle cannot be included amongst those actions in which strategical requirements have been sacrificed to political considerations, for in this case both policy and strategy demanded the same course.

The approach of the Second Pacific Squadron has not been regarded as a factor which could have influenced Russian strategy on land for the following reasons. In January, 1905, the squadron was at Nossi Bé, having covered more than half the distance to its original destination. On the one hand the success of this voyage, which had not been anticipated, had caused public opinion in Russia to veer round from scepticism as to the future of the new venture to a more sanguine view of its prospects. On the other hand the Government itself seems by the fall of Port Arthur to have been thrown into doubt as to the advisability of allowing the squadron to proceed to eastern waters. It is certain, therefore, that the Russian commander-in-chief on land could have had no precise ideas as to the future operations of, or possibilities before, the naval force.† But whatever his doubts on these points, it must have been obvious to General Kuropatkin that the army could do nothing to assist Admiral Rozhstvenski unless he reached port, and that the only port to which he could go was Vladivostok. Whether he should succeed in making that place with the bulk of his fleet, after evading the Japanese; with a portion of it, after fighting an indecisive action; or with the remnants of it, after

* Ullrich, *The Trial under Fire of the Russian Army in the War of 1904-05*, p. 17.

† It will be seen that later, when Admiral Rozhstvenski had been ordered to proceed and had been reinforced by Admiral Nebogatov's ships, he apparently remained undecided for some time whether to court action with the Japanese fleet or to endeavour to break through to Vladivostok without fighting.

The absence, in the Russian accounts of the land operations, of any reference to the Second Pacific Squadron is somewhat remarkable.

having suffered defeat, the only way in which General Kuropatkin could co-operate with him would be by preventing the capture by land attack of the fortress and the ships contained in it. Moreover, even if Admiral Rozhstvenski should eventually establish himself at Vladivostok with a view to interfering with the enemy's oversea communications, it was unlikely that the Japanese, after their experience at Port Arthur, would again divide their numerically inferior army and undertake another siege when they could obtain protection for their communications by naval action.* The position of the Second Pacific Squadron in Vladivostok would not be parallel to that of the First Pacific Squadron in Port Arthur, for the Russians would have no further force to send out in support of any portion of the squadron which might have arrived in Vladivostok, and there consequently would not be the same necessity for the Japanese to attempt to destroy the ships in harbour as had existed in 1904. The prospect, therefore, of any co-operation between the Russian army and navy was so speculative and so remote in time as to be negligible.

To turn from wider issues to the conduct of the actual battle by the Russians, except for the attack against his extreme left on the 18th January, General Kuropatkin was again allowed by his opponent full liberty to develop his plans. He was thus in a position to enjoy to a great degree the advantages conferred by the initiative, and within the limitations as to time already noted, was free to decide when and how he would strike. The scheme underlying his action at San-de-pu was generally similar in conception to that put into practice at the Sha Ho, insomuch as victory was to be sought by the envelopment of a flank combined with a frontal attack. The difference was that the Japanese left was now to be the objective of the envelopment, whereas in October it had been their right. This alteration was justified for the reasons that have been put forward in the criticisms on the selection of the flank for attack at the Sha Ho, and was doubtless brought about by the experience of that battle and the failure of General Stakelberg's Eastern Force.† But though sound in conception, in execution the major tactics of the

* Later on General Kuropatkin was seriously disturbed by reports of a proposed Japanese landing on the east coast of the mainland, and was induced to detach force to guard against it. But this was a different matter from allowing his strategy to be influenced in anticipation, on the mere chance.

† See Vol. II, p. 491.

Russians failed in two important particulars. As has been seen, their opportunity lay in exploiting their temporary numerical superiority to its utmost and therefore in pressing with their whole force and without waste of time. Yet the two main particulars in which the battle failed were that the offensive was not undertaken along the whole front, either seriously or as a distraction to the enemy, and that not even the attack attempted was pressed strenuously.

Why General Gripenberg's movement against the Japanese left flank was not supported by the pressure of the other two armies is not explicable on tactical grounds. And it seems that such co-operation was originally contemplated—at least in principle—for it was laid down in General Kuropatkin's orders of the 19th January that the Third Manchurian Army was to attack the enemy between Chang-liang-pu and Lin-sheng-pu and then to push on to the line of the Sha Ho between the latter village and Hung-ling-pu, whilst the First Manchurian Army was to co-operate in the direction of the Hou-tai hillock. That this project was not carried into execution may, as already suggested, have been due to the fact that General Kuropatkin never really intended a serious action, or to the fact that after the issue of his orders on the 19th he was thrown into such a state of indecision by his ignorance of the whereabouts of General Nogi's army that he hesitated before committing himself whole-heartedly. His general inclination to postpone the advance leads to the former conclusion, whilst the restriction of General Gripenberg's advance on the 21st, and the transfer eastwards of the 72nd Division give rise to a suspicion that the news of the Japanese attack on Ching-ho-cheng three days before may have shaken his confidence at the last moment. But, whatever its cause, the course pursued by the Russians worked in a vicious circle to their detriment. Not having started simultaneously with the enveloping attack on the west, the frontal action of the First and Third Manchurian Armies was allowed to become contingent on the progress of the envelopment, the success of which was rendered more difficult of attainment and more improbable by the very fact that it was unsupported. And when the envelopment was found not to be making such progress as was expected, General Kuropatkin could not bring himself to break this progressive arrangement and launch all his armies into the fight, which would have been the one way of helping General Gripenberg. Thus the operation which it was

hoped would change the whole course of the war was permitted to degenerate into an isolated attempt at the offensive carried out in one corner of the battlefield by less than one-third of the whole strength available. Such frequent reference, however, has been made in the course of the account of the battle to the immediate consequences of the neglect of the Russians to apply pressure all along the line—which are also summarized in the portion of these comments dealing with the Japanese major tactics—that no more need be said here than to point out that the omission was the principal material cause of their defeat.

Necessary, however, as it would have been, even in the case of a general advance, for the Second Manchurian Army to press on relentlessly in order to carry out its part in the combined operation, such a course became vital when there was no contributory action or even threat elsewhere which might have held the Japanese and prevented Marshal Oyama transferring strength to the threatened point. Nevertheless, as has been stated, the second striking feature of the Russian tactics is the half-hearted and dilatory manner in which the enveloping attack was conducted. This was to a great extent due to the attitude of the commander-in-chief, whose action in assigning beforehand a definite limit to the advance of the Second Manchurian Army in his order of the 21st January seems to have tinged the whole of its operations. And his influence throughout the battle was restrictive. On the 26th he ordered the withdrawal of General Kossakovski's force from the position it had taken up the day before, stipulated that Hei-lin-tai should not be attacked until San-de-pu was captured, and when he was under the impression that the attempt to take San-de-pu had failed issued orders for defence. Later, when he heard that the village had been captured, he acquiesced in General Gripenberg's project for a day of rest on the morrow. On the 27th, when the truth was known about San-de-pu, he did nothing to assist General Gripenberg in his fresh effort against the village, and deprecated General Stakelberg's attack on Su-ma-pu as leading to too great a dispersion of force. On the 28th the commander of the Xth Corps was enjoined to be cautious, and the motive underlying the commander-in-chief's instructions to General Gripenberg of that evening, before retirement was decided upon, was defence. It is true that General Kuropatkin did project an offensive movement on the east and west round the flanks of the Japanese, but it could not be carried out.

Not once during the battle did he evince any determination to retain the initiative he had seized or to force a decision. On the contrary, it appears from the tone of his orders and communications, that his final resolve to break off the action on the night of the 28th was only due to a culmination of the fears which had been harassing him for a week. Firmly convinced all along that the Japanese intended to adopt the offensive, he interpreted the cannonade carried out by General Oku on that day for the purpose of "drawing fire" as the preliminary step in their attack and according to his predilection selected a retirement for a closer concentration as the best method of meeting such a movement. Both at Liao-yang and the Sha Ho, General Kuropatkin's chief concern had been to avoid defeat; but on those two occasions the order for retirement had not been given until a general attack had been attempted and had failed and the commander-in-chief had himself intervened in an active attempt to force success. At San-de-pu, on the other hand, the action was given up when two-thirds of the Russian forces had not been engaged. Even had the Japanese, as General Kuropatkin thought, been initiating a counter-attack between the Second and Third Manchurian Armies it is open to question whether the retirement of the right was the best course for the Russians to have pursued. As it was, however, it seems that even on the 29th a general advance of the Russians all along the line, combined with the weight of their General Reserve thrown against the Japanese east of San-de-pu might have produced a great result.

In his handling of the Second Manchurian Army General Grippenberg reproduced on a smaller scale the main fault committed by the commander-in-chief, in that he employed only a proportion of his whole strength whilst the remainder looked on. Of the infantry at his disposal—slightly more than six divisions and three Rifle brigades, or a total equivalent to seven and a half divisions—not one-half was engaged on the first two days of the battle, and on the 27th an even less proportion, for the projected renewal of the attack on San-de-pu was not carried out and the 1st Siberian Corps was the only unit to show activity. On the 28th the intention was that San-de-pu should be assailed by a force amounting to nearly two divisions; but before this was undertaken the whole army was placed on the defensive, and the offensive was limited to the counter-attack by the Xth Corps and General Kossakovski's force against the flanks of the advancing

Japanese. Actually a portion of the Xth Corps and General Mishchenko's force did attack. The latter detachment was also engaged actively on the 26th and 27th, but mostly on the initiative of its own commander. This ill-judged economy, or rather waste, of force, may have been partly due to a mistaken conception on the part of General Gripenberg as to what the situation demanded; but it was rendered inevitable by his system of advance, which consisted in inaugurating separate attacks upon different localities, to be carried out by specified fractions of his force and, what is most remarkable, to be carried out in succession. Thus on the 25th January the VIIIth Corps was not to move on San-de-pu until the 1st Siberian Corps had captured Hei-kou-tai. The latter village, however, was not gained by the Russians until the evening, and no serious effort was made against San-de-pu. On the 26th San-de-pu was forced into prominence as the crux of the situation, for until the VIIIth Corps gained possession of it the 1st Siberian Corps was not to press on. The result of this cut-and-dried, inelastic and progressive plan based on preconceived notions was to allow nothing for the element of chance or for the openings which may be seized by the exercise of initiative by subordinate commanders. To them was denied any exercise of that opportunism which so often brings great results from the exploitation of a local success.

Putting aside the unsuitability of the step-by-step method of subduing the villages on his front, it is not obvious why the necessity for their capture, the scope of which operation was shortly reduced to the attack of one village, assumed the importance it did in General Gripenberg's eyes. The whole value of these points to the enemy lay in the delaying effect of their resistance, and it was to the advantage of the Japanese that the Russians should fritter away their strength and lose time in attempts to take them instead of sweeping on. Though his army was unsupported by the other two, it seems that General Gripenberg would have incurred little risk had he detached a brigade with some artillery to contain San-de-pu and pressed on with the bulk of his force. If he had done this on the 25th or 26th January he would have forestalled the transfer of the bulk of the Japanese reserves to their left flank and would have met comparatively little opposition. His failure to break through this weak section of the Japanese front was not due to any inherent virtue in the system of holding isolated

points, strong as such a system may be in resistance : it was caused by the fact that he allowed the momentum of his advance to be checked and then stopped by the unnecessary attempt to reduce one unimportant village, which was the key to no position, and the possession of which was not essential to his further progress. From this it followed, owing to General Kuropatkin's plan of battle, that the resistance made by the garrison of San-de-pu was permitted to paralyse the whole Russian offensive.

Apart from the merits or demerits of the system of advance adopted by General Grippenberg, and making due allowance for certain factors favouring the defence which are alluded to later and for the adverse climatic conditions, it cannot be said that the performance of the Russian infantry against San-de-pu was distinguished by dash. The attempt made by the VIIIth Corps on the 26th was less determined than that made in the recapture of Yen-tao-niu-lu in October, 1904, or than the fighting at Manju Yama, and it was outmatched in vigour by the operations of the 1st Siberian Corps at Su-ma-pu. Of the achievements of the Provisional Rifle Corps nothing can be said, for its commander interpreted his instructions as permission to remain passive, but those of its units which fought under General Stakelberg showed that they could stand heavy loss. The difference between the action of the units which had previous experience in this war and those which had not was indeed somewhat remarkable.

The operations as a whole again suffered from the system of control. For, though the commander-in-chief did not take up his station almost immediately in rear of the firing line, as he had done at the Sha Ho, and did not on this occasion render himself liable to be unduly influenced by the events taking place under his own eyes ; he showed the same tendency as before to direct operations in detail and to interfere in the province of his subordinates.* To General Grippenberg, indeed, to whom he had entrusted the execution of the only attack carried out, he left but little liberty of action, while he frequently issued orders directly to the commander of the Xth Corps, which was a portion of General Grippenberg's army. The spirit in which the principle of the delegation of authority and responsibility was understood by General Kuropatkin can be gauged by his order of the

* During the greater part of the battle he was at Chan-sa-ma-tun about nine miles to the north-east of Su-chia-tun on the main line of railway and some twenty-five miles from the centre of the fighting.

25th January to his army commanders, by which he reserved to himself the power of moving units larger than regiments and called for reports of the progress of the Second Manchurian Army to be submitted every two hours. Another fact illustrative of the same spirit is that when General Mishchenko's detachment was allotted to the Second Manchurian Army, after its return from Newchuang it was expressly stipulated that the force should not be moved without reference to General Head-Quarters. This embargo, however, appears to have been withdrawn before the battle began. Such paralysing limitations may possibly have been due to General Kuropatkin's distrust of the judgment of his army commanders, and if it was justified he was indeed unfortunate in having to carry on active operations with such subordinates. In other ways, also, the direction of the battle left much to be desired. It is reported that General Gripenberg, so far from taking precautions that his situation on the battlefield should be known to all those whose duty it was to communicate with him, frequently changed his position without notice. And his example was followed by some of his corps commanders. It was this fact which added to the confusion which reigned on the night of the 26th January as regards the capture of San-de-pu, for the staff officers bearing messages had great difficulty in finding the commanders of the Second Manchurian Army, of the VIIIth Corps, and of the 14th Division. Indeed, the whole staff work of that army appears to have been of an inferior nature. Owing, it is stated, to the lack of practice in such work afforded by the peace training of the Russian army it was the habit of general officers to attempt to command the various units under them instead of exercising a general direction.

The distribution of the cavalry was more in accordance with the requirements of the case than it had been either at Liao-yang or the Sha Ho, insomuch as a comparatively large mounted force was collected on the right, opposite the more accessible flank of the Japanese and in a situation whence it could operate over country suitable for mounted action. With the exception of the squadrons retained at Second Manchurian Army head-quarters the cavalry at General Gripenberg's disposal was divided into two bodies of forty-four and twenty-one squadrons, under Generals Mishchenko and Kossakovski respectively. General Kossakovski's force, the mobility of which was hampered by the inclusion of eight battalions of infantry, was employed on the flank of the

attacking army in the purely protective duties to which its composition was suited. General Mishchenko's detachment, on the other hand, was formed entirely of mounted troops and in strength amounted to more than a quarter of the whole of the cavalry at General Kuropatkin's disposal. If it had been intended to employ this force in co-operative action round the Japanese left flank it is open to question whether it might not with advantage have been stronger; but, such as it was, it formed a compact body well adapted in size, composition and situation for a bold offensive. And yet, although it cannot be said, as has been remarked of the battle of the Sha Ho, that the Russian cavalry exercised practically no influence on the battle, General Kuropatkin, whether from the same reasons that had vitiated his handling of his cavalry in October, 1904, or from the causes which paralysed his tactics generally at San-de-pu, again failed to exploit his superiority in mounted men. Anything that was achieved by the cavalry was really done in spite of his influence. General Mishchenko, however, was never inactive and interpreted all instructions as to the guarding of the right flank of the Second Manchurian Army in a sense which precluded passive observation. Thus, on the 25th January, before receiving his orders for that day, he continued to follow up the demonstration which had been made by the Japanese on the previous day and was in action until evening. On the 26th he co-operated successfully with the general attack, making good some miles of ground and driving in several of the enemy's detached posts. On the following day he pushed forward apparently on his own initiative. On the 28th his successor in command—General Teleshov—carried on the movement thus started, and had he not been compelled to fight in two directions and then been recalled he might have effected more than he did. Nevertheless, as it was, the movement of this force of cavalry contributed to check the Japanese advance in this quarter. Finally the detachment was the last to move back on the 29th, remaining in touch with the enemy until 10 a.m. It is true that on the night of the 27th–28th the commander-in-chief contemplated a repetition on a small scale of the raid carried out two weeks earlier by General Mishchenko, but, apart from the fact that its execution was stopped by the general retirement, it was inaugurated at too late a moment for action of such a nature.

Concerning the Japanese strategy there is little to be added

to what has been said on the subject in commenting on the battle of the Sha Ho, for it had not altered in nature by the time that the battle of San-de-pu was fought, and Marshal Oyama had to make no choice between alternative courses. Up to the end of the year 1904 his rôle had been to maintain his position in order to cover the siege of Port Arthur in the event of a renewed advance of the Russians, which became more and more probable as they gained in strength. After the 2nd January, 1905, his situation became more critical, since the preponderance of the Russians had increased, and there was every reason for them to precipitate action. But his rôle still was to maintain his position, though with a different object, i.e., until he should be strong enough to assume the offensive in earnest and to strike a blow which might really be decisive. This, however, would not be for some time, until the Third Army could be brought into play and the scheme under preparation for the envelopment of the Russian armies was fully developed. In point of fact it was not till the commencement of the battle of San-de-pu that Marshal Oyama was able, by sending one portion of General Nogi's army eastwards to form part of the new Ya-lu Army on the Russian left, to take one of the preliminary steps in the movement which culminated at Mukden. It has been stated in the comments upon the battle of the Sha Ho that Marshal Oyama would have been justified strategically in adopting purely defensive tactics at that battle.* In January, 1905, when the relative strength of his forces facing the Russians was considerably less than it had been in October, 1904, and he was within measurable distance of completing a great strategic deployment from which he hoped to gain really decisive results, merely to beat back a Russian attack was his best course. To have attempted more would, in the circumstances, have been premature and might have jeopardized the greater *coup* that was under contemplation.

As regards major tactics it is unlikely that the Japanese had prepared any definite plan of battle beforehand. Marshal Oyama's policy being purely defensive, his action would have to conform with that of the Russians who in attacking would be exercising the initiative; and though an advance by the Russians was known to be probable, and though it was more likely to be made against the comparatively weak left than against the fortified front, it

* See Vol. II, p. 502.

was uncertain in which quarter their main blow would fall. Indeed their opening attack on the Japanese left on the morning of the 25th January was unexpected both as to direction and strength. From Marshal Oyama's conduct of the battle—unless he was in reality taken by surprise—it seems that until matters developed sufficiently for him to act in a definite direction he was content to allow his front line to bear the brunt of the Russian onslaught; and for this all except the section west of Wan-chia-yuan-tzu was well prepared. His power of intervention, if the Russians had pressed along his whole front, would have been practically confined to the employment of the disengaged force under his own hand, the General Reserve. As the attack was executed, however, he was enabled to do more than this, and the action fought by him furnishes a striking example of a progressive and unimpeded accumulation of strength on the threatened weak flank of a defensive line, the time for which was gained by the stubborn resistance offered on that flank, and the possibility given by the complete absence of pressure from the attack elsewhere.

Weak as was the Japanese front from Wan-chia-yuan-tzu to Hei-kou-tai as compared with the rest of the line, being merely a series of fortified villages held by small garrisons largely composed of dismounted cavalry, the only precautionary step that had been taken before the Russian advance to strengthen this quarter was the transfer westwards to Yang-chia-wan of the 3rd Division on the 23rd January. Of the Japanese General Reserve, the 8th *Kobi* Brigade already lay detached at Lang-tung-kou as a protection to the depot there and as a local reserve to this flank, leaving actually under Marshal Oyama's own hand the 5th and 8th Divisions near the railway. On the first day of the battle the 8th *Kobi* Brigade was employed to reinforce the villages in front attacked, and that morning Marshal Oyama ordered the 8th Division—one-half of his General Reserve—up to the threatened flank. On the second day the Japanese counter-movement was commenced by the attack on one of the villages captured by the Russians, and was carried out by the reserves then on the spot—the 8th *Kobi* Brigade and the 8th Division. With the resistance being made by the garrison of San-de-pu it succeeded in checking the Russian advance, but it did not make much headway and was itself threatened on its left. Marshal Oyama, seeing as yet no sign of hostile pressure elsewhere along his front, sent up to the threatened point the 5th Division, and to replenish his General

Reserve withdrew the 10th *Kobi* Brigade and the 2nd Division from behind the Fourth and First Armies respectively. On the third day the Japanese counter-attack, a direct frontal movement against the enemy's enveloping troops, was carried on by the 8th *Kobi* Brigade and the 8th and 5th Divisions. But again, though the Russian advance was checked and San-de-pu still held out, not much progress was made. That night it was obvious that the two divisions and one brigade already engaged in the attempt to force back the Russians were not strong enough for the purpose, and still seeing no signs of activity against his line elsewhere the Japanese commander-in-chief ordered up another division—the 2nd—from his newly formed General Reserve in order to give more weight to his thrust against the enemy, since it was becoming urgent that the pressure against the left should soon be relieved. On the 28th January the active resistance against the Second Manchurian Army was pressed by the 8th *Kobi* Brigade and the 8th, 5th, and 2nd Divisions. Nevertheless, and in spite of the fact that San-de-pu still held out, no ground was gained; and that night, before the sudden and unexpected retirement of the Russians took place, the 10th *Kobi* Brigade, the last large unit of the new General Reserve, was also ordered westwards in order to be thrown into the fight.

In the course of the four days, therefore, Marshal Oyama had moved to the threatened flank three divisions and one *Kōōi* brigade, or nearly one-third of his whole strength, and in doing so had both denuded himself of a General Reserve and weakened his centre and right. What enabled the Japanese commander thus to transfer force from one quarter to another at his discretion during the battle has already been stated, but there are one or two points in his action which are especially worthy of note. The first is the promptness with which he used his reserves. So far from showing any hesitation about expending them, he ordered the first unit to be employed—the 8th Division—away from its central situation before the attack had developed and before he could have realized its strictly limited nature. And yet, on the other hand, in spite of the fact that the reserves were employed so early in the battle, there was no hasty squandering of force in one direction so soon as it appeared to be threatened. The flow of reinforcements appears to have been graduated according to the growing necessity for them at one point and the decreasing probability of their being required elsewhere and

considerable risks were incurred in doing this. For, however small in the light of after knowledge may appear to have been Marshal Oyama's real danger, he had no grounds on the 25th and 26th January for supposing that the Russian attack would assume the limited form it did, whatever conviction he may have gained during the next two days as to the probability of the continuance of the inactivity of the First and Third Manchurian Armies.

An interesting contrast between the action of the Japanese at this battle and their action at the Sha Ho is furnished by the direction of the application of force. At the latter battle Marshal Oyama, so far as reinforcements were concerned, practically ignored the attack of the Russian Eastern Force and left his troops, already in the east, to repel it as best they could. At San-de-pu, on the contrary, he began to move force up to the point threatened so soon as the attack made itself felt, and continued to do so. There is no doubt that this variation in procedure was to a great extent due to the fact that at the Sha Ho the Japanese commander's plan was not purely defensive and that he wished to conserve his strength for his counter-attack elsewhere, whereas at San-de-pu he had no intention of relieving the situation in one quarter by a great counter-stroke in another quarter. But, apart from this essential difference in his intention, it seems that the actual direction of the Russian envelopment in the two cases must have had considerable influence on the nature of Marshal Oyama's reply to it, more especially as regards the promptitude with which that reply was made. At the Sha Ho the opening movement of the Russians threatened the flank of the Japanese, which was the farther from their main line of communication and entailed an advance across bad country where any preliminary success could not be pressed with any rapidity. It could therefore be ignored by the Japanese for some time with comparative impunity. At San-de-pu, on the other hand, the advance of the Second Manchurian Army was against the strategic, or vulnerable, flank of the Japanese, was a direct threat to their most important communications and was being pushed across open country where a decision might be quickly reached. It could therefore not be ignored and demanded the promptest measures to counteract it, such as Marshal Oyama unhesitatingly made. Though there was a difference in the employment by the Japanese of the time gained, the rôle played by the defenders of San-de-pu was the same as that played by the garrison of Pen-hsi-hu in October, 1904,

in that in both cases the result was to hold up the Russian attempt at envelopment.

As regards the Japanese counter-offensive, the chief point worthy of remark is the promptness with which General Tatsumi launched his 8th Division and the 8th *Kobi* Brigade into the fight on the 26th, the direction of his main blow being against Hei-kou-tai, the weak spot, where the Russians threatened to break through. Though the deployment of his 16th Brigade in divisional reserve, south of Liu-tiao-kou was a precautionary measure, as a guard to the right of his forces attacking Hei-kou-tai, it seems to have produced a considerable effect on General Muilov, who was conducting the Russian operations against San-de-pu, and through him upon General Grippenbergs's operations. On the 27th the replacement of this brigade on the right by the newly arrived 5th Division was justifiable, though no ground was gained by it in face of the Russian opposition, for there was still a danger, so far as the Japanese knew, of the Russians capturing San-de-pu and taking the Japanese counter-attack on the right flank, or of their containing San-de-pu and pressing on; but in reality the situation of the Japanese left flank at Erh chia and round Su-ma-pu was the more critical. Next day, however, the capture of Liu-tiao-kou by this division seems to have been the turning point in the battle, for it was partly the threat implied by this success which caused General Grippenbergs to exchange the intended offensive on that day for the defensive, while the left of the 8th Division was safeguarded by the arrival of the 2nd Division. The movement of the 3rd Division on the 28th was a precaution against any Russian advance to the east of San-de-pu, whilst the transfer during the night of the 10th *Kobi* Brigade was a measure of a similar nature. That the Russian retirement was an entire surprise to the Japanese is shown by the fact that General Tatsumi renewed his attack on Hei-kou-tai that night. The reason why no pursuit was attempted was that the Japanese were as yet neither ready nor strong enough to carry out such an operation.

In the sphere of minor tactics it is instructive to note that the Japanese infantry attacked in a more extended formation than had been their custom hitherto, the maximum interval to which the firing line was extended being five or six paces. They still showed a tendency to thicken the firing line too soon, however, and this was the cause of many unnecessary casualties, especially in the 8th Division, which was engaged for the first time.

Marshal Oyama's system of controlling the battle, also, presented a great contrast to that of General Kuropatkin. As he had done before, and as his opponent did on this occasion, the Japanese commander-in-chief took up his station at some distance from the front, at a central point near Yen-tai. But being so far from the fighting line he, unlike General Kuropatkin, made no attempt to interfere within the province of his subordinates. This is well exemplified by his relations with General Tatsumi. Having entrusted that officer—a divisional commander—with the conduct of the operations to check the Russian envelopment he, so far as is known, gave him general instructions to attack and left him a free hand as to the method of doing so. After he had made known his wishes Marshal Oyama's energies were confined to collecting and sending up reserves as available, in other words to supplying General Tatsumi with the means for carrying out his orders. And that this should have been possible shows that amongst the higher leaders on the Japanese side there must have existed to a considerable extent that community of thought productive of a mutual reliance and an intelligent anticipation of the course likely to be pursued by others. This does not imply that everything ran smoothly on the Japanese side. This was far from the case. From the very nature of the battle the Japanese were fighting, their action was largely of an unpremeditated nature improvised to suit the occasion and, as has been seen, was almost entirely carried out by reserves hastily collected. Owing to the lack of preparation and the unexpected development of the Russian attack on one flank only, there were unnecessary orders and counter-orders, wastage of effort and incoherent action. From the fact that a divisional general, with a staff suited to a divisional command, found himself after four days in control of what amounted to an army equivalent in size to four divisions, it may be gathered that there must have been considerable confusion in the staff arrangements. In the transmission of orders, again, some complication seems to have been caused by the inability of the communication service to deal with the unexpected development of the battle. For example, it is believed that all telephone messages to and from the scene of fighting had to pass through one exchange at Lang-tung-kou.

In marked distinction, also, to the continuous activity of the Russian cavalry was the conduct of the only body of Japanese cavalry employed on mounted duty. After General Mishchenko

broke off his action with the Japanese 2nd Cavalry Brigade on the 25th that brigade appears to have remained on the watch and to have taken no active part in the battle. It has been stated that in the confusion produced by the unexpected attack no orders for co-operation was sent to the brigade ; but even if this really was the case it can hardly explain the completely passive rôle it played. So far as being of any active assistance against the Russian attack is concerned, the Japanese 2nd Cavalry Brigade might as well have remained in the hilly country in the east from which it recently had been transferred ; whereas, even allowing for the fact that it was vastly outnumbered by the mounted troops under General Mishchenko, it might, it seems, have done something to contribute to the Japanese operations by hampering the advance of those troops on the 26th, 27th and 28th. This might have reacted on the offensive of the 1st Siberian Corps and, in thus influencing the operations of the two fractions of the Second Manchurian Army which really showed most enterprise, might have seconded General Tatsumi's efforts to an appreciable degree. On the other hand, though not employed in mounted duties, the Japanese 1st Cavalry Brigade covered itself with glory by its share in the defence of San-de-pu. The part played in the battle by the resistance made by the garrison of the village has already been touched upon, but while the infantry were, after all, only carrying out the normal tactics of their arm, in fighting behind defences and in enclosures, it was not so in the case of the dismounted cavalrymen. Colonel Tanada's detachment, consisting of those of the remaining squadrons of divisional cavalry which had not been attached to the 1st Cavalry Brigade, and those of the 5th Divisional Cavalry which had escaped from Hei-kou-tai, the only mounted units to be actively employed in mounted action, did useful work on the left of General Tatsumi's counter-attack.

Of the more general features of the battle, one of the most striking is the part played by the fortified villages on the Japanese left flank—a part which contributed so much to the success of the defending side. This applies especially to the gallant resistance made by San-de-pu, with its comparatively small garrison, to the large force of infantry and guns operating against it. But in the case of the action round this village there were certain factors which so favoured the defence as to constitute it a special case ; and unless these factors are taken into account there is some danger of this example of success against overwhelming odds

leading to the attribution of greater inherent powers of resistance to fortified localities than is really warranted. In taking into consideration the large force of infantry nominally set in motion against San-de-pu, it must be remembered that the number of men which can be actually employed in the attack of an isolated locality prepared for an all-round defence—such as this was—has a limit, and that by day this limit is the number which can be deployed all round the objective, extended at a reasonable interval plus a reserve to take advantage of any opening made. San-de-pu was not approachable from every side, which still further decreased the numbers which could be used against it. Thus the attack on the 26th January—the only day upon which it was seriously pressed by the Russians—nominally entrusted to the VIIIth Corps was actually carried out by the four regiments of the 14th Division, or, in other words, by some twelve thousand infantry. Though even this force seems enormous in comparison with the size of the defending garrison, there was one fact which militated against its success. Where the ground round strongly fortified localities—and the villages of Manchuria are far stronger for defence than most of those in Europe—offers no facilities for troops advancing to the attack, there is small hope of the infantry assault succeeding unless it is prepared and well supported by artillery. The country round San-de-pu was practically flat and to a great extent open, and yet the fire of the Russian artillery was quite inadequate and powerless to subdue the defence, in spite of the concentrated bombardment carried out and the vast amount of ammunition expended.* There were several reasons for this. In the first place, the neighbourhood had not been properly reconnoitred by the Russians, and it was not discovered until too late that San-de-pu itself formed the hidden kernel of a cluster of hamlets of which only the outlying portions could be seen and ranged upon. In the second place, the difficulty of observation was increased by the haziness of the atmosphere and the intervening buildings standing on the same level as the guns on their

* On the 26th San-de-pu was shelled by some seventy guns, while on the 27th the number of pieces firing on it amounted to over one hundred and thirty, of which twelve were howitzers and four were siege guns. The Second Manchurian Army during the five days of fighting, from the 25th to the 29th January, fired in all 76,000 rounds of gun ammunition, a large proportion of which must have been used against San-de-pu. The reserve ammunition of the Second Manchurian Army in the ammunition park at Ta-su-chia-pu, consisting of 12,000 rounds, was fired away during the first period of the battle.

target. In the third place, any result which might have been produced on the defences of San-de-pu or on its garrison was still further reduced by the fact that the frozen mud walls of the houses and enclosures were proof against the shrapnel of the quick-firing field guns which composed the bulk of the Russian artillery.* The consequence was that when the infantry had fought their way into the cluster of hamlets surrounding San-de-pu, they found the defences of that village practically intact and its defenders unshaken.

In one particular the battle conveys the same lesson as that furnished by the battle of the Sha Ho—that frontal attacks must be made when the occasion demands the sacrifice. The attempt of the Japanese to recapture Hei-kou-tai, their attacks on Liu-tiao-kou, and that of the Russians against Su-ma-pu were to a great extent made by day and come under the category of local frontal attacks. It is true that only one of these operations, that against Liu-tiao-kou, was directly successful, in that the immediate objective was gained during daylight. Hei-kou-tai was not recaptured by the Japanese till the night of the 28th–29th, when the Russians evacuated the village, while Su-ma-pu was also only entered by the Russians after nightfall. But all the attacks were of sufficient indirect value to the sides by which they were conducted to justify their having been made. Another interesting point is the great use that was made of machine guns by both sides, the number of these weapons carried by the Japanese troops having been largely increased during the winter. It is stated that one machine gun was responsible for a thousand casualties amongst the Russians attacking San-de-pu, whilst a Russian weapon in Hei-kou-tai accounted for one hundred and eighty men out of a *Kobi* company two hundred and ten strong. The nature of the fighting, consisting as it did so largely of the defence of fortified villages was such as to afford great scope for these weapons.

Of the part that might have been played by aerial reconnaissance, had the haziness of the atmosphere and the falling snow permitted of successful results, one aspect stands out pre-eminent. The opinion has been expressed that the failure

* In addition to the small number of siege guns with the artillery of the Second Manchurian Army, owing to the confusion about the capture of San-de-pu on the night of the 26th January the maximum effect was not obtained from these. See p. 171.

of the Russians was in great measure due to General Kuropatkin's ignorance of the actual situation, and to his consequent fear that the Japanese Third Army might arrive upon the scene and enable Marshal Oyama to advance against his centre. Effective aerial reconnaissance would almost certainly have given the Russian commander-in-chief the knowledge that General Nogi's army was not present, and that, so far from there being a great Japanese force disposed opposite the gap between the Second and Third Manchurian Armies, ready to deliver a penetrating blow, all the Japanese troops accumulated behind the front line on the west of the railway were fully occupied in resisting the attack on San-de-pu and to the south-west of that place. This applies especially to the 28th January, when the artillery demonstration carried out by General Oku apparently had a considerable effect. Whether this knowledge would in fact have inspired the Russian commander-in-chief to press on with the offensive and seize the advantage which his numbers gave him, it is not possible to say. But what is thought to have been his main reason for not doing so would have disappeared. In regard to the Japanese, the most important result that might have been brought about by the employment of air-craft appears to be that Marshal Oyama would have discovered the nature of the Russian movement against his left sooner than he did. But even had he done so it is doubtful whether he would have reinforced that flank earlier or to a greater extent. The contrary rather seems to be the case, for an air service would also have enabled him to ascertain definitely the position of the Russian General Reserve opposite his centre and to discover that strength was not being transferred from the First and Third Manchurian Armies to assist the Second, and the knowledge might have induced in him some hesitation about moving his own reserves. If this had happened the resistance of the Japanese on their left would not have been so weighty and aggressive, and the Russian envelopment would have been assisted. But here, again, it is impossible to estimate how far the Russian commander-in-chief would have profited by the greater progress made by General Grippenbergs' army. On the whole, all that can be said is that had both sides been better informed than they were the balance of the advantage that might have been obtained would have lain with the Russians.

Not often have troops been called upon to fight under such

terrible conditions of weather as prevailed at San-de-pu. The days and nights were intensely cold, the effect of the low temperature being aggravated by the biting wind which blew most of the time. By this the sufferings of the wounded must have been greatly increased, although perhaps not to the extent that might be imagined from the accounts of some of those who were present.* Nevertheless, in spite of the severity of the climatic conditions, neither the spirit nor the fighting powers of the troops seem to have been reduced. The Russian soldiers appear to have responded with alacrity and devotion to every call made upon them, while the tactics of the Japanese side were as relentlessly aggressive as they had been at other and more favourable seasons of the year. Any loss of power in the efforts of either side that were observable towards the end of the action were probably more due to sheer physical exhaustion than any moral depression caused by the extreme climate. And this leads to the supposition that though differing in nature and degree the discipline of both Russians and Japanese was of a high standard. On both sides adequate and suitable clothing no doubt assisted to minimize the hardships endured, but without discipline such accessories would have availed but little.

Tactically the battle of San-de-pu only amounted to a defeat for the Russians in the sense that they did not succeed in gaining the object with which they had fought, since General Kuropatkin was able to break off the action voluntarily at the moment selected by himself and to withdraw his troops practically without interference. Strategically it was a heavy reverse. Not only had they lost an opportunity; they had registered yet another failure; and by failure rendered their enormous sacrifice in lives useless. Apart from this, the feeling that the Second Manchurian Army had been engaged practically single-handed whilst the remainder of the Russian forces looked on as spectators created resentment and a spirit of criticism in that army which could not but have had an adverse effect on the *moral* of the troops. And it is partly as an expression of such sentiments that the unusual step taken by its commander in begging for recall must be regarded. The Japanese also suffered severe loss. But on their side it was

* The Principal Medical Officer of the Japanese 5th Division reported that the wounded did not suffer greatly from the cold, and that there were only twenty-five cases of frost-bite out of one thousand two hundred and ninety-two wounded, and that no death from cold occurred in the division.

unavoidable, the battle not being of their seeking. Moreover, it was not in vain, for however indecisive the mere repulse of the Russians may have been, it betokened no failure in intention on the part of the Japanese, as had been the case at the Sha Ho and at Liao-yang, while it furthered their plan and therefore amounted to a strategic victory. As in September and October, 1904, the defeat of the numerically superior side in January, 1905, was brought about primarily by the indecision of its leaders.

CHAPTER LXVI.

MINOR JAPANESE AND RUSSIAN CAVALRY RAIDS DURING
THE EARLY PART OF 1905.

(Strategical Map 6 and Plan 53.)

IT has been mentioned that on their raid upon Newchuang the Russians narrowly missed encountering two Japanese columns which were on their way northwards, bent on enterprises of a similar nature.* Before this there had been sporadic attacks upon the Chinese Eastern Railway, but though these had probably been inspired by the Japanese and executed under their leadership they had actually been carried out by bands of Hun-hu-tzu.† It was not until December, 1904, two months after the Russians had first contemplated acting in force against the Japanese communications, that the Japanese were induced by the inactivity of both sides and the obvious vulnerability of the long single line of rail upon which their enemy depended, to undertake operations of a similar nature. During that month General Akiyama had been ordered to organize small bodies of mounted men to be dispatched to cut the Russian railway and telegraphs as far to the north as possible. He accordingly made arrangements for the dispatch of two such columns, one under Lieutenant-Colonel Naganuma, commanding the 8th Cavalry Regiment, and the other under Major Hasegawa, of the 1st Cavalry Brigade. They started in January, 1905, and their activities lasted for so long a time, and extended so far afield, that a consecutive account of them will be given before that of the main operations is resumed. Before this is done, however, the methods employed by the Russians to guard their railway communications will be briefly described.

* See pp. 114 and 128.

† Attempts had been made, on the 15th February, 1904, to blow up the bridge across the Sungari River, and on the 1st May to cut a span of one of the bridges near Hai-cheng. On several occasions in March and April 1904, minor damage had been done to the line.

The Chinese Eastern Railway, against which the Japanese were about to act, was more strongly guarded than either the Siberian or Trans-Baikal lines. Ever since its construction had been begun in 1897 the Russians had been forced to protect this line, not only against the wandering bands of Hun-hu-tzu, but against larger formed bodies of these guerrillas. Until 1900 the total number of men employed by the railway authorities on these duties amounted to about 6,000, or, for the whole length of 1,567 miles, an average of four men per mile. After the Boxer Rising it was decided to protect the railway by Government troops, and in 1901 a corps of Trans-Amur Frontier Guards was raised for the purpose. In 1902 this corps attained a strength of 25,000 of all arms. At the same time schemes were prepared for organizing the defences of the stations, railway buildings and bridges. By the outbreak of war, however, the construction of defensible enclosures round the barracks along the southern portion of the line had alone been commenced, and the remainder of the work had still to be done.

At that time the officer in command of this section of the lines of communication was Lieutenant-General Chikagov. The Trans-Amur Frontier Guards under him consisted of 55 companies, 55 squadrons and $7\frac{1}{2}$ batteries, which were formed into independent mixed detachments of varying strength of a few companies and squadrons and in some cases of a battery as well. There were eight line detachments and four reserve detachments, or twelve in all, and they were organized in four brigades. The 1st and 3rd Brigades were responsible for the length of the line from Manchuria Station to Vladivostok, the 2nd Brigade protected the section of line from Harbin to Kuan-cheng-tzu and the Sungari River from Harbin to the Amur River, while the 4th Brigade, originally in charge of the defence of the line from Harbin to Port Arthur, safeguarded the stretch from Mukden to Kuan-cheng-tzu. The 1st and 4th Brigades consisted of 18 companies, 18 squadrons and 3 horse mountain batteries each, the two other brigades being of about half that strength. Each company of the line detachments, of two officers and 254 men, was told off to a definite section of the railway, the length of which depended on the number and nature of the engineering structures to be guarded and varied from 20 to 66 miles; and the troops were distributed in small posts of five to twelve men each, housed in

defensible blockhouses, the patrolling of the line being carried out from the posts. At first only the larger bridges had permanent guards, the smaller ones being merely visited by patrols. The reserve detachments were concentrated in greater force at certain central points. The mounted troops were similarly collected at some of the stations for active defence at a distance from the railway, and were responsible for the strip of country 16 to 20 miles broad on each side of the line, which had been taken up by the railway. The infantry of the Frontier Guard were, in addition, employed in various duties, such as the protection of steamers, mines, the branch establishments of the Chinese Bank, etc., so that the number available for the railway was to some extent reduced. Except from the vicinity of the larger garrisons the Chinese troops quartered in the railway belt were not removed, owing to the danger of possible political complications being thereby caused and in order to protect from the Hun-hu-tzu the inhabitants, whose labour was required by the Russians; but they were only allowed to approach or cross the line at specified crossing-places. To facilitate the reinforcement of any point on the line where danger threatened, trucks which could be attached to the first passing train proceeding in the required direction were always kept ready at Kun-chu-ling, Tieh-ling and Mukden.

After the attempt on the Hai-cheng bridge on the 1st May, 1904, the Frontier Guards were temporarily reinforced by 5,500 field troops, which garrisoned the stations and set free the men of the Guard for the other portions of the line. In October these field units were relieved by some six battalions, or 6,000 men of the *Opolchenie* or Imperial Militia.* In February, 1905, therefore, at the time when the Japanese reached the railway in their more serious efforts to cut it, the total number of troops guarding the length of the Chinese Eastern Railway still in Russian hands amounted to some 31,000, or, approximately, 25 men per mile. By that time, also, most of the defences had been completed. The stations were entrenched and surrounded with obstacles, and the bridges were protected by blockhouses and entanglements, the more important being furnished with searchlights and defended

* The *Opolchene* or Imperial Militia was raised in Siberia in 1904. It consisted of twenty-four *druzhini*, each *druzhina* being of four companies. Sixteen *druzhini* remained in Siberia and eight were transferred to Manchuria. These *druzhini* were about one thousand strong and can conveniently be called battalions. This militia force was officered in the higher ranks from the regulars.

by booms and pile piers against floating mines. After the Japanese raids the number of men guarding the line rose to about 37 per mile. It then fell back to 28, at which figure it remained till the end of the war.

When the Japanese were preparing to attack the Russian communications at the end of 1904 and in the beginning of 1905, they were under no illusions as to the difficulty of the task before them.

Lieutenant-Colonel Naganuma's force was the first to start. Its strength amounted to twelve officers and one hundred and sixty other ranks, and it was divided into two squadrons each under a captain. The officers were specially selected, as were also the rank and file, in whom the physical fitness to undergo great exertion and privations was the first point considered. The commander of the expedition chose his own staff, and the remainder of the force was appointed from their units by the officers commanding the 5th, 8th, 13th and 14th Cavalry Regiments, the latter two of which formed the 1st Cavalry Brigade.* Every effort was made to ensure a man keeping his own mount, but all horses which were poor feeders or addicted to neighing were cast, and neither carts nor pack animals were taken, for supplies for men and horses were to be obtained by purchase from the inhabitants. A few interpreters and some Chinese spies accompanied the force.

On the 30th December Lieutenant-Colonel Naganuma assembled the whole of the officers who were to accompany him, and in the presence of General Akiyama impressed upon them the important nature of the service on which they were about to be engaged; and by the 4th January his entire force was assembled at Su-ma-pu, where for three days its members were exercised in pistol and carbine practice. The men were instructed in the methods of cooking the various kinds of millet and other grain upon which they would have mainly to subsist, and the horses were fed on forage such as would be obtainable.

The region about to be traversed being strange to all, no exact itinerary could be laid down; and the arrangements made, liable to subsequent amendment, were generally as follows:—

The primary objective was Pa-la-tao-kai in Mongolia, but since the adoption of the shortest route from Su-ma-pu to that place

* For details of the composition and equipment of the force, see Appendix 14.

would expose the party to discovery, a detour was to be made southwards and the Hun was to be crossed to the west of Hsiao-pei-ho, the Liao at Tien-chia-ta, and the Willow Palisade in the vicinity of Hsin-liu-tun.* From Pa-la-tao-kai, it was proposed that the force should move on to Chang-lin-tzu, but it was left to Lieutenant-Colonel Naganuma to decide whether that place or some other in its vicinity should be his next destination. In any case he was to endeavour to reach the neighbourhood of Kuan-cheng-tzu, on the southern branch of the Chinese Eastern Railway, one hundred and fifty miles south of Harbin and one hundred and seventy north of Mukden, and destroy a portion of the line or burn the military stores collected at that place. The party was then to proceed northwards and interrupt the traffic between Harbin and Tsitsihar.†

The best way of doing the maximum amount of damage in a minimum of time was carefully considered, as also was the more difficult problem of maintaining communication with the rear. To leave posts for this purpose here and there in the villages along the line of march would not only reduce greatly the numbers of the raiders, but might disclose their presence and endanger their retreat. After much discussion it was decided that orderlies should be sent to the nearest friendly troops, and that during the earlier stages of the march they should if possible rejoin the raiding party, bringing back with them as much ammunition and explosive as they could carry. The sick and wounded were to be sent to the rear on Chinese carts impressed for the purpose or, when distance made this impracticable, were to be carried to villages beyond the radius of Russian visitations, whose inhabitants would be paid to take care of them.

On Monday, the 9th January, the column left Su-ma-pu, and passing near Hsiao-pei-ho pushed on due west to the Liao Ho. On the following day, when near this river, Lieutenant-Colonel Naganuma received information of the southward march of a large body of Russian cavalry. So soon as this news was corroborated by his patrols he sent word of the Russian movement to the Japanese Second Army and continued his advance. As

* The exact location of Tien-chia-ta is not known : it is south of Ta-wan.

† See Plan 53. It was originally proposed to attack a railway bridge some forty-seven miles north of Kuan-cheng-tzu, but it was found to be well guarded and another point nearer that village was finally selected.

has been described, this body of troops was General Mishchenko's force on its way south. In order to escape notice the highways frequented by Chinese carts were henceforth avoided by the Japanese, while only the smaller villages were used for quartering the troops at night, and by evening of the 12th January the column was at Shih-tai-tzu, close to the Hsin-min-tun railway line, where it spent the night. During the day the Japanese had been fired upon by Chinese troops who mistook them for bandits, an error which was frequently made.

The 16th January found the column at Pa-la-tao-kai, where it halted for two days. Rations and forage for five days were now collected and loaded upon Chinese carts, and when the march was resumed a small communicating post was left at Ta-lang-ying-tzu under a warrant officer whose duty, besides transmitting reports to the rear, was to burn all supplies brought in by the Chinese contractors collecting for the Russians. On the 30th January Ta-yuan-chih was reached, the only incident of note having occurred two days earlier near Sha-tai, where about one hundred Mongolian troopers attacked the supply carts unsuccessfully. At Ta-yuan-chih the force remained until the 6th February. The sick were handed over to the care of the villagers, and final arrangements were made for the coming dash against the railway, the men being practised in laying and firing explosives.

On the 7th February the second phase of the raid may be said to have begun, for on that day the column moved off towards the east and made for the selected spot on the railway. By the evening of the 10th it was only some five and twenty miles distant from the line, and a halt was called for the night at Liu-chia-tun. Next day was the anniversary of the national holiday commemorating the accession of the first of the long line of emperors who had ruled Japan as well as the promulgation of the Constitution of 1889, and it was felt to be an auspicious occasion on which to carry out the dangerous mission of the party. The distance now to be covered was short, and the raiders did not leave Liu-chia-tun until after midday on the 11th, and by 5 p.m. were assembled at a village about five miles west of the railway. Three hours later, by the light of the moon, a village some five thousand yards from the objective was gained, but since the bridge to be attacked was known to be guarded and the moon would not set till midnight, it was still some hours before the time for action.

The 7th-11th
February.

Lieutenant-Colonel Naganuma therefore dismounted his party and gave out the following orders:—

1. Second-Lieutenant Numata will be in charge of the horses, and will have with him one non-commissioned officer and four men, and eight non-commissioned officers and men from sections (i.e., in all thirteen non-commissioned officers and men). The medical officer will make the necessary preparations in the village.

2. Captain Miyauchi is appointed to command the demolition parties, which will be led by Second-Lieutenants Kotsutsumi and Kurita.

3. Captain Asano's squadron will form the covering force on the right, and that of Captain Nakaya will perform similar service on the left.

4. On the march the officer commanding the force will be on foot in front of the covering force, but during the operation he will remain in the centre between the two squadrons.*

5. The signal to retire will be the sound of an extra loud explosion.

6. The line of retreat will be along the river bed to the village.

7. The countersign will be —————.

The point on the railway which had been selected as the objective was Bridge 247 over the Hsin-kai Ho. It was a two-span girder bridge, fifty yards in length, with one central pier. Fifty to one hundred yards north of the river was a guard-house, and close to the bridge itself was another wooden guard-house for the men actually on guard duty. The ends of the bridge were protected by small entrenched bridge-heads. The garrison was composed of forty-two men of the 25th Trans-Amur Frontier Guards Company, of whom eighteen were stationed close to the bridge.

At 2.30 a.m. on the 12th, in pitch darkness, the Japanese silently approached the line. The squadrons advanced at first in close order, with scouts thrown forward a short distance, and extended when from five hundred to six hundred yards from the bridge. This change of formation had just been completed and the march resumed, when a Cossack patrol rode across the front

* All were dismounted.

of the Japanese who, upon seeing that their presence was discovered, opened fire. Their fire was returned from the guard-house north of the river and from the bridge itself. Captain Nakaya led his squadron against the former, while the demolition parties, impeded by their explosives, advanced with difficulty along the surface of the ice-bound river, preceded by four men carrying wire-cutters. The Russians soon realized that the post was seriously threatened and concentrated their fire on and around the bridge. In spite of this the demolition party at length reached the central pier and laid and fired a charge. But no serious damage was effected, and the defenders, now certain as to where the greatest danger lay, increased their fire in that direction. Amid a rain of bullets a second and a third charge were placed. This time both charges proved effectual, and with shouts of "*Banzai*" the attackers fell back along the river bed to a village to the north. Shortly after 6 a.m. they left the village, taking with them the dead and wounded, and at 10 a.m. reached Erh-tai-hua, whence after resting till 5.30 p.m. they moved on to Erh-chien-shan, where they passed the night.* Second-Lieutenant Tamura was killed and Second-Lieutenant Kotsutsumi was wounded, while of the men two were killed and eight wounded.

A simultaneous attack was made against a post about half a mile to the south. Here the Russians fell back, and the Japanese cut the rails and brought down one telegraph pole without, however, interrupting communication over the wires. Having achieved this much they withdrew, pursued by the Russians who captured two of their party.

Although the appearance of Lieutenant-Colonel Naganuma's force came as a surprise to the local garrison such an attempt on the part of the Japanese had for some time past been considered likely. Since the middle of January reports had reached General Chikagov pointing to the possibility of activity by Hun-hu-tzu and Japanese against the railway, and they had been confirmed by information collected by a small force under Lieutenant-Colonel Khitrovo, which had moved across the frontier into Mongolia, also by the intelligence from secret service agents. So persistent, indeed,

Measures taken
by the Russians.

* By the last two charges the Japanese claim to have brought down the pier and both spans. But since a train is stated to have crossed the bridge within seventeen hours of the attack it is probable that in the dark the raiders overestimated the damage done.

became the rumours of a possible attempt against the line that on the 7th February General Chikagov ordered Lieutenant-Colonel Gámchenko, commanding the 4th Detachment of the 2nd Brigade of Trans-Amur Frontier Guards, to send three squadrons and two guns under Staff Captain Linitski out from the railway to reconnoitre towards Ha-pa-san. This party was to start on the 10th February and move by forced marches and as secretly as possible towards the Mongolian frontier, where it was to connect with the detachment under Lieutenant-Colonel Khitrovo. While it was assembling, however, news came in of the attack on the Hsin-kai Ho bridge, and Captain Linitski at once proceeded to follow up the Japanese, moving out from the vicinity of Hsi-hei-cheng on the morning of the 13th.

On reaching Chiao-pao-hou on the 13th Lieutenant-Colonel Naganuma heard that some Russian cavalry were about seventeen miles to the south-east and, what was more surprising, that four hundred to five hundred Japanese troops had arrived the

The action near
Chang-chia-pu,
14th February.

previous day at Hsin-chieh-chiao. Since nothing was known of the propinquity of another Japanese force an officer's patrol was dispatched to verify this news, and it ascertained twenty-four hours

later that Japanese cavalry had been in the village and had left. This was, in fact, the second raiding column under Major Hasegawa.* On the 13th February, therefore, three separate mounted forces were moving roughly parallel to, and within a short distance of, each other. Colonel Naganuma's column of Japanese was marching west, as was also the Russian detachment under Captain Linitski, while north of these rival forces and proceeding in an easterly direction was the Japanese column under Major Hasegawa.

On the 14th the collision which had been imminent between the gradually converging columns of Colonel Naganuma and Captain Linitski took place. Fighting was started by the Russian artillery which opened fire upon the Japanese and appears to have taken them by surprise. The situation of the raiders seemed critical, for coming towards them was a force apparently of double their strength and supported by artillery, to retire before which without fighting would probably lead to disaster, since the Russians were probably the better mounted and unimpeded with wounded. The Japanese commander, therefore, conscious that

* See p. 249.

the exact strength he wielded could not be known, and anxious to exalt the *moral* of his men, which could not have been improved by so many days of hide and seek, resolved to meet the attack, and settle the best way of retreat afterwards. The spare horses and the wounded were therefore sent back to Liu-chia-tun, while the remainder of the force rode forward, dismounted on reaching a position two thousand yards north of Chang-chia-pu which threatened the enemy's rear, and opened a heavy fire on the advancing Russians. By sunset the latter fell back leaving eight men and eighteen horses dead upon the ground. Not satisfied with this success, the Japanese followed up; but on arriving at the northern corner of Chang-chia-pu they came under fire from that village.

About 8 p.m. Captain Asano's squadron rushed the village, where it was soon engaged with some two hundred of the enemy, while Captain Nakaya menaced the Russian flank and rear. Heavy fighting ensued and the defenders soon began to fall back before the furious onset of the Japanese, leaving behind a rear guard consisting of the guns and sixty men. The moon was now up, and Captain Nakaya's squadron—being still mounted—charged and, driving off the escort, captured a gun and wagon.* The Russians fell back in haste, and the Japanese retired within the village. Their losses proved to be severe. Captain Asano's squadron had suffered the more heavily, four-fifths of its numbers being incapacitated. He, himself, and Second-Lieutenant Kotsutsumi were killed as well as sixteen rank and file, while the wounded numbered forty-four, including two officers. The action had thus reduced the Japanese force almost by one-half, but sufficient officers and men remained to carry on.

On the 15th, carrying their wounded on Chinese carts and improvised stretchers, the Japanese moved through Hsin-chieh-chiao to Chang-lin-tzu where they arrived on the 16th. Here, owing to the heavy losses incurred, a fresh organization of the squadrons was carried out, and the southward march was resumed on the 18th February, Tung-wu-chia-tzu being reached without incident on the 28th.

The 15th-28th
February.

Reports were now received of small hostile bodies being in the vicinity, and of a larger force, estimated at six thousand eight hundred cavalry and four guns, having been pushed up from Mukden and distributed west of the railway between Nan-tu-fu and the Hsin-kai Ho. This information was welcomed by the

* These were rendered unserviceable and left behind.

raiders as showing the effect which their presence had produced. But still more acceptable was the tidings of the success at the battle of San-de-pu obtained the following day from the party which had been dropped on the outward journey at Ta-lang-ying-tzu. This diminutive garrison had not been idle while their comrades had been operating against the railway, for it had succeeded in burning two hundred and forty tons of Russian supplies stored in a neighbouring village.

The sick and wounded were now left in charge of an officer, and in order to assist the army then before Mukden preparations were made to carry out a series of further attacks upon the communications to the north of that place. For this purpose the force was

divided as follows:—One party, under Captain Nakaya, consisting, besides himself, of two officers and thirty-seven rank and file, was directed to destroy the railway and telegraph somewhere between Kai-yuan-hsien and Shuan-miao-tzu, while a second party, under Captain Miyauchi,

consisting of one warrant officer and thirty-two rank and file, was to perform a similar service north of the latter place; and a third, under Second-Lieutenant Numata, numbering thirteen rank and file, was to endeavour to do the same in the neighbourhood of Kai-yuan-hsien.

Captain Nakaya's party and that of Second-Lieutenant Numata left Ta-lang-ying-tzu on the morning of the 6th March, crossed the frozen Liao on the 9th, and after capturing and burning fifteen carts of supplies assembled at San-yen-chin by 11 a.m. on that day. After some hours' rest the march was resumed, a halt being made from 6 to 9 p.m., when detailed instructions regarding the destruction of the railway were issued. By 5.30 a.m. on the 10th the line in the vicinity of Sha-ho-tzu was reached, and ten minutes later the Russians on guard, some twenty in number, opened fire. The Japanese then swung round towards the south, and at 6 a.m., under a cross fire from the station at Sha-ho-tzu and a guard-house north-east of it, cut the rails in fourteen places and threw down four telegraph posts, severing the wires. They then fell back to Tei-chia-wo-peng, arriving there at 4 a.m. on the 11th. On information furnished by spies, an officer's patrol was detached to Liu-chia-tzu, where it burned sixty tons of supplies collected by the Russians, and captured twenty-five cows and fifteen carts. It then rejoined the squadron

The 6th-17th
March. The work
of detachments
from Lieutenant-
Colonel Naga-
numa's column.

at Mi-li-ku. No further attempt against the line was made and the force reached Ta-lang-ying-tzu on the 13th.

Captain Miyauchi's party started from Ta-lang-ying-tzu on the 6th March and halted in Wei-wo-peng, east of the Liao Ho, on the 9th.* On the morning of the 11th it reached a point on the railway north of Shuan-miao-tzu station, destroyed the line and one telegraph post, and then fell back to Li-chia-kang-tzu where it remained till the 12th. Next day it again moved to the railway, near Hsi-ping-kai station, and on the morning of the 14th cut the rails in five places and threw down three telegraph posts. It then withdrew to Chieh-cheng, where it halted, and Captain Miyauchi heard that four hundred of the enemy's cavalry with a few guns had been quartered on the previous night in Yu-shou-tai, in dangerous proximity to the line of march to and from the railway. On the 15th the retirement was continued, and Ta-lang-ying-tzu was again reached on the night of the 17th.

On the 20th March Lieutenant-Colonel Naganuma moved with his whole force to Ta-shih-chiao, north-west of Mukden, and halted there till the 29th, after which the force was dispersed.

In forwarding a report to Major-General Akiyama upon the operations which he had conducted, Lieutenant-Colonel Naganuma summed up his conclusions in the following remarks:—

1. It is desirable that cavalry sent on raids should be accompanied by machine guns or horse artillery.

2. As many parts of Mongolia are more or less swampy, winter is the best season for moving troops over that country.

3. The people of the country are inclined to take offence at any lack of respect paid to their religion by strangers, and since there are Buddhist shrines in many houses it is advisable that soldiers should not omit to pay reverence in the customary manner.

4. During the first week of the raid the horses lost condition owing to the unavoidable change in their food, but they soon became fit and hard.

5. That Japanese horses can stand cold fairly well is proved by the fact that at times during the raid the thermometer fell from four to twenty-two degrees below zero Fahrenheit. They were kept in the open, covered with one blanket, and Chinese

* During a halt on the 10th a heavy explosion in the direction of Mukden was heard. This was the report of the destruction of the railway bridge across the Hun Ho. See p. 636.

mats, if available, and in the morning were generally white with frost or snow.

6. The daily distance covered was between twenty-eight to forty miles. On one occasion seventy-five miles were completed in thirty hours, during which time the movement, except for two halts to feed, was continuous; and in the next forty-two hours, seventy-eight miles were covered. Thus the total distance marched in three days and nights was one hundred and fifty-three miles.

7. Omitting those wounded, only two horses fell sick, and none died. A few only lost their shoes.

Although the raiding party had found it impossible to carry out every item of the original programme, what it had been able to do was regarded as of such service to the Japanese army in the operations round Mukden, that every officer who survived was presented with a *kanjo* by the Emperor. Unlike General Mishchenko's raid, that of Colonel Naganuma carried with it from the first the impress of success. Its numerical weakness facilitated both rapid movement and secrecy, while mobility was further gained by good organization and by relying upon the country for supplies. By making a wide sweep through the so-called neutral territory of Mongolia, where the inhabitants in many places had no conception as to the precise nationality of their unexpected visitors, by following unfrequented paths and halting only in the smaller villages the chances of discovery were minimized. In the zone through which the force passed it was, as it were, hidden behind a veil from behind which it only emerged with suddenness and rapidity to carry out its work of destruction. This done it vanished at once and relied on spies and the information of the inhabitants for information of pursuit.

It is now time to revert to the middle of January in order to follow the fortunes of the second column under Major Hasegawa, which by that time was equipped and ready to start. This force was composed of one hundred and four non-commissioned officers

The Japanese raid under Major Hasegawa. and men of the 1st Cavalry Brigade and of the 3rd, 6th and 9th Cavalry Regiments. As had been the case with Lieutenant-Colonel Naganuma's column, men and horses were carefully selected, and for some days before the raid started, the latter were given the food they were likely to get on the journey, i.e., *kao-liang* grain

and stalks as well as straw and bean cake. Felt boots and winter overcoats were issued to the men, but their goat-skin waistcoats were discarded as being too conspicuous. Four days' rations were carried on the saddle—two of rice and two of biscuit; and five Chinese carts started with the column. Included in the personnel were a veterinary surgeon, a medical officer, a Chinese interpreter, and financial officer, the latter being in charge of about one thousand pounds in army notes and cash. The exact amount of ammunition taken is not known, but when the carts were abandoned each man carried two hundred rounds. As regards the task of the column, the orders given were few and explicit, namely:—

(1) To move on Ta-wan (north-west of Hsiao-pei-ho, on the left bank of the Liao Ho), and sever General Mishchenko's communications.

(2) To get behind the enemy's line and by disturbing his flanks and rear to do as much damage as possible.

Leaving the neighbourhood of Su-ma-pu on the 15th, the force reached Ta-wan on the 16th, where as has been related it discovered that General Mishchenko had already gone north and that the first part of the allotted task could not therefore be carried out.*

On the 19th, after hiring five Chinese soldiers as guides, it proceeded and, moving west of Hsin-min-tun and avoiding villages, marching sometimes by night and sometimes by day, reached

Chin-chia-tun on the 25th. The inhabitants of this region proved to be simple and well disposed, and appeared indifferent as to the nationality of the raiders. The weather now grew much colder, and the raiders were obliged to provide themselves with fur caps and cuffs and to cover their stirrups with the same material. Chin-chia-tun was left on the 27th January, the intention being to move direct on to the railway, but information from the Chinese disclosed that the enemy had posts at Feng-hua and Pa-men-cheng so Major Hasegawa determined to move into Mongolia. When within a day's march of Nung-an he learnt from natives of the presence of three or four hundred Cossacks and some brigands not far off, while in and about Pei-tu-ne there were said to be about one thousand of the enemy. It was clear, therefore, that the line of railway was well

* See p. 128.

guarded. Moreover, the farther north the column proceeded, the more pro-Russian did the natives appear to be.

The intelligence tended to show that there were actually fewer of the enemy in the neighbourhood of Nung-an than elsewhere, so it was determined to destroy the railway not far from that place. On the 13th February the carts were dismissed; and that night the column passed Nung-an without being discovered, reaching the neighbourhood of Yao-min railway station at 4 a.m. on the 18th. Dawn being near at hand, and no Russians having been met with, the Japanese pushed on to a point on the line one and a quarter miles north of the station, where they cut the rails and telegraph wires, part of the force meanwhile approaching the station and opening fire on it. By 5.30 a.m. the task was completed and the Japanese retired quickly until they reached the left bank of the I-tung Ho where they halted for the night. During the retirement some Cossack scouts appeared in the distance, following up from the railway. They soon withdrew, but the Japanese found the right bank of the I-tung patrolled by the enemy, whose numbers were uncertain, so Major Hasegawa decided to go north towards Harbin.

On the 20th February, the column crossed the Sungari and reached Wu-chia-cheng, a few miles north of the river on its right bank, where the rumours of the presence of Russians at Pei-tu-ne was corroborated and it was reported that there were about one hundred and fifty of them at the railway station to the east of Wu-chia-cheng. Major Hasegawa consequently decided to attack

Attack on Tao-lai-chao station on the 20th February.

the latter. At 8 p.m. the Japanese moved off, and at midnight reached a hill south-west of the station whence after a short halt they sent forward ten men, each carrying a grenade. These men were instructed to creep up and throw the grenades one by one into the buildings or defence works, so as to cause the maximum of confusion and disorder, while the remainder of the force was to follow and open a hot fire on the place. All took place as arranged. The Russians opened fire after the explosions, and the Japanese replied at a range of four hundred yards until about 2 a.m., by which hour all the defenders had apparently fled. An attempt was now made to fire the huts and station, but the explosions had so excited the horses that seventeen had broken away and stampeded for Wu-chia-cheng. This interfered with the proceedings and prevented the Japanese

from completing their work by blowing up the line, for it was imperative to recapture the horses if possible. Only four were actually recovered and on the following day the number had to be made up by the purchase of Chinese horses at Wu-chia-cheng. While at Wu-chia-cheng the Japanese ascertained that there had been one hundred and twenty Russians at the station prior to the attack, and that their losses amounted to seventeen killed and wounded. There were no casualties on the side of the Japanese.*

On the morning of the 22nd, two hundred Cossacks appeared from the direction of the railway and watched the Japanese from a hill to the north-east. Fresh information now reached Major Hasegawa to the effect that there was a mixed force of the enemy
 twenty-five miles north-east of Wu-chia-cheng,
 and since a move farther eastward appeared to be
 out of the question he resolved to retire to the
 left bank of the Sungari. The Cossacks followed,
 but lost touch with the Japanese before the latter reached the river.

After crossing, the Japanese reached the vicinity of Ha-erh-hai-cheng-tzu on the 24th, most of the marching being done by night. Here they heard that there were from two hundred to three hundred Cossacks on the right bank of the I-tung, and so pushed on towards the south-west, since to cut the railway anywhere in this district would be very difficult. On the 29th it was learnt from a Chinese magistrate that Lieutenant-Colonel Naganuma had ten days before met a superior force of the enemy a few miles to the east, and after suffering some casualties had retired south-west with the intention of waiting for Major Hasegawa at Cheng-chia-tun. This official further stated that at Nung-an and Huai-te there were considerable bodies of the enemy, who patrolled constantly to the south. Major Hasegawa therefore gave up all idea of attempting to cut the railway again, and leaving the village where he had got this information on the 1st March, arrived two days later at Cheng-chia-tun. Here he discovered that Colonel Naganuma had passed through that place ten days before, had fought with the enemy thirty-three miles south of it, and had then continued his march in the same direction.

* From the accounts available from Japanese sources this attack appears, as here described, to have been made upon Tao-lai-chao railway station. The *Russian Official History*, however, mentions an attack on Shih-li-chan, some miles to the west. The *German Official Account* and *Streffleur's Militärische Zeitschrift* also describe the objective of the Japanese raiders as having been a magazine at Shih-li-chan.

This news induced him to make another attempt against the line, for in all probability most of the Cossacks had gone south in pursuit of the other column. He chose Hsi-ping-kai railway station as his objective, but first left Cheng-chia-tun for a less frequented village twelve miles to the south. While in this hamlet he received information that the line Feng-hua—Fa-ku-men was held strongly by the enemy; that there were guns at the former place and some six thousand men at the latter; and that the railway was also held. These tidings did not seem to promise much success for a project of cutting the line; nevertheless, it was not at once abandoned, and during the night of the 6th–7th the squadron marched eighteen miles in a south-easterly direction. From the fact that the natives were now hostile and the guides did their best to escape Major Hasegawa gathered that the enemy must be near at hand and in strength. On the night of the 7th–8th March, therefore, he abandoned his enterprise and returned to the small village he had occupied for the previous three days.

It was now more than fifty days since the Japanese had started with four days' rations, and although there had been no casualties the Chinese food was telling on men and animals. On this account Major Hasegawa divided his column into two parties of about fifty each, one composed of the stronger men and horses, the other of the weaker. The latter he dispatched on the night of the 9th–10th to Chin-chia-tun, where they were to await him, while he himself with the stronger party moved on Hsi-ping-kai station. At 10 a.m. on the 10th March, while in a village, his force was suddenly surrounded by three hundred Cossacks, who opened fire from a fairly safe distance; and shortly afterwards a force of the enemy's infantry was seen advancing from the north-east. Major Hasegawa, realizing that there was now nothing to be done but to beat a hasty retreat, brought all his men to the south side of the village. From here they opened a rapid rifle fire for a few minutes in order to clear a way through the enemy, then mounted and charged out of the village with drawn swords. The Cossacks in this section hesitated and the Japanese after inflicting a few casualties galloped off to the south. Four Japanese were slightly wounded, and five others whose horses could not keep up were left behind. It was a fortunate thing for the raiders that the two parties had separated but a few hours

Major Hasegawa
divides his column.
Action on the
10th March.

before, for their losses would have been severe had this detachment been handicapped by weak horses and men. After travelling eighteen miles in a southerly direction as fast as they could without entirely knocking up the horses, they lost sight of the Cossacks and at 8 p.m. reached the other party, and the whole column halted for a few hours.

Any further attempts against the enemy's line of communication were now finally out of the question, and after a few hours' rest the whole column started for Hsin-min-tun, and making a detour west of Fa-ku-men reached the Japanese lines on the 16th March, some days after the battle of Mukden had been concluded. The casualties were nine men wounded and missing. Twenty-one horses were lost and many returned lame. Most of the money taken had been spent.

Though the material results achieved by both these expeditions were of the slightest the moral effect produced upon the Russians was great and, as will be seen, caused a serious diversion of strength to guard the communications.* Besides a defensive

The Russian raid under Colonel von Gillenschmidt. The 17th-23rd February.

reinforcement of the railway, however, the action of the Japanese was responsible for measures of a more active nature on the part of the Russians. Hearing of the attack on Bridge 247, General Head-Quarters informed the Second Manchurian Army that it was considered desirable to reply to the Japanese enterprises by a movement against their communications. The commander of the Second Manchurian Army was left to work out the details of the proposed raid, but it was enjoined that a movement in force was only to be made in conjunction with a general offensive operation such as was then contemplated.† For the execution of this duty the commander of the Second Manchurian Army selected the troops under General Rennenkampf, who had on the 9th February taken over command of the cavalry corps stationed in the district between the Liao Ho and Hun Ho, and on the 17th ordered that officer to send out a force of four squadrons with instructions to penetrate in rear of the enemy's troops and to blow up one of the large railway bridges on the line Liao-yang—Hai-cheng—Ta-shih-chiao.‡

* See p. 263.

† This was the projected renewal of the Russian attack after the battle of San-de-pu.

‡ The 3rd Squadron of the 2nd Daghestan Cavalry Regiment, the 5th Squadron of the Terek-Kuban Cavalry Regiment and the 1st and 2nd

Shortly after midday on the 18th February this force, under the command of Colonel von Gillenschmidt of the Guards Horse Artillery, moved out from Wu-pa-niu-lu in the direction of Kao-li-ma, where the extreme western detachment of the Russian army was standing. Here Japanese outposts were discovered on the left bank, and in order to avoid them the Russian cavalry crossed the river and, moving off the roads and avoiding villages, eventually reached Hsiao-li-pu-tzu at 6.30 on the morning of the 19th. After a twelve-hour halt Ta-wa was reached at 4.30 a.m. on the 20th, and at seven o'clock in the evening a start was made for the railway bridge over the Hsiao Ho a few miles southwest of Hai-cheng, which had been selected for destruction. When the Russians arrived within five hundred yards of the objective fire was opened by the Japanese detachment guarding the bridge, but it was quickly driven off and the demolition section was soon at work. At 3 a.m. the charges were fired and the bridge blown up.* An hour later the Russians started on their return journey and reached Wu-pa-niu-lu at 2 p.m. on the 23rd after having been engaged the previous day with some Japanese near the Hsin-min-tun railway.

In the execution of this raid the Russians showed that they had profited by the lessons to be learned from General Mishchenko's expedition. On this occasion no supply column accompanied the force and consequently the speed of advance was much increased, the average daily distance covered being as much as fifty miles. This rapid progress assisted towards secrecy, which was also maintained by the precautions taken to prevent the departure of the inhabitants from the various villages in which the force halted. There was also no confusion as to the objective. That the actual damage done to the railway was so slight was due to the inexperience in demolition and the handling of explosives of the men entrusted with the destruction of the bridge, for which work properly trained technical troops were apparently not available. Though the raid resulted in no serious harm to the Japanese communications, the ease with which they were reached shows what chances were missed during the winter by the Russians, in keeping inactive the large masses of cavalry on their right flank. The losses of General Gillenschmidt's force amounted to fifteen killed and twenty-one wounded.

Squadrons of the Verkhne-Udinsk Cossack Regiment were selected. An engineer officer and some mounted sappers accompanied the force. The explosive taken amounted to 423 lbs. of pyroxylin carried on pack animals.

* The bridge was of sixty or seventy feet span. The girders were not dropped, but were cut at the north end and let down on the abutment.

CHAPTER LXVII.

THE SITUATION AFTER THE BATTLE OF SAN-DE-PU—PLANS OF THE OPPOSING COMMANDERS—DESCRIPTION OF THE TERRAIN—GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE BATTLE OF MUKDEN—OPERATIONS FROM THE 18TH TO THE 24TH FEBRUARY—THE ADVANCE OF THE YA-LU ARMY AND THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE BATTLE—THE RUSSIANS EVACUATE CHING-HO-CHENG—OPERATIONS OF THE 2ND DIVISION OF THE JAPANESE FIRST ARMY—THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE RUSSIAN OFFENSIVE—END OF THE FIRST PHASE OF THE BATTLE.

(Plate 50 and Plans 54, 55, 56 and 57.)

AS has been seen, the battle of San-de-pu produced no change in the relative situation of the two sides, except that the Russians were once again made to suffer under a sense of failure. Save for the withdrawal of the VIIIth and 1st Siberian Corps

Situation after
the battle of
San-de-pu.

on the Russian right both armies remained in occupation of approximately the same positions that they had previously held, and the calm which had reigned through the greater part of the winter was once more resumed. But it was obvious that the cessation of hostilities would not last long. The abnormal situation of two large forces lying opposite each other, in some places with their outposts separated by but a stone's-throw, could not continue once winter should relax its grip and either side be ready to move. As a matter of fact, this period of inactivity lasted for exactly three weeks, and was broken by an advance of the Japanese, which forestalled a similar movement by the Russians.

When General Kuropatkin ordered the retirement of the Second Manchurian Army on the night of the 28th January, during the battle of San-de-pu, his action was an expedient to seek safety from a blow that was feared rather than to obtain relief from any

The Russians.
General
Kuropatkin's
intentions.

pressure actually being applied, and within three days, when that blow did not fall, the question of the resumption of the offensive was once again brought forward. It is not known exactly for what reasons the commander-in-chief considered his position to be

so much improved that he could again press on; but if the assumption be correct that the abandonment of the attack was due to a fear of the intervention of the Japanese Third Army, the inference is natural that the reversion to offence may have been caused by the discovery that that army had not come up from Port Arthur, and by a desire to act before it should arrive. As will be seen later, however, the Russians were still inclined to the belief that a portion of General Nogi's force had reached the scene of operations, though they remained in ignorance of its position for nearly a month. And the recrudescence of the aggressive spirit could not have been due to any sudden accession of their strength, for they received no reinforcements after the battle. Indeed, the first that were expected—the 3rd and 4th Rifle Brigades—were not due until half-way through March, while the IVth Corps, which had been mobilized in Russia at the end of December, could not arrive till considerably later. Nevertheless, difficult as it is to follow the motives underlying the changes in policy of the Russians at the end of January and the beginning of February, 1905, the fact remains that their general intention to attack was unshaken by the failure at San-de-pu. This being so there were two factors which more than ever pointed to the necessity for early action. One was the chance of delivering a blow before the Japanese Third Army should come up, if it had not already arrived. The other was that the weather was rapidly growing milder, and the roads might before long be useless.

It is thought that in order to convey the clearest impression of the development of Russian strategy at this time it will be best, in anticipation of the narrative, to give a consecutive summarized account of some of the discussions on the subject which took place

between the end of January and the commencement of the battle of Mukden. On the 31st

January the Quartermaster-General pointed out that the Japanese were moving troops, and suggested that the Second and Third Manchurian Armies should attack at once while the First Army demonstrated. This proposal was rejected by General Kuropatkin who favoured a fresh attempt against San-de-pu. Next day the Chief of Staff reported that the Japanese were mounting heavy guns, along their front, and pressed for an attack upon San-de-pu by the Second Manchurian Army, in which a Mixed Brigade from the First and Third Manchurian Armies

should take part.* On the 12th February General Kuropatkin circulated a letter to his three army commanders, in which he appreciated the various ways in which the Japanese Third Army might interpose, laying emphasis on an attempt against Vladivostok, and requested the opinion of his subordinates as to whether the Russians should seize the initiative at once or wait for reinforcements before doing so, and whether any attack made by them should be against the enemy's left or centre. All three army commanders unanimously favoured an immediate attack against the Japanese left. On the same day, however, the 12th, General Kuropatkin also wrote to the Quartermaster-General, inquiring the latter's opinion as to the scope of the suggested operations against San-de-pu—whether they should be restricted to the capture of that village or be carried out as a preliminary to a general attack; what force should be detailed to support this attack from the General Reserve; and where the General Reserve should be stationed. The reply of the Quartermaster-General, in which the Chief of Staff concurred, is especially interesting. It was to the effect that the capture of San-de-pu would be a means to an end and not an end in itself; that the support to be afforded by the General Reserve was not a matter for immediate consideration; and that the XVth Corps should remain at Hsiao-ho-tun, where it was, and the 6th East Siberian Rifle Division and the 146th Regiment should be at Huang-shan. From the nature of his query it seems evident that General Kuropatkin had already made up his mind definitely to attack San-de-pu again.

A week later, at a council of war at which the commander-in-chief, the army commanders, and their respective staffs were present, the whole question of an offensive policy was apparently reopened, for the subject discussed was the course to be pursued, firstly, in view of the fall of Port Arthur and, secondly, in view of the defeat at San-de-pu. The opinion of General Bilderling is not known. Generals Linevich and Kaulbars both favoured a blow against the Japanese left. On the 20th February, General Kuropatkin again circularized the army commanders. After giving a further appreciation of the situation,

* The object of forming a Mixed Brigade from units of the two armies which had hitherto not been engaged was that the units might on return be able to instruct their comrades in the best methods of attacking fortified villages.

he inquired their opinions as to the advisability either of making a general attack—such attack to be carried out immediately after the capture of San-de-pu and Li-ta-jen-tun by pushing forward the Second and Third Manchurian Armies to the Sha Ho so as to cut the Japanese off from Liao-yang, or of confining immediate action to the capture of those two villages, and of holding them until the arrival of the 3rd and 4th Rifle Brigades, when the general attack would take place. General Linevich's reply was to the effect that future action must depend on the progress of the fighting : General Bilderling, on the other hand, was of opinion that the mere capture of San-de-pu and Li-ta-jen-tun was valueless : General Kaulbars rather avoided the issue. General Kuropatkin held fast to his resolve of attacking San-de-pu, and on the following evening issued his orders for the advance to be carried out on the same lines as that of the 25th January.

Though an aggressive policy was definitely favoured, there was the same hesitation and delay in putting any one plan into execution as there had been before the last battle. From the 1st February, when the resumption of the offensive had been first mooted, until the 21st, when definite orders were issued, three weeks of valuable time had been wasted, with the results that will be seen.

Nevertheless, the Russians had not neglected to prepare for their advance. The strength of the defences of San-de-pu having by this time been fully appreciated, steps had been taken to ensure an adequate preparation by artillery fire for the proposed renewal of the attack on that village, and the number of siege pieces emplaced opposite this point of the Japanese line was brought up to sixty-eight by the addition of the siege guns of the Third Manchurian Army.* Besides increasing the number of batteries much work was also done in strengthening

Preparations.
Changes in the
dispositions of
the troops.

*	Nature of Gun.	Number of Guns.	Number of Batteries.
Old pattern field guns	... ..	32	4
Siege guns	{ 6-inch guns 42-line guns 8-inch light howitzers (1877 pattern) 6-inch field howitzers	28	7
		4	1
		8	2
		28	5
		<hr/> 100	<hr/> 19

the profile of those that existed and in supplementing the auxiliary accommodation, and the supply of ammunition with the Second Manchurian Army was brought up to one hundred and sixty rounds per gun, of which more than one-half was common shell. General Ivanov, the commander of the 3rd Siberian Corps, an artillery officer of much experience, was placed in charge of all the artillery on this flank, and to assist in this centralized control an elaborate system of telephone communication was installed. San-de-pu and Li-ta-jen-tun, also, were reconnoitred by specially selected officers and by balloon. A few minor changes were made in the disposition of the Second Manchurian Army, which was again to play the principal part in the projected engagement. The 1st Siberian Corps, which had suffered so severely, was reinforced by the Mixed Brigade drawn from the First Manchurian Army, and General Kossakovski's force was placed under the commander of the Provisional Rifle Corps.* The cavalry detachment of General Mishchenko—now under General Teleshov—was pushed down to Wu-pa-niu-lu, with its outposts across the Pu Ho, and on the 9th February General Rennenkampf, who had been brought over from the left flank, took command of this force.

Three days later the Second Manchurian Army received a successor to General Grippenbergh in the person of General Kaulbars, who was transferred from the Third Manchurian Army, his place being taken by General Bilderling. On the 13th he assembled a conference of his commanding officers, at which it was decided that the attack of Li-ta-jen-tun should be omitted from the programme of the Second Manchurian Army.

While the information in possession of General Head-Quarters at the beginning of February as to the strength and position of the Japanese First, Second, and Fourth Armies was fairly complete, the Russians were unable to locate the Japanese Third Army.

Information about the Japanese. Uncertainty as to the position of the Japanese Third Army.	Chinese spies had placed it near Hsiao-peih-o; but their reports, which though premature eventually proved to be correct, were discredited. It was thought probable that the bulk of General Nogi's force had reached Liao-yang, and that one of his divisions had replaced the Japanese 8th Division at Yen-tai. At the same time a transfer of some
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* Owing to objections raised by the commander of the Third Manchurian Army, no units from that army had been taken to form this Mixed Brigade, which did not stay long with the 1st Siberian Corps. See p. 262.

of his troops to the east coast was not regarded as impossible. One important point, however, had been discovered by the Russian Intelligence Department: it had received news of the proposed formation of the Japanese Ya-lu Army, under General Kawamura, though the intervention of this force in hostilities was not expected to take place for a month later than proved to be the case.*

The paucity of the intelligence regarding the hostile strength in the neighbourhood of Hsiao-pei-ho in the early days of February induced General Muilov to take steps to clear up the situation in that quarter, and on the 9th he dispatched General Rennenkampf, with the Ural Trans-Baikal Cossack Division, the Caucasian Cavalry Brigade and the 19th, 25th and 26th Don Cossack Regiments, to work round the enemy's left.† By the 15th the force was some eleven miles south-west of Hsiao-pei-ho, where it encountered and drove back six squadrons of Japanese cavalry, which were trying to work north, and an infantry column which appeared from the direction of Hsiao-pei-ho.‡ On the following day, however, for some unknown reason, General Rennenkampf retraced his steps and made for Ma-ma-kai. Here an order reached him to send a brigade of the 4th Don Cossack Division north to reinforce the troops protecting the railway, and this led him to give up further reconnaissance.§ The result of the work done by the cavalry was therefore purely negative, for though it discovered that the line Liao-yang—Hsiao-pei-ho was on the 14th apparently clear of the Japanese, and that the latter place probably marked their extreme left, it had gained no positive information as to the whereabouts of the Japanese Third Army. This detachment of strength from General Rennenkampf's force and his consequent abandonment of the reconnaissance was one of the results of the Japanese raid against the railway, which was now beginning to make its influence felt.|| On the other hand, the latter was also the cause of the minor success obtained

* This force is also called the Japanese Fifth Army.

† General Muilov, who was originally the commander of the VIIIth Corps, had been temporarily placed in command of the Second Manchurian Army *vice* General Grippenberg.

‡ These squadrons were probably from the Japanese 2nd Cavalry Brigade.

§ The 2nd Brigade of the 4th Don Cossack Division was sent up with the 3rd Don Cossack Battery. The remainder of this division, on another order, left for Mukden on the 18th, and there entrained for the north.

|| See Chapter LXVI.

Reconnaissance
by General
Rennenkampf.
The 9th-17th
February.

by the Russian cavalry in the destruction of the railway bridge on the Hsiao Ho, south of Hai-cheng, on the night of the 20th-21st.*

General Kuropatkin was not now to enjoy that immunity from threats of danger in more distant portions of the theatre of war which had favoured him in January, when formulating the plan of action for the battle of San-de-pu; and the transfer of the 4th Don Cossack Division northwards on account of the Japanese raids was not the only deduction of strength he made from the main army about this time. For some days before the news of the enemy's attempts against the railway to the north reached him he had been much disturbed by rumours of hostile activity elsewhere, which were based on something more substantial than camp gossip. The Russian agent in China, General Dessino, had reported that an army one hundred thousand strong under General Nogi, consisting of the Japanese Third Army and *Kobi* troops, was about to land at Possiet or on the east coast of Korea and to take the Russian main forces in rear, while a detachment was to attack Vladivostok.† Although the plan thus outlined was in some respects obviously exaggerated, the commander-in-chief, naturally sensitive as to his long communications, took action at once, and on the 16th February sent the Mixed Brigade off to Nikolsk Ussuriski.‡ To compensate for the gap caused in the ranks of the Second Manchurian Army by the deduction of this brigade and of the 4th Don Cossack Division, he transferred to that army the 2nd Brigade of the 6th East Siberian Rifle Division, which was in the First Manchurian Army reserve. That brigade with part of the 26th Artillery Brigade left Po-hsin-tsai on the 18th February, and joined the 1st Siberian Corps on the 20th. Certain other troops were also withdrawn from the front, while drafts on their way down to join their units were detrained and posted to guard the railway; the total strength of the forces thus diverted for duties in rear of the army very soon amounted to the consider-

* See p. 255.

† See Appendix 15.

‡ The Mixed Brigade remained at Nikolsk Ussuriski, where it served as the basis for the formation of the new 10th Siberian Rifle Division. This expansion was made partly at the expense of the field armies, by the diversion of drafts going up to the front, and partly from the troops in the Maritime Province.

able number of twelve battalions, forty-two and a half squadrons, forty-two guns and ten thousand details.*

Thus, as a direct result of the raids of the Japanese and as an indirect consequence of the complete command of local waters enjoyed by them—which was responsible for General Dessino's alarmist report—within one week of Colonel Naganuma's attempt on Bridge 247 the number of men, including Frontier Guards, *Opolchenie* and field troops, guarding the Chinese Eastern Railway section of the Russian communications was increased to the large total of 50,000.†

Except that the 1st Siberian and VIIIth Corps had been withdrawn from the right of the Second Manchurian Army, and that the right of the Russian main line of battle now lay west of Chang-tan, instead of opposite Hei-kou-tai, the disposition of the Russian forces remained during February as it had been before the battle of San-de-pu.

The Russian forces.

On the right was the Second Manchurian Army, comprising:—

General Rennenkampf's cavalry force.‡

General Kossakovski's detachment.§

* The 2nd Brigade, 41st Infantry Division, XVIth Corps	...	...	...	...	...	8 battalions.
The 100th (Ostrov) Regiment, XVIth Corps	...	...	...	...	...	4 battalions.
Drafts	...	...	...	...	...	10,000 men.
The 45th Artillery Brigade	...	...	...	...	...	24 guns.
The 4th Don Cossack Division	...	...	...	...	...	24 squadrons.
Don Cossack Artillery	...	...	...	...	...	12 guns.
A detachment under Colonel Stakhovich	...	...	...	...	...	8 squadrons.
The Amur Cossacks	...	...	...	...	...	1½ squadrons.
The Ussuri Cossack Regiment	...	...	...	...	...	5 squadrons.
Frontier Guard Liao Ho Detachment	...	...	...	...	...	4 squadrons.

Total—12 battalions, 42½ squadrons, 10,000 drafts, 24 field and 12 horse artillery guns.

Of these units, the 100th (Ostrov) Regiment and Colonel Stakhovich's detachment soon returned to the army; the remaining 8 battalions, 34½ squadrons and 36 guns continued detached in the north throughout the Mukden fighting. It should be stated, however, that reports had been received from the officer in command of the defence of the railway to the effect that large bodies of the enemy—in all over 10,000 strong—were collecting in Mongolia for the purpose of cutting the Russian communications. Portions of this number were probably considered to be Hun-hu-tzu.

† The number of men employed in protecting the railway at this period works out to twenty-eight men per mile of line.

‡ Less the units dispatched northwards. See foot-note (§), p. 261.

§ The Liao Ho Detachment.

The Provisional Rifle Corps.

The VIIIth Corps.

The Xth Corps.

The 1st Siberian Corps, in army reserve.

The frontage of this army, exclusive of the cavalry, extended for some sixteen miles; and the number of heavy guns was one hundred.*

In the centre was the Third Manchurian Army, comprising:—

The 5th Siberian Corps.†

The XVIIth Corps.

The 6th Siberian Corps.‡

The frontage of this army was about thirteen miles, and all the units were in first line. It disposed of one hundred and forty heavy guns.

On the left was the First Manchurian Army, comprising:—

The 1st Corps.§

The 4th Siberian Corps.

The 2nd Siberian Corps.

The 3rd Siberian Corps.

This army had a frontage of some thirty-two miles and also had all its units in front line. With it were sixteen heavy guns. The left front was protected by a force of all arms under General Alexeiev about Ching-ho-cheng, while farther to the east was a detachment under Colonel Madritov.

In General Reserve were:—

The XVIth Corps.||

The 72nd Division of the 6th Siberian Corps.

The 146th (Tsaritsin) Regiment of the 1st Corps.

In round numbers, the total strength of the force under the command of General Kuropatkin was 276,000 bayonets; 16,000 sabres; 1,200 guns; and 54 machine guns.

In General Kuropatkin's orders for the offensive, which were issued on the evening of the 21st February, it was laid

* For a detailed list of heavy guns with the Russians, see Appendix 17.

† Less two regiments with General Kossakovski.

‡ Less the 72nd Division.

§ Less the 146th (Tsaritsin) Regiment.

|| Less the 2nd Brigade of the 41st Division, and the 2nd Division of the 45th Artillery Brigade. The XVIth Corps was about Hsiao-ho-tun: the 72nd Division was farther to the south on either side of the railway. Near Ta-su-chia-pu was one brigade with artillery, while six miles to the east of the line was the other brigade with artillery, and the 146th (Tsaritsin) Regiment.

down that the advance was to be generally on the lines of that ordered before the battle of San-de-pu, and that, as before, the Second Manchurian Army was to begin the attack, which was to commence on the 25th February.* The experience of his last failure, however, had apparently not aroused the commander-in-chief to the danger of partial measures, for the action of the Third Manchurian Army was to be limited to artillery fire and demonstrations, whilst no reference was made to any co-operation by the First Manchurian Army.

General Kaulbars now found himself confronted with the task which had proved too much for General Gripenberg a month earlier. On the 22nd he issued his operation orders, and on the 24th announced that the artillery preparation was to begin on the following day.

By that time, however, as will be seen, Marshal Oyama's orders for the assumption of the offensive by the Japanese were already four days old, the battle had begun, and the advance of the Russians upon which so much thought had been expended was destined to be strangled at its birth. Even sooner than had been the case at the Sha Ho were their opponents to wrest the initiative from them and to force them to throw their carefully deliberated plans to the winds.

In regard to the intentions and actions of the Japanese there is comparatively little to be said, for the period after the battle of San-de-pu was, as had been the period before that battle, one of waiting. Marshal Oyama's strategy apparently aimed at the

envelopment of the Russians on both flanks, the plan for which had been initiated before the fall of Port Arthur, when the 1st *Kobi* Division had been formed right out in the east. The surrender of the fortress had been a further step in the development of the scheme, in that it had set free the Japanese Third Army. What he had been awaiting since the 2nd January, and still awaited, was the moment when General Nogi's units and a number of siege guns should come up and take their place in the line of battle. The advance could not be much longer delayed, for the weather was already beginning to grow milder, and it would not be long before flooded rivers might render the roads impassable.

Of the new Ya-lu Army in the east the 1st *Kobi* Division was

* For the outline of the orders for the battle of San-de-pu, see p. 144.

The Japanese.
Marshal Oyama's
intentions.

round Cheng-chang, where it had been for some time, and the 11th Division, which had left Port Arthur on the 25th January, was well on its way to that place. Great secrecy had been observed about the formation and destination of this force, the existence of which it was hoped would come as a surprise to the Russians. But, in spite of its position out on the flank, its initial rôle was not to be one of envelopment, for the country across which it would have to advance was of such a difficult character as to preclude the speed of movement demanded by such an operation. The Ya-lu Army, when it first disclosed itself, was to act with a view to attracting the attention of the Russians to their eastern flank and of drawing their strength in that direction. The real blow was then to be delivered on the west by the Third Army, whose presence in that quarter, it was hoped, would be unsuspected by the enemy. That army was also on its way up from Port Arthur, which it left in the beginning of February; and in order to assist in concealing its arrival the area of concentration selected for it was that between Liao-yang and Hsiao-pei-ho instead of farther west, whence an enveloping advance would have been easier. Until both these forces reached the front, Marshal Oyama was unable to do anything more than hold himself in readiness to beat back any repetition by the enemy of the attempt made at San-de-pu. The great activity of the Russians at the beginning of February, especially in the neighbourhood of that village, did not escape the notice of Japanese General Head-Quarters, but it was apparently taken more as a sign of defensive preparation than as indicating a projected renewal of the attack.

About the second week in February Marshal Oyama held a council of war at Liao-yang to consider the impending action. Among those present was the newly appointed commander of the Ya-lu Army, General Kawamura, who had just returned to the front from Japan. He left Liao-yang immediately afterwards for Cheng-chang to take up his new command, and reached that place on the 18th.* By the evening of the 19th February the bulk of the Japanese Third Army reached the line Liao-yang—Hsiao-pei-ho, and on the same day the 11th

* General Kawamura had commanded the 10th Division at Liao-yang and the Sha Ho. He had since been promoted to general.

Division joined the 1st *Kobi* Division at Cheng-chang, thus completing the Ya-lu Army.*

The total field force of the Japanese was now composed of five armies instead of three, two independent cavalry brigades, and the General Reserve. Working from east to west their disposition and strength was as follows :—

The Japanese forces.

The Fifth, or Ya-lu Army, under General Kawamura, lying round Cheng-chang, where it was echeloned slightly in rear of the general line, consisting of :—

- The 1st *Kobi* Division.
- The 11th Division.
- The 16th *Kobi* Brigade.
- The 59th *Kobi* Regiment.

The First Army, under General Kuroki, consisting of :—

- The 2nd Division.†
- The 29th and 39th *Kobi* Regiments.
- The 5th *Kobi* Brigade.
- The 12th Division.
- The Guard *Kobi* Brigade [Umezawa Brigade].
- The Guard Division.

The Fourth Army, under General Nodzu, within whose sphere of action lay the railway and the Mandarin Road, consisting of :—

* Almost the whole of the Third Army which went northwards marched from Port Arthur. The railway was fully taxed with the transport of supplies, heavy artillery, and ammunition. It is stated, also, that it was considered that the troops would benefit by the march after their comparatively sedentary duty round Port Arthur.

The 11th Division had marched east from Port Arthur on the 25th January. See p. 131.

† The 2nd Division had returned from the western portion of the Japanese line after the conclusion of the battle of San-de-pu. On the 21st February it was reinforced by the 29th *Kobi* Regiment from the First Army and by the 39th *Kobi* Regiment which apparently came up from the neighbourhood of Pen-hsi-hu. To it were also added three squadrons of cavalry (one from the Guard and two from the 12th Division) and some mountain artillery from the 12th Division.

The 10th Division.

The Okubo *Kobi* Division.*

The 6th Division.†

Most of the heavy guns [from Port Arthur].

The Second Army, under General Oku, carrying on the line as far as Su-ma-pu, consisting of:—

The 8th *Kobi* Brigade.‡

The 3rd Division.§

The 4th Division.

The 5th Division.||

The 8th Division.||

The Third Army, under General Nogi, between Liao-yang and Hsiao-pei-ho, in rear of the Second Army, consisting of:—

The 9th Division.

The 15th *Kobi* Brigade.

The 7th Division.

The 1st Division.

The 2nd Artillery Brigade.

The 1st Cavalry Brigade, under General Akiyama, connecting the Second and Third Armies.¶

The 2nd Cavalry Brigade, under General Tamura, lying to the west of Hsiao-pei-ho.**

* This division was originally formed during the battle of the Sha Ho, and was made up of the 3rd, 10th and 11th *Kobi* Brigades and the 1st Field Artillery Brigade. Later, some of the artillery had been sent to the Second Army and portion of the infantry had been detached to the Fourth Army reserve. It now consisted of the 3rd *Kobi* Brigade (18th and 34th *Kobi* Regiments); the 11th *Kobi* Brigade (12th and 22nd *Kobi* Regiments); the 10th *Kobi* Brigade (10th and 40th *Kobi* Regiments), in divisional reserve; and a proportion of the artillery of the Fourth Army, in which were included most of the 11-inch howitzers. It was commanded by Major-General Okubo, who must not be confused with Lieutenant-General Okubo, commanding the 6th Division. The remainder of the division was apparently in the Fourth Army reserve.

† Transferred from the Second to the Fourth Army on the 20th February.

‡ Came under the command of General Oku on the 24th February.

§ On the 17th February orders were issued that the 3rd Division was to be detached from the Second Army to form part of the General Reserve, but owing to the difficulty of withdrawing it from its position of close proximity to the enemy the move did not take place until the 25th.

|| The 5th and 8th Divisions, which had been pushed out westwards to take part in the battle of San-de-pu, came under General Oku's command on the 20th February.

¶ The 1st Cavalry Brigade during the first stages of the battle formed part of the Second Army.

** Later the 2nd Cavalry Brigade joined the Third Army for a short time.

The General Reserve, near Yen-tai, consisting of :—

The 1st *Kobi* Brigade.

The 13th *Kobi* Brigade.

The 14th *Kobi* Brigade.

In round numbers the total strength of the force under Marshal Oyama was 200,000 bayonets; 7,300 sabres; 1,000 guns; and the large number—compared with that of the Russians—of 254 machine guns.

There was now nothing further for which to wait, and on the 20th February were issued the operation orders for the battle it was hoped would have a decisive influence upon the land operations of the war. Their general trend was that :—

Marshal Oyama's orders.

(1) The Ya-lu Army was to advance on the 23rd in two columns on Fu-shun, with the object of getting to the left rear of the enemy.

(2) The First Army was to be ready to attack on the 27th, if necessary, by which date the 2nd Division was to take the Wang-fu Ling.

(3) The Fourth Army was to hold the line from the left of the First Army to Lin-sheng-pu near the railway and was to be ready to advance at any time.

(4) The Second Army was to attack from San-de-pu towards Lan-shan-pu, wheeling to its right.

(5) The Third Army was to advance on the 26th and attack the enemy's right flank, wheeling to its own right.*

(6) The General Reserve was to assemble near Ta-tung-shan-pu.

Marshal Oyama summed up the object of the coming operation as follows :—

“The object of the battle is to decide the issue of the war. The question is not one, therefore, of occupying certain points or seizing tracts of country. It is essential that the enemy should be dealt a heavy blow, and as since in all our battles hitherto pursuit has been very slow, it is imperative upon this occasion to pursue as promptly and as far as possible.”

Although the advance of the Ya-lu Army was specified to be begun on the 23rd February, it seems that some preliminary movement had previously been ordered so as to bring that army more into the general alignment of Marshal Oyama's forces. A

* The Third Army, however, did not advance until the 27th. See p. 327.

similar feature, it will be remembered, had characterized the initial stages of the battle of Liao-yang, when the Guard Division of the Japanese First Army was required by its position to open the battle. At any rate General Kawamura's force began operations several days before the date assigned in the orders of the 20th, and to it belongs the honour of having fired the first shot, and having scored the first success in the last land battle of the war.

No lengthy description of the battlefield is now required. The action was fought only a few miles north of the scene of the struggle in October, 1904, and the main characteristics of the terrain were the same. The battlefield of Mukden.

Speaking broadly, the ground on the west of the railway, traversed by the Liao Ho and the Rivers Hun and Pu, is flat, while that on the east becomes more and more rugged the farther the railway is left behind. So wild, indeed, is the district east of a line drawn north and south through Fu-shun that movement is confined to mountain tracks, and the rare approaches which favour a movement of all arms acquire great tactical importance. The plain west of the railway at the time that the battle was fought consisted of bare frozen fields on which but little snow was lying, except in the furrows with which every field was scored. Here, as in the former actions, the chief features of tactical value were the villages, temples, and burial grounds. In the direction of the Liao Ho, however, along the old railway between the Pu Ho and Hun Ho, ten miles west of Mukden, was to be met a line of sand hummocks, which formed a strong position covering the approaches to Mukden from the west.* The old railway just referred to was itself likewise an important tactical feature, consisting as it did of an embankment rising in places to thirty-five feet in height.† Thus was formed a high rampart to the south, south-west and west of Mukden, at a distance of eight to twelve miles from that city, which afforded an excellent defensive work behind

* This line of hillocks had been occupied in September, 1904, by the units of the 5th Siberian Corps and had been known as the Dembovski Position.

† Up to 1901 the Chinese Eastern Railway passed 10-12 miles west of Mukden, and crossing the Hun Ho by the bridge near Ma-chia-pu struck due south. This route, however, was altered after the Boxer Rising. It was realigned to pass nearer Mukden and a new bridge was built across the Hun Ho, south of the town.

On some maps the embankment (going north) ceases at the old Mukden station, reappearing about San-chia-tzu, fourteen miles north-west of the city. Between these points the old formation level was that of the plain, or at an insignificant height above it.

which movements could take place unobserved. Another isolated tactical feature was the grove of lofty pine trees some three miles north-west of the city, round which had been raised the ancient pagodas where the remains of bygone emperors reposed. Here were to take place some of the bloodiest scenes of the struggle.

Constructed originally to act as a bridge-head to secure a possible retreat from Liao-yang, the Russian works round Mukden had been extended when that retreat became a reality. The original bridge-head lay on the southern bank and was furnished with five "forts," several redoubts, a lunette and a redan. By February, 1905, these works were supplemented on the right by a fortified position running north-north-east from Ma-chia-pu, on which were twelve redoubts, a lunette and entrenchments for infantry and guns, while on the left a chain of works was constructed along the right bank to Fu-ling.

In February the roads which traversed the plain were in good condition, for the sun was not sufficiently powerful to counteract the influence of the frost at night.* Movement across country, too, was everywhere possible, although at first the furrows proved a hindrance for both men and horses. The banks of the Hun Ho were low, though occasionally steep, and the ice was so thin in places that the crossing-places for guns and cavalry had to be very carefully indicated. Generally speaking the condition of the ice was such as to necessitate the construction of a bridge whenever the passage of a large force was in question. Nine bridges had already been built east of the railway bridge, while below it were others. One was immediately west of the railway; another was at Ma-chia-pu, where there was also a passage over the ice; and there were others at Erh-tai-tzu, Ta-wang-kuan-pu and Tou-tai-tzu. The three latter, however, did not lead direct to Mukden and were not found to be of any service. In the section of river from Ma-chia-pu to the railway exclusive there were two only—a number which proved to be quite insufficient for the troops and transport dependent upon them.†

The course of the battle, which lasted altogether for twenty days, from the 18th February to the 10th March, may be

* The only native roads which were other than mere cart tracks were the Mandarin Road and that from Mukden to Hsin-min-tun.

† The following were the bridges from east to west: Fu-shun (2); Ka-pu-kai; Fu-ling (2); Huang-chia-chan-tzu; Yan-kuan-tun; Hou-mi-kuan; Hun-ho-pu; Hou-chia-hou; Railway Bridge; one just west of the latter; Ma-chia-pu; Erh-tai-tzu; Ta-wang-kuan-pu, Tou-tai-tzu; and some others.

considered to have been made up of four stages which, though merging into one another, are each distinguished by definite characteristics. The first stage lasted from the night of Saturday, the 18th, to the evening of Monday, the 27th February ; it included the preliminary pressure by the Ya-lu Army, the hurried dispatch by the Russians of reinforcements to the east, and their abandonment of the offensive, and it closed with the beginning of the advance of the Japanese Third Army in the west. During the second period, which lasted from the evening of the 27th February to the evening of Tuesday, the 7th March, General Kuropatkin ineffectually endeavoured to resist the enveloping movement of General Nogi, which was assisted by a right wheel and advance of the Japanese Second Army, and on the latter day decided to withdraw his centre and left from the Sha Ho to the Hun. The third phase lasted about forty-eight hours, during which the Russians endeavoured to make a stand at Mukden itself and the Japanese strove to surround them, and it closed with the issue of orders for the retreat to Tieh-ling on the evening of the 9th. The next day the fourth period began, when the Russians broke through towards Tieh-ling. Although the pursuit continued until Thursday, the 16th, the battle ended on Friday, the 10th March.

It was nearly fifty miles away from the city which has given its name to the battle that the first clash of arms took place. Away to the south-east the left flank of the First Manchurian Army was protected by the Ching-ho-cheng Detachment, the command of which had been taken over by General Alexeiev on the departure of General Rennenkampf to the right of the whole Russian line.* This detachment lay grouped in three bodies at Kao-ling-tzu, Ching-ho-cheng and Hsing-ching, so as to guard the roads leading from Ching-ho-cheng to Mukden and Tieh-ling, a hostile advance along which might have turned the Russian lines upon the Sha and Hun Rivers. The following was the disposition of the detachment from west to east :—

(a) At Kao-ling-tzu, General Liubavin with 2½ battalions, 4 squadrons, 6 guns.†

* General Alexeiev had been the commander of the 5th East Siberian Rifle Division.

† Two and a half battalions of the 282nd (Chernoyar) Regiment ; four squadrons of the 2nd Argun Cossack Regiment and six guns from the Frontier Guards.

(b) About Ching-ho-cheng, General Ekk with 10½ battalions, 11 squadrons, 24 guns.*

(c) At Hsing-ching, General Maslov with 4 battalions, 1 squadron, 2 guns.†

Behind all these troops were three and a half companies on the Ta Ling; ‡ another two companies were at work on the light railway, ¶ while at Ma-chun-tan, some miles back, were two more battalions and half a mountain battery.** As to what lay in front of the Russians in this quarter, reconnaissances carried out from the First Manchurian Army and intelligence obtained from spies had established the fact that there were twenty-four Japanese battalions and eighty-two guns in the vicinity of Cheng-chang. It was known that this force was of *Kobi* troops and included the 7th, 19th, 36th and 48th *Kobi* Regiments. The approach of the 11th Division was, however, apparently not suspected, although Chinese agents reported that troops from Port Arthur were being transferred to the Japanese right flank.

It was in this mountainous district that the action was to be opened, for it was in this quarter that Marshal Oyama had decided to exercise the preliminary pressure which he trusted

* Three and a half battalions of the 281st (Drissa) Regiment; a composite battalion (3rd, 7th, 9th and 11th Companies) of the 282nd (Chernoyar) Regiment; the 283rd (Bugulmin) Regiment; the 5th Trans-Baikal Cossack Infantry Battalion; the 2nd Battalion of the 21st East Siberian Rifle Regiment; the 2nd Nerchinsk Cossack Regiment; five squadrons of the 2nd Chita Cossack Regiment; the 6th Battery of the 26th Artillery Brigade; the 3rd and 9th East Siberian Mountain Batteries and half a company of the 2nd East Siberian Sapper Battalion. There were two advanced guards out, one to the east and one to the south-east of the Ching-ho-cheng.

† Reserve battalions of the 6th (Yeniseisk), 7th (Krasnoyarsk), 9th (Tobolsk), and 10th (Omsk) Siberian Infantry Regiments; one squadron of the 1st Argun Cossack Regiment; two horse mountain guns of the Frontier Guards and half a company of the 3rd East Siberian Sapper Battalion.

‡ Two companies from the 282nd (Chernoyar) Regiment and one and a half from the 2nd East Siberian Sapper Battalion.

¶ From the 281st (Drissa) Regiment.

** This was a narrow gauge Décauville railway worked by horse traction. For a description of this line, see Chapter LXXXVII.

** The 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 21st and 22nd East Siberian Rifle Regiments respectively and half the 7th East Siberian Mountain Battery. The 21st and 22nd East Siberian Rifle Regiments formed the 1st Brigade of the 6th East Siberian Rifle Division, 3rd Siberian Corps. That division had been forming the reserve of the First Manchurian Army at Po-hsin-tsai, but the 1st Brigade had been sent to Ma-chun-tan between the 14th and 18th February; the 2nd Brigade went westward on the 18th. See p. 262.

would mislead his opponent into leaving the way open for the Japanese main blow in another portion of the field. On the night of the 18th–19th February fighting began with the advance of the 1st *Kobi* Division of the Ya-lu Army against the two advanced guards which had been thrown out in front of General Ekk's detachment, with the result that the advanced troops of the right advanced guard of the Russians were driven in by units of the 9th *Kobi* Brigade upon the high ground east and west of Hsiao-chia-cheng-tzu.* The left advanced guard, which seems to have been attacked later by part of the 6th *Kobi* Brigade, managed to hold its own. During the course of the 19th the Russian vedettes on the high ground at Kao-ling-tzu observed some Japanese troops in the valley of the Tai-tzu Ho. The latter probably formed part of the 11th Division which arrived this day at Cheng-chang after its long march through the hills.

The close of the first day, therefore, found all Marshal Oyama's five armies in their allotted positions, charged with the execution of an offensive movement on a vast scale. On the Russian side the offensive had not yet emerged from the stage of discussion.

On the 20th February, the Ya-lu Army for the first time acted as a whole. With the 1st *Kobi* Division on the right and the 11th Division on the left, it moved against the Ching-ho-cheng position, and forced back the Russian advanced troops a short distance; but the attack appears to have been carried out without particular vigour, being estimated by the Russians to have been undertaken by not more than eight battalions and twelve guns. This induced General Alexeiev to contemplate a counter-attack; and having obtained permission from General Linevich to bring up the troops from Ma-chun-tan he dispatched to Ching-ho-cheng two battalions, half a mountain battery and four machine guns, which reached that place on the morning of the 21st.

The 21st February was spent in an artillery duel and was distinguished by no activity on the part of the infantry on either side.

On the 22nd, General Alexeiev began his counter-blow with the advance of four columns which were to press the enemy in

* Eight squadrons and two battalions were with General Ekk's left advanced guard, and three squadrons and one battalion with the right.

front and to endeavour to envelop his flanks.* But the Japanese were also active; and the 23rd and 48th *Kobi* Regiments of the 6th *Kobi* Brigade deployed against the Russian left advanced guard near Wan-li-ho, and by 4 p.m. had forced it back on to Denikin Hill. While this action was in progress the Russian advanced guard commander received instructions from General Alexeiev to occupy Ma-cheng-tzu with eight squadrons, so as to protect the Russian left flank from an enveloping movement which had threatened since the previous day; but this order could not be fully complied with, because the advanced guard cavalry was closely engaged all through the day; and it was not until seven o'clock that four squadrons could be sent off. Meanwhile, however, a squadron had already started off to join hands with the detachment sent south-westwards by General Maslov. Another squadron which succeeded in reaching Ma-cheng-tzu had to fall back before a Japanese company. The advanced guard commander, who was following with the remaining two squadrons, assembled the whole of his mounted troops later on the Pa-pin Ling, less the squadron sent to join the detachment from General Maslov.

As regards the four columns launched by General Alexeiev, that under Colonel Zarako-Zarakovski, which had spent the night at Fu-chia-liu-tzu, advanced at daybreak on the 22nd towards the Chang-tzu Ling, where the 13th *Kobi* Regiment and four guns lay in position. The left of the 13th *Kobi* Regiment was at first driven in, but on the Japanese artillery coming into action the situation was quickly restored, and the Russian column was forced to withdraw to Beresnev Hill. Colonel Truchin had no better success, for so soon as his force encountered some Japanese troops on the high ground immediately overlooking the Tai-tzu Ho his left was uncovered by the withdrawal of Colonel Zarako-Zarakovski, and he had no option but to retire to Fu-chia-liu-tzu. The column under Colonel Shirokov had bivouacked in Liu-shen-shih-kou, and about 10 a.m. advanced against the high ground

* Colonel Shirokov (two battalions and four guns) from Wang-cheng-kuan-tzu against Ha-pa-ling.

Colonel Truchin with the original right advanced guard from Fu-chia-liu-tzu against Su-chun.

Colonel Zarako-Zarakovski (one battalion and two guns) from Fu-chia-liu-tzu against the Chang-tzu Ling.

The fourth column was a small detachment of two companies, two guns and some scouts from General Maslov, which was ordered by General Alexeiev to work round the enemy's rear.

south of Ha-pa-ling; but the Japanese were reinforced by two battalions of the 43rd Regiment from the 11th Division and Colonel Shirokov's force fell back to Wan-cheng-kuan-tzu. Profiting by the retirement of this column as well as of that under Colonel Truchin, the Japanese consolidated their position upon the heights between Liu-shen-shih-kou and Hsiao-chia-cheng-tzu.* On the whole the efforts of the Russians seem to have lacked driving power, due, doubtless, to the intense cold and to the fact that in places the mountain slopes were covered with a thick coating of frozen snow and ice.

The failure of his counter-offensive movement, the fact that a considerable reinforcement of the enemy had been observed opposite the Yang-tzu Ling—due, though the Russians were not yet aware of it, to the arrival of the Japanese 11th Division—and the fact that General Liubavin had been attacked led General Alexeiev on the evening of the 22nd to decide that he would collect his whole force round Ching-ho-cheng and there accept battle in the event of a further advance by the enemy.† His casualties in the fighting which had already taken place amounted to sixteen killed and one hundred and thirty-five wounded.

The ground on to which he now resolved to concentrate the bulk of the flank detachment under his command was destined to witness some of the fiercest fighting which took place outside Port Arthur. It consisted of two positions—the Ching-ho-cheng section, properly so called, and the Yang-tzu Ling section in touch with it. The former of these blocked the only carriage road leading from the Cheng-chang region via the Ta Ling, while the latter commanded the tracks and minor roads by which the Ching-ho-cheng section might have been turned on the west. Their front was together about ten miles in length, and the terrain between them was very broken. The field of fire was therefore, generally speaking, bad, while concealment was easy for an advancing enemy.

The necessary movements of the Russians were effected without incident during the night of the 22nd–23rd February and before

* There is some conflict of opinion as to whether the Japanese troops here referred to belonged to the 9th *Kobi* Brigade (of the 1st *Kobi* Division) or to the 11th Division. The latter hypothesis is the more probable and has been accepted.

† It is not known by whom the attack on General Liubavin's detachment was made; it was probably the work of the 11th Cavalry Regiment.

midnight orders for the occupation of the ground to be held were issued. The Ching-ho-cheng section was to be defended by General Ekk with three battalions, sixteen field and four machine guns, and half a squadron of Cossacks, while the ground from the Ma Ling to the La-kuan Ling was entrusted to Colonel Nekrasov, the commander of the 22nd East Siberian Rifle Regiment, who had for the purpose the three battalions of his regiment, eight mountain guns and a squadron of Cossacks. The reserve, amounting to five and a half battalions, four mountain guns, one and a half squadrons and one and a half companies of sappers, was placed in two groups. The remainder of the cavalry, in all eight squadrons, was ordered to reconnoitre on the left, and to counteract any attempt on the part of the enemy to try and break through towards Ma-chun-tan. The disposition of the Russians was unfortunate, since both the fighting line and the reserve were each divided into two groups; for this, however, the nature of the ground and the extent of front to be held are said to have been responsible. But in spite of its natural drawbacks, the position was not an easy one to attack, for the Russians had been strengthening it ever since the unsuccessful attempt made against it by the 9th *Kobi* Brigade in the previous November.* Indeed, the defensive works which topped the steep hills east and south of Ching-ho-cheng itself appeared so formidable that the men of the Japanese 11th Division immediately gave the name of "Little Port Arthur" to the heights which they were to gain.

The 23rd February was ushered in with a snowstorm which affected both sides, rendering movement difficult for the Japanese and observation of their movement almost impossible for the Russians. Since his troops were fighting in co-operation with the veteran 11th Division, the commander of the 1st *Kobi* Division burned to show their mettle to the heroes of Port Arthur, and, dispensing with a reserve, launched both his brigades simultaneously into the fight. About ten o'clock the 9th *Kobi* Brigade took the offensive against Beresnev Hill, which was occupied by one Russian company, and by midday had deployed a considerable force and concentrated the fire of several batteries against it. The Japanese threw even more than

The 1st *Kobi*
Division attacks
on the 23rd
February.

* See p. 18.

usual energy into this attack. Every man carried a sandbag on his shoulder, and as each section faced the blaze of infantry fire which greeted it upon emerging from cover, the men threw down the sandbags and lay behind them. While their guns in rear swept the summit of the position with a continuous hail of shrapnel, the attacking infantry were thus able to gain ground slowly, until by four in the afternoon the remnants of the leading battalion had struggled as far as the wire entanglement and had torn up the stakes supporting it. The defenders, however, had been reinforced by a company, a dismounted squadron and two machine guns, and the 9th *Kobi* Brigade could make no further progress. An attempt by the 6th *Kobi* Brigade against Denikin Hill was no more successful.

On the Japanese left a slight advantage was gained by some troops of the 11th Division, who forced back a Russian scout detachment from Fu-chu-niu to a position south-east of the Yang-tzu Ling. In this portion of the field the attackers had been much hampered by the snow and by the necessity for constructing bridges over the Tai-tzu, upon which the ice was in places beginning to give. At dusk the firing gradually died away, but about 9.30 p.m. the 9th *Kobi* Brigade renewed its attempts against Beresnev Hill, only to be met by a shattering fire which compelled it to fall back. Although this attack was renewed an hour later, the Japanese could not advance further and lay down some two hundred paces from the obstacles.

Marshal Oyama's action against the Russian left now began for the first time to exert the influence he had intended, for General Linevich moved troops towards the threatened point. He dispatched the 9th East Siberian Rifle Regiment and half a mountain battery from the 3rd Siberian Corps to Ching-ho-cheng and the 10th East Siberian Rifle Regiment to Pa-chia-tzu.

At dawn on the 24th the attack was renewed by the Ya-lu Army, Ching-ho-cheng being assigned as the objective of the whole force. On the Japanese right the 1st *Kobi* Division advanced with the 6th *Kobi* Brigade on the outer flank and the 9th *Kobi* Brigade on the left, or inner, flank, while the 11th Division had its 22nd Brigade on the right, the 10th Brigade on the left and the 11th Artillery Regiment in rear. Until 9 a.m. Beresnev Hill was shelled by two or three batteries of the 9th *Kobi* Brigade, and then the

The Ya-lu Army captures Ching-ho-cheng on the 24th February.

infantry, after several attempts, gained the advanced trenches on Redit Hill, only to be expelled almost at once. Towards midday the Japanese brought up reserves and hurled themselves against Beresnev Hill in a fresh series of assaults; but their fury was equalled by the determination of the Russians, who time and again raised themselves from their trenches in order to search the dead ground with their fire, and drove the attackers down the hill. Nevertheless, the Japanese persisted in spite of the unceasing fire from the defenders, the explosion of fougasses, and the difficulty of the abattis through which they had to force their way. At last, when hope of penetrating the defence had almost been abandoned, a little group of five men made good their ascent to the summit and for a moment stood silhouetted on the skyline. Then a reinforcing section struggled up, followed by others, the men climbing over the corpses of their comrades in their eagerness to close with the Russians, and a furious bayonet struggle ensued. Notwithstanding the heroic resistance shown by Staff-Captain Vilmovich, who was in command of the advanced work on Redit Hill, and by his force of two companies, the defenders found it impossible to withstand the fury of the Japanese, and the remnants of the garrison, amounting to ninety-nine non-commissioned officers and men, fell back to Rennenkampf Hill.

In this series of desperate encounters the Russian field army felt the mettle of the infantry which had learnt its trade in the bloody assaults on Port Arthur, for during the attack the 9th *Kobi* Brigade had been reinforced by a detachment of infantry and engineers from the 11th Division on its left. The identity of these troops became known to the Russians, who were much impressed by the appearance of portions of General Nogi's army in this quarter of the field.

With the loss of the advanced work on Redit Hill the situation of the defenders of Beresnev Hill had become critical. They had suffered many casualties from cross fire, their reserves were expended and the majority of the officers, including the commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Beresnev, after whom the hill was named, were out of action, and about 2 p.m. the companies of the Bugulmin Regiment began to evacuate the hill and to retire to Hsiao-chang-tzu. It was just at this time that the 6th *Kobi* Brigade deployed against the left of Denikin Hill. Considering that the situation of the defenders of this latter hill was precarious General Ekk ordered them also to withdraw and to join up with

the late garrison of Beresnev Hill on the heights north of Hsiao-chang-tzu. By moving up some companies in support General Alexeiev ensured that the retirement would not degenerate into a retreat beyond the line indicated, and by 3 p.m. the troops of the Ching-ho-cheng section were still holding on to the line Hsiao-chang-tzu—Rennenkampf Hill.

The activity of the Ya-lu Army, however, was not limited to the attack on Beresnev and Denikin Hills, for the 11th Division moving up the Fu-chu-niu valley had been engaged against the Yang-tzu Ling. Here, after some stubborn fighting, the Japanese delivered an assault upon the pass at midday, and when this was repulsed endeavoured to turn the left flank of the Russian position by a movement against the Ma Ling. The news of their activity in this quarter was received by General Alexeiev at the moment when the evacuation of Denikin Hill had been ordered. And just as the policy of counter-attack had been replaced by that of passive defence, so was defence now in turn to give way to retirement. General Alexeiev became alarmed about the safety of the line of retreat of his force, since the road to Ma-chun-tan was the only route available for wheeled transport. The main task allotted to him had been to cover the roads leading to Fu-shun and Tieh-ling, and in order to be in a position to carry it out he now deemed it necessary to withdraw beyond the Ta Ling.

At 3.30 p.m. he gave orders for the withdrawal of the force in two columns at nightfall; and about seven o'clock, having set fire to the village, the troops of the Ching-ho-cheng group, except one battalion, which went to the Hei Ling, began to leave the position, passing over the Ta Ling to San-lung-yu.* Owing to the steep gradients the artillery and transport were got over the pass only with great difficulty, the infantry being called upon to haul the guns, even though extra teams were attached. It was fortunate for the Russians that the darkness and the rugged nature of the country proved a hindrance to pursuit, for as matters were there seems to have been considerable confusion during the retreat. They left one hundred and fifty dead upon the field, and the Japanese captured twenty-four prisoners and about one hundred thousand rounds of small arm ammunition. Simultaneously with the withdrawal of the troops from Ching-ho-cheng General Liubavin's detachment also fell back from

* The retirement was not carried out in two columns.

Kao-ling-tzu, while the force under General Maslov remained at Hsing-ching.*

In that section of Marshal Oyama's orders which prescribed the action of the Japanese First Army it was laid down that General Kuroki was to be ready to attack the Russian left on the 27th, by which date the 2nd Division was to take the Wang-fu Ling.

To accomplish this it was necessary that the 2nd Division and the 12th Division—to which was attached the 5th *Kobi* Brigade—should first make a great left wheel, pivoting on the left of the latter, in order to carry on the general alignment of the Japanese Second and Fourth Armies. Since the battle of the Sha Ho the 12th Division had been on the extreme right of the Japanese main line, but that place was now occupied by the 2nd Division, which had been sent back to the First Army, to concentrate at Wei-ning-ying, after the battle of San-de-pu.† The 16th Regiment had been detached from the latter division to Ho-ma-tang, to fill the gap between the First and Fourth Armies, but the division had been reinforced by the 29th and 39th *Kobi* Regiments, three squadrons of cavalry under Colonel Aiyura, and the 1st Battalion of the 12th Mountain Artillery.‡ Further, in view of the nature of the country in which it was to operate, a battery of mountain guns had been sent to it from the 12th Division, in exchange for a field battery.

In order to initiate the wheel, 2nd Divisional orders to the following effect had been issued for the 24th:—

(1) The attached cavalry was to remain on the left bank of the Tai-tzu Ho, covering the right rear of the division.

The Japanese
2nd Division
threatens the
left of the
3rd Siberian
Corps.

(2) The 39th *Kobi* Regiment was to drive in the Russians on the right bank of the Tai-tzu Ho, and to take up a position on that bank covering the right flank of the division.

(3) The 3rd Brigade, with a mountain battery, was to force the enemy from the vicinity of Kao-kuan-sai.

* The Japanese 1st *Kobi* Division bivouacked in the area Hsiao-chang-tzu—San-chia-tzu—Wan-li-ho; the 11th Division bivouacked partly on the ground it had won and partly in and near Fu-chia-liu-tzu.

† The 2nd Division, less the 16th Regiment, rejoined the First Army on the 18th February. According to some authorities the division did not concentrate actually at Wei-ning-ying till the 23rd.

‡ One squadron of cavalry from the Guard Division: two from the 12th Division.

(4) The divisional cavalry was to remain behind the right wing of the 3rd Brigade, and to be ready to push on so soon as the enemy should be driven back.

(5) The 29th *Kobi* Regiment was to gain a position west of Kao-kuan-sai, and to get into touch with the 12th Division.

In accordance with the above orders the troops began their respective movements at daybreak on the 24th. The 3rd Brigade quickly drove in the scouts of the Siberian Cossack Division which was posted on the left front of the 3rd Siberian Corps, and pressing on over the Heng-ya Ling to Kao-kuan-sai occupied that village at about 6 p.m.* Some scouts of the Chembar Regiment held out for an hour longer on a pass north of the Heng-ya Ling, but finally fell back and rejoined two companies of their regiment, which had been driven off that pass, at Ying-pan. On both flanks of the 2nd Division, as well as in the centre, success crowned the Japanese efforts, for the 39th *Kobi* Regiment on the right had forced back the Russians who were in front of it, and the 29th *Kobi* Regiment had driven in the right of the Cossacks' line. The effect upon the Russians of this movement against the Siberian Cossack Division was to excite alarm as to the left flank of the 3rd Siberian Corps and to cause General Linevich to order five battalions and two mountain batteries to be sent from the 2nd Siberian Corps to support General Kashtalinski's troops.† The combat between the Japanese 2nd Division and the Russian cavalry was in reality nothing more than an episode in a preliminary movement before the general Japanese attack, but it produced locally the usual result of any pressure made by the Japanese, in that the Russians began transferring force to the threatened point.

As regards the action of the 12th Division on the 24th, the arrangement come to was that its wheel should begin so soon as the 2nd Division arrived at the Kao-tai Ling

The Japanese 12th Division. The latter division did not reach this point, and the 12th Division therefore stood fast throughout the day on the line it was holding.

* The main body of the Siberian Cossack Division under General Baumgarten was about South Yang-tan-san, with outposts along the line Heng-ya Ling—Hsiao-chia-hei-tzu—Pei-lin-pu-tzu. The Heng-ya Ling itself was occupied by two companies of the 284th (Chembar) Regiment.

† The battalions were the 4th (Verkhne-Udinsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment and one battalion of the 1st (Strietensk) Siberian Infantry Regiment.

While the Japanese had thus been actively developing their plan on the east, the Russians had up to the night of the 24th continued to carry on in preparation for their original scheme for the assumption of the offensive on the west. And during these days the Second Manchurian Army had been busily employed in putting the final touches to its arrangements for the attack to be launched at dawn on the 25th. As has been said, its objective was again to be the village of San-de-pu, to which point an undue amount of importance had all along been attached—now probably increased by the disappointment engendered by the recent repulse; and in marked contrast to the lack of preparation which had characterized their attempt of a month earlier elaborate measures were now being taken to ensure success. But though on the 24th the Russians were outwardly still fixed in their resolve to proceed with their own plan of battle as originally intended, and though on the very eve of its projected execution a spirited order was circulated amongst the troops, which concluded with the words:—"The Emperor and the Russian people pray for us and our success. Comrades, we will do our best. May the Lord God help us," there must by that time have been serious doubts in the minds of the commander of the Second Manchurian Army and the commander-in-chief as to whether the attack would be launched next day, or at all. For during the 24th both had received information that the Japanese knew of the impending operation; and General Kuropatkin, who had not as yet been induced to abandon his own offensive, was beginning, after several days' pressure on his left flank, to be seriously affected by the news from that quarter. The details of the development of the resulting change in the Russian plans are of interest.

Before dawn on the 24th, Major-General Ukhach-Ogorovich who was Director of Transport at General Head-Quarters as well as in charge of the Russian secret service, received a report from a spy that the Japanese were aware of the Russian offensive proposed for the following day and were making preparations to meet it. This, if it were really the case, would discount the attack of the Second Manchurian Army, since the element of surprise would be absent, and General Ukhach-Ogorovich repaired at once to General Head-Quarters with the object of reporting the matter personally to the commander-in-chief.

Although it would have been by no means extraordinary if the

Japanese had really obtained this information—for their secret service was known, even at the time, to be excellent, and the Russians had taken no particular precautions as to secrecy—the news that they had done so appears to have surprised General Kuropatkin. The method, however, which he adopted of dealing with the situation was somewhat remarkable. Addressing General Ukhach-Ogorovich, he said: “Go to General Baron Kaulbars and tell him what you have told me. Tell him, too, from me that I beg him to decide upon the possibility of the offensive, and ask him to let me know at once by telephone whether the Second Army will attack the Japanese to-morrow or not.” It is not clear whether General Kuropatkin did, or did not, supplement this verbal order to the commander of the Second Manchurian Army by an explanatory document; but it seems that he made no attempt to anticipate the arrival of his envoy by telegraphing or telephoning to General Kaulbars a premonitory message which might have afforded that commander some hours for reflection before General Ukhach-Ogorovich should arrive. This omission, if it really took place, is difficult to understand, for time was clearly a matter of urgent importance, and the distance to General Kaulbars’s head-quarters at Ma-tou-lan was some twenty miles.* Indeed General Ukhach-Ogorovich did not arrive until nearly five o’clock, or eleven hours after the spy’s report had been received by him. He delivered his message to General Kaulbars in the presence of his chief of staff, General Ruzski, and appears to have left these officers to consider the situation thus for the first time revealed to them; but he soon afterwards was called in by the Quartermaster-General, General Flug, to assist at a council of war.

At this conference he was invited to give his views as the intelligence expert; and his information to date was to the effect that whereas the Second Manchurian Army could put in motion ninety thousand bayonets for the attack on San-de-pu, the

The Russian
offensive
indefinitely
postponed.

Japanese, now that they had been warned of the impending attack, could place against these some thirty thousand more. Further, that reinforcements had been located behind the enemy’s left

* According to the *Russian Official History* General Ukhach-Ogorovich delivered his information to General Kuropatkin at Hsiao-ho-tun; according to the *Conférences sur la Guerre Russo-Japonaise faites à l’Académie d’état-major Nicolas*—in which General Ukhach-Ogorovich’s own account appears—at Chan-sa-ma-tun. The distance is taken from the latter place.

wing.* This appreciation — whether the identity of the Japanese forces was really divined or not—rendered the prospects of the Second Manchurian Army somewhat unpromising. After some discussion, the question was mooted as to whether reinforcements from the General Reserve could be reckoned upon, and the conference suspended its deliberations until General Kuropatkin's views on this subject could be obtained. For this purpose General Kaulbars went to the telephone, and for some time a discussion upon the situation ensued between him and the commander-in-chief. Finally the three remaining members of the council heard General Kaulbars put the important question as to whether the General Reserve could be sent at once to the Second Army. The answer, announced by General Kaulbars, was:—“Not a bayonet will be sent, Alexeiev is being hard pressed.”

The council then resumed its deliberations, and the reply as to the General Reserve enabled a conclusion to be quickly reached. Within a short time General Kaulbars, availing himself of the discretion which the commander-in-chief had allowed him, telephoned to his superior that the attack was indefinitely postponed, and confirmed this almost immediately by telegram. He also communicated directly, by the same means, with the commanders of the other two armies. In this manner, which seems to imply a strange devolution of responsibility on the part of General Kuropatkin, the Russian offensive collapsed before it had begun.†

The news that the Ching-ho-cheng Detachment was being hard pressed; the tidings as to the threat against the left of the 3rd Siberian Corps; and the growing suspicion, fostered by the appearance of the Japanese 11th Division, that General Nogi's army was to be employed against the Russian left, had had their effect upon the mind of the Russian commander-in-chief. As had happened at the battle of Liao-yang the dominating motive now inspiring his action was a sensitiveness for his flanks, and it immediately produced a direct reply to the threat made by the Japanese against his communications. His heart was steeled

* It is stated that this was accepted as the solution of the mystery as to the whereabouts of the Japanese Third Army. See, however, foot-note (*), p. 366.

† The details as to the postponement of the Russian offensive have been taken from the *Russian Official History*, Vol. V, Part 1, pp. 73-4, and from a series of articles by General Ukhach-Ogorovich in the *Russki Invalid*, Nos. 119-21, 1906, and reprinted as an appendix in the *Conférences sur la Guerre Russo-Japonaise faites à l'Académie d'état-major Nicolas*, French translation Fascicule 8, p. 175.

against allowing his reserve to be placed at the disposal of the Second Manchurian Army, for his attention was riveted upon the hills of Ching-ho-cheng.

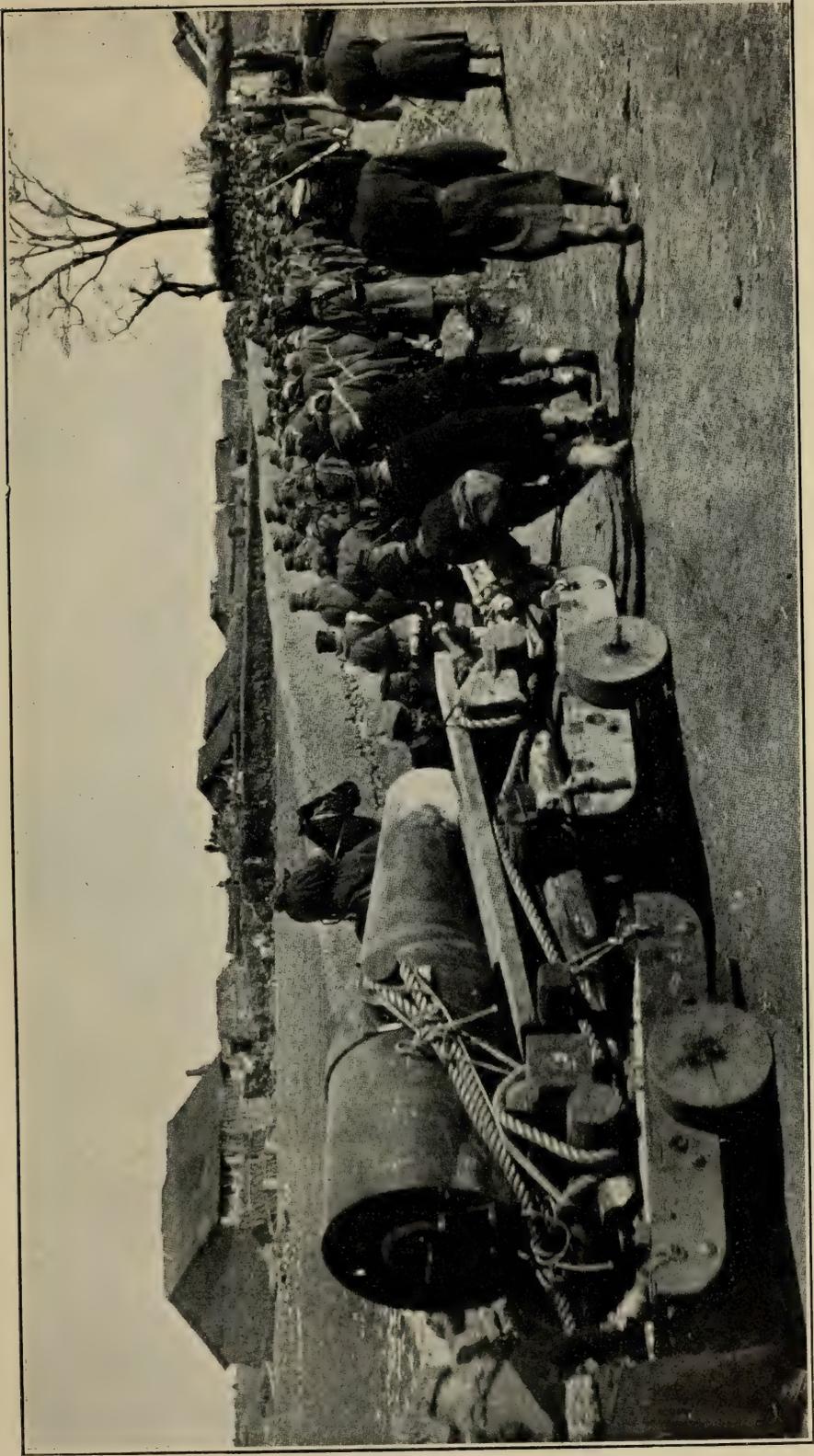
By nightfall on the 24th February the struggle had been in progress for six days, and so far all the action had been undertaken by the Japanese, who, however, had only operated with the Ya-lu Army and the right division—the 2nd—of the First Army.* The

local result of these operations had been that the former, after six days, had driven General Alexeiev's force back from Ching-ho-cheng, and the latter, after one day's co-operation, had wheeled

up into line, pressed back some of the advanced troops of the left of the 3rd Siberian Corps, and caused a transfer of strength within the First Manchurian Army towards that flank. Though no forces had as yet actually been moved by the Russians from the west to the east, one important effect produced was the fact that they gave up their own plan of action.

Before dawn on the 25th, Marshal Oyama had imposed his will on his opponent, and had begun to control the battle.

* During the night of the 24th-25th the area of activity of the Japanese was extended westwards, for the Guard Division started its advance and attacked the 2nd and 4th Siberian Corps, but this was the initial move in, and appertained to, their operations of the 25th. It is therefore described in the narrative for that day.



MOVING AN 11-INCH HOWITZER TO THE BATTLEFIELD OF MUKDEN.

(To face p. 286.)

CHAPTER LXVIII.

THE BATTLE OF MUKDEN—*continued*—GENERAL KUROPATKIN MOVES TROOPS EASTWARDS ON THE 25TH—OPERATIONS ON THE NIGHT OF THE 24TH-25TH, AND ON THE 25TH AND THE 26TH FEBRUARY—THE JAPANESE 2ND DIVISION COMES UP INTO LINE—GENERAL RENNENKAMPF ASSUMES COMMAND OF THE CHING-HO-CHENG DETACHMENT AND IS FORCED BACK.

(Plans 57 and 58.)

THE 25th February, far from witnessing the advance of the Russian right wing, saw the dispatch of large reinforcements to quite another quarter of the field. On that morning the 2nd Brigade of the 6th East Siberian Rifle Division,* which had earned for itself by its services the honourable title of the "Iron Brigade," was ordered to proceed by rail from Ma-tou-lan to Fu-shun Junction and thence to make its way south, to cover the left flank of the Ma-chun-tan position, while at the same time getting into touch with General Maslov's force.† During the afternoon the 1st Siberian Corps, the soldierly qualities of which caused it once again to be dispatched towards the post of apparent danger, was ordered to leave the Second Manchurian Army and to proceed eastwards by forced march to Chan-sa-ma-tun. At Liao-yang it had crossed the whole battlefield, arriving just in time to retrieve the disaster to General Orlov's force; it had been brought from the east flank to the west to stiffen General Grippenbergs's army at the battle of San-de-pu; and its severe losses there did not prevent

General
Kuropatkin
moves troops
eastwards.

* This brigade was at present attached to the 1st Siberian Corps which was now the reserve of the Second Manchurian Army. See p. 262.

† Two batteries and a squadron were detailed to this force and ordered to proceed by road. See foot-note (+), p. 306. This force will hereafter be referred to as General Danilov's detachment from the name of its commander.

its being recalled to the east in the initial stages of the battle of Mukden. Later it will be found crossing the battlefield yet once again when the real attack of the enemy had been disclosed upon the west. It had by now, however, lost the commander who had led it at Liao-yang, the Sha Ho and San-de-pu, for the initiative shown by General Stakelberg at the last-named battle had been viewed with disfavour. He had been relieved of his command and had returned to Russia. The 2nd Brigade of the 72nd Division, 6th Siberian Corps, with the divisional artillery, was also ordered to proceed eastward and to form a reserve to part of the line occupied by the 3rd Siberian Corps.

Every action of General Kuropatkin now revealed the importance which he attached to his left flank, and the completeness of the surrender of the offensive which was to have been carried out by the Second Manchurian Army. Not only was the 1st Siberian Corps deducted from its strength; General Rennenkampf was ordered to give up the command of General Mishchenko's cavalry on the right and to relieve General Alexeiev at Ching-ho-cheng; and General Ivanov was directed to return at once to his own 3rd Siberian Corps. Further, the XVIth Corps was directed to hold itself in readiness to proceed to Po-hsin-tsai, and finally, the Tsaritsin Regiment and a battery were ordered to move to Ying-pan.* Thus the whole of General Kaulbars's reserve, and almost the whole of the General Reserve, was in process of dissolution. Marshal Oyama had only begun the preliminary pressure at an isolated corner of the battlefield. Yet this was sufficient to induce General Kuropatkin to expend in a direction unpremeditated forty-two battalions and one hundred and twenty-eight guns from various reserves before the battle had really begun.† Moreover, as has been seen, the Russian army was now without a plan.

To return to the quarter where the fighting had occurred which produced these results: by 5 a.m. on the 25th the

* On the Hun Ho, east of Fu-shun.

† These figures do not include the XVIth Corps. The author of the *Conférences* states that the 1st Siberian Corps had been ordered to move as early as the night of the 24th-25th, and that the order was sent direct to that corps from General Head-Quarters without reference to the commander of the Second Manchurian Army of which it formed part. According to the same writer the mission of General Ukhach-Ogorovich is explained by these circumstances, in that it was really a diplomatic method of ensuring that the offensive should be dropped, but that the responsibility for this step should be borne, or at any rate shared, by General Kaulbars.

difficulties of the Ta Ling had been overcome and the transport of General Alexeiev's retreating force was safely past the obstacle to its march, and by ten o'clock the main body was assembling round San-lung-yu, while to the east the cavalry had fallen back from Pa-pin-kou to Shih-ta-hei-tzu-hu and Wu-lin-kou, followed up by the Japanese. So serious did this threat against his left appear to General Alexeiev that he ordered General Liubavin to hand over the command of the troops on the Tun-kua Ling to Colonel Polyanski, to proceed with three squadrons to Wu-lin-kou,* and to take over the command of the eight squadrons there. By midday the general situation of the Ching-ho-cheng Detachment was as follows:—

Operations
between the
Ya-lu Army
and the
Ching-ho-cheng
Detachment.

Right Detachment—Colonel Polyanski.

2½ battalions, 2 squadrons and 6 horse mountain guns on the Tun-kua Ling.†

Centre Detachment—Colonel Budkovski.

4 battalions, 1½ squadrons and 8 mountain guns near the Ta Ling and Hei Ling.‡

Left Detachment—Colonel Gezhdeu.

One battalion and 2 guns on the Hsiao-pa-pin Ling.§

Cavalry—Colonel Zakrzhevski.

8 squadrons at Wu-lin-kou|| and 3 squadrons¶ en route under General Liubavin.

Main Body—General Ekk.

7 battalions, 24 guns, 3 machineguns about San-lung-yu.**

* These were the squadrons of the original left flank guard of General Ekk which had made an unsuccessful attempt to reach Ma-cheng-tzu See p. 275.

† Two and a half battalions of the 282nd (Chernoyar) Regiment, two squadrons of the 2nd Argun Cossack Regiment; six horse mountain guns.

‡ Two battalions of the 9th and one battalion of the 21st East Siberian Rifle Regiments. A composite battalion from the 283rd (Bugulmin) Regiment; one and a half squadrons of the 2nd Nerchinsk Cossack Regiment and eight mountain guns.

§ One battalion of the 22nd East Siberian Rifle Regiment and two guns of the 8th Mountain Battery.

|| Five squadrons of the 2nd Chita Cossack Regiment and three of the 2nd Nerchinsk Cossack Regiment.

¶ Of the 2nd Argun Cossack Regiment.

** The exact composition of this force is not known, but the infantry consisted of the 281st (Drissa) Regiment, two battalions of the 21st East Siberian Rifle Regiment, and the 5th Trans-Baikal Cossack Infantry Battalion

Reserve—Colonel Zarako-Zarakovski.

(a) 4 battalions, 2 mountain guns and 1½ squadrons at Wu-pa-niu-pu-tzu.*

(b) One battalion of the 9th East Siberian Rifle Regiment and 4 mountain guns at Ma-chun-tan.

The day, however, passed quite quietly, and the troops were employed in strengthening the positions occupied by them. Towards evening small bodies of Japanese were seen approaching the Ta Ling and Hei Ling, but they made no real advance, and on the Russian left the force which had pushed back Colonel Zakrzhevski's squadrons got no farther than Pa-pin-kou. The frozen snow had completely stopped the Japanese, for the slopes were so slippery that it was only by incredible exertion that any progress could be made, the men being reduced to crawling on hands and knees. Snow continued to fall during the night, the cold grew more intense, and the sufferings of the Japanese were severe. Some men were frozen to death, nearly all the wounded perishing in this manner.

But the tide of battle which was for the moment checked at the Ta Ling continued to flow against the left of the Russian main position. To the right of General Alexeiev's force lay the 3rd Siberian Corps, which had already on the previous day begun to feel the pressure exerted by the Japanese 2nd Division in its wheeling movement carried out in unison with the advance of the Ya-lu Army. This corps now consisted of thirteen battalions, eleven squadrons and fifty-two guns and lay in two groups†, having been reduced in strength by the dispatch of one regiment and four guns to the assistance of the Ching-ho-cheng Detachment on the 23rd.‡ On the right, along the

* Three battalions 283rd (Bugulmin) Regiment; one battalion 282nd (Chernoyar) Regiment; one and a half squadrons 2nd Nerchinsk Cossack Regiment; two mountain guns.

† The 3rd East Siberian Rifle Division.

The 284th (Chembar) Regiment.

The 3rd East Siberian Artillery Brigade.

The 2nd Battery 6th East Siberian Artillery Brigade.

The 4th and 6th East Siberian Mountain Batteries.

One section 3rd Battery Frontier Guards.

Four squadrons 4th Siberian Cossack Regiment.

Three squadrons 5th Siberian Cossack Regiment.

Four squadrons 8th Siberian Cossack Regiment.

Mounted Scout Detachment 13th East Siberian Rifle Regiment.

‡ The 9th East Siberian Rifle Regiment.

line of hills from Tung-kou to La-tzu-kou, were the 3rd East Siberian Rifle Division, twelve mountain guns and the 3rd East Siberian Artillery Brigade, while on the left, about the Kao-tai Ling, were three battalions of the 284th (Chembar) Regiment, a battery of field artillery and four mountain guns. South-east of the Kao-tai Ling was Major-General Baumgarten's Siberian Cossack Division, with its main body about South Yang-tan-san; and in rear of it on the Ku-ling-tzu Ling, acting in support, was a small detachment made up of the scouts and the 2nd Battalion of the Chembar Regiment with two guns of the Frontier Guard.

The whole of this area is rugged in the extreme, consisting of a chain of hills from which many spurs run in a southerly direction. Both on ridge and spurs the slopes are in places steep, particularly those that trend northward, a fact which hampered the Russians in reinforcing their line, and between the rest of the position and that occupied by General Baumgarten's cavalry, there was no road suitable for the movement of troops of all arms. Generally speaking, the position of the 3rd Siberian Corps was well adapted for defence; but for defence of a purely passive nature. Against that corps the Japanese 2nd Division now continued to press.

In the orders for the 25th issued from head-quarters of the Japanese First Army it was laid down that the advanced guard of the 2nd Division was to occupy the country north-west of Kao-kuan-sai, while a detachment was to be thrown forward to

the north of the Erh-ma Ling, to get touch with the right of the 12th Division. The main body of the division was to concentrate at

Kao-kuan-sai before midday, and the cavalry was to operate out on the right flank and to gain connexion with the Ya-lu Army to the east. At daybreak the movement commenced and soon afterwards some Russian entrenchments were found barring the advance. A field battery with the advanced guard came into action west of Hua-ling and drove out the occupants, so that the main body of the division with the other two field batteries reached Kao-kuan-sai by half-past eleven, and continuing its march occupied South Yang-tan-san between twelve and one o'clock. The Siberian Cossack Division under General Baumgarten offered but little resistance and fell back as far as the Pei-ta-ling-ku Ling, towards which the 10th East Siberian Rifle Regiment and half a mountain battery had

been sent from the main body of the 3rd Siberian Corps, in order to support the cavalry. The pass was reached by the Cossacks about four o'clock. A position was taken up by ten dismounted squadrons, while the flanks were watched by two squadrons and a battalion at the Ku-ling-tzu Ling, and by a squadron close to Tai-kou. The 4th (Verkhne-Udinsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment had arrived at Pa-chia-tzu some two hours earlier and two of its battalions were sent to the Kao-tai Ling, while two remained in reserve.* But, in spite of these reinforcements, by dusk the Japanese 2nd Division, with its cavalry on the right, had reached the line South Yang-tan-san—Ying-pan—Ta-pei-kou, where its left joined up with the 5th *Kobi* Brigade of the 12th Division.

Since the advance of the Japanese appeared to General Linevich to constitute a threat against the left of the 3rd Siberian Corps on the Kao-tai Ling, during the night he ordered the 4th Siberian Corps to send the 7th (Krasnoyarsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment to the pass, and enjoined General Baumgarten to delay the enemy as much as possible and then to fall back to North Yang-tan-san, while maintaining contact with the left of the 3rd Siberian Corps and the right of General Alexeiev's force. This latter duty was assigned to General Prince Tumanov, who took over the command of the troops on the Ku-ling-tzu Ling, which were reinforced during the night by two squadrons and two mountain guns.† A battalion was also called for from the Ching-ho-cheng Detachment. The Japanese 2nd Division, however, made no attempt to pursue the advantage it had gained, and the night was broken only by intermittent fire from both sides.

It has been mentioned that the left of the 2nd Division had during the afternoon gained touch with the right of the 12th Division, and to the movements of the latter unit the narrative now turns. Up till the 25th the front of the 12th Division had been formed, working from east to west, by the
 The Japanese First Army. 5th *Kobi* Brigade and the 23rd and 12th Brigades
 The 12th Division. but on that day a change took place in the
 composition of the latter two brigades by which
 they became columns, and to a certain extent lost their brigade

* From the 2nd Siberian Corps.

† Prince Tumanov was the commander of the 2nd Brigade Siberian Cossack Division. The troops at this time on the Ku-ling-tzu Ling were the 2nd Battalion of the 284th (Chembar) Regiment.

identity.* Beyond this change in organization there is little to chronicle of the division on this day. Its orders were for an approach to the left bank of the Sha Ho, to be carried out in support of the 2nd Division on the right; and the troops were in motion before daylight. No opposition of any kind was encountered.†

West of the 12th Division were the Guards, and, insomuch as the orders to the First Army had prescribed a readiness to attack the Russian main position on the 27th, should occasion demand, it followed that the Guard Division must take part in the movement of the 12th and 2nd Divisions on its right, and that it should gradually edge itself forward into the position implied in the army orders. And to describe how this was carried out necessitates reverting to the night of the 24th. Since the battle of the Sha Ho the main line of the Guard Division had run along the crests of the hills which rise in front of the line Hua-kou Ling—Ho-ma-tang, with the 2nd Guard Brigade on the right and the 1st Guard Brigade on the left, while in front were two advanced posts—Chin-chung Shan and Pagoda Hill. Upon the latter hill were a battalion of the Umezawa Brigade and four guns from the Hijikata Battery, the remainder of the brigade being to the east of the Hua-kou Ling. The line of main peaks held by the division and the Umezawa Brigade rises from four to six hundred feet above the valley, and since the end of October, 1904, the troops had been constantly employed in strengthening it. The trenches were simple in section, roomy and deep enough for men to fire standing. Running along the low ridges which connected the main heights, they were carried round the front of the latter well down the hill-sides, while lines of subsidiary trenches to the front commanded the slopes right down to the valley. The garrisons of the works lived for the most part in semi-underground dwellings on the reverse slope, reached by covered approaches, while the bulk of the division was

* Prior to the 25th February.	12th Brigade ■ ■ ——— 47th 14th	23rd Brigade ■ ■ ——— 24th 46th
	(General Shimamura).	(General Imamura).
The 25th February and after.	Left Column ■ ■ ——— 47th 24th	Centre Column ■ ■ ——— 14th 46th
	(General Imamura).	(General Shimamura).

† The arrangement mentioned on p. 281 had apparently been modified.

quartered in the villages in rear, the insufficiency of the houses being supplemented by dug-outs warmed by *kangs* in Chinese fashion. When the ground became frozen and digging was rendered practically impossible sandbags were used for the construction of breastworks. In addition to the four guns on Pagoda Hill artillery was in position on the low ridges east and west of Ma-erh Shan, on Chin-chung Shan, and across the valley to Lien-hua Shan.

Facing the Guard Division and the Umezawa Brigade, but with their general line running obliquely to that of their opponents, lay the 2nd and 4th Siberian Corps, the latter being responsible for the section of front from Tsu-chia-chuang to Liu-chien-hu-tun.

The First Manchurian Army. For this the corps commander had at his disposal thirty-two battalions, six squadrons and ninety-six guns. These were subdivided into a right, centre, and left section, with a corps reserve of eight battalions and sixteen guns about Erh-tao-

kou. The right flank of the corps practically rested on an isolated hill, four hundred feet high, marked by a solitary tower and known as Ta Shan or Tower Hill. The position generally was very thoroughly entrenched. On the left the 2nd Siberian Corps maintained a similar formation, carrying on the defensive line as far as Tung-kou, but its strength had been somewhat reduced by the withdrawal on the 24th of five battalions and sixteen guns to reinforce the 3rd Siberian Corps, which left available but seventeen battalions, two squadrons and fifty-four guns.* Owing to the course of the River Sha its line, for most of its length, ran obliquely to the general trend of the Russian position and formed a salient about Pien-niu-lu-pu. The position generally consisted of a belt of hills from a mile to a mile and a half wide, made up of a series of rounded summits and spurs flanking each other and separated by steep ravine-like valleys. Its general level was about two hundred and fifty feet above the main valley, but towards the western end Tung-chia-tun Shih Shan raised itself rocky and precipitous some four hundred feet. Its front was particularly strong, there being generally three lines of deep trenches, as well as numerous well-placed obstacles. In both the 2nd and 4th Siberian Corps the guns were on the cols of the main ridges, and some villages and points on the left bank of the Sha were held as advanced posts. The corps reserve, which consisted of two battalions, was at Kang-ta-jen-shan.

* See p. 282.

In order to be in position on the 27th, in accordance with the scheme for the First Army, General Asada, the commander of the Guard Division, had several tasks to perform. He had to drive an advanced post of the enemy off the hill north of Tung-chia-wen, to put all his artillery in motion, and to capture Chao-chien-hu-tun, which was also held by a Russian detachment. General Umezawa, for his part, had to make himself master of Chien-su-ma-pu-tzu. General Asada had intended to make a start with the hill north of Tung-chia-wen on the night of the 23rd-24th February, and had ordered the commander of the 1st Guard Brigade to carry out the attack. But snow fell so heavily and the cold was so severe that it was decided to postpone the advance till the following night.

Fighting by the Guard Division during the night of the 24th-25th and on the following day.

It was therefore not till the evening of the 24th that the 2nd Guard Regiment—to which the brigadier had assigned the duty of attacking—assembled north-east of Tai-kuan-tun. The regimental commander determined to attack with two battalions, keeping the remaining battalion in reserve, and in charge of three thousand sandbags which were to be sent up to the front so soon as the hill should be taken. At 8.30 p.m. the Japanese advanced, with nearly the whole of each battalion deployed in double rank, heading for the line of trenches along the road running south-east from Feng-chi-pu, which was occupied by a company of the Tobolsk Regiment. The Russian sentries opened fire, but the Guards rushed them silently with the bayonet, swept into the trenches, and drove back the defenders in confusion. Their flight, however, was soon checked, and they came to a halt at the end of the spurs running towards the river valley. The Japanese now brought up sandbags and constructed a parapet across the spurs facing the new Russian position. The company of the Tobolsk Regiment was during the night reinforced by another company, and about 2 a.m. made a counter-attack, the Japanese replying by hand-grenades fired from a wooden mortar, the second shot from which proved too much for the assailants, who at once fell back again.

At the village of Chao-chien-hu-tun, also, the Japanese were the aggressors against the two companies of the Semi-palatinsk Regiment which formed its garrison; but success did not here crown their efforts.* The attackers, estimated

* One battalion of the 3rd Guard Regiment attacked.

by the Russians to amount to two battalions, were met by volleys. Three times they came on, and getting to within fifty paces of the village hurled hand-grenades into it, while some of the more daring actually forced their way inside. But they eventually drew off, leaving over one hundred dead behind them.

All along the line of the Guard Division, fighting went on throughout the night of the 24th—25th. Against the Japanese trenches which lay south-east of Pagoda Hill, on the west of the little valley running to the Sha Ho, a most determined attack was made by order of General Linevich, who seems to have initiated the operation with the object of diverting the attention of the Japanese from their left, against which, so far as he knew, the Second Manchurian Army was about to advance at dawn. The attack was delivered by the scouts of the 17th and 18th East Siberian Rifle Regiments whose numbers were magnified into a battalion by the defenders. The Japanese, however, rightly conjectured that their assailants were picked men. The scouts got behind the Japanese line, breaking down the abattis which, owing to the hardness of the ground, was not properly anchored down in the earth. After a desperate hand to hand fight, in which the Japanese company commander himself cut down a couple of Russians, the latter were driven out from the space about thirty yards broad between the abattis and the trench, where the bulk of them had collected. Some managed to reach the trenches, but of these not one survived. The success of the Japanese was to a great extent due to their employment of hand-grenades.

As a result of the night's fighting the Japanese were enabled to move forward their artillery into position on the 25th, and during the day the Independent Artillery Corps under Major Hijikata took post on Pagoda Hill, while on the spur west of Ta-tzu-pu were placed two field batteries, one of which consisted of four captured Russian guns.* Four batteries were posted on the slopes of Ti-ti Shan and one was brought up to south-east of them. The infantry was also pushed forward, while three

* The Independent Artillery Corps was organized during June, 1904, at Feng-huang-cheng from four quick-firing guns captured from the Russians supplemented by a similar battery captured at Liao-yang, manned by gunners from the Guard, 2nd and 12th Divisions. Owing to the fact that all the junior officers appointed to it were of noble birth it received the appellation "The Noble Battalion" from the officers and men of the other artillery units of the Japanese First Army.

battalions were withdrawn from the 1st Guard Brigade and were formed into a divisional reserve at Hsia-hei-niu-tun. Head-quarters of the division were at Ma-erh-shan-pu-tzu. On the side of the Russians in this portion of the field the only event of importance consisted in the withdrawal of the Krasnoyarsk Regiment from the 4th Siberian Corps and its dispatch to reinforce the 3rd Siberian Corps upon its left.

During the 25th, however, no operations took place in that sector of the battlefield upon which the Japanese Guard Division confronted the 2nd and 4th Siberian Corps. Orders were indeed issued for the resumption of the attack by the Japanese, but this was not to take place until the 28th, by which date it was hoped that the Ya-lu Army would have turned the left flank of the Russian defensive position. As a matter of fact, and as will be related in its proper place, that consummation was by no means reached by the expected date, and the attack by the Guards did not take place until the night of the 2nd-3rd March, and even then was practically enforced upon them in order to relieve the serious congestion brought about by the standstill to which the whole line to their right had been brought.

At some time during the day Marshal Oyama strengthened his General Reserve by removing the 3rd Division, less one regiment, from the front line of the Second Army, and dispatching it to Ta-tung-shan-pu.*

On this day the fighting on the Japanese side had still been confined to attacks carried out by the Ya-lu and First Armies against the Russian forces opposing them. Farther west the Fourth and Second Japanese Armies had only been engaged in desultory bombardment and minor recon-
 Summary of the
 25th February. naissances, while the Third Army had not yet entered upon the scene of action. But the area of activity of the Japanese First Army had during the day been extended to the west by the unresisted advance of the 12th Division and the attacks of the Guard Division on the previous night. An interesting point in the development of the action lies in the fact that whilst General Kuropatkin was denuding his General

* The 34th Regiment, with a battery of captured mortars, took post from Ta-ping-chuang to Han-shan-tai and appears to have come under the orders of the 4th Division. (See foot-note (h), Appendix 19.) General Oku's head-quarters were at Ta-tung-shan-pu, but were moved on the following day to Kou-tzu-wan.

Reserve and the reserve of the Second Manchurian Army, Marshal Oyama had, on the contrary, strengthened the force under his own hand.

Since the eastern portion of the battlefield still remained the scene of all serious action during the 26th, the narrative for that day will start with the operations of the Japanese Guard Division, and will then be carried eastwards, describing those of the Japanese 12th and 2nd Divisions and of the Ya-lu Army. For the 27th February, however, on which day the action became practically general, the account, starting from the operations of the Ya-lu Army, will run uninterruptedly along the whole front from east to west.

The part played by the Guards on the 26th was of the slightest. During the morning artillery fire was opened, to which the guns of the 2nd Siberian Corps replied, but a cold northerly wind made itself felt about noon bringing with it a blizzard of dust and snow which put an end to firing for the day. To the right of the Guards the 12th Division made a short advance, and nightfall found it along the left bank of the Sha Ho. Its right unit, the 5th *Kobi* Brigade, occupied some high ground south-east of Chang-chi-sai; the left of General Imamura's brigade was slightly to the west of Pien-niu-lu-pu on the left bank, and between these two brigades was General Shimamura. Scarcely any opposition had been encountered.

For the 2nd Division the day's task was to occupy the Wang-fu Ling and Kao-tai Ling and to carry out reconnaissances towards Hai-lang-chai; and the divisional orders prescribed an advance in two columns with a divisional reserve of the 29th *Kobi* Regiment and one mountain battery, while the cavalry was to cover the right flank.* Rising steeply ten miles north of the River Tai-tzu the range of hills pierced by the passes at the Wang-fu Ling and Kao-tai Ling formed even without artificial strengthening admirable positions for passive defence. And, since the Russians had spent months in constructing works to command the Wang-fu Ling and had placed innumerable obstacles on the lower slopes

* Right column: 15th Brigade, the 30th Regiment and the 39th *Kobi* Regiment, and one mountain battery. Left column: 3rd Brigade, the 4th and 29th Regiments, and one mountain battery.

that pass was almost impregnable. Moreover, the weakness of the Japanese in cavalry rendered reconnaissance of the position extremely difficult.

At dawn the Japanese field artillery opened fire, and the right column carried out a turning movement against the Pei-ta-ling-ku Ling, in front of which was now the 10th East Siberian Rifle Regiment. The commander of that regiment was soon mortally wounded, and his troops fell back on to the pass itself. Eight squadrons of Cossacks were then hurried thither by General Baumgarten to support the infantry, and this reinforcement served to check the Japanese for a time. About three o'clock the snow-storm which had caused the cessation of the artillery duel between the Guard and the 2nd Siberian Corps also put an end to fighting in this portion of the field.* The left column had set off simultaneously with the right, but the Russians directed a hot fire from ten guns upon it, and for a time it was checked. Nevertheless, the 4th Regiment after a short delay pushed on against the Wang-fu Ling covered by artillery fire. The snow which began to fall about noon soon increased the difficulties of the attackers, for the men were forced by the steep approach to be continually looking upwards. In these circumstances the left column had to remain content with occupying some heights east of the Wang-fu Ling.

On the Russian side the 2nd Brigade of the 72nd Division, sent off from the 6th Siberian Corps on the 25th, arrived at Hsi-hu-cheng at 3 p.m., and its commander was ordered to move at once to Ying-shou-pu-tzu and to push forward one battery to Pa-chia-tzu. At 8 p.m. the brigade reached the former place, and three hours later General Kashtalinski ordered one regiment to be prepared to move at dawn to North Yang-tan-san to be at the disposal of General Baumgarten.† The 4th Siberian Corps also contributed to supply reinforcements to cope with the threat against the 3rd Siberian Corps at the Pei-ta-ling-ku Ling, for General Linevich ordered up the Yeniseisk Regiment and the 2nd Trans-Baikal Cossack Battery. And General Kuropatkin himself intervened in the process of hurrying units eastward, telephoning direct to General Zasluch to send from the

* One battalion of the 9th East Siberian Rifle Regiment, accompanied by two mountain guns, from the Ching-ho-cheng Detachment, reinforced Prince Tumanov during the afternoon or evening.

† This duty was carried out by the 287th (Taruss) Regiment which arrived at North Yang-tan-san early on the 27th.

2nd Siberian Corps a battalion of the Strietensk Regiment and two mountain batteries. The moral effect, at any rate, of the movement by the Japanese 2nd Division had been by no means inconsiderable.*

To return to the Ching-ho-cheng Detachment, it will be remembered that General Alexeiev's troops, successfully negotiating the Ta Ling, had by the night of the 25th taken position, with the main body at San-lung-yu, covered by right, centre and left detachments and by the cavalry still farther to the left. On the morning of the 26th the Ya-lu Army continued its advance in three columns. The 1st *Kobi* Division operated against the Russian cavalry, while of the 11th Division the 10th Brigade was to make its way through the Hsiao-pa-pin Ling, to turn the left of the Russian main body, and the 22nd Brigade, moving by the main road through the Ta Ling, was to attack the centre detachment under Colonel Budovski. By this subdivision of the Ya-lu Army the right detachment of the Russians on the Tun-kua Ling was unopposed, but of this fact Colonel Polyanski took no advantage, and in this quarter the day passed absolutely without incident. In the centre, some time about noon, the guns with the Japanese 22nd Brigade opened against the Russian battery on the Ta Ling, and soon afterwards firing broke out all along the attacking line. By three o'clock some three or four battalions and a couple of batteries were deployed against the left of the pass, and began to advance, but they were checked by the 9th East Siberian Rifle Regiment. Simultaneously with the attack on the Ta Ling a portion of the Japanese 22nd Brigade also endeavoured to reach the Hei Ling. It was stopped by volleys, and could make no progress in several subsequent efforts to go forward. The high wind and snow interfered with operations here no less than farther to the west.

On the Hsiao-pa-pin Ling all was quiet until about two in the afternoon, when an advance of the enemy was observed by the Russians, whose scouts were quickly driven in. The attackers were the troops of the 10th Brigade of the Japanese 11th Division, and before them the Russian left detachment immediately

* The 7th (Krasnoyarsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment arrived during the day. See p. 297. One battalion was placed at Fan-hsin, the remainder went to Pa-chia-tzu. One battalion of the 4th (Verkhne-Udinsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment was sent during the evening to Tai-kou.

commenced to retire, a movement which at once exposed the left of the Russians upon the Hei Ling. Owing to a breakdown in the telephonic communication, General Alexeiev was for nearly three hours in ignorance of Colonel Gezhdeu's retreat, and was not able to take such steps as the situation demanded until nearly five o'clock. He then ordered a battalion, half a squadron and two mountain guns to proceed from Wu-pa-niu-pu-tzu under Staff-Captain Sakharov to support Colonel Gezhdeu, and at the same time directed General Ekk to extend his left in order to bring under fire the valley stretching from the Hsiao-pa-pin Ling to Wu-pa-niu-pu-tzu. Before these troops, however, could be set in motion a further report was received from Colonel Gezhdeu to the effect that, although he had halted and stood at bay, the threatening appearance of the enemy had forced him to continue his retreat. This intelligence induced General Alexeiev to give orders for all first line transport south of Wu-pa-niu-pu-tzu to be sent back without delay to Ma-chun-tan; but hardly had the message reached those concerned when it was countermanded by General Rennenkampf, who had arrived from the west to resume command of the detachment. It was now about 5 p.m.*

Meanwhile the reinforcements under Staff-Captain Sakharov had fallen in with Colonel Gezhdeu's retiring troops about a mile south of Wu-pa-niu-pu-tzu. The combined forces took up a position, and by the fire of their mountain guns succeeded in checking the enemy, who was now advancing with the greatest determination. Soon, however, the Japanese were seen to be attempting to turn both flanks of the defenders, and since a counter-attack does not seem to have ever been contemplated by Colonel Gezhdeu the only alternative was to retire a stage farther. His force reached Wu-pa-niu-pu-tzu after eight o'clock and proceeded to occupy a position in front of the village, on either side of the valley, during which operation it was still further reinforced by a battalion of the Chernoyar Regiment. This continued withdrawal seems to have embarrassed General Rennenkampf, who as yet had scarcely had time to get a grip of the actual state of affairs. About eight o'clock he had received a despondent message from Colonel Gezhdeu, who was then falling back to Wu-pa-niu-pu-tzu, in

* Henceforth the Ching-ho-cheng Detachment will be referred to as General Rennenkampf's detachment.

General Ren-
nenkampf's
difficulties.

which the situation was represented as serious. That officer failed to make any mention of the reinforcements brought by Captain Sakharov, and omitted also to give the time and place of dispatch—features which drew comments from General Rennenkampf—who sent off two battalions of the Drissa Regiment and two mountain guns and took the precaution of informing Colonel Shirokov, the officer in command of these reinforcements, that he was to supersede Colonel Gezhdeu and to check the pursuit. Immediately after this had been done a verbal message was received from Colonel Gezhdeu, again reporting that he was sorely pressed and that the Japanese were shelling Wu-pa-niu-pu-tzu.

It was now apparent that all the troops to the south of that village were in imminent danger of having their line of retreat to Ma-chun-tan cut, for the only available road led through Wu-pa-niu-pu-tzu, and General Rennenkampf accordingly decided to withdraw them to a position at Tu-pin-tai and there to withstand the Japanese. All transport was to retire to Ma-chun-tan forthwith, the dangerous zone near Wu-pa-niu-pu-tzu being passed at the trot; the field artillery was to follow under escort of two companies to each battery; and the right detachment at the Tun-kua Ling, which had been undisturbed all day, was to fall back to San-lung-yu, and there to cover the withdrawal of the troops from the Ta Ling and Hei Ling, who were to move immediately their guns had left. These precautions, however, were not put to the test, for when Colonel Shirokov arrived with his reinforcements at Wu-pa-niu-pu-tzu the Japanese 10th Brigade had ceased to advance, so that all the Russian troops which had been in danger of being cut off reached Tu-pin-tai about midnight in good order. The Japanese merely kept up an intermittent fire against Wu-pa-niu-pu-tzu.

The cavalry were the only troops of General Rennenkampf's detachment which did not join in this retirement to Tu-pin-tai. It will be remembered that the squadrons under Colonel Zakrzhevski had on the previous day fallen back to Wu-lin-kou and that General Liubavin was on his way from the west of the area of fighting to reinforce him. On the 26th the 1st *Kobi* Division continued to press Colonel Zakrzhevski, who withdrew and joined General Liubavin at the Hu-mien chia Ling. That officer then assumed command of the total force, amounting to eleven squadrons and one battalion. The 1st *Kobi* Division occupied

A-niu-pu-tzu with its advanced units, but made no further advance.*

During the night of the 25th-26th a notification had reached General Rennenkampf from the commander of the First Manchurian Army to the effect that the 2nd Brigade, 6th East Siberian Rifle Division,† which had detrained at Fu-shun Junction, had been directed to Ku-chia-tzu. To this General Rennenkampf replied later that he was convinced he could hold his ground on the position he had then taken up. General Maslov's force remained, where it had been, at Hsing-ching, and was ordered by General Kuropatkin to evacuate that place only if forced to do so, and should such evacuation be necessary to fall back and cover the road to Ying-pan.‡ As a further protection to this road, which led round the Russian left flank, the commander-in-chief ordered the 146th (Tsaritsin) Regiment, which arrived on this day at Fu-shun, to send forward two companies to occupy some entrenchments constructed at Ying-pan. During the day the 1st Siberian Corps, detached from the Second Manchurian Army, had reached Chan-sa-ma-tun, and in response to a query from General Kuropatkin the commander of the First Manchurian Army had expressed his need for that corps. Accordingly it was ordered to move eastwards on the 27th, sending on an advanced guard to Hsi-hu-cheng, and to come under General Linevich's command. The XVIth Corps had already been instructed to hold itself in readiness to proceed to Po-hsin-tsai.

By these deductions the General Reserve would have been reduced to the 1st Brigade 72nd Division, 6th Siberian Corps, and to augment its numbers orders were given that the 1st Corps should be prepared to reinforce it to the extent of twelve battalions.§ But the news of the successful retirement of General Rennenkampf and of the favourable situation on the left of the 3rd Siberian Corps induced the commander-in-chief about midnight to cancel the move of the XVIth Corps.

The active operations upon the 26th were again limited in extent. But the Ching-ho-cheng Detachment had been driven a

* The main body spent the night about Shih-ta-hei-tzu-hu.

† Which had been sent off from the Second Manchurian Army reserve at Ma-tou-lan on the 25th. See p. 287.

‡ On the Hun Ho, east of Fu-shun.

§ The 85th (Viborg) Regiment and two battalions each from the 86th (Wilmanstrand), 87th (Neishlot), 145th (Novocherkask) and 147th (Samara) Regiments.

step farther back, to Tu-pin-tai, and the Japanese 2nd Division had continued its pressure against the left of the 3rd Siberian

Corps. The general result had been to accentuate the effect already produced on General Kuro-patkin, who this day contemplated moving the

Summary of the
26th February.

XVIth Corps in addition to those units sent to the east on the 25th, which had now begun to reach their destinations behind the Russian centre and left. While these changes in the disposition of the troops were in progress in rear of the Russian front line—evidences of the change of plan—there were no movements of the Japanese reserves. The battle was now following a course similar to that of two of the earlier actions of the war—an offensive steadily maintained by the Japanese against a Russian policy which had veered from intended aggression to improvised defence.

CHAPTER LXIX.

THE BATTLE OF MUKDEN—*continued*—OPERATIONS ON THE 27TH AND NIGHT OF THE 27TH-28TH FEBRUARY—THE YA-LU ARMY CHECKED IN THE EAST—OPERATIONS OF THE JAPANESE 2ND DIVISION—THE RUSSIANS ATTEMPT TO SEIZE THE SHA HO RAILWAY BRIDGE—THE JAPANESE THIRD ARMY ADVANCES—THE BEGINNING OF THE JAPANESE ENVELOPING MOVEMENT IN THE WEST.

(Plan 59.)

INFORMATION had reached Japanese General Head-Quarters on the 26th of the movement of large bodies of Russian troops to the east. But whether the intelligence had not been sufficiently definite, or whether Marshal Oyama wished to allow the Russians to become more deeply committed by the actual arrival of their troops in the eastern quarter of the field, he had refrained from disclosing his intention by any forward movement of General Nogi's force against the weakened Russian flank. By the morning of the 27th he had come to the conclusion that the time was ripe to launch his real attack, and he set in motion the Japanese Third Army to play its part. Since, however, it did not actually intervene in the battle for some hours, and the Japanese did not meanwhile relax their pressure elsewhere, the action in the east and centre of the battlefield will first be described and the account of General Nogi's advance which, after all, was the cardinal feature of the day's operations will be reserved till later.

When sending General Danilov by rail to Fu-shun on the 25th with a force of all arms to reinforce the left flank,* General

* The 2nd Brigade of the 6th East Siberian Rifle Division, the 7th and 8th Batteries of the 26th Artillery Brigade, and one squadron of the Primorsk Dragoons. The 6th East Siberian Rifle Division had originally formed part of the 3rd Siberian Corps, but the 1st Brigade was now with the Ching-ho-cheng Detachment, and the 2nd Brigade had been with the 1st Siberian Corps and attached to it. See foot-note (**), p. 273.

Kuropatkin had directed him to move on through Liao-pa-kan and the Pai-ta Ling to Hsi-ssu-a and Hsi-ta-hei-tzu, and had laid upon him the responsibility of offering a stubborn resistance to any hostile advance. And so impressed had General Danilov been with the necessity of speed that without waiting for the arrival of his whole force at Fu-shun Junction he had ordered the 24th East Siberian Rifle Regiment to push forward to the Pai-ta Ling and to send out an advanced detachment to the south of Hsi-ssu-a. During the night of the 26th-27th the troops of his detachment were distributed as follows:—*

General Danilov reinforces the Russian left.

- (1) As advanced guard immediately south of Hsi-ssu-a, one battalion of the 24th East Siberian Rifle Regiment, two scout detachments and two machine guns.
- (2) At Tung-ssu-a and Hsi-ssu-a, two battalions of the 24th East Siberian Rifle Regiment.
- (3) Between Fu-shun Junction and Liao-pa-kan, the 23rd East Siberian Rifle Regiment, 8th Battery of the 26th Artillery Brigade, two machine guns, and one squadron of the Primorsk Dragoons.†

Before dawn the missing battery had come up, and General Danilov issued orders for the advanced guard to move to Hsi-ta-hei-tzu, while the main body under Colonel Lechitski was to make for Wu-lin-kou.‡ The advance began about 8 a.m., but since the Japanese had the evening before driven Colonel Zakrzhevski's squadrons of the Ching-ho-cheng Detachment from the latter village, General Danilov's troops were bound to meet with opposition, and between Ku-chia-tzu and Hou-ka-hei-tzu the collision took place. The Russian advanced guard immediately occupied the heights at Chan-tan and Ku-chia-tzu, and while the operation was in progress General Danilov came up and assumed command of the fight about one o'clock.

The force which the Russians had now encountered were some advanced troops from the 1st *Kobi* Division. For while on this day—the 27th February—the 11th Division of the Ya-lu Army

* See p. 303.

† Apparently the 7th Battery had not yet arrived. The artillery and a squadron had come by march route, the infantry by rail.

‡ This was now composed of five battalions, sixteen field guns, two machine guns, and one scout detachment.

had been ordered to advance on Ma-chun-tan, the 1st *Kobi*

Division was apparently to continue to move on a parallel course to the east, up the Wu-lin-kou valley. The leading units of the latter division passed through Yao-pu at 10 a.m., and about one o'clock its artillery opened fire upon

General Danilov's advanced guard, which was at once reinforced by two companies and two guns. A typical encounter action now took place, in which the Russians quickly assumed the defensive and managed to hold their own, although by three o'clock the Japanese had advanced to within five hundred yards of the position. Thus the afternoon wore away, the Japanese, for some reason not readily apparent, being slow to reinforce their advanced guard. This, however, they did after dusk, and at 8 p.m. renewed the attack, before which the Russians gradually fell back a short distance on to another position. Here they were relieved by the main body which had come up during the afternoon.* The main body of the 1st *Kobi* Division went into bivouac at Chen-ka-hei-tzu.

The reinforcing detachment under General Danilov had therefore been of much service, for it had attracted to itself practically the whole of the 1st *Kobi* Division, leaving General Rennenkampf with only the 11th Division of the Ya-lu Army to deal with, and therefore saving him from all possibility of being outflanked on the east. The force, over which General Rennenkampf had upon the previous day resumed immediate control, had formed up upon

the position near Tu-pin-tai in accordance with orders issued shortly after midnight. Defending the ground in front of Wu-pa-niu-pu-tzu, and thus controlling the junction of the roads leading from the Ta Ling and Hsiao-pa-pin Ling, was Colonel Polyanski's advanced guard;† and a flank guard‡ under

* General Danilov's force was then disposed as follows :—

Right.—Two battalions of the 23rd East Siberian Rifle Regiment.

Centre.—Two batteries and two companies.

Left.—Two and a half battalions of the 24th East Siberian Rifle Regiment.

Reserve.—Three companies of the 23rd East Siberian Rifle Regiment.

During the day General Danilov was, by order of the commander of the First Manchurian Army, placed under General Rennenkampf.

† The 282nd (Chernoyar) Regiment; half the 6th Battery of the 26th Artillery Brigade, four guns of the Frontier Guards, and two machine guns.

‡ One battalion of the 22nd East Siberian Rifle Regiment, and two guns of the 3rd Mountain Battery.

Colonel Rzhevski was posted on the west to prevent a turning movement from that quarter. The main body under General Ekk* was stationed across the valley and facing south-east, while the reserve of three battalions, six mountain guns and two squadrons was in Ma-chun-tan.† The Russian left was protected by General Liubavin, who held the Hu-mien chia Ling with three battalions, ten squadrons, and four mountain guns, and was also responsible for gaining touch with the troops under General Danilov.‡

The line now taken up by General Rennenkampf had been noted as suitable for defence some weeks previously and had been carefully reconnoitred with a view to its employment in that manner. But labour had not been available and the ground was quite unprepared for defence: there were no obstacles, and indeed even trenches had not been dug. Some delay took place in occupying the position in accordance with his orders, for when three battalions of the advanced guard arrived at Wu-pa-niu-pu-tzu to relieve Colonel Shirokov the latter considered it inadvisable to withdraw with the Drissa Regiment, since the village was actually under fire, and adding the three fresh battalions to his force remained where he was.§ The flank guard, too, under Colonel Rzhevski, in moving forward before dawn, lost its bearings and arrived at the same village, but when daylight came it set out for its allotted place, accompanied by a battalion of the Drissa Regiment, which Colonel Shirokov then added to it.

While it was yet dark the advanced units of the Japanese 10th Brigade had resumed the offensive against Colonel Shirokov's force at Wu-pa-niu-pu-tzu and had managed to approach within

* Three and a half battalions of the 281st (Drissa) Regiment; half a battalion of the 282nd (Bugulmin) Regiment; two battalions from each of the 9th and 22nd East Siberian Rifle Regiments; the 5th Trans-Baikal Cossack Infantry Battalion; the 3rd Battery of the 3rd East Siberian Artillery Brigade; half the 6th Battery of the 26th Artillery Brigade; four guns of the 8th Mountain Battery; two guns of the Frontier Guards; one and a half squadrons of the 2nd Nerchinsk Cossack Regiment; two companies of the 2nd East Siberian Sapper Battalion; in all nine battalions, eighteen field guns, one and a half squadrons, and two companies of sappers.

† The 21st East Siberian Rifle Regiment, six guns of the 3rd Mountain Battery and two squadrons of the 2nd Nerchinsk Cossack Regiment.

‡ The infantry and guns were three battalions of the 283rd (Bugulmin) Regiment and four guns of the 8th Mountain Battery.

§ See p. 302.

four hundred yards, but, as before, the Russian mountain guns succeeded in checking them. The Japanese 11th Division was advancing in three columns. So far as can be ascertained, the 12th Regiment was to move in the centre through San-lung-yu upon Ma-chun-tan; on its right the 10th Brigade—in rear of which followed head-quarters—was to leave Pan-cheng-yu for the same objective; while to the west the 22nd Brigade, less the 12th Regiment, was to endeavour to work round the enemy's right flank. Between 9 and 10 a.m. a Japanese battery opened fire; to this the Russians replied from four of their field pieces, and for a couple of hours maintained an artillery duel. The arrival of the Japanese divisional head-quarters at Pan-cheng-yu appears to have been quickly detected by the Russian gunners, who made good practice at such a tempting target. One staff officer was killed; General Samejima, the divisional commander, had a narrow escape from a shell which burst close to him and covered him with earth; while three staff officers had their horses shot. About noon, however, the Russian artillery directed its attention to another target, for the Japanese infantry was approaching.

At first the latter directed their efforts against the right of the Wu-pa-niu-pu-tzu position and subsequently against the left. They met with no success, however, and before five o'clock firing died down all along the front. Later the Japanese guns again opened fire for a couple of hours; but with darkness the bombardment ceased, and Colonel Shirokov was at last enabled to withdraw with the Drissa Regiment from the position he had held so well. Colonel Polyanski, who was now left with only his own four battalions, withdrew his force slightly. During the afternoon some alarm had been caused by a report that the Japanese were working round the right flank, and two battalions and four guns had been sent from the reserve to the high ground north of Huang-ti. These fears, however, proved to be groundless. Hsiao-lien-chiang was found to be occupied by one company of the Chembar Regiment, from the 3rd Siberian Corps, while in Huang-ti were some of General Baumgarten's Cossacks from the same command. Touch was therefore established with the main Russian line.

On the east flank General Liubavin was left undisturbed until evening, when a small force of three companies from the Japanese 1st *Kobi* Division made a half-hearted and ineffective attack,

—a respite from active operations directly due to the appearance on the scene during the day of General Danilov's detachment. News of the fighting carried out by that force reached General Rennenkampf about 10 p.m. and led him to send an order to General Liubavin to leave a battalion and four guns on the Hu-mien chia Ling and to advance rapidly with the remainder of his force on A-niu-pu-tzu, with the object of working round in rear of the 1st *Kobi* Division. General Liubavin decided to put this order into execution at dawn on the 28th.

The Ya-lu Army had now advanced to a point beyond which its own unaided efforts could no longer carry it; and another nine days were to pass before it reached Ma-chun-tan. Nevertheless, although it was now to suffer a decided check, it had played its part in that its steady advance had misled General Kuropatkin into transferring strength to the east.

The initial stage of the battle had effected a change in the relative positions of the Japanese First and Ya-lu Armies, for instead of being in rear of the right of the former the Ya-lu Army was now echeloned to its right front. It is, in consequence, necessary to cross the mountains for some six miles in a south-westerly direction in order to follow up the operations of the Japanese 2nd Division on the 27th. It will be remembered that on the previous day that division had advanced in two columns and that a snowstorm had debarred it from gaining any really decisive result. On the 27th the attack was resumed and, in the right column, General Ohara, placing the 39th *Kobi* Regiment on the right and the 30th Regiment on the left, decided to carry out a turning movement from the east with the former regiment, under the protection of a mountain battery. The Russian position, however, held by General Baumgarten and Prince Tumanov extended considerably farther to the east than General Ohara imagined, and when the 39th *Kobi* Regiment was set in motion about 9 a.m. some Russians almost immediately appeared to the east, occupying the heights, which were among the steepest and highest in the district.* With this menace upon its right it was clearly impossible for the 39th *Kobi* Regiment to advance, so its flanking movement was for the moment suspended and a portion of the

* These troops probably formed part of the detachment near the Ku-ling-tzu Ling.

regiment was deployed against the hills from which the enemy had by now opened fire. By this time information was received to the effect that Russian reinforcements had been seen entering Hsiao-pu. This intelligence was correct, for about noon the Taruss Regiment had arrived in that village and had immediately pushed forward two battalions to the Pei-ta-ling-ku Ling and one to Tai-kou.* General Ohara appears now to have come to the conclusion that this strengthening of the Russians to the north of him implied that they were about to attack, and acting upon this hypothesis which, as a matter of fact, was incorrect, he ordered his column to take up a defensive position. This was done, and the afternoon passed without incident except for the artillery fire which the Russians maintained for some time.† The cavalry of the Japanese 2nd Division played a somewhat inactive rôle.

By the left column of the 2nd Division, however, some success was gained. On the previous evening it had bivouacked upon the hills east of the Wang-fu Ling, and had received orders that the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 4th Regiment were on the following day to attack Redoubt 16, which crowned the summit of a hill rising abruptly some four hundred and fifty feet above the Wang-fu Ling. General Ishibashi, commanding the Japanese column, intended to capture the work before daybreak and then to wheel his force eastwards, apparently with the idea of moving along the valley in the hours of darkness and of co-operating with General Ohara in turning the left flank of the 3rd Siberian Corps. During the night, therefore, he sent out reconnoitring parties which under cover of the falling snow succeeded in approaching to within a few hundred yards of the Russian work. When the patrols sent back word that the Russians had constructed wire entanglements in front of their position volunteers were called for to destroy the obstacle. For this purpose thirty men were selected from each battalion, of which forty-two were furnished with hand-grenades and the remaining eighteen with wire-cutters.

These men did not at once advance, the attack being fixed to start at 4 a.m. on the 27th, but the hours of waiting were not

* The 287th (Taruss) Regiment was from the 2nd Brigade 72nd Division.

† One battalion of the 29th *Kobi* Regiment from the divisional reserve reinforced General Ohara during the day.

undisturbed, for the Russians kept up a steady fire against the Japanese front line. The night was the coldest during the battle, the temperature falling to eight degrees below zero (Fahrenheit), while the snow fell more heavily as the hours passed; and the Japanese 4th Regiment suffered considerably, several men dying of exposure before the morning. It was probably with a sense of relief that the word to advance was received after the long hours of cold and darkness. About 4 a.m. the volunteers with the hand-grenades and wire-cutters were ordered to the front; and behind them followed the 1st and 3rd Battalions, with the 2nd Battalion in reserve. Owing to the snow the slopes were very slippery, and but slow progress was made, while to add to the difficulties of the advance a heavier fire than ever was opened by the Russians about ten minutes to six.

Nevertheless the two assaulting battalions managed to approach to within one hundred yards of the obstacles, though they suffered severely in doing so, one-third of their number being quickly placed out of action, chiefly by the fire of machine guns which the defenders were employing with great effect. One of the Japanese company commanders, espying a large rock which seemed to promise prospect of shelter from the hail of rifle bullets, called to his company to follow him, but their movement was observed and the Russians turned some of their machine guns upon the hurrying Japanese, killing the commander and fifty of his men within a few seconds. Meanwhile the men with wire-cutters had gone forward, followed by the grenadiers, who lit their bombs with cigarettes and hurled them into the Russian trenches. At 7 a.m. a Japanese mountain battery opened fire, at first with disastrous effect, for its shrapnel burst among the attackers, who had to withdraw under cover until the range was more accurately found. Shortly afterwards the cutting of the wire entanglements was completed, though at a cost to the volunteers of nearly half their number, and at about a quarter to eight the assaulting companies poured through the gaps and then flung themselves down to recover breath for the final dash. The defenders were now hurling hand-grenades and large stones over the parapet; but the Japanese soon stormed the redoubt and carried it at the point of the bayonet. Two hundred Japanese fell in the assault. The Russians left about one hundred dead and sixty-nine prisoners behind, all their officers except one having fallen. Upon the dead body of one the Japanese found a detailed plan

of the defences, which showed that their information had been incorrect.

This fierce encounter was the hottest affair in which the Japanese 4th Regiment had been engaged since the fighting at Manju Yama almost six months before. The actual assault appears, curiously enough, to have come as a surprise to the garrison, which consisted

of two companies of the Chembar Regiment, with two companies of the Verkhne-Udinsk Regiment in reserve in rear. So little did the

defenders realize the situation that no warning of impending danger nor any appeal for assistance had been transmitted by the telephone which linked the redoubt with the neighbouring Russian troops. News of the disaster was, indeed, only received by them later from some scouts who noticed the occupation of the work by the Japanese. All the scout detachments of the 3rd East Siberian Rifle Division were then collected and sent to Sung-shu-chu-tzu, whence two mountain guns with them enfiladed the captured redoubt, being joined during the day by another couple of mountain guns. In addition a battery opened fire from the right section of the 3rd Siberian Corps and two from the Kao-tai Ling, and their combined efforts effectually stopped the Japanese. After the capture of Redoubt 16 orders had been issued to the 4th Regiment to push right on to the Kao-tai Ling; but to pierce the Russian line in the face of such a fire and with a regiment so thoroughly exhausted and depleted was impossible, and General Ishibashi decided to spend the day in reconnaissance, preliminary to a night attack upon Redoubts 17 and 18.

On the side of the Russians the 3rd Siberian Corps had been augmented by the arrival of the 2nd Brigade, 72nd Division, 6th Siberian Corps, at North Yang-tan-san—a reinforcement which brought General Kashtalinski's force up to thirty battalions.*

In addition, the Yeniseisk Regiment arrived towards evening from the 4th Siberian Corps, and the whole of the 1st Siberian Corps was expected shortly to reach Hsi-hu-cheng.† Thus the situation of the 3rd Siberian Corps was reassuring; and a further cause for satisfaction lay in the fact that touch had been gained with General

The 3rd Siberian Corps reinforced.

* It was from this brigade that part of the 287th (Taruss) Regiment had been sent to reinforce the Pei-ta-ling-ku Ling. See p. 311.

† The advanced guard arrived at that village during the day.

Rennenkampf, for Prince Tumanov, who was posted on the Ku-ling-tzu Ling, fearing lest the retreat of the force to the east of him might allow the Japanese to get behind General Baumgarten and himself, had sent units to occupy Huang-ti and Hsiao-lien-chiang.*

The operations which took place this day between the Japanese 2nd Division and the 3rd Siberian Corps were therefore on the whole indecisive. The Japanese right column had effected nothing, and although the left column had captured an outwork it had not been able to advance. On the other hand, the Russians made no attempt to recover the lost ground, and the assailants remained in possession of it. Since the 3rd Siberian Corps had been so largely reinforced, the Japanese 2nd Division, like the Ya-lu Army, was forced to remain practically fixed to its position for several days. So far, however, it had carried out Marshal Oyama's instructions to the letter, for the Wang-fu Ling had been taken by the 27th as ordered.†

Farther westward along the Japanese front the narrative of the battle for the 27th February next embraces that of the 12th Division, but the action of this division may be dismissed with a few words. Its situation remained the same as it had been at the close of the 26th, for the taking of the Kao-tai Ling by the 2nd Division was to be the signal for a further advance on the part of the 12th Division, and the Kao-tai Ling had not yet been captured. There had, however, been a change in the composition of the Russians opposing the division. The 11th and 12th East Siberian Rifle Regiments, which formed part, and were on the right, of the 3rd Siberian Corps, had by General Linevich's order been placed under General Zasulich, the commander of the 2nd Siberian Corps, on account of the great length of front held by the former corps and the need for undivided attention being paid to its left flank. General Zasulich took advantage of the comparative lull in his own front to help the 3rd Siberian Corps upon his left, for having heard from the chief of staff of that corps that the Japanese were concentrating against its left and that the corps reserve was expended, he sent off the Yeniseisk Regi-

* See p. 309. The arrival of the 2nd Brigade, 72nd Division, had set free the 5th Siberian Cossacks, which left Hsiao-pu and rejoined Prince Tumanov, who now came directly under the orders of the corps commander.

† See p. 269.

ment and the 2nd Trans-Baikal Cossack Battery from the 4th Siberian Corps, which were at Kang-ta-jen-shan, to its assistance.* Fearing that these units might not arrive in time to be of service he hurried off two Mounted Scout detachments to get ahead of the slower moving infantry and guns. Nor did his co-operation cease with the dispatch of these reinforcements. During the night the 1st Brigade of the 72nd Division, in accordance with telephonic instructions from the commander-in-chief, was due at Po-hsin-tsai,† and General Zasulich ordered the brigadier to push still farther eastwards early next morning, instructing him generally to support the left flank of the 3rd Siberian Corps, and to proceed at once to the Kao-tai Ling if fighting was reported on that pass.

The arrival of this brigade so opportunely on the scene was due to a request from General Linevich that his First Manchurian Army should be reinforced. This demand was based upon sound reasoning, for when the 1st Siberian Corps had arrived at Hsi-hu-cheng General Linevich had considered that he ought to abandon his defensive rôle and endeavour to turn the right flank of the Japanese 2nd Division which was operating against the Kao-tai Ling. He had therefore asked the commander-in-chief for all the reinforcements which could be spared, and the 1st Brigade, 72nd Division, had been sent to him. General Kuropatkin approved generally of his subordinate's plan of utilizing the 1st Siberian Corps to outflank the Japanese, but suggested the advisability of making a frontal attack as well. Thus in the First Manchurian Army there were shown signs of the offensive spirit and some proofs of initiative and combined action. But these characteristics were displayed only by commanders of parts of the Russian force. For the army as a whole there was now no co-ordinated plan. General Kuropatkin had ceased to be a guiding mind and had insensibly drifted to the position of a custodian of spare units to be issued to each claimant for reinforcements.

The transfer of force to the east had by now been carried out by the Russians on so large a scale that an important deduction may not unfairly be drawn from this fact. Inasmuch as they had always

* Kang-ta-jen-shan was in the rayon of the 2nd Siberian Corps. See p. 294.

† This brigade reached Po-hsin-tsai about 3 a.m. on the 28th.

shown a tendency to meet pressure directly, it seems certain that it was not only for the safety of General Alexeiev's force that General Kuropatkin was anxious, but that he imagined that the Japanese main attack would be made in the east; and therefore that the presence of the Japanese Third Army in the west had not yet been discovered, and that the turning movement soon to be launched in that quarter came to the Russians as a complete surprise.* By the evening of the 27th the whole of the 1st Siberian Corps, the 72nd Division of the 6th Siberian Corps, the 2nd Brigade of the 6th East Siberian Rifle Division and the 146th (Tsaritsin) Regiment were either en route to, or had reached, the eastern portion of the field. It had even been proposed to send the XVIth Corps to General Linevich and to withdraw most of the 1st Corps from the front line to form a new General Reserve.† It was only when the position of the First Manchurian Army was found to be not unfavourable on the evening of the 26th that this move had been cancelled.

The precipitate action of General Kuropatkin in hurrying such large bodies of troops towards the point of first pressure had, however, been viewed by at least two responsible officers with some concern. General Bilderling, who was temporarily in command of the Third Manchurian Army, became uneasy about the possibility of a hostile penetration of his centre, through which ran the main avenue to Mukden, and felt it his duty to point out that the operations of the Japanese in the east might possibly be nothing but a demonstration and that the real attack might yet come against the Russian right. On the evening of the 26th, too, General Kuropatkin's own Chief of Staff had submitted in writing an opinion to the same

* The direct evidence upon this important question is conflicting, as will be inferred from the two following extracts from the *Russian Official History*:—

“The situation on the extreme left flank for a time appeared to be quite indefinite, and there were no data to justify the conclusion that the Japanese had received considerable reinforcements there.”—*Russian Official History*, Vol. V, Part I, p. 123.

“The 11th Division from Nogi's Army, observed on the right flank of the Japanese line, pointed to a weakness on their left flank, so that it seemed possible to the [Russian] commander-in-chief to draw boldly on his strategical reserve [General Reserve] in order to reinforce the First Manchurian Army.”—*Ib.*, p. 131.

† The place of the 1st Corps would then have been taken by the 1st Brigade 72nd Division, the 2nd Brigade 5th East Siberian Rifle Division, and one regiment from the 22nd Division.

effect. His memorandum on the subject concluded with the following words:—" . . . the situation is by no means cleared up, and according to all the data available the main strength of the Japanese is still in front of our centre and right." It is significant, however, that neither General Sakharov nor General Bilderling hazarded any definite opinion as to the probable whereabouts of the Japanese Third Army.

In the strip of country formed by the valley of the Sha Ho, from the south-eastern flank of Pagoda Hill to Feng-chi-pu, the Guard Division and the Umezawa Brigade were still confronted by the greater portion of the 2nd and 4th Siberian Corps. During the day a

The Japanese Guard Division and the 2nd and 4th Siberian Corps.	heavy bombardment was carried out by the Russians, their guns opening at about 8 a.m. and continuing until dusk to shell every portion of the Guard's line in turn. Fire was concentrated, however, chiefly upon the hill north
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of Tung-chia-wen, where the garrison had a trying time. Though the casualties, as a matter of fact, were not heavy, for only about thirty men were hit, the Russian shrapnel admitted of no communication between the front line and the reserves during daylight. To this bombardment the Japanese replied, the greater portion of their fire being directed against the position of the 2nd Siberian Corps. All their guns were well protected and had lately been provided with shields, two factors which kept down the losses amongst the gunners.* No advance was possible by either side until one or the other should obtain a superiority in the artillery duel, so that both the Russian and Japanese infantry passed the day in inaction. When darkness fell, however, two or three companies of Russians appear to have made an attack on the hill north of Tung-chia-wen, but they were driven back.

Leaving the Japanese First Army, it will be convenient to turn to that area of which the river-side towns of Liu-chiang-tun and Lin-sheng-pu approximately mark the eastern and western limits, which may be termed the centre of the field. Within

The centre of the battlefield. The Russians.	this area were comprised the important topographical factors—Putilov and One Tree Hills, the Mandarin Road, and the Harbin-Port Arthur railway. Here, on the Russian side, the 1st, 6th Siberian† and XVIIth Corps confronted the Japanese Fourth Army
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* On Ti-ti Shan four men were wounded and on Pagoda Hill, three.

† Less the 72nd Division, with the General Reserve, on its way eastwards.

under General Nodzu, and a brief description of the subdivision of the sector is required. The important point to bear in mind is that the Sha Ho here ceased to be the dividing line between the opposing forces. The capture of Putilov and One Tree Hills by the Russians in October had enabled them to maintain a hold along the left bank for some five miles, and so to strengthen the defences of these two hills during the winter that they had been rendered almost impregnable. The front line of the Ist Corps included Liu-chiang-tun, and running thence in a north-westerly direction passed south of Putilov and One Tree Hills; and the right flank, which included the former hill, was in charge of the brigade after which the hill had been named, now forming part of this corps.* In all, the Ist Corps amounted to twenty-two battalions, two squadrons, and sixty-eight guns, of which two battalions, two squadrons and six guns were in army reserve at Ta-tzu-pu. Sixteen siege guns were also placed within the area occupied by it. From its right the line was carried on by the 6th Siberian Corps,† with twelve battalions and forty-eight guns in front,‡ and four battalions in reserve, astride of the Sha Ho. The line of the latter corps crossed the river at Sha-ho-pu, which village was wholly in Russian hands, and from it that of the XVIIth Corps extended westwards, its trenches, striking the railway about Ying-wo, then trending to Lin-sheng-pu, the possession of which village was divided between the Russians and Japanese. Seventeen battalions and ninety-six guns were disposed along the front of the position and the reserve consisted of three battalions.‡ Between this village and Ta-liang-tun the front of the XVIIth Corps ceased. Of the three corps just mentioned, therefore, the front of one was wholly south of the river, the front of another wholly north, while that of the centre corps lay astride of it. And each was concerned with a definite topographical feature: Putilov and One Tree Hills lay within the rayon of the Ist Corps; the Mandarin Road ran through that of the 6th Siberian Corps, and the XVIIth Corps was disposed upon both sides of the railway.

Facing these three corps, to which was entrusted the defence

* The 2nd Brigade 5th East Siberian Rifle Division, 2nd Siberian Corps, under Major-General Putilov.

† Less the 72nd Division with the General Reserve.

‡ The guns referred to are field guns. For a list of the heavy guns in the rayon of the XVIIth, and 6th Siberian, Corps, see Appendix 17.

of the main avenue to Mukden, the Japanese Fourth Army was disposed as follows:—The 10th Division was on the right, and its right brigade—the 8th—confronted the village of Liu-chiang-tun, and overlapping the front of the Russian Ist Corps The Japanese. watched the right of the 4th Siberian Corps on Ta Shan as well. The 20th Brigade marked the left of the division, and was opposite One Tree Hill. Then came the Okubo *Kobi* Division, composed of the 3rd, 10th and 11th *Kobi* Brigades, filling the space between the left of the 10th Division and the Mandarin Road, the 11th *Kobi* Brigade being on the left, the 3rd *Kobi* Brigade on the right, and the 10th *Kobi* Brigade in second line. Next came the 6th Division, with the 11th Brigade on the right and the 24th Brigade on the left, continuing the line through La-mu-tun to Lin-sheng-pu, where it was actually in touch with the right of the Russian XVIIth Corps. Under General Nodzu's own hand was a reserve of three *Kobi* regiments.*

The primary duty of the Fourth Army being to pin the Russians in the centre to their ground, it was to this army that the bulk of the heavy artillery from Port Arthur had been sent. Ten days after General Stessel's capitulation, a siege park had been established at Shih-li-ho; and work had been started on preparing the emplacements for the six 11-inch howitzers which were to come up. By the middle of February the concrete drums had set sufficiently for these pieces to be mounted. There were now in position guns of 3·5-inch, 3·9-inch, 4·7-inch, 5·9-inch and 7-inch, and howitzers of 7·8 and 11-inch calibre, the latter weapons being the heaviest that had ever been employed in field operations. In all, in the Fourth Army, there were not less than one hundred and eight heavy pieces. As a matter of fact the actual results obtained from the employment of the largest of these pieces was not great. Their accuracy had been impaired by the continuous firing at Port Arthur, the ammunition was not suited to the targets fired at, and once mounted they were practically immobile. Their moral effect, however, appears at first to have been considerable.

Opposite that part of the line of the Fourth Army held by the left of the 10th Division the Russian position was a truly formidable one. As has been said, Putilov and One Tree

* The 6th, 20th and 43rd *Kobi* Regiments from the 3rd, 10th and 11th *Kobi* Brigades, respectively, of the Okubo *Kobi* Division.

Hills had been strongly entrenched during the winter and siege guns had been placed upon their eastern and western slopes. Ta Shan also was well defended, while at Liu-chiang-tun, which was commanded by that height, field fortification had been employed with such skill that the place was considered by the Japanese to offer greater difficulties to capture than had any of the closed works in front of Liao-yang. An advance by infantry without preliminary artillery preparation was out of the question, and accordingly, on the morning of the 27th, some of the mountain and siege guns opened fire against Putilov and One Tree Hills and against the trenches round Liu-chiang-tun.* To this the Russians replied with field guns, howitzers, and siege pieces, concentrating their fire on the Japanese batteries, whose positions had been located by scouts some days previously. The field artillery of the Okubo *Kobi* Division also joined in the bombardment, directing most of its efforts upon the trenches upon Putilov and One Tree Hills, while on the left of the Japanese Fourth Army the guns of the 6th Division also performed their part in the day's work. They opened between 9 and 10 a.m., first against the trenches of the Russian 3rd Division and later upon those of the 35th Division, discharging about a hundred high-explosive shells.† The Russians replied from a siege battery and later from a howitzer battery at Ying-wo. In the centre of the field, therefore, the day was passed in purely artillery operations, and nothing was effected by the infantry on either side; but an aggressive attempt on the part of the Russians after nightfall led to some fierce infantry fighting.

Two days earlier, in a telephonic conversation with General Bilderling, the Russian commander-in-chief had mentioned the anxiety which he felt for his left flank, and had suggested the possibility of a demonstration being made by the Third Manchurian Army. Shortly afterwards General Bilderling received a written order directing him to carry out an attack upon the Sha Ho railway bridge; but the missive concluded with a somewhat characteristic warning to the recipient not to allow himself to become seriously entangled.

* The 11-inch howitzers did not fire during the 27th.

† The 3rd Division was on the (Russian) right, the 35th Division on the left, of the XVIIth Corps.

Apart from the necessity which now existed of relieving pressure at another portion of the line, the capture of this bridge had for some weeks been under consideration at Russian General Head-Quarters. The section of the Japanese front between La-mu-tun and Lin-sheng-pu was felt to be as the point of a wedge in a vital part of the Russian position, and the Japanese had shown that they realized the advantages which such a forward defensive sector yielded them. Within it, upon the right bank of the river just above the railway bridge, was a small belt of trees which had received from the Russians the name of The Black Grove, and the concealment afforded by these trees had enabled the Japanese to enfilade the left trenches of the Russian 3rd Division. This little grove was from its position now destined to witness such bitter fighting for its possession that long after the war it was still known to the Japanese by their equivalent for hell.

Since so far back as the end of January the Russians had made preparations for the capture of the grove and of the north end of the bridge by mining, and by the 25th February had driven a mine gallery to within a hundred paces of the latter. A reconnaissance of the bridge had disclosed that the Japanese had constructed three blinded trenches upon the embankment, from which several communication trenches ran to the Black Grove, and that these were supported by others upon the right bank. It had been proposed to bombard these defences, and upon receipt of General Kuropatkin's order referred to above measures had been taken to carry this out on the 26th. The snowstorm which raged throughout that day, however, effectually prevented any observation of fire and obliged the commander of the Third Manchurian Army to defer the undertaking until the following day. Unfortunately for the Russians the Japanese commenced a bombardment upon the 27th, and during the day the Russian guns had perforce to devote some of their attention to the hostile pieces, though in the evening the field batteries which were to prepare the attack on the bridge and the Black Grove began to shell the points to be assaulted.

The Russians had proposed to divert the attention of the enemy by firing a mine in Lin-sheng-pu, where the opposing troops were literally in touch, and had driven forward a mine gallery for this purpose; but in the evening of the 27th a non-commissioned officer working in the gallery made a startling discovery. Attracted

by the sound of what he took to be a pick, he set himself to make a thorough exploration and found that the noise was due to a Japanese boring tool. It was clear that the enemy was countermining, and, to wreck their gallery a charge of fifteen hundred pounds of powder was laid.*

Meanwhile the preliminaries to the assault on the points selected had begun. For this two scout detachments and two companies—of the 10th (Novoingermanland) Regiment—from the 3rd Division, and three scout detachments and a company from the 35th Division had been detailed.†

The attempt
on the bridge.

The scouts of the 3rd Division were to capture the bridge and those of the 35th were to make themselves masters of the Black Grove, while the siege batteries, howitzers and field guns were to assist by concentrating their fire upon La-mu-tun. In silence these troops assembled in the trenches nearest to the bridge. By eight o'clock it was completely dark, but soon the disconcerting ray of a Japanese searchlight blazed forth, and contrary to the usual practice was rapidly directed from one point to another on the northern bank. For about an hour the attackers remained inactive; then a Russian howitzer battery joined in with the field guns, and almost immediately afterwards a loud explosion was heard in the direction of Lin-sheng-pu. The scouts rushed forward and at once came into the beam of the searchlight, but after a momentary hesitation they raced along the railway to within fifty to one hundred paces of the Japanese trench covering the northern end of the bridge. Here, finding some cover in the craters of the Russian 6-inch howitzer shell, they opened fire upon the defenders. All the element of surprise had, of course, long disappeared, and it looked as if the attack were doomed to failure, when a lucky shot from a siege battery destroyed the searchlight, and favoured by the sudden darkness the scouts rushed the trenches and threw themselves upon the bridge. The two companies of the 10th Regiment followed close behind, carrying filled sandbags, and the Japanese fled along the bridge, many of them flinging themselves over on to the ice below. Russians and

* It is not certain whether the explosion heard later by the assaulting party was due to the firing of this mine or not.

† This force, amounting in all to some thousand men, was drawn from six different regiments; and this fact leads the author of the *Conférences* to comment upon the deplorable but inveterate Russian custom of unnecessarily mixing up tactical units.

Japanese were now firing at each other from the opposite ends of the bridge, the former finding a Japanese countermine which they put out of action. Though the filled sandbags were rapidly passed to the front and heaped up, and some tools abandoned by the Japanese were plied with feverish energy in an attempt to throw up some cover, for a short time the situation of the Russian scouts was critical. Soon, however, they were relieved by the companies of the 10th Regiment, which held on valiantly and beat off two counter-attacks made by troops of the Japanese 6th Division.

While this bloody struggle had been taking place at the bridge the scouts of the 35th Division had managed to seize the Black Grove shortly after midnight, but they were not long left undisturbed. A violent rifle and machine gun fire was opened upon them from La-mu-tun, and their casualties were soon so numerous that they twice had to evacuate the wood. They made a third attempt to seize it, but this ended in insuccess, and General Bilderling, considering the task impossible, ordered that no further attacks were to be made. By this time the moon had risen, and the Japanese silently reoccupied the belt of trees, whence small groups of them from time to time crept out towards the flank and rear of the companies of the Novoingermanland Regiment upon the bridge. These now were in a serious plight, the 10th Company having seventy casualties, and over forty men of the 12th Company being killed or wounded. Nevertheless, they still held their ground until dawn, when the Japanese guns opened upon them, and retreat or annihilation seemed to be the only alternatives. Carrying their wounded, the Russians fell back and thus ended the demonstration. It had cost the attackers two hundred and eighty-one killed and wounded, but, in spite of the dash and resourcefulness of their scouts, it seems to have failed in its immediate object, for the Japanese pressure in the east was not relaxed.

The point where the Sha Ho bends sharply to the south, under the steep bluff from which rise the walls of Lin-sheng-pu, may be taken, approximately, as the eastern flank of the Japanese Second Army, and the story of the fighting on the 27th now passes to the

The Japanese Second Army. frozen plain dotted with numerous villages and occasional low sandhills where this army lay facing the 5th Siberian Corps and the Second Manchurian Army. Of General Oku's army the right was now formed by

the 8th *Kobi* Brigade under Colonel Tomioka which had been reinforced with some units from the 4th Division.* By the 27th February this reinforced brigade had come under the direct orders of the army commander and held a line extending from Lin-sheng-pu through Wan-chia-yuan-tzu to Hsiao-tai. There it was in touch with a remnant of the 3rd Division which carried on the line still in a south-westerly direction from Ta-ping-chuang to Han-shan-tai.† Beyond that village the line turned north-west, and from La-pa-tai up to, and including, San-de-pu was the 4th Division, less the units lent to Colonel Tomioka, but with a squadron of cavalry and an independent brigade of field artillery recently arrived from Japan. Between San-de-pu and the Hun was the 5th Division, with a squadron and another independent field artillery brigade. The 8th Division, with a squadron and an independent battery, was astride the river, and both it and the 5th Division supplied one regiment for the army reserve. On the left of the army was General Akiyama, whose force now consisted of the 1st Cavalry Brigade, the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, and 8th Cavalry Regiments (each less a squadron), the 2nd *Kobi* Regiment, a battery of horse artillery and another of captured field guns—twelve guns in all. A heavy artillery brigade was about Liu-tiao-kou. The army reserve was quartered in the area Ta-tai, Ku-cheng-tzu, Kou-tzu-wan and Lang-tung-kou, and now consisted of :—

One section of cavalry from the 4th and one from the 5th Division.

The 13th Artillery Regiment (of the 1st Artillery Brigade).

Six batteries of 4·7-inch howitzers (four per battery).

Three batteries of 5·9-inch guns (four per battery).

One battery of 3·5-inch guns (four guns).

One battery of captured howitzers (four guns).

One company of engineers.

The 42nd Regiment from the 5th Division (two and a half battalions).‡

The 31st Regiment from the 8th Division.‡

* One section of cavalry, one brigade of field artillery, one captured battery of Russian guns, one battery of 3·5-inch mortars, one company of engineers and three battalions of infantry.

† The 34th Regiment less two companies. The remainder of the division had assembled at Ta-tung-shan-pu where it formed part of the General Reserve. See p. 297.

‡ These regiments joined the army reserve on the morning of the 27th.

Head-quarters of the Japanese Second Army were at Kou-tzu-wan.

On the right of the Japanese Second Army the reinforced 8th *Kobi* Brigade was confronted by the 5th Siberian Corps of the Third Manchurian Army, but the remainder of General Oku's troops lay opposite the Second Manchurian Army of General Kaulbars,

which now, after the departure of the 1st Siberian Corps and the 2nd Brigade of the 6th East Siberian Rifle Division, consisted of ninety-six battalions, fifty-two squadrons and two hundred and eighty-eight guns, exclusive of guns

of position and siege pieces.* The Xth, VIIIth and Provisional Rifle Corps carried on the Russian line westwards to Chang-tan, where it crossed the Hun, and thence to Chang-chiao-pao. On the Russian right, stretching from the Hun to the Liao Ho, was the mounted force under General Vladimir Grekov† amounting to thirty-one squadrons and eighteen guns and divided into a right and left wing under Generals Pavlov and Eichholz respectively.‡ The army reserve of seven and a half battalions and a battery was echeloned along the Hun from Shu-kan-ko to Su-hu-chia-pu. This reserve, however, was obtained by the sacrifice of a detachment, the Liao Ho Detachment being broken up for the purpose in lieu of the 1st Siberian Corps transferred to the east of the battlefield.§ Second Manchurian Army head-quarters were at Matou-lan.

* For the heavier guns, see Appendix 17.

† General V. Grekov had been in command of the Orenburg Cossack Division, but that division had been distributed throughout the army with the effect that General Grekov had been left without employment until his appointment to succeed General Rennenkampf in command of the Cavalry Detachment.

‡ *Right Wing*.—4 squadrons of the 4th Ural Cossack Regiment; 5 squadrons of the 5th Ural Cossack Regiment; 5 squadrons of the 1st Verkhne-Udinsk Cossack Regiment; the 1st and 4th Trans-Baikal Batteries. Frontage: Kao-li-ma—Shang-tsui-men. Reserve: Wu-pa-niu-lu.

Left Wing.—The Caucasian Cavalry Brigade (less one squadron); the 1st Chita Cossack Regiment; the 20th Horse Artillery Battery. Frontage: Shang-tsui-men to the right flank of the Provisional Rifle Corps. Reserve: Ssu-fang-tai.

Apparently there was no central reserve. All the squadrons were much below establishment, being in many cases fifty per cent short of their proper complement.

§ Of the units of the Liao Ho Detachment not required for the army reserve the 11th Horse Artillery Battery, two squadrons of Frontier Guards, and a company of sappers were sent to the Provisional Rifle Corps. The disposition of the remaining squadrons is not known.

In an order issued from Japanese General Head-Quarters after the 20th February General Oku had been informed that he was to maintain touch with the Fourth Army, that his left was to form the pivot for the enveloping movement of General Nogi, and that when the progress of the latter's army should become marked the Second Army was to attack in force along the line Lan-shan-pu—San-de-pu. He had therefore decided to make Chang-tan the first point of attack and had made the redistribution of the army already described in accordance with this intention. On the evening of the 26th, to add the final touch to the instructions already issued and to lead up to the operations that would follow, he had issued these orders:—

(1) To-morrow, in order to conceal from the enemy the internal movements in the army, the artillery will open fire. The same procedure is being followed in the Fourth and First Armies.

All divisions will therefore engage the enemy in the manner indicated for two hours, namely, from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. and from noon to 1 p.m. Since the bombardment is not intended to be serious, only a portion of the artillery and no heavy guns will come into action.*

(2) The Heavy Artillery Brigade will take up positions at Liu-tiao-kou at an early hour to-morrow, from which it can bring fire to bear on Chang-tan, Ku-chia-tzu, and Chou-kuan-tun. These positions will be selected as soon as possible, but fire will not be opened until ordered.

(3) General Akiyama's force, keeping touch with the Third Army, will cross to the right bank of the Hun, with the object of assisting the movement of that army.

About 3 a.m. on the 27th some Russian units, probably scout detachments, advanced against the 8th *Kobi* Brigade, but they were soon driven back, and at eight o'clock the Japanese artillery opened a deliberate fire.† The effect was that all the

* The Japanese wished to conceal their artillery positions up to the last, and any disclosure of the whereabouts or existence of the heavy artillery might indicate whence the real attack would come.

† Scout reconnaissances against the line of the Japanese Fourth and Second Armies had been constantly made, particularly by night, from the 20th to the 27th February. It is thought that they were prompted by a desire on the part of the Russians to ascertain if the Japanese attack in the east had led to their forces there being reinforced from their centre and right.

Russian guns opposite the Japanese Second Army at once replied, disclosing their positions and nature. The intervals in the bombardment prescribed by General Oku were passed in quietness, for the Russians ceased firing whenever the Japanese stopped, but at night they reopened fire and launched many minor attacks all along the line, all of which were speedily repulsed. The Japanese 1st Cavalry Brigade crossed the river during the day without opposition.

But it was across the frozen Hun Ho, to the west, where the real development of the day took place. Though Marshal Oyama may not have known about the projected Russian attack in the west or of its enforced abandonment on the night of the

The deployment
of the Japanese
Third Army.

24th, by the morning of the 27th, as has been said, he was sufficiently assured of the transfer of a large portion of the Russian strength to the east to pursue his own main offensive plan

by moving forward the Japanese Third Army. And its advance was anticipated and accompanied by a demonstration of activity on its right, which was probably designed to conceal it until the last possible moment. From early morning the Japanese had maintained a slow but steady bombardment against Huang-la-ta-tzu and the 8th Division had at the same time carried out some infantry movements, the object of which was to distract the attention of General Grekov from his right and centre. While this demonstration was in progress General Nogi's Third Army started off, and advanced in a north-westerly direction. Of the infantry the 9th Division was on the right, the 7th Division and 15th *Kobi* Brigade in the centre, and the 1st Division on the left, while beyond the last and across the Hun Ho was the 2nd Cavalry Brigade.

The first indication vouchsafed to the Russians of the movement was the appearance about eleven o'clock of some squadrons of Japanese cavalry, probably from the 7th Division, and some infantry and artillery, which approached the centre of General Pavlov's line and forced back a piquet towards Wu-pa-niu-liu. But its true significance does not seem to have been correctly diagnosed till some time later. Almost immediately afterwards the Russian cavalry observed three further hostile columns of which the outer—and western—one was heading for A-sui-niu; and by two o'clock they knew that a hostile force had reached the line Liu-ti-kan-tzu—Ta-lan-tou-tzu.

General Kaulbars was at once informed of these movements, and he directed General Grekov to extend his line of observation to the Hsin-min-tun railway and to reconnoitre in rear of the advancing enemy. The 5th Ural Cossacks were accordingly ordered to move from Wu-pa-niu-liu to Kao-li-ma and to send patrols over the River Liao. Meanwhile a piquet of the 4th Ural Cossacks at A-sui-niu noticed that a force, estimated at two battalions of infantry and a regiment of cavalry, was making for Kao-li-ma, and was able to gather that a definite turning movement of some sort was in operation. The 5th Ural Cossacks also observed a small hostile force of all arms heading for Ni-chia-tun, and Colonel Solovyev, who was in command of that regiment, sent a report of what he had seen to General Pavlov and pushed on towards A-sui-niu. But he found it impossible to carry out the reconnaissance over the Liao Ho, for three officers' patrols sent out discovered that Kao-li-ma was occupied by the Japanese; and during the evening the column which had been at first supposed to be making for Ni-chia-tun was also seen to move into the former village.

The Japanese 9th Division sent only advanced units across the Hun Ho, while the 15th *Kobi* Brigade assembled between that river and the Liao, south-west of Hsiao-pei-ho.

Thus, almost without opposition, and apparently without the unlimbering of a gun on either side, the Japanese Third Army by evening gained the line Kao-li-ma—Ma-ma-kai, while the 2nd Cavalry Brigade was on the right bank of the Liao Ho. The right wing of General Grekov's cavalry had swung back slightly and could now maintain touch with Kao-li-ma only by observation patrols.

By now the struggle had assumed dimensions never before reached in war. The front along which the rival armies were disposed amounted to nearly ninety miles, and the lines of both may be said to have been continuous.* So far the Japanese plan had been developed with almost mechanical precision. Their advance on the east had been brought to a standstill; but the enemy had transferred strength to the wrong flank, and the real attack

Summary of the
27th February.

* The distance is taken from Kao-li-ma on the west to Chan-tan on the east, and does not take into account General Maslov's fraction of the Ching-ho-cheng Detachment, nor Colonel Madritov's force, both of which were virtually outside the main zone of fighting.

had been set in motion. It is true that its direction was now disclosed and that the attenuation of the Japanese front entailed certain risks, but the latter were reduced by the preoccupation forced on the Russians. Possibly it was to guard against such risks that Marshal Oyama had on the 25th increased his General Reserve by a division and did not now move it to add weight to his main blow on the west. This precaution, if precaution it was, was seriously to delay the consummation of his plan.

At nightfall of the 27th February, with the disclosure of the action of the Japanese Third Army, the first stage of the battle came to an end.

CHAPTER LXX.

THE BATTLE OF MUKDEN—*continued*—OPERATIONS ON THE 28TH FEBRUARY—CONTINUATION OF THE ENVELOPING MOVEMENT BY THE JAPANESE THIRD ARMY—THE JAPANESE BOMBARD THE RUSSIAN CENTRE—THE YA-LU ARMY STILL CHECKED IN THE EAST.

(Plan 60.)

SAVE for the occasional exchange of fire between patrols, all was quiet between the Rivers Liao and Hun during the night of the 27th–28th. But the lull was only temporary. The Japanese Third Army had received orders while in bivouac to carry out at daylight a further stage of the march which had been so auspiciously begun; and on the side of the Russians General Grekov was preparing to resist this hostile advance. By dawn he had collected under his own command the best part of two cavalry regiments and a horse artillery battery, with which he proposed to march to the support of the 5th Ural Cossacks on the right.* This plan, however, underwent some modification, and about eight o'clock that regiment was ordered to act independently and to send patrols as far as the Hsin-min-tun railway to discover the strength and direction of movement of the Japanese. With the remainder of the right wing General Pavlov was to move against the village of Liu-ti-kan-tzu, forcing back the Japanese wherever met.

Accompanied by a section of the 1st Trans-Baikal Cossack Battery the 5th Ural Cossacks moved towards Kao-li-ma, and on approaching that village observed a hostile column—in strength about a regiment with some guns—marching north. These troops formed part of the Japanese 1st Division, whose route this

* The 1st Chita Cossack Regiment, three squadrons of the Terek-Kuban Cavalry Regiment, and the 20th Horse Artillery Battery. All these units were taken from General Eichholz's left wing and assembled at Wu-pa-niu-lu about 8 a.m.

day lay along the left bank of the Liao Ho. The commander of the 5th Ural Cossacks then deployed a couple of squadrons against the Japanese force, while his two guns, under escort of the remaining two squadrons, shelled the enemy from a position near San-chiao-pu. The Japanese column, however, did not check its march, but merely deployed a battalion, which advanced against the Russian artillery position and caused the Cossacks to fall back about a mile to the north-east. Here the latter held on until about noon when the appearance of a Japanese battery sent them galloping eastwards to Ta-tzu-yen. The Japanese still pushed on. Thus the 5th Ural Cossacks, with four squadrons and two guns, discovered nothing which a well-handled patrol could not have found out equally well. Their casualties were *nil*.

General Pavlov had a more difficult task to perform, since, exclusive of his outpost line, he had merely two squadrons and four guns, with which he was to drive back the Japanese wherever met. A short advance made it clear that it was impossible to carry out the duty assigned him, for on his right front there loomed up almost the whole of the Japanese 7th Division. Having collected his outposts, therefore, he occupied a position about Fan-san-ti, and opened fire with his guns against some of the enemy—probably from the 7th Division—now visible in Hsiu-chia-tun; but so soon as a Japanese battery replied he realized that to remain was to court disaster, and fell back to Wu-pa-niu-lu. Here he made but a brief halt and, continuing his retreat reached San-chiao-wo-pu after nightfall, where he went into bivouac, with outposts upon the line Liang-hou-pu—Hou-pi-nai.

General Grekov effected nothing of any importance with his reserve. Moving generally westward he was soon warned by his scouts of the appearance of hostile columns making towards the north, and apparently with the intention of heading them off advanced to Hsi-kuan-tai; but from here his force was quickly dislodged and forced to retire in a north-easterly direction.* The right, therefore, of the Russian Cavalry Detachment had failed even to delay the enemy, and its left wing had also been forced back by the Japanese 9th Division and 1st Cavalry Brigade. The net result of the day's operations, so far as the Russians were concerned, was that it had been made clear that about a division of Japanese had passed Kao-li-ma and seemed probable that hostile troops were also on the general line Pai-chiao-pu—

* One Cossack was wounded during the day's fighting.

Tu-tai-tzu. As a matter of fact the Japanese 2nd Cavalry Brigade and the 1st Division were well in advance of that line.*

While a substantial advance had been achieved by the Japanese Third Army, the nature of the resistance made by the Russian cavalry may not unfairly be estimated from their casualties, which in the right wing—apparently the more seriously engaged of the two—amounted to one officer and seven men wounded. Even granting that the task of stopping an army was beyond the power of General Grekov's force, the mobility which so adds to the value of mounted troops in operations of this nature had been greatly discounted by the disconnected nature of the tactics employed. The Japanese themselves were surprised at the lack of serious opposition encountered, and seem to have expected obstinate resistance by infantry. Such opposition could not, however, be brought into play, since the Liao Ho Detachment had been broken up. That force had been condemned to almost complete inaction at the battles of Liao-yang and the Sha Ho, while at San-de-pu it had only played a minor part. Now just when its services might have been of the utmost value, it had ceased to exist as an independent unit.

The reinforcement of the Russian left away among the mountains in the east was now to prove dearly bought, and General Kaulbars soon found himself in difficulties owing to the action of his superior in robbing him of his army reserve. As early as eleven o'clock General Grekov had telegraphed to the head-quarters of the Second Manchurian Army to report that he had come into collision with advanced Japanese units on the line Ta-lan-tou-tzu—Hsiu-chia-tun—Ni-chia-tun; that some hostile infantry had

General
Kaulbars's
difficulties.

* During the night of the 28th February—1st March, the Japanese Third Army and the Russian Cavalry Detachment were disposed as follows :—

Japanese Third Army.

- 2nd Cavalry Brigade on the right bank of the Liao Ho, near Tung-tao-wan.
- 1st Division south of Lin-chia-pa-kao.
- 7th Division about Ta-hou-chia-pu.
- 9th Division near Tsu-yu-ta.
- 2nd Artillery Brigade and 15th *Kobi* Brigade near Hsiao-pa-niu-la.

Russian Cavalry Detachment.

- 5th Ural Cossacks (4 squadrons) west of Ta-hou-chia-pu.
- Right Wing (General Pavlov), San-chia-wo-pu.
- Left Wing (General Eichholz), Ssu-fang-tai. See p. 325.
- Reserve (General Grekov), Northern Erh-tao-kou.

already passed Kao-li-ma, towards which place more infantry, with guns, was approaching; and that another column had also been reported moving north. Intelligence such as this clearly demanded prompt action, and General Kaulbars lost no time in taking such steps as he thought the situation demanded. The measures which he proposed, however, show the loss of tactical power brought about by the weakening of his army at General Kuropatkin's hands, for at first he was able to devise no more effective method of withstanding the Japanese advance on the west than to order the VIIIth and Xth Corps to open fire with siege guns upon San-de-pu and Li-ta-jen-tun respectively. It is true that the Provisional Rifle Corps was directed to pay attention to its right flank and to maintain touch with General Grekov's cavalry. But for the moment General Kaulbars did not even suggest any more vigorous action, and a paragraph of ominous import concluded his instructions: after nightfall the siege guns, beginning with those on the right, were to be moved and units were to send back all superfluous heavy *matériel* to the rear.

Limited as was the reserve at his disposal it is nevertheless remarkable that General Kaulbars made no attempt at first to use it. The pressure on his right flank was being made by a force to be reckoned in divisions, and was clearly no demonstration so that an envelopment of the Russian right was foreshadowed. To reinforce the cavalry by means of infantry, and so delay the hostile movement until the commander-in-chief could devise a plan to meet the new situation and set the necessary troops in motion to carry it out, should, it would seem, have been regarded as a matter of the first importance. But it was only when General Eichholz, who commanded the left wing of the Cavalry Detachment, pointed out that in order to retain Ssu-fang-tai it was necessary to send infantry there, that General Kaulbars acted.* From the army reserve the 215th (Buzuluk) Regiment was ordered to move from Shu-kan-ko to Hsiao-li-pu-tzu, and the 241st (Orsk) Regiment, with two batteries, was directed to concentrate at Ta-wang-kuan-pu, en route for Hei-chuang-tzu, both regiments to come under the commander of the Provisional Rifle Corps. Meanwhile a couple of battalions from that corps were to proceed direct to Ssu-fang-tai. These measures, while

* Chang-chiao-pao was now the most westerly point held by Russian infantry, being occupied by units of the 2nd Rifle Brigade of the Provisional Rifle Corps.

affording but slight assistance to General Grekov, had the effect of leaving General Kaulbars without any reserve at all, and he consequently nominated two brigades which were in rear of the actual line of front of the VIIIth and Xth Corps to be at his disposal* Later in the day, in order to carry out a reconnaissance to the south of the line Tung-tao-wan—Kao-hou-pu, he issued orders that the Independent Cavalry Brigade of Major-General Stepanov was to proceed to the former village.†

It will be remembered that the Japanese Second Army was to shape its action entirely with a view to assisting General Nogi's enveloping operation,‡ and the possibility of his being seriously opposed on the 28th made it incumbent upon General Oku to adopt measures for relieving any such pressure against him. Second Army orders, therefore, which had been issued late the previous night, directed all units to be ready to attack if necessary, while the 1st Cavalry Brigade was to push to the front as far as possible and to drive the enemy out of Hou-ma-hu-ling-tzu. At an early hour on the 28th, therefore, a deliberate artillery fire was opened along the whole front of the Second Army. To this the Russians replied, and by afternoon sixty-eight of their guns were counted by the Japanese.§ No infantry operations took place. The Japanese 1st Cavalry Brigade, however, carried out the advance which had been prescribed for it, and occupied the line Hou-ma-hu-ling-tzu—Hou-pi-nai, with its main body at Huang-la-ta-tzu.|| During this movement it met with little resistance from the left wing of the Russian Cavalry Detachment and was materially assisted by the independent batteries of field artillery attached to the 8th Division.

At eight o'clock in the evening the orders which all ranks had been eagerly expecting arrived from Japanese General Head-

* The 1st Brigade of the 14th Division, VIIIth Corps and the 2nd Brigade of the 9th Division, Xth Corps.

† Six squadrons of the 51st Chernigov Dragoons and two squadrons of the 52nd Nyejin Dragoons. This brigade had formed part of the reserve of the Third Manchurian Army, but by the 28th had been placed at the disposal of General Kaulbars. Originally divided between Erh-tai-tzu and Ta-ching it appears to have concentrated about Su-hu-chia-pu on the 28th.

‡ See p. 326.

§ Fifty-six field guns and twelve heavy guns.

Two 11-inch howitzers were apparently employed by the Japanese. They seem to have been posted near La-pa-tai.

|| The bulk of the divisional cavalry of the 5th and 8th Divisions, i.e., the 5th and 8th Cavalry Regiments, acted with the 1st Cavalry Brigade. See p. 324.

Quarters. Attack was to be the rule for the following day and the particular duty of the Second Army on the 1st March was to occupy the enemy's first line from Chang-tan to Chin-chia-tun, for which General Oku issued the following orders:—

(1) The army is about to advance to the line extending from Lan-shan-pu to Su-hu-chia-pu, but will first secure that stretching from Chin-chia-tun to Chang-tan.

(2) The 5th Division will advance at dawn from the line San-de-pu—Ya-tzu-pao and attack the enemy holding the line from Li-chia-wo-peng to Chang-tan-ho-nan,* and will if possible occupy the vicinity of Chou-kuan-tun. The artillery of the 5th Division, including the independent batteries attached to it, will be under the orders of the brigadier-general commanding the heavy artillery which is now at Liu-tiao-kou. If a company of engineers is required it will be furnished from the division, on demand.

(3) The 4th Division will commence operations so as to keep touch with the 5th Division, and will advance from San-de-pu and the ground to the east of it and attack the enemy on the line Pei-tai-tzu—Huang-ti—Chin-chia-tun. If possible the enemy is to be forced from it, and the line Ku-chia-tzu to Erh-ta-tzu is to be occupied.

(4) The 8th Division will occupy before dawn the line extending from Ya-tzu-pao to the sandhill about one mile north of Tu-tai-tzu, and will keep touch with the 5th Division. When the 5th Division begins its attack the 8th will also attack, and will try to occupy a line stretching from Ya-tzu-pao to the east, thence attacking the enemy at Chang-tan and its vicinity.

(5) The heavy artillery will be ready in its positions in the neighbourhood of Liu-tiao-kou before dawn, and when day breaks will bombard the enemy at Li-chia-wo-peng and Chang-tan-ho-nan* so as to assist the 5th Division in its attack. After silencing the enemy's guns it will direct its fire against the artillery near Chang-tan, so as to help the 8th Division, and some of its guns will support the 4th Division.

(6) The artillery of the 5th Division will be under the orders of the brigadier-general commanding the heavy artillery and if that officer requires a company of engineers he will obtain it on demand from the 5th Division.

* Wang-chia-wo-peng is given in the original; but the Japanese field maps incorrectly show Wang-chia-wo-peng as the southern portion of Chang-tan-ho-nan.

(7) Colonel Tomioka's detachment will, so soon as the army begins its attack, bombard the enemy at Ta-liang-tun and Wu-chang-ying, so as to assist the main attack.

(8) The 1st Cavalry Brigade will remain between the Second and Third Armies, and will maintain close connexion with the left of the former army and will protect its left flank in strength. If possible it will also attack the enemy to its front in order to assist the main attack.

(9) The reserve of the army will assemble, at 6 a.m., at its quarters in Ta-tai and Ku-cheng-tzu.

As has been said, General Oku's original intention on the 20th had been to make Chang-tan and its vicinity the main point of attack, and the orders issued by him on the night of the 28th were drawn up with this view.* A great force of artillery—one hundred and thirty-four guns in all—was, therefore, massed in the neighbourhood of Liu-tiao-kou, and under its fire and before the impetuous attack of the infantry, it was hoped that the Russians in their solid field works would have to give way.† The brunt of the action on the 1st March would fall upon the 5th Division, while the inner wings of the 4th and 8th Divisions would in all probability be also seriously engaged. East of La-pa-tai, where the line had been thinned to reinforce the left, no attack would be made, the troops within that area merely holding the enemy's attention and menacing him with their guns.

The operations of both sides on the 28th February so far as they were concerned with the battlefield west of the line of railway have now been described; and the present is a suitable moment to review such portion of the day's events and to describe the action which the Russian commander-in-chief took to deal with the situation brought about. By noon the fact that the Japanese were engaged upon a wide flanking movement of all arms in the west had become obvious; and it was dawning upon General Kuropatkin, not only that his right was in serious danger, but that the troops which were threatening it might possibly belong to the Japanese Third Army, for no other

General Kuro-
patkin's plans
to deal with the
new situation.

* See p. 326.

† The one hundred and thirty-four guns were composed of thirty-six mountain guns of the 5th Division, eighteen field guns of that division, thirty-six guns of the 13th Regiment 1st Artillery Brigade, and forty-four heavy guns or howitzers.

hostile force was likely to be in the region of the flanking movement.

Thus the outstanding feature of the development of the action in this quarter of the field upon this day was the realization by the Russians of the Japanese plan. The second marked feature was the surprising ease with which the Japanese Third Army had carried out its movements. The resistance encountered had been of the slightest, there having been nothing even of the nature of a brisk skirmish.

To turn to the actual steps taken by General Kuropatkin. When the telegram from General Grekov describing the hostile advance in the west was received at head-quarters of the Second Manchurian Army its contents were at once telephoned to the commander-in-chief; and they were confirmed by two subsequent telegrams from General Flug. A comparison of the information received seems to have forced General Kuropatkin to realize that it was almost certainly the Japanese Third Army which had thus unexpectedly appeared. And the anxiety caused by this conviction was aggravated by rumours of further hostile movements on the right bank of the Liao Ho, for General Grekov had been unable to gain any information of the state of affairs in that quarter, and the Japanese 2nd Cavalry Brigade had been magnified by spies into a force of four thousand men moving from beyond the Hsin-min-tun railway against Tieh-ling. Faced by this combination of fact and rumour General Kuropatkin viewed the situation in a light subsequently described by him in the following terms :—

“The concentration of sufficient force to repel this turning movement demanded several days, for which reason it was important to throw out without loss of time a screen to the west of Mukden, and to check the advance of the leading units; and under the protection of this screen to carry out the concentration of force necessary for assuming the offensive.”*

This decision, interesting as displaying the first sign of an aggressive plan since the renunciation of the offensive four days before, was not easy to translate into action. General Kuropatkin's General Reserve was now less than an army corps, for he had some time before drawn upon the XVth Corps to the extent

* *General Kuropatkin's Account*, Vol. III, p. 153, quoted in the *Russian Official History*, Vol. V, Part 1, p. 177.

of one brigade, to reinforce the railway after the destruction of Bridge 247 by Japanese cavalry ;* and the 72nd Division of the 6th Siberian Corps, as well as the 146th Regiment, had been sent to the First Manchurian Army.† With a General Reserve reduced to three brigades there were obvious difficulties in the way of finding sufficient troops to construct a screen to delay an army of the mettle of the victors of Port Arthur ; and one brigade was all that General Kuropatkin could spare. This was the 1st Brigade of the 41st Division, XVIth Corps, which, with three batteries and a squadron,‡ under the command of General Birger, was now ordered to proceed to Kao-li-tun, not far from the terminus of the Hsin-min-tun railway. During the evening the commander-in-chief decided to place this reinforcement directly under General Kaulbars, and telegraphed to him to that effect ; but these instructions reached the latter too late to enable him to communicate with his new subordinate. This was unfortunate,

* See foot-note (*), p. 263.

† When the 72nd Division had been sent east General Kuropatkin had called for twelve battalions and three batteries from the 1st Corps to be sent to his General Reserve. See p. 303. This, however, was to take place upon the morning of the 28th, and apparently the movement was not completed at the time General Kuropatkin had to face this new danger on his right. As will be seen the 1st Corps was very heavily bombarded upon this day, a fact which roused some anxiety in the commander-in-chief's mind as to a movement against his centre, and this may have been responsible for the delay in the transfer of the above units to the General Reserve. The evidence, however, regarding the units from the 1st Corps which were taken for the General Reserve is decidedly conflicting. In the *Russian Official History*, Vol. V, Part 1, p. 117, in a paragraph headed "1st Corps up to February 24th," appears the sentence "In rear of the corps . . . in the commander-in-chief's reserve were the 85th (Viborg), the 145th (Novocherkask), the 146th (Tsaritsin) and the 147th (Samara) Regiments. On pp. 130-1, however, of the same volume it seems that as regards the 85th, 145th and 147th Regiments the order for their withdrawal from the front line was not even issued until the 26th, and was, during that day and the next, cancelled and amended. The composition of the twelve battalions allotted (see above) is given in p. 130 of the authority quoted as the 85th (Viborg) Regiment, and two battalions each from the 86th (Wilmanstrand), 87th (Neishlot), 145th (Novocherkask) and 147th (Samara) Regiments. On p. 141 of the Russian volume, however, the composition is given thus: 85th (Viborg), 145th (Novocherkask) and 147th (Samara) Regiments.

‡ The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Batteries, 1st Division, 45th Artillery Brigade ; the 6th Squadron of the 10th Orenburg Cossack Regiment.

General Birger commanded the 41st Division XVIth Corps.

On arrival at Kao-li-tun he was to add to his command two companies of the 241st (Orsk) Regiment and two squadrons of the 11th Orenburg Cossack Regiment already there.

for, though General Kaulbars would have preferred that the brigade should move to the line Kao-hou-pu—Tung-tao-wan, he had perforce to allow it to proceed to its original destination.

The plan of posting a force upon the Mukden—Hsin-min-tun highway to threaten the flank of the Japanese Third Army as it wheeled eastwards had much to recommend it; but a brigade was too small a body to be expected to produce any marked result. As will be discovered later it had no effect other than to diminish the Russian strength throughout a great part of the battle by eight battalions and twenty-four guns. For the present however it is only necessary to trace its journey during the 28th. Leaving its camp about 5 p.m. it moved through Mukden; but owing to the late start, the cold, darkness, and the large amount of transport, it was long after midnight when the column reached Ta-shih-chiao where it halted for the night.

In the centre of the battlefield the 28th February was to witness a striking development in artillery action in field warfare. Soon after dawn a roar louder than that usual from field artillery made itself heard even at a distance of thirty miles,

The bombardment with heavy guns in the centre.	for over two hundred heavy siege pieces of both Russians and Japanese, including the 11-inch howitzers of the latter, began an artillery duel which lasted through the whole day.
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The Japanese directed their fire all along that portion of the Russian front held by the XVIIth, 6th Siberian, and 1st Corps, concentrating the greater part of it with particular intensity upon Putilov and One Tree Hills. The selection of the latter objectives is easily understood, for their capture must necessarily have preceded any general advance on the part of the Japanese, and their strength was now such as to demand heavy bombardment before any attack could be launched against them. Added to this the hills were invested with peculiar interest for the Japanese Fourth Army, since on them alone at the recent great battle of the Sha Ho had the sting of defeat been endured. Almost at the moment when the protracted struggle in October had been brought to a successful conclusion by the Japanese, at this one spot troops of that army had been put to flight and forced to abandon guns to the triumphant Russians. And for more than four months most of the Japanese units concerned in that struggle had been compelled to witness the results of their failure and to watch these points grow in strength before their eyes. But now the

promise of a general offensive allowed them once more to cherish the hope of redeeming their past misfortune.

As regards the disposition of the Japanese pieces, there were some batteries of 4·7-inch and 5·9-inch howitzers emplaced in pits near the ruined Sha-ho station, and about twelve hundred yards to the west, near the village of Shu-lin-tzu, was a battery of

The Japanese
heavy guns.

the 11-inch howitzers which had been brought up from Port Arthur. The howitzers in this battery were fighting under less advantageous conditions than those under which they had been employed during the siege, for instead of being on the reverse slope behind the shelter of a steep hill they were practically in the open, behind a slight rise. Black powder was being used, and the thick cloud of smoke of each discharge, which was visible to the Russians above the rise, betrayed the position of the battery. The howitzers were protected by sandbag epaulments, the ammunition being stored in underground magazines close to the emplacements. Fire observation was carried out from the crow's-nest of a field observatory of light spars erected not far off, the observing officer being in telephonic communication with the battery. Although the howitzers themselves were hidden from the view of the enemy the observatory was not, and it formed the target of the Russian fire. In the case of this particular battery near Shu-lin-tzu the observatory was not destroyed on the 28th, but more than one observing officer was wounded during the day by splinters of shell. The amount of protection afforded to the different batteries of 11-inch howitzers varied according to their situation and the ground, but in no case was it anything approaching that afforded by the hills round Port Arthur.

Somewhat to the east another battery of 11-inch howitzers was hidden in a hollow of the ground near Ta-shan-ssu, while several 5·9-inch howitzers were in position lower down the Sha Ho at Hung-ling-pu on the left bank, and on the right bank near Chi-shao-tun. Two 11-inch howitzers were at Tung-shan-kou and the same number at Pa-chia-tzu. While the Japanese infantry remained in their trenches, the bombardment from these guns was maintained all day, and under the intense fire Putilov Hill was every now and then hidden from view by the smoke of the bursting shells.* By two o'clock in the afternoon smoke was seen

* The 11-inch howitzers fired against the Russian advanced trenches while the lesser siege guns bombarded Putilov and One Tree Hills.

to rise from a point on the railway, shortly afterwards Han-chia-pu burst into flames, and within a few minutes one of the Russian magazines blew up. As daylight waned Sha-ho-pu caught fire, and as darkness deepened the horizon glowed where Pao-chia-a-tzu, Kao-li-tun and Shan-kan-tzu were fiercely burning. Still the guns of the Japanese kept up the fire, increased after dark by that of their infantry; but gradually the fight died down and at 2 a.m. on the 29th the order was given to prepare to advance at dawn.

Throughout the day the Russian artillery maintained a fire in reply to this bombardment, though upon a much smaller scale. Alarmed by the possibility of a Japanese penetration General Bilderling issued orders that all the stores collected at Su-chia-tun station should be dispatched northward, and made arrangements for sending off the administrative offices of his army—an action usually indicative of retreat. Nevertheless this result had not been brought about by the Japanese guns, the effect of which had been almost entirely moral. The material damage caused by them was of the slightest, and in the Russian 1st Corps, within whose rayon lay Putilov and One Tree Hills, the casualties had been only five officers and twenty-eight other ranks, in spite of the fact that over a thousand shells had been thrown on to its positions.* This immunity from serious loss was doubtless due to the multiplicity of trenches and covered ways by which the defenders could move from those sections most under fire, and also to the small number of splinters into which the Japanese projectiles burst. The damage done to the trenches themselves was, however, considerable, and several blindages had been so severely knocked about that they could not be repaired during the night.

One important result was brought about by the bombardment, though one of which the Japanese could not yet be aware: it added still further to the anxieties of General Kuropatkin. Earlier in the day he had been forced to renounce the theory that the enemy's main attack was being developed in the east and had transferred his attention to the west. Towards evening he thought it possible that the blow might come in the centre, and accordingly sent word to the 4th Siberian Corps to be ready to lend assistance

* The losses in the 6th Siberian Corps were also very small. One of the shells from a Russian 5.9-inch howitzer, however, struck a Japanese bomb-proof shelter, killing two officers and fourteen rank and file, and this incident, with others of a lesser nature, seems to have caused the Japanese to imagine that their own fire was doing greater execution than was the case.

to the Ist Corps, should the Japanese make their principal effort in that direction.

To the east of General Nodzu's troops the Japanese First Army was condemned to play a more or less passive rôle. While the Fourth Army on its left had to open a way by artillery fire before it could advance, on its right the Ya-lu Army had come to a standstill ; and, in these circumstances, General Kuroki considered that all he could do was to continue the pressure against the left of the 3rd Siberian Corps with his right 2nd Division, while refraining from anything in the nature of a frontal attack along the rest of his line. His head-quarters were behind the right of the Guard Division on top of Hua-kou-ling Shan, and from there he watched a bombardment between the Guards and the 2nd and 4th Siberian Corps in which all the batteries of the Japanese division were engaged. There was nothing noteworthy about this artillery duel beyond the characteristic difference between the Russian and Japanese methods, the Japanese firing slowly and continuously, while the Russians employed a rapid succession of *rafales* followed by a considerable pause.

During the afternoon both Pagoda Hill and Ti-ti Shan were heavily bombarded by the Russians, the former being shelled from the east and also enfiladed from the north. The firing continued on both sides until dark, when for some hours all was quiet ; and then during the night three infantry attacks were made by the Japanese. The 3rd Guard Regiment assaulted Chao-chien-hu-tun, this time with the whole regiment, and took it by 4 a.m. on the 29th with small loss. After driving the Russians away, however, the victors withdrew just before daylight and the village was thus left deserted by both sides. Another attack was carried out simultaneously by the 2nd Guard Regiment, which advanced against a spur to the north-west of Chao-chien-hu-tun. The assault in this case was made by two companies which successfully cleared the spur, wheeled sharply to their left and advanced silently against an adjacent spur. Here they surprised some Russians employed in building breastworks, who retreated hastily, leaving many entrenching tools behind, when the Japanese charged with the bayonet. A little later, in the small hours of the morning the Russians retaliated with a series of counter-attacks, which were beaten off by rifle and machine gun fire. In one case, however, they managed to reach the rear of

the Japanese unobserved and to take them by surprise. In the hand to hand fighting which ensued some Japanese hand-grenades detonated in their own trenches. Both friend and foe were killed, and the Russians were driven back. During the night, to the right of the division, General Umezawa pushed a battalion down the valley against Chien-su-ma-pu-tzu. Before dawn it managed to seize a portion of the village; but the Russians held the remainder and offered a stubborn resistance, and although the Japanese made the most strenuous efforts they made no further progress.

To the east of the Guards no change occurred in the situation of the 12th Division, which merely maintained an artillery duel with the enemy to its front, while a similar inactivity marked the operations of the 2nd Division.* In that unit the left column

The Japanese
12th and 2nd
Divisions and
the 3rd Sibe-
rian Corps.

restricted itself to reconnoitring the enemy's position, and the right column waited where it was, expecting a Russian attack which, however, was not carried out. The mountainous nature of the country, aggravated by the extreme cold which rendered all movement difficult on the

sloping ground, naturally favoured the defence.† Shortly after midday the Russians concentrated the fire of thirty-six guns upon Redoubt 16, with the view of following it up by an attempt to regain the captured work by an attack with three columns, but the order for the latter was cancelled. The Japanese magnified the difficulties now before them, thinking that the Russian line to their front extended right across to Ma-chun-tan. As a matter of fact this was not the case, but the presence of the connecting detachments between General Rennenkampf and the 3rd Siberian Corps had misled their patrols. During the day some fighting took place at the Hsiao-ta Ling, which Russian patrols from near Huang-ti found unoccupied and held. At this point the 1st Siberian Corps for the first time took part in the battle, an advanced guard of the corps being hurried on from Hsi-hu-cheng and taking over the pass from Prince Tumanov.‡

* According to the *Russian Official History* the 12th Division suffered severely from the Russian guns and its right was forced to retire.

† During the night of the 27th-28th the thermometer had fallen to one degree below zero (Fahrenheit).

‡ The 2nd and 36th East Siberian Rifle Regiments, three batteries and two squadrons. The main body during the day was assembled in two equal portions at Hsi-hu-cheng and Ying-shou-pu-tzu.

The Japanese then made several ineffectual attempts to seize the pass with a force of the 11th Division estimated at from two to three battalions and a battery.* By nightfall the 3rd Siberian Corps had been increased by reinforcements to fifty-one battalions;† and the arrival of the whole of the 1st Siberian Corps was to be the signal for an offensive movement by the Russians in this quarter.

Although by now the operations of the Ya-lu Army in the extreme eastern portion of the battlefield may be said, from the Japanese point of view, to have become to a certain extent of subsidiary importance, no relaxation of pressure was made,

and this part of the field actually witnessed the most important infantry attacks of the day. The contest here had resolved itself into two almost distinct struggles separated by some eight miles of hilly country. In front of

Tu-pin-tai General Rennenkampf, with the original Ching-ho-cheng Detachment, was standing at bay before the 11th Division of the Japanese Ya-lu Army, and from that army the 1st *Kobi* Division was facing the Russian reinforcements which had arrived under General Danilov.

Since the previous evening touch had been lost between General Rennenkampf and General Danilov's detachment, although communication by telegraph could still be carried out,‡ and during the morning of the 28th General Rennenkampf decided to send a force of a battalion and two mountain guns to the Tung-hsi-ho Ling, which was to be supported by some companies from General Ekk's reserve. It carried out its mission in such

* The 11th Division of the Ya-lu Army had sent a detachment against the pass on the 27th. See p. 309.

† Sixteen battalions originally. The 9th East Siberian Rifle Regiment had been sent to the Ching-ho-cheng Detachment, thus leaving thirteen battalions. Then from the 2nd and 4th Siberian Corps came the 4th (Verkhne-Udinsk) one battalion of the 1st (Strietensk) and the 7th (Krasnoyarsk) Siberian Infantry Regiments; and from the General Reserve the 2nd Brigade 72nd Division making the 3rd Siberian Corps thirty battalions. To these had been added three and three-quarter battalions of the 6th (Yeniseisk) Siberian Infantry Regiment from the 4th Siberian Corps, and the 1st Brigade of the 72nd Division (eight battalions). Also the 146th (Tsaritsin) Regiment (three and a half battalions) had been sent from Fu-shun to Pa-chia-tzu on the 28th, and two regiments of the advanced guard of the 1st Siberian Corps (six battalions) had arrived. These figures include the units on the right, temporarily placed under the commander of the 2nd Siberian Corps.

‡ Probably via Fu-shun Junction.

a very leisurely manner, however, that a detachment from the 1st *Kobi* Division forestalled it in the occupation of the pass and was only driven off when the three companies sent by General Ekk came up. Meanwhile, the Tu-pin-tai position had been occupied by General Rennenkampf as follows:—In front, north of Wu-pa-niu-pu-tzu, was an advanced position entrusted, as before, to three battalions of the Chernoyar Regiment, while on the main line three battalions and eight guns occupied the line of heights from Tu-pin-tai to Miao-kou.* West of the light railway and trending beyond hill 249 were eight more guns and two battalions,† and close by Tu-pin-tai itself was the reserve, consisting of one battalion of the Drissa Regiment and the 5th Trans-Baikal Cossack Infantry Battalion. Immediately south of Ma-chun-tan was the remainder of the detachment, amounting to four battalions and six guns,‡ while upon the left was General Liubavin with a battalion, four guns and ten squadrons. It will be remembered that this commander had during the night been preparing to advance at dawn towards A-niu-pu-tzu in order to operate against the flanks and rear of the 1st *Kobi* Division, but this scheme fell through, for at an early hour the Japanese 11th Division began an energetic advance against the Tu-pin-tai position.

At dawn on the 28th the Japanese opened fire upon the Chernoyar Regiment, holding the advanced position, and began to press its right strongly. At about ten o'clock they attempted an assault which however failed, chiefly owing to the excellent use which the Russians made of two machine guns. In one of the assaulting companies only eight officers and men were unhit and another company suffered no less severely. Seeing the effect of these guns, the Japanese took the hint and brought up similar weapons, and enfiladed the Chernoyar Regiment with marked success, for the defenders were unable to withstand the murderous fire and fell back to the heights north of the valley which leads from Tu-pin-tai to the Hu-mien chia Ling. This withdrawal seriously endangered General Liubavin's line of retreat; and the necessity for it was not recognized by General Rennenkampf,

* Two battalions of the 9th East Siberian Rifle Regiment, one battalion of the 281st (Drissa) Regiment and eight guns of the 3rd East Siberian Mountain Battery.

† Two battalions of the 22nd East Siberian Rifle Regiment, and eight guns of the 7th and 8th Mountain Batteries.

‡ One battalion from each of the 22nd East Siberian Rifle Regiment and the 281st (Drissa) Regiment, two battalions of the 21st East Siberian Rifle Regiment, and six guns from the Frontier Guards.

who relieved one of the battalion commanders of his command. In spite, however, of the apparent danger of General Liubavin's situation, the fire which his detachment and the Chernoyar Regiment now brought upon the Japanese compelled them to retire.

This brisk encounter testified once again to the efficacy of machine guns suddenly brought into action against a favourable target, and the fighting round Wu-pa-niu-pu-tzu on the morning of the 28th is of especial interest as showing the capabilities of weapons of this class both in defence and attack. The losses incurred from machine gun fire by the Japanese both here and in the attack on Redoubt 16 on the previous day were extraordinarily severe—so severe indeed as to amount to the practical annihilation of the units against which it was directed.* And although it may be urged that these results were largely due to the terrain in the east of the battlefield, which was peculiarly adapted to machine guns in defence, it must be remembered that upon ground of an entirely dissimilar nature machine guns had also played a destructive rôle at the battle of San-de-pu.

While this fighting had been in progress General Liubavin had also been attacked by a detachment, estimated at from four to five battalions with machine guns, which was concentrating its main effort against his left. But with the fire of his infantry battalion and mountain guns he succeeded in repulsing the enemy without much difficulty, and though the retirement of the Chernoyar Regiment had, as already mentioned, exposed his force to some risk, he sent word to General Rennenkampf that he would be able to hold his ground until dark, and remained on his position. Meanwhile, about three o'clock, the fighting near Tu-pin-tai, which had to some extent died away, broke out again. Concentrating a cross fire upon the Chernoyar Regiment the Japanese approached in places to within a hundred yards of the defence, but were checked; and an assault attempted about seven o'clock met with the same fate. Nevertheless, the approach of night did not stop the fighting, and under cover of darkness the troops of the Japanese 11th Division made five desperate attempts to drive back the Chernoyar Regiment, and when morning broke had to admit defeat. The soldiers of the Russian regiment had reason to be well satisfied with their work of the past four and twenty hours, which called forth an eulogistic expression of thanks from General Rennenkampf, whose failure

* See p. 312.

to support the sorely pressed unit with some of the ample forces at his disposal is difficult to explain. During the evening General Liubavin fell back to Tu-pin-tai—an operation which presented much difficulty. Two routes were possible, of which one alone—merely a bridle path quite impassable for wheeled transport—afforded cover from the Japanese fire. Sending his infantry by this route, General Liubavin dispatched his vehicles by the better but more exposed road, with instructions to gallop past the danger zone; and so well was this manœuvre carried out that all the vehicles arrived safely except one cart, which was abandoned and burnt.

Nearly ninety miles from Kao-li-ma on the River Liao, where General Grekov was engaged in the west, General Danilov was, on the morning of the 28th, attacked by the 1st *Kobi* Division at Kuchia-tzu, which village marked the eastern extremity of the long line of fighting. A battalion of the 13th *Kobi* Regiment opened the day's work by an advance against the north-western spur of hill 206, the capture of which would have enabled the attackers

to enfilade the Russians with artillery fire. Realizing the importance of prompt action, the commander of the 24th East Siberian Rifle Regiment, which was the nearest unit of the defence, sent two companies to counter-attack, and after losing almost all their officers and a third of their rank and file they drove the Japanese off. The latter, however, were not to be denied, and having been reinforced returned to the attack again and again, so that the 24th East Siberian Rifle Regiment, which by noon had lost four officers and one hundred and eighty-five men, was placed in an extremely critical position.

General Danilov now resolved to make an attempt to relieve this pressure on his left indirectly by an advance from his right where all was at this time quiet, and with this object directed the 23rd East Siberian Rifle Regiment to move against Trefoil Hill and thus to threaten the left flank and rear of the enemy attacking hill 206. Supported by a powerful artillery fire, the troops moved out about three o'clock and occupied the hill, which appears to have been but weakly held by the Japanese. The pressure on the 24th East Siberian Rifle Regiment was eased almost immediately, and the Japanese began to transfer most of their attention to Trefoil Hill. After some stiff fighting they managed to regain it, and the Russians in retiring

to their former positions lost heavily, fifteen officers and four hundred and eighteen men falling in the retirement alone. The fighting died away with evening, and General Danilov, although he had lost severely, had nevertheless grounds for congratulating himself on having scored a tactical success. By indirect pressure he had saved the situation on his left flank, and ably backed up by his officers and men had barred the enemy's advance by an admirable exhibition of offensive-defensive action. And though he had had many casualties, it is on record that those of the Japanese were by no means few. During the night General Rennenkampf ordered some infantry from his right flank—which the approach of the 1st Siberian Corps now rendered more secure—to proceed to the Tung-hsi-ho Ling.

This stubborn infantry struggle on his extreme left flank had a disturbing influence upon General Kuropatkin. In the morning he had ordered the 85th (Viborg) Regiment—one of the units which he had gathered in from the 1st Corps to fill his depleted General Reserve—and a battery to be sent to General Danilov's assistance, but the move had been cancelled in consequence of the Japanese offensive in the west.* In the evening, however, the commander-in-chief again changed his mind and gave orders for the regiment to entrain at daybreak and to proceed by rail to Fu-shun Junction, while the guns, transport and mounted scouts moved by road. He was indeed fearful at this time of a Japanese advance even farther to the east than the ground held by General Danilov and thought that the enemy might possibly envelop General Maslov's weak detachment. In accordance with his telegraphic instructions that force had fallen back without coming into contact with any Japanese.

As has been said, the 28th February, after the intention of the Japanese on the west had been revealed, was chiefly remarkable for the unopposed progress of the enveloping force and for the attempts made by the bewildered Russian commander-in-chief to reinforce his front in order to resist attack in the centre and on both flanks of a line some eighty miles long. Up to a certain moment on this day, General Kuropatkin had still been absorbed by the threat on his extreme left, towards which quarter he had been pouring

Summary of the
28th February.

* The General Reserve now consisted, so far as infantry is concerned, of the following:—The 25th Division of the XVIth Corps and the 85th (Viborg), 145th (Novocherkask), and 147th (Samara) Regiments of the 1st Corps—in all twenty-eight battalions. See foot-note (†), p. 338.

reinforcements for the past two days. Then, it seems quite suddenly, he realized the fact that the real danger was in the west, and set about strengthening his position in that quarter by throwing out a screen of troops from his reserve. Either at the same time, or shortly afterwards, owing to the bombardment carried out by the Japanese Fourth Army, he was perturbed about the centre of his line, which he had weakened to replenish the General Reserve, and was concerned in reinforcing his Ist Corps. Lastly, he became exercised as to the situation in the extreme east and took measures to send further reinforcement there.

Insomuch as the movements of the units of their second line during the 25th, 26th, and 27th February contributed largely to the ultimate defeat of the Russians, a recapitulation of them is advisable, even at the cost of some repetition. On the 25th, from the Second Manchurian Army, the 2nd Brigade of the 6th East Siberian Rifle Division had been sent to the extreme left flank, and the 1st Siberian Corps had been brought by forced marches behind the centre, while from the General Reserve one brigade of the 72nd Division, the Tsaritsin Regiment and a battery had been set in motion eastwards. Upon the 26th, the 1st Siberian Corps had been moved on; and on the 27th the remaining brigade of the 72nd Division had been started eastwards. On the 28th, General Kuropatkin was borrowing twelve battalions from his centre to replenish his General Reserve. When news came in of the Japanese envelopment he flung a brigade out to the north-west and sent a regiment to the extreme east to General Danilov. By that evening he had twenty-four battalions still under his own hand, a force representing less than one-fifteenth of his total strength, of which twelve had been obtained at the expense of his centre.*

Nothing will give a clearer conception of the dissemination of strength implied in these moves than a reference to the distance between Ku-chia-tzu and Kao-li-tun. It is true that the commanders on both sides were endeavouring to control operations at these widely separated points, but while Marshal Oyama was enjoying the freedom which is conferred by the exercise of the initiative, General Kuropatkin was condemned to the far more difficult task of conforming to the actual or supposed actions of his opponent.

* The twenty-four battalions do not include the 85th (Viborg) Regiment, which was making ready to move eastwards.

CHAPTER LXXI.

THE BATTLE OF MUKDEN—*continued*—OPERATIONS ON THE 1ST MARCH AND NIGHT OF THE 1ST—2ND—PROGRESS OF THE JAPANESE ENVELOPING MOVEMENT—THE LEFT OF THE JAPANESE SECOND ARMY FORCES BACK THE RUSSIANS IN THE VICINITY OF CHANG-TAN—GENERAL KUROPATKIN'S PLAN TO WITHSTAND THE JAPANESE IN THE WEST—CAPTURE OF PORTION OF THE LEFT OF THE POSITION OF THE 3RD SIBERIAN CORPS—THE YA-LU ARMY STILL CHECKED IN THE EAST.

(Plans 61 and 62.)

THE centre of gravity of the battle had by the 1st March been definitely transferred to the west; and it will be convenient to return at once to that quarter, and then, after describing the continuation of the action of the Japanese Third Army, to work gradually back towards the east until the Ya-lu Army is reached once more.

So successful had been the initial phases of General Nogi's movement against the Russian right that, even at this comparatively late stage of the battle, the Japanese 2nd Cavalry Brigade and 1st Division were able to make ground with scarcely more incident than might have attended a march during peace. The mounted troops were still entirely unopposed. Indeed, General Tamura's squadrons had scarcely fired a shot, except against Chinese bandits, since the battle had begun. On this day the main body of the cavalry crossed the Liao Ho near Yang-lou-kou, and making a half-right-wheel bivouacked for the night at Ta-min-tun, while a detachment, still keeping on the right bank, reached Hsin-min-tun. During the evening a Russian force arrived within a few miles of the Japanese cavalry outposts. This was the 2nd Brigade of the 41st Division of the XVIth Corps under General Birger, which had on the 28th received orders to proceed

Progress of the Japanese enveloping movement.

to Kao-li-tun and had, it will be remembered, reached Ta-shih-chiao, on the Mukden—Hsin-min-tun highway, in the small hours of the morning.* During the 1st March it pushed on to its destination, and reached Kao-li-tun about 8 p.m., having accomplished over forty miles in the twenty-four hours. Although General Birger had information as to the presence of Japanese horsemen at Hsin-min-tun, this was probably received from spies, for the Russians and Japanese do not seem to have actually come in contact during the night. The Russian general's situation was now precarious. The main body of the Japanese 2nd Cavalry Brigade could reach his last bivouac long before he could return to it, and he was therefore in some danger of being cut off from Mukden.

On the right of the 2nd Cavalry Brigade the Japanese 1st Division altered its course from north to north-east, and except on its inner flank was not engaged throughout the day. Leaving Lin-chia-pa-kao in the morning, it settled down in the neighbourhood of Hou-ssu-hei-tzu for the night, having covered some sixteen miles—a considerable advance in an enveloping operation in a battle which had already lasted ten days. Both the 1st Division and the cavalry overlapped the Russian line, to which fact their immunity from fighting was largely due; but this was not the case with the remainder of General Nogi's army, and before following the movements of his other divisions it will be advisable to describe what had been taking place behind General Grekov's vedettes.

The lack of cohesion which characterized the action of the Russian cavalry on the 28th had caused it to settle down for the night in four practically distinct fractions, whose movements upon the 1st March were distinguished by little improvement as regards unity of purpose. On the left bank of the Pu Ho the 5th Ural Cossacks were practically an independent detachment, and about 8 a.m. their patrols reported hostile columns moving north and north-east. These columns were composed of troops of the Japanese 7th Division and 15th *Kobi* Brigade. The Cossacks were soon under fire, and between nine and ten o'clock began to fall back, followed by the enemy. Passing through Yu-chia-tai and Ting-hai-pu, they reached the village of San-kuan early in the afternoon, and since the Japanese halted they did the same.

Operations of the
Russian cavalry.

* See p. 338.

After a pause of some four hours, during which they appear to have made no serious attempt at reconnaissance, they once more fell back so soon as the Japanese advance was resumed. This time, however, they were destined to see more fighting, for besides being fired upon by the Japanese 7th Division they were attacked by some of the Japanese 1st Division from the north-west; but their superior mobility enabled them to get away without difficulty, and between nine and ten o'clock they reached Chi-san-pu-tzu, where they spent the night.* They appear to have acted in accordance with no definite plan and without any connexion with the remainder of the cavalry detachment. Although their camp, as will appear later, was but two or three miles from where General Grekov lay in bivouac with his reserve, this fact was not known, and communication was not established with the cavalry commander until the morning of the 2nd.

With the reserve which he had collected under his own hand, with which he had made an isolated and fruitless effort upon the previous day to delay the Japanese, General Grekov had passed the night of the 28th February-1st March at Northern Erh-tao-kou. During the morning of the 1st March telephonic instructions were sent from the head-quarters of the Second Manchurian Army, ordering him to carry out a thorough reconnaissance on both banks of the Liao, and if retreat should become necessary to fall back upon Hsin-min-tun. Apparently the telephone system extended no farther west than Chang-tan or Ssu-fang-tai,† and when the order had been passed on and reached him it was past three o'clock in the afternoon, by which time he had been retreating with his reserve for over five hours.‡ His course was shaped due north to Ta-min-tun, but finding that place occupied by Japanese§ he turned sharp to the east

* The Japanese 7th Division bivouacked at Cheng-tien-san-tzu and the 15th *Kobi* Brigade south-east of Yu-chia-tai. The 2nd Artillery Brigade reached Su-chia-kan.

† General Pavlov was, however, in telephonic communication with Second Manchurian Army head-quarters. See p. 354.

‡ A confirmation in writing of the instructions, sent off at 10.15 a.m., reached General Grekov at this hour, and it is not clear whether the telephone message had reached him by that time. A further telephone message sent via General Eichholz failed to reach him.

§ The main body of the Japanese 2nd Cavalry Brigade.

until he reached Ku-chia-tai, where he spent the night, having first sent to the head-quarters of the Second Manchurian Army a report summarizing the intelligence gained during the day. Here he proposed to wait until General Pavlov—whom he had ordered to fall back also—should join him, when he hoped to carry out the orders received from General Kaulbars.

On the 1st March, therefore, General Grekov effected even less than he had performed on the 28th February. He had not been in action; his only contact with the enemy was due to stumbling against the Japanese 2nd Cavalry Brigade, which was on his line of retreat; apparently he was out of touch with the greater portion of his command; and he passed the night in ignorance of the fact that one of his regiments was in bivouac within a quarter of an hour's ride from him.

Nevertheless, he was fortunate enough during the evening to get into touch accidentally with a valuable mounted reinforcement. This was the 2nd Independent Cavalry Brigade under Major-General Stepanov, which in accordance with an arrangement made on the 28th February with General Bilderling had started to move across the front of the Japanese Third Army.* The task assigned to it had been to proceed to the Liao, to reconnoitre the right bank, and to gain contact with General Grekov and General Birger; and by evening of the 1st March it was at the village of Sha-lin-pu, about twelve miles due west of Mukden. Patrols were sent out from there to locate the two commanders named, a task which presented no difficulty so far as General Grekov was concerned, for he had retreated almost to Sha-lin-pu himself. Thus, during the night of the 1st–2nd March, there were concentrated in the area Ku-chia-tai—Sha-lin-pu—Chi-san-pu-tzu twenty-one squadrons and six horse artillery guns.†

To turn to General Pavlov's operations. About 6 a.m., having by order of General Grekov transferred a battery with an escort of

* See p. 334.

† 5th Ural Cossack Regiment	4 squadrons.
1st Chita Cossack Regiment } General Grekov's	{ 6 squadrons.
Terek-Kuban Regiment } reserve... ..	{ 3 squadrons.
20th Horse Artillery Battery, from General Eichholz. (See p. 356)	6 horse guns.
51st Chernigov Dragoons } 2nd Independent Cavalry	{ 6 squadrons.
52nd Nyejin Dragoons ... } Brigade	{ 2 squadrons.
Total—21 squadrons, 6 horse artillery guns.	

two squadrons to General Eichholz, he commenced with six squadrons to carry out the task of covering the front Ssu-fang-tai—San-chia-wo-pu, while gaining touch with General Eichholz on his left. Shortly after ten o'clock long skirmishing lines of Japanese were observed, and about noon General Pavlov received word from the Russian cavalry commander to say that he was then retiring northward. He apparently considered that some sort of concentration would be advisable if any effective work was to be carried out by the cavalry, and he accordingly wrote to General Grekov, suggesting that Ssu-fang-tai should be left entirely to General Eichholz, and that he himself should be allowed to retire and join up with General Grekov so as to co-operate with him in dealing a blow against the Japanese enveloping force. In reply to this suggestion, as it appears, came an order for him to march to join General Grekov, but before he could comply he received another order, this time from the head-quarters of the Second Manchurian Army, directing him to move towards Kao-li-ma and to reconnoitre the rear of the advancing Japanese, and informing him that General Grekov, the 2nd Independent Cavalry Brigade, and General Birger would from the north shepherd the enemy's movements.

These contradictory orders emanating from different sources induced General Pavlov to telephone to ascertain what was really required of him; but communication was found to be interrupted, and when the Japanese began to attack about four o'clock he realized that to reach Kao-li-ma was entirely out of the question. He decided, therefore, to fall back and rejoin General Grekov so soon as General Eichholz should relieve his portion of the line. The relief, carried out by the 2nd Daghestan Cavalry, took place about 6 p.m., and General Pavlov immediately set off northwards; but he was soon overtaken by a message from General Eichholz requesting him to stay his retreat at Tu-erh-tao, as the Japanese were now pressing Ssu-fang-tai heavily. He accordingly remained in the former village until between eight and nine o'clock, when he fell back to San-chia-tzu. Touch had by now been lost with General Grekov and was not regained during the night.

The heavy pressure on Ssu-fang-tai reported by General Eichholz was due to an attack by the Japanese 9th Division, which had been maturing since early morning. It was carried

out under conditions somewhat unfavourable to the Japanese, insomuch as the village of Ssu-fang-tai stands higher than the surrounding plain, and the movements of the attackers were therefore in full view ; moreover, a Russian captive balloon ascended during the forenoon and prevented even the earliest stages of the advance from being concealed. But since it was essential that the 7th and 1st Divisions of the Japanese Third Army should be able to gain ground, the commander of the 9th Division decided to seize Ssu-fang-tai, in spite of the fact that he was under the impression that it was held by about a division of Russian infantry.* The attack began soon after midday, and was directed against the west and south sides of the village, the 6th Brigade being on the right of the Japanese, the 18th on the left, and the 9th Mountain Artillery Regiment between the two wings. When the Japanese arrived within four thousand yards of Ssu-fang-tai the Russian guns opened fire, but as this range was too much for the Japanese mountain guns, no reply was made by them until the distance had decreased to eighteen hundred yards. Then, under cover of their guns, the Japanese infantry pushed on to within four hundred yards of the village, where they were met by so hot an artillery fire and lost so many men that they started to entrench themselves with the idea of suspending operations until after nightfall.† Two Japanese batteries were reduced to silence and the officer commanding the artillery was killed. Meanwhile, upon the Russian side, the Buzuluk Regiment was moved forward into the front line to prolong the right flank to the west. Until dark the Japanese were unable to make progress, and it was not until about eight o'clock that the assault could be carried

* The actual garrison of Ssu-fang-tai and vicinity was :—

From General Eichholz's force—

2nd Daghestan Cavalry Regiment	6 squadrons.
Terek-Kuban Cavalry Regiment	2½ squadrons.
20th Horse Artillery Battery	6 guns.
1st and 4th Trans-Baikal Cossack Batteries	12 guns.

From the Provisional Rifle Corps—

Four Rifle battalions... ..	4 battalions.
5th Rifle Artillery Division	24 guns.

From the Army Reserve—

215th (Buzuluk) Regiment	4 battalions.
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Total—8 battalions, 8½ squadrons, 42 guns.

† This fire was from three batteries of General Pavlov's force, which fell back towards Ssu-fang-tai prior to its retreat northwards.

out. This proved successful, since General Eichholz was then already in full retreat, a course which he was practically compelled to take owing to the isolation in which General Grekov's retirement and the withdrawal of General Pavlov's force had left him. He fell back gradually to San-chia-tzu and sent the Rifle battalions and the 5th Rifle Artillery Division to their own corps, while the Buzuluk Regiment marched on to Shu-kan-ko, and the 20th Horse Artillery Battery proceeded to Ta-wang-kuan-pu, thus leaving him with only the Daghestan Cavalry Regiment and two and a half squadrons of the Terek-Kuban Regiment—all of which were very weak in strength—and the 1st and 4th Trans-Baikal Cossack Batteries.*

The defence of Ssu-fang-tai was by far the best piece of work in which the Cavalry Detachment had been concerned since the battle had begun, and its vigour, which was largely due to the fact that the cavalry was reinforced by eight battalions of infantry, shows how valuable the Liao Ho Detachment would have been had it been left in the front line. Strengthened by the Buzuluk Regiment and some Rifle battalions General Eichholz had delayed the Japanese 9th Division and 1st Cavalry Brigade for a whole day, and the casualties inflicted by him and General Pavlov amounted to nearly seven hundred.

General Eichholz had had, indeed, to deal with portions of both the Second and Third Japanese Armies, and the precarious position in which he found himself on the evening of the 1st March was not entirely due to the pressure of the Japanese 9th Division. All day long the noise of battle had made itself heard on his left. The previous evening the Japanese Second Army had been ordered to press forward upon the 1st March with the object of assisting General Nogi, and General Oku had therefore issued instructions for an attack upon Chang-tan and the villages linked to it.† This movement was to be covered by General Akiyama, whose force reached Tu-tai-tzu by nine o'clock and occupied Chang-chiao-pu, before 1 p.m., but coming under a heavy fire from General Eichholz's artillery in Ssu-fang-tai it had been suspended. Meanwhile the 8th Division had commenced operations against

* The 20th Horse Artillery Battery, however, joined General Grekov during the night. See foot-note (+), p. 353.

† See p. 335.

Yueh-pu-tzu and Chang-chiao-pao, having crossed the Hun by a military bridge during the night.* The morning was cold and misty, but since 7.30 a.m. the artillery had been maintaining a fire against three Russian batteries east of the latter village and on a couple more west of Chang-tan.† After about an hour the Russian pieces replied, but for some time could not locate the Japanese guns. At 11.30 a.m., however, the latter were found by the Russian artillerymen, who concentrated their fire upon them and made very accurate practice although, for some reason, they constantly changed their target. The Japanese gunners took cover during the fire, and whenever the Russians changed the target they seized the opportunity of again serving their guns. Meanwhile the heavy artillery of the 5th Division bombarded Chang-tan and Yueh-pu-tzu and to this the heavy guns of the Russians near Chou-kuan-tun replied, setting fire to Fei-tsai-ho-tzu.

Opposite the Japanese 8th Division was the village of Yueh-pu-tzu, held as an advanced work by one and a half battalions from the Provisional Rifle Corps, and General Tatsumi decided to attack it first of all. This task he committed to his 16th Brigade, while the 4th Brigade, less the 31st Regiment, was to be prepared to take Chang-chiao-pao when Yueh-pu-tzu should be captured.‡ The latter village consisted of less than a dozen houses and compounds, being really a straggling offshoot of Chang-tan, and about one hundred and fifty yards south of it stood a detached house surrounded by a wall which had been strengthened by a parapet and loopholed. Abattis had also been laid down in front, and a traversed trench about one hundred and fifty yards long had been dug on the west side of the house, facing south. The defences of the village itself consisted of a natural bank on its outskirts, with very shallow and hastily made trenches

* This division was greatly under strength, the heavy casualties suffered at the battle of San-de-pu not having been wholly replaced.

† The Japanese artillery was distributed as follows:—

18 field guns. On the right bank of the Hun Ho west of Fei-tsai-ho-tzu.

18 mountain guns. Farther west and on the same line.

6 captured Russian guns. North-west of Hei-kou-tai on the right bank of the river.

18 mountain guns. One and a quarter miles north of Tu-tai-tzu.

In addition, the heavy artillery of the 5th Division east of Fei-tsai-ho-tzu co-operated.

‡ The 31st Regiment was in the Japanese Second Army reserve. The other regiment of the 4th Brigade was the 5th Regiment.

running for about one hundred yards on either side of it. The south front, which faced the direction of the Japanese advance, was not more than three hundred yards broad, and there were trenches between Yueh-pu-tzu and Chang-chiao-pao.* The broken stalks of a field of *kao-liang* about five hundred and twenty yards south of the village which had been left uncut still gave cover from view.

During the night the 16th Brigade had moved up to eight hundred yards of Yueh-pu-tzu and laid down rows of sandbags to form a low breastwork about two feet high. The firing line took up its position behind this improvised cover before dawn and remained lying there during the artillery preparation. At 11.30 a.m. the infantry were given the order to advance.† The first troops to move were from the 2nd Battalion of the 32nd Regiment on the left bank of the river, and these moved forward in three or four lines at about five paces interval. The Russian artillery now devoted almost all its attention to this infantry, and only occasionally fired on the Japanese guns, which continued to pour a heavy fire on Yueh-pu-tzu. Shortly afterwards the infantry on the right bank of the river also began to move forward. Progress was slow at first, but soon developed into section or half section rushes of about thirty to forty paces at a time. About 12.30 p.m. the 3rd Battalion of the 17th Regiment also deployed, moving up on the left of the 1st Battalion so as to take the village in flank. The attacking troops were subjected to a heavy shrapnel and musketry fire, in the smoke and dust of which they were from time to time hidden, but by half-past one they had approached to three hundred yards of the detached house south of Yueh-pu-tzu, which was garrisoned by two companies of the Russian 17th Rifle Regiment, while the 3rd Battalion of the Japanese 17th Regiment, which had taken up a position on the left of the 1st Battalion, threatened the retreat of the garrison. The Russians now began to leave the house under cover of the fire from Yueh-pu-tzu,

* According to Russian sources this portion of the front was entrenched, but the trenches were not visible to the Japanese.

† The dispositions from right to left were as follows :—

2nd Battalion 32nd Regiment—on the left bank of the river.

1st Battalion 32nd Regiment—on the right bank of the river.

3rd Battalion 32nd Regiment—on the right bank of the river

2nd Battalion 17th Regiment—on the right bank of the river.

1st Battalion 17th Regiment—on the right bank of the river.

3rd Battalion 17th Regiment—in reserve east of Tu-tai-tzu.

but they were taken in flank by the 3rd Battalion of the 17th Regiment, their retreat to Yueh-pu-tzu was cut off, and in their attempts to escape to the river bed, they had to cross the line of fire of the 32nd Regiment, and lost over thirty men killed. The Japanese also had to pay dearly for their success. In the 1st Battalion of the 17th Regiment only one non-commissioned officer and twenty-seven privates were unwounded, while the 32nd Regiment also suffered severely.

Yueh-pu-tzu was now almost indistinguishable amidst the smoke of high-explosive shells and that from the burning houses. The Japanese infantry attempted to dig trenches and continued to lay down sandbags, and it was in bringing up these under fire that most of the casualties were caused. The next advance was made against the village itself, and after a fight with the bayonet it was evacuated by the Russians at two o'clock.

Shortly after the occupation of Yueh-pu-tzu preparations were made for the attack on Chang-chiao-pao. The three mountain batteries and two of the field batteries west of Fei-tsai-ho-tzu took up a more advanced position, where they were hidden by

some withered *kao-liang*, and commenced to bombard the objective. They came under a hot fire while changing position, but the casualties were insignificant, and shortly afterwards the

Unsuccessful
attack on
Chang-chiao-pao.

Russians seemed to have lost sight of them, for they continued to fire on the old positions, evidently not realizing that they had moved. They recommenced firing at 2.45 p.m., and during the next hour the artillery duel was kept up steadily on both sides. The infantry advance began at 3.30 p.m. The 2nd Battalion 5th Regiment, which had been in a village opposite Hei-kou-tai during the morning, had left two hours earlier and marched up a hollow road towards the north, where it remained under cover. There it seems to have been discovered by the balloon, which ascended from near Chang-tan about 3.30 p.m., for at four o'clock the Russians commenced to shell the spot where it was lying concealed. It began to deploy about 4.15 p.m., and moved in three lines at about two hundred yards distance due north on Chang-chiao-pao. The interval between men was about two paces; and at least two of the companies of the battalion were deployed, the reserve remaining under cover. At 5 p.m. the leading companies were severely shelled, but moved on steadily without halting. At 5.15 p.m. the advance by rushes began and carried the battalion

to about one thousand yards from the Russian position, where it was unable to make further progress. The attack of the other two battalions of the 5th Regiment more to the west was also checked at about the same distance; and the musketry fire coming from their direction, which had been continuous for over an hour, ceased at half-past five.

General Tatsumi had still two battalions of *Kobi* infantry, which had been sent him by General Oku, but he did not press the attack, and the operations of the day now came to an end. From 5.30 p.m. until dark, the only movement was that of the strings of ammunition and baggage carts going up the river bed to Yueh-pu-tzu and the stretcher-bearers carrying the wounded back to the field hospitals, though up to six o'clock the Russians occasionally dropped shells into Yueh-pu-tzu. The troops remained during the night in the positions occupied, and General Tatsumi and the head-quarter staff took up their quarters in dug-outs on a sandhill on the bank of the river opposite Hei-kou-tai, where they had been during the whole of the day's fighting, and where the divisional telephone office connecting with each unit of the command had been installed.

The failure of this attempt on Chang-chiao-pao was probably due to insufficient numbers, since Major-General Yoda, who commanded the attacking troops, was unable, with only three battalions, to employ the outflanking tactics which had succeeded in the case of the 3rd Battalion 17th Regiment at Yueh-pu-tzu. It made it impossible to carry out General Tatsumi's original plan of reinforcing the 16th Brigade under Major-General Kamada at Yueh-pu-tzu with two battalions of the 31st Regiment, which were to be sent up from the army reserve. After the capture of Chang-chiao-pao the 16th Brigade and the above two battalions were to have moved against Chang-tan. The latter units had arrived from Kou-tzu-wan about 4.30 p.m. and had advanced up the river bed, halting south of Yueh-pu-tzu. Here they remained during the night and afterwards formed part of General Tatsumi's divisional reserve.*

The result of the day's fighting for the 8th Division, therefore, was the capture of Yueh-pu-tzu and the gaining of a position

* Both battalions were weak, one being about five hundred and twenty, the other six hundred, strong. It is doubtful if any battalions in the 8th Division exceeded seven hundred men at this period.

close to Chang-chiao-pao. The Russians still held on to the latter village and to Chang-tan itself, but by evening the occupation of Ssu-fang-tai by the 9th Division of the Japanese Third Army and the fact that on the east, as will be narrated later, the 5th Division of the Second Army had almost made itself master of Chang-tan-ho-nan, caused them to feel that their position in Chang-chiao-pao and Chang-tan was precarious, and they retired from both villages during the night. There was no attempt at a night assault on the part of the Japanese and the Russians got away with practically no loss.

It appears that the attack of the 8th Division was a surprise to the Russians, for the entrenchments at Yueh-pu-tzu were hastily dug and the defences of Chang-tan were arranged to meet an attack from the east and south-east. The southern side of the village was indeed defended, but the frontage was very limited and no attempt had been made to construct trenches in prolongation of it; and even where the defences were more fully thought out they were of the most rough and ready type. Like most of the larger Chinese villages Chang-tan was surrounded by a mud wall with a ditch outside, but although this ready-made perimeter had been slightly improved by the Russians, there appears to have been neither head-cover, obstacles nor communication trenches.

While the 8th Division was carrying out the operation just described, the 5th Division upon its right had been more hotly engaged, its first objective being the line Li-chia-wo-peng—Chang-tan-ho-nan. It is not clear what force the Russians

had actually in Chang-tan-ho-nan itself, but upon the other extremity of the sector to be attacked were disposed troops of the 2nd and 17th Rifle Regiments. The position consisted of three lines of defence, of which the most southern was a chain of low sandhills

The Japanese
Second Army.
The 5th Division
gains the line Li-
chia-wo-peng—
Chang-tan-ho-
nan.

flanked on the western edge by a Chinese graveyard. Some four hundred paces in rear, running almost east and west, and immediately in front of the hamlet of Li-chia-wo-peng, was an intermediate position, on the left of which was flat ground, and on the right a low narrow ridge, upon which stood the hamlet. To the ridge, probably on account of its shape, the Russians gave the name of Splinter Hill. Some five hundred yards farther back, upon the left bank of the

Hun Ho, was the village of Chang-chuang-tzu, where was the third line of defence.

The position was formidable, and to attack it the artillery of the 5th Division was largely reinforced from the reserve of the Second Army.* In all there were with the division one hundred and eight guns disposed as follows:—

One battalion of field artillery was south-east of Liu-tiao-kou, and the other battalion a little behind the same village.

The howitzers were in the bed of the stream and were quite hidden from view.

The 4·7-inch guns were a little in front of the divisional head-quarters, while the mountain guns were echeloned forward on their left.†

All the guns were in emplacements of earth or sandbags, and, wherever they were in the open, cover pits had been dug for the gunners.

At 7.30 a.m. the artillery near Liu-tiao-kou opened fire before the morning mist had cleared away, and the bombardment soon became general, the ranging of the Russians being so good that the Japanese guns were at times completely hidden by the dust raised by the shrapnel balls and fragments of shell. The Russian batteries chiefly fired salvoes of eight rounds rapidly one after the other, and when their fire got very hot the Japanese gunners took cover. Though the defenders' guns were bombarded before the fire of the Japanese was turned on the entrenchments, the effect upon them was slight.

At ten o'clock in the morning the Japanese launched their infantry attack, two battalions of the 21st Regiment on the right moving against the sandhills south of Li-chia-wo-peng, the remaining battalion being in local reserve, and the left attack against Chang-tan-ho-nan being entrusted to the 11th Regiment. The 41st Regiment was in second line, two battalions supporting the right and one the left attack, and the reserve was found by the 42nd Regiment. Advancing over flat and bare fields, without cover of any sort, the attackers moved in a formation borrowed from the tactics employed in the South African war—successive lines of men extended to five or six paces interval.‡ Whether

* One regiment of field artillery, thirty-six guns; one regiment of 4·7-inch guns, twenty-four guns; one battalion of 5·9-inch howitzers, twelve guns.

† Divisional head-quarters were at Ta-tai.

‡ This attack formation had only recently been adopted, and was known amongst the Japanese officers as "Boer tactics."

this novel system of approach disconcerted the Russians or not is not clear, but the shooting of their infantry became extraordinarily wild, and bullets fell like rain more than a mile in rear of the advancing Japanese. Even the Russian artillery was apparently unable to make anything of the unusual target, for after a few erratic rounds the guns were turned off the hostile infantry upon the Japanese batteries and the village of Liu-tiao-kou. Thanks to these circumstances the attackers made good progress. Nevertheless, in spite of the poor fire of the Russians and the fact that they were assisted by the excellent practice of their own guns against the sandhills, they were being shot down in hundreds. On the right the 21st Regiment managed to get within five hundred yards of the sandhills, but could make no further progress; and at 11.15 a.m., when it was forced to halt, the whole of the open ground right back to Liu-tiao-kou was strewn with killed and wounded, amongst whom stretcher bearers were making their way about in the coolest manner and the slightly wounded men were limping back to safety. Most of the dead had been killed when prone, the casualties incurred when the firing line was lying down to shoot largely outnumbering those caused when it was actually advancing.

Leaving the 21st Regiment crouching in whatever cover could be obtained on the flat and frozen plain facing the sandhills, it will be convenient to follow the fortunes of the Japanese 11th Regiment on the left. Supported by the fire of the mountain artillery and twenty-four 4.7-inch guns it had advanced to the attack of Chang-tan-ho-nan. That place, which was surrounded by trees, had been strongly entrenched, and included in its armament were four machine guns, two on either side of the village. These weapons played such havoc in the ranks of the 11th Regiment that it became necessary to silence them at all costs, and a bold stroke was determined upon, namely, to attempt to put them out of action by taking up two mountain guns to within five hundred yards of the Russian position. Volunteers were called for to carry out this duty. Fortunately there was a sunken road which yielded a certain amount of cover, and along this approach the guns were carried on their pack ponies up to a group of houses which was within the prescribed distance of the village. There they were quickly assembled, the muzzles were thrust through holes knocked in the outer wall, and a rapid fire was

opened. In a few moments two of the Russian machine guns were smashed to pieces, but the other two were well hidden and were withdrawn intact.

Encouraged by their success the Japanese brought up four more guns in a similar manner, so that soon they had a whole mountain battery in action within some five hundred yards of the Russians, a somewhat remarkable achievement to carry out in face of an entrenched enemy. The infantry now made another effort and this time managed to reach the dry bed of a small stream, which afforded good cover. Here the 11th Regiment remained for the rest of the day and half the night, but at 11 p.m. it was reinforced by a battalion of the 41st Regiment and made a desperate assault against Chang-tan-ho-nan. The fighting lasted till dawn on the 2nd, when the village fell into the hands of the Japanese. During this attack the 11th Regiment suffered more than one thousand casualties.

To return now to the right attack. From 11.15 a.m. the 21st Regiment slowly but surely pressed forward until about four o'clock, when its leading units were scarcely twenty yards from the eastern edge of the sandhills. The frozen state of the ground prevented any excavation, and therefore the losses of the attackers, which included Colonel Inaba, the regimental commander, were very heavy.* The resistance of the Russians was still too obstinate for an assault to have much chance of success, and it was indeed only the approach of dusk which saved the 21st Regiment from gradual annihilation. At 6.30 p.m., aided by a battalion from the divisional reserve, the attackers at last overcame the Russian resistance and captured the sandhills, passing the night on the ground they had won. At dawn on the 2nd they occupied Li-chia-wo-peng without much difficulty, the Russians retiring to the north-east and leaving many killed and wounded behind. Thus ended the first day's serious fighting in the battle for the 5th Division, for which the price paid was two thousand five hundred killed and wounded.

Immediately to the right of the successful 5th Division the 4th Division played a part, although a minor one. It had joined in the artillery bombardment during the morning and then

* According to the *Russian Official History* the 21st Regiment carried sandbags which the men filled where they lay, thus obtaining cover, but there is no mention of the fact in Japanese accounts.

initiated an attack against Pei-tai-tzu simultaneously with the advance carried out by the 5th Division. The village was held by portion of the 15th Division of the VIIIth Corps, and to capture it General Tsukamoto dispatched the 19th Brigade, less one battalion, from San-de-pu and Hsiao-tai-tzu; but this force came under a well-sustained fire from the Russian 29th Artillery Brigade and began to suffer heavily, losing over two hundred men before it had gone three hundred yards to the front. The brigadier now realized that it would be unwise to continue the attack by daylight and determined to wait until darkness should favour a further advance. The men were ordered to take cover in the *kao-liang* or to improvise shelter with the sandbags which they carried, and no further movement was made until nearly midnight. Then the 9th Regiment and one battalion of the 38th Regiment were told off to renew the attack while the remainder of the latter regiment created a diversion on the left. Fortunately the attack of the 5th Division against Chang-tan-ho-nan was taking place while the night attack of the 4th Division was in progress and thus the attention of the enemy was to some extent diverted. Favoured by this circumstance, the 19th Brigade assaulted the redoubt at Pei-tai-tzu and took it after an obstinate struggle. So fierce was the fight that four hundred Japanese fell and the retreating Russians left nearly five hundred dead behind. Hardly, however, had the village been won when Russian reinforcements arrived and made a counter-attack, driving back the Japanese. Nothing daunted by this repulse, the men of the 19th Brigade again pressed on after a short pause, and by half-past four on the morning of the 2nd the Russians were streaming north, leaving behind them three hundred and fifty dead and several prisoners. Since noon on the previous day the 19th Brigade had more than one thousand casualties.

Farther to the east in the rayon of the Japanese Second Army nothing of note occurred during the day. The opposing forces consisted of the right wing of the Japanese 4th Division about La-pa-tai, the 34th Regiment, with a battery of captured mortars, occupying ground from Han-shan-tai to Ta-ping-chuang, and beyond that Colonel Tomioka's troops, facing the Xth and 5th Siberian Corps. Upon the positions held by the latter the Japanese threw some three hundred shells of different calibres, but no

material damage was done either to the Russian personnel or entrenchments. The head-quarters of the Japanese Second Army still remained at Kou-tzu-wan, and the army reserve, now reduced to two and a half battalions of infantry, was at Ta-tai, south of San-de-pu.

Thus, from the Liao Ho to Lin-sheng-pu on the River Sha, the Japanese Third and Second Armies were engaged all through the 1st March—and in some places through the ensuing night—with the Second Manchurian Army and the right corps of the Third Manchurian Army. Along this front fighting had only been of a really severe nature round Ssu-fang-tai, Chang-tan and Pei-tai-tzu; and success had everywhere crowned the efforts of the Japanese.

On the 28th February no prisoners had been taken by General Grekov's cavalry, and at General Head-Quarters the identity of the Japanese units towards the Liao could only be inferred from the reports that "a crushing superiority in strength on the side of the enemy had been discovered." Some time during the night of the 28th—1st General Kuropatkin seems to have been forced finally to admit that he was being outflanked upon the west by the Japanese Third Army.* This led him to conclude that General Nogi's object was either to make for the line Mukden—Sha-lin-pu, in order to cut the Russian communications immediately north of Mukden, or to operate along the Liao Ho valley, so as to carry out a wider turning movement towards Tieh-ling. He therefore decided on the 1st March to strengthen his screen and to extend its scope by means of his General Reserve reinforced by units from the Second Manchurian Army. About eleven o'clock in the morning he telephoned to General Topornin, commanding the XVIth Corps, to proceed with the 25th Division of

General
Kuropatkin's
plan.

* The sentence in inverted commas will be found upon p. 185, *Russian Official History*, Vol. V, Part 1. The next paragraph in that work is as follows :—

"Comparing the reports received with the information available earlier, *one might suppose, however, that in all probability the whole or greater part of General Nogi's Japanese Third Army was moving to the north.*"

The italics have been inserted. It seems that right up to midday on the 28th February General Kuropatkin was still in doubt as to the position of the Japanese Third Army.

that corps along the Hsin-min-tun road to Kao-li-tun, where he was to take under his command again the 1st Brigade, 41st Division, already sent there under General Birger. These units were to be joined by a division—from the Second Manchurian Army—which the commander-in-chief during the day ordered to be placed at his disposal; and later General Kaulbars was called upon to detach another thirty-two battalions to be sent to Sha-lin-pu, athwart the enemy's line of advance. Thus General Kuropatkin now proposed to parry the threatened envelopment with the following troops:—

- (a) The 1st Brigade, 41st Division, XVIth Corps, already at Kao-li-tun (eight battalions).
- (b) The 25th Division, XVIth Corps (sixteen battalions).
- (c) A division from the Second Manchurian Army (sixteen battalions).
- (d) Thirty-two additional battalions from the Second Manchurian Army, or seventy-two battalions in all.

It was not five days since General Kaulbars had issued a spirited order on the eve of the offensive in which his army was to play the leading rôle. By now, however, not only had he been forced to forego all chance of being the main instrument of a Russian victory, but by evening he was preparing to send off from his army the final instalments of the seventy-eight battalions demanded from him by his superior.* The command of the new screen, was, however, to be entrusted to him. By this time those at General Head-Quarters who believed that the danger lay in the west had completely triumphed over that section—headed by the commander-in-chief—which had been misled by the Japanese activity in the east. The leading representative of the former was the Chief of Staff, General Sakharov, who now suggested to General Kuropatkin that even more weight should be transferred to the west. In his opinion the whole

* The 2nd Brigade 6th East Siberian Rifle Division	6 battalions.	} Already sent eastwards.
The 1st Siberian Corps	24 battalions.	
A division	16 battalions.	} To be sent westwards.
Thirty-two battalions	32 battalions.	
Total		78 battalions.

of the Second Manchurian Army should have been sent with the XVIth Corps, and the 1st Siberian Corps should have been brought across from the east and added to the General Reserve for the purpose of delivering a decisive stroke. After annihilating the isolated wing of the enemy, he thought that it might be well to retreat slowly to Mukden, and even beyond it, in order to assume the offensive under more favourable conditions. General Kuropatkin, on his part, after having spent from the 25th to the 27th February in hurrying troops to the east, now seized upon every suggestion for reversing the process. Not only did he at once fall in with the project of recalling the 1st Siberian Corps from the First Manchurian Army, but suggested to the commander of that army that some other units might be sent as well. To this suggestion, however, General Linevich turned a deaf ear, and the matter dropped.

Of the five distinct bodies of troops to be concentrated in the west the brigade under General Birger was already at its destination, Kao-li-tun. Of the others the 25th Division of the XVIth Corps started for that village in the afternoon, preceded

The building up
of the Russian
screen in the
west.

by an advanced guard of a regiment and two batteries, which moved out about five o'clock*, while the main body assembled at Pei-ta-pu. After a long halt near Mukden, the advanced guard reached Ta-shih-chiao about dawn on the 2nd, and the remainder of the division passed the night at Mukden. The division called for from General Kaulbars was formed by detailing the 2nd Brigade of both the 9th and 31st Divisions of the Xth Corps and forming them into a composite division, which General Vasilev was appointed to command. The former of these brigades arrived shortly after 11 p.m. at Su-chia-tun station, whilst the second was at first sent to Su-hu-chia-pu and later to Sha-lin-pu. To furnish the further thirty-two battalions, however, necessitated that General Kaulbars should withdraw them from his front line and should then open out his remaining troops to cover the gap thus created. Insomuch as the number of battalions required was exactly equivalent to an army corps he decided to send the entire VIIIth Corps, and to relieve it by units of the Provisional Rifle Corps.

* The 100th (Ostrov) Regiment and two batteries of the 25th Artillery Brigade.

About 9 p.m. he issued orders that one Rifle brigade should hold the original line of the Provisional Rifle Corps, that is to say to front Chang-chiao-pao—Chang-tan—Chang-tan-ho-nan—Chang-chuang-tzu, while the remaining two should relieve the VIIIth Corps, which was to move before daybreak to the line Tou-tai-tzu—Hsin-tai-tzu, en route for Sha-lin-pu. This scheme, which required one brigade to do the work which three brigades had been with difficulty performing all day, clearly required some amendment, and a couple of hours later it was modified to the extent that the original line of the Provisional Rifle Corps was to be abandoned; that all three Rifle brigades were to relieve the VIIIth Corps; and that General Eichholz's force was to be attached to the Provisional Rifle Corps. This complicated and artificial manœuvre was quite impossible of execution, and the order for it must have been penned in complete ignorance of the situation in the front line. To begin with, General Eichholz had already left Ssu-fang-tai, and it was late at night before his force could be discovered;* the Provisional Rifle Corps, hotly engaged all day and still in touch with the Japanese, could not possibly shift eastwards in the dark; and the VIIIth Corps, within rifle shot of the enemy, could not have disengaged itself and got into march formation in time.

The various movements proposed were not even attempted, and the VIIIth Corps remained practically where it was. Laudable as was the plan of dispatching a corps intact, it was in the circumstances unworkable; and, as will be told later, the required thirty-two battalions had to be obtained by collecting such units as could be spared from any source. As regards the 1st Siberian Corps, it started on its return march from the east on the following morning.

East of the railway the staff of the Japanese Fourth Army had by dawn drawn up the plan of action for the 1st March and had issued the necessary operation orders. A general attack was to be carried out, in which the objectives were clearly allotted. On the left the 6th Division was to attack the village of Sha-ho-pu. In the centre one of the brigades of the Okubo *Kobi* Division was to capture a village, which seems to have lain somewhere between Sha-ho-pu and Putilov Hill, and another was to make itself master of a village which seems to have been identical with Nan-kang-tzu.

The Japanese
Fourth Army
attacks
Sha-ho-pu.

* See p. 356.

To the 10th Division was assigned the recapture of Putilov and One Tree Hills, the announcement of which task was received with great acclamation by the troops concerned. The various positions which were to be attacked were, however, exceedingly strong, and a successful issue could only be hoped for with the aid of artillery co-operation of the highest class. Indeed, there is reason to believe that it was the exaggerated estimate formed at headquarters of the Japanese Fourth Army of the effect produced by their heavy guns on the previous day which led to the decision to attack so early as the 1st March. On that day the Japanese artillery was again active, and from the left of the Fourth Army the Russian XVIIth, and 6th Siberian, Corps were steadily bombarded, the village of Sha-ho-pu in particular being treated to a very heavy fire. Whilst the village itself was incessantly shelled by the siege guns, including the 11-inch howitzers, the Russian batteries were kept under such a rain of shrapnel that the detachments could scarcely serve their guns.

Nevertheless, the strongly fortified bridge-head of Sha-ho-pu showed up as such a formidable position to assail that the commander of the Japanese 6th Division realized that an attack by daylight was out of the question; and it was not until after nightfall that a force to carry this out assembled at Kan-chia-latzu. It was composed of the 11th Brigade, the soldiers of which carried sandbags already filled, and at four o'clock in the morning of the 2nd March it advanced in silence to within five hundred yards of Sha-ho-pu. Here the infantry deployed, the 45th Regiment going to the right, and the 13th Regiment forming the left wing, while a small detachment was sent still farther west to divert the enemy's attention. The garrison, however, was on the alert and at once poured a furious fire from guns, rifles and machine guns from the redoubts in front of the bridge-head. In the dense darkness the Japanese threw themselves flat upon the ground and endeavoured to gain ground by rolling the filled sandbags before them. By 5 a.m., just as the moon was beginning to show itself, the Japanese sappers managed to clear away some of the outer obstacles, only to find that at least four lines of barbed wire entanglements had yet to be dealt with. Dawn was now breaking, ushered in by a fall of snow, and in the growing light the casualties of the attackers became very heavy, for the sandbags offered but poor protection, and the iron ground defeated all their efforts

to scoop out even the slightest cover. But the story of how the attack on Sha-ho-pu fared on the 2nd March must be reserved until the operations of that date are described; and the narrative now turns to the actions of the centre and right of General Nodzu's army.

So far as can be ascertained the Okubo *Kobi* Division made no attempt to advance throughout the day, though its artillery, which included some of the 11-inch howitzers, kept up the bombardment. On the right the 10th Division essayed a forward movement, and at 8 a.m. the 20th Brigade moved out of its trenches upon the left, in the face of a cannonade from Putilov Hill, but it gained little more than half a mile. Upon the right of the division the 8th Brigade attempted to attack the entrenchments which flanked One Tree Hill on the east. Some Japanese siege batteries bombarded the enemy's position, but the Russian artillery upon Ta Shan replied with vigour, and it was under a hail of projectiles that the Japanese infantry prepared to advance. At 9 a.m. two companies, with some machine guns, occupied without difficulty a trench to the north-east of Fan-shen and less than half a mile from the enemy. This trench had been excavated and stored with sandbags for the advance by four hundred sappers who had worked every night since the 26th February and had returned to their lines before dawn. Later, Pu-tsao-a was occupied by a company, and with this the efforts of the 10th Division ceased.

So long as the Russian centre was intact General Kuroki felt that it was altogether beyond his powers to achieve any useful purpose by a frontal attack, and on the 1st March, exactly as had

been the case upon the previous day, his Guard
 The Japanese
 First Army. The
 Guard Division. and 12th Divisions were chained to their line. Early in the morning the 16th Regiment, which had been taken from the 2nd Division and

had been taken from the 2nd Division and posted by General Kuroki at Ho-ma-tang, was brought across to the valley south-east of Pagoda Hill and attached to the 2nd Guard Brigade; and while this movement was in progress the Guard Division batteries gradually came into action, at first without drawing any reply except an occasional shell fired at Ti-ti Shan. The battalion of the Umezawa Brigade which had been disputing the possession of Chien-su-ma-pu-tzu with a Russian detachment, endeavoured shortly after 9 a.m. to gain the whole village. The original garrison of mounted scouts, however, had been reinforced by some companies, and a Russian howitzer battery shelled

the portion of the village held by the Japanese with such effect that it was soon in flames and they had to evacuate it, although they managed to retain hold of a group of buildings outside. It was not until close on midday that the Russian guns along the front of the 2nd and 4th Siberian Corps began to speak, and then they shelled Pagoda Hill and Ti-ti Shan persistently, later turning their attention also to four batteries of the Umezawa Brigade upon the right. Thus the day wore on, distinguished by no other feature than the exchange of artillery fire. During the night the usual minor activity of the infantry was displayed, the Russians attacking the hill north of Tung-chia-wen with a small force without success. Under cover of darkness, too, General Kimoura occupied the hill just west of Chao-chien-hu-tun with one company. This hill had hitherto been held by the 3rd Guard Regiment, but the 2nd Guard Brigade—to which that regiment belonged—was now being collected for an advance across the valley. For although the Guard Division had been ordered to stand fast throughout the day, about 9 p.m. it received an order to hold itself in readiness to attack at short notice.

The reports received from the Japanese 2nd Division showed that the Kao-tai Ling had not as yet been won, nevertheless the news of the progress of the army of General Nogi in the west induced the commander of the 12th Division to make preparation to press on also, and he issued orders to the 5th *Kobi* Brigade to attack the right of the 3rd Siberian Corps.* Crossing the River Sha, the Japanese brigade soon came into collision with the 11th East Siberian Rifle Regiment, which was upon the extreme right of the Russian corps, and was effectually checked and driven back by its rifle fire aided by the fire of fourteen Russian field guns west of La-tzu-kou. In these circumstances the Japanese commander decided to wait until dark and then to occupy the high ground immediately north and north-east of Chang-chi-sai. Accordingly the 5th *Kobi* Brigade and General Shimamura's column deployed upon the left bank of the Sha some hours before dawn on the 2nd, and crossing the river occupied the rise without difficulty. General Imamura remained as before on the left bank of the Sha, opposite the line Tung-kou—Pien-niu-lu-pu.

* The actual troops to be attacked now formed, however, the left of the 2nd Siberian Corps.

The right wing, however, of General Kuroki's army, that is, the 2nd Division, was destined to see some brisk fighting on the 1st March. It will be remembered that upon the 28th February the left column of this division under General Ishibashi, had,

The Japanese
First Army.
General Ishiba-
shi's column of
the 2nd Division
captures Redoubts
17, 18, and 19
from the 3rd
Siberian Corps.

after capturing Redoubt 16, spent the day reconnoitring the strong position formed by the left of the 3rd Siberian Corps, while General Ohara upon the right had remained stationary, expecting a Russian attack. Opposite this division were the troops on that portion of the Russian line covered by the general title of the Kao-tai Ling position, as well as certain detachments which almost filled the gap thence to General Rennenkampf's force. The Kao-tai Ling position, so called, consisted of the portion of the front of the 3rd Siberian Corps from Redoubt 13* to Redoubt 23,† and was held by twelve battalions.‡ Immediately east of the position was a force§ under General Baumgarten, split up into detachments at Tai-kou, the Pei-ta-ling-ku Ling, Hsiao-pu, and North Yang-tan-san. Then, towards the east, Prince Tumanov disposed of three battalions and six squadrons, which held the Ku-ling-tzu Ling and the Hsiao-ta Ling.|| while upon the Hsi-ta Ling still lay the detachment of six battalions of the 1st Siberian Corps, under General Bachinski, which had arrived at the pass the previous evening.¶ Broadly speaking, General Ishibashi confronted the formidable Kao-tai Ling position, while the column under General Ohara was disposed opposite the forces of General Baumgarten and Prince Tumanov.

Before it was yet light the advance against Redoubts 17 and 18 commenced, under cover of a heavy artillery fire. Two battalions of the Japanese 4th Regiment and one company of sappers attacked the former work, while the 2nd Battalion

* The exact position of this redoubt is unknown.

† But exclusive now of Redoubt 16 which was in the hands of the Japanese.

‡ Three battalions of the 284th (Chembar) Regiment, three battalions of the 4th (Verkhne-Udinsk), two battalions of the 7th (Krasnoyarsk), and the 6th (Yeniseisk) Siberian Infantry Regiments.

§ The 10th East Siberian Rifle Regiment, the 288th (Kulikov) Regiment, one battalion of the 4th (Verkhne-Udinsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment, and three battalions of the 287th (Taruss) Regiment.

|| One battalion of the 284th (Chembar) Regiment, one battalion of the 9th East Siberian Rifle Regiment, one battalion of the 288th (Kulikov) Regiment and six squadrons Siberian Cossacks.

¶ The 2nd and 36th East Siberian Rifle Regiments.

of the 29th *Kobi* Regiment and two companies of the 29th Regiment advanced against Redoubt 18, and by dawn both columns were within three hundred and fifty paces of their objectives. The three field batteries and one mountain battery of the Japanese concentrated their fire mainly on Redoubt 17. Its defenders were soon in a critical condition, for ammunition began to run short, but two companies sent from Redoubt 19 brought invaluable assistance, and, in addition, a battalion of the 146th (Tsaritsin) Regiment came up from Pa-chia-tzu to the threatened point.* Meanwhile, the Japanese infantry attacking Redoubt 17 were unable to reduce the distance which lay between them and their goal, and volunteers were called for from the sapper company to go forward and to cut the wire entanglements. Every man in the company responded, and the fifty chosen at once advanced under a second-lieutenant and rushed up to the entanglements under a heavy fire and a shower of hand-grenades. So deadly was the fire that the sappers had to resort to stratagem to get on.

They lay on their backs, feigning death or severe wounds, and in this manner worked their way forward in the still uncertain light until they managed to reach the wire, which they then succeeded in cutting. Of the fifty who started twenty-eight were killed or wounded, a number which would probably have been exceeded had it not been for the co-operation of the Japanese artillery which was literally strewing the redoubt with high-explosive shells. So soon as the wire was cut the first line of the 4th Regiment rose and rushed forward with the bayonet. There was a brief struggle on the parapet, but by ten minutes to nine the survivors of the garrison were fleeing northwards. They halted, rallied and reformed upon a ridge some distance off. Ten minutes later the men of the 29th *Kobi* Regiment assaulted Redoubt 18 with equal success, the artillery co-operating until the very moment when the infantry reached the parapet. Then the Russian artillery suddenly opened fire against the two works. The Japanese guns endeavoured to intervene, but they produced little effect since those of the Russians were well concealed. The battalion of the Tsaritsin Regiment, however, which had moved up into a depression near Redoubt 17 now came under a very hot fire from the other captured work. About this time the Japanese began to

* The three and a half battalions of the 146th (Tsaritsin) Regiment which arrived from Fu-shun on the 28th February had been posted at Pa-chia-tzu to form the corps reserve.

press on northward, but the movement was checked by a counter-attack organized by the commander of the Tsaritsin Regiment; and the arrival of two more battalions of the same regiment brought still further relief for the Russians. The Japanese now concentrated the fire of several batteries upon Redoubt 19, which was evacuated by the remnant of the defenders and occupied, apparently, by some of the 29th *Kobi* Regiment. The main body of the 3rd Brigade assembled in Redoubt 18, and by 12.30 p.m. the western half of the Kao-tai Ling position was in the hands of the Japanese.*

On the right General Ohara still remained, awaiting attack, while the divisional cavalry closed up a little, protecting the right flank as before; but beyond repulsing a reconnaissance sent out by General Baumgarten the Japanese here effected nothing. Some indecisive fighting took place at the Ku-ling-tzu East of the Kao-tai Ling. Ling, when both sides attempted in turn to advance, but no vigour was shown. Upon hill 321 was a Japanese force, estimated by General Bachinski to consist of a battalion and some guns, which was probably a post to protect the line of communications of the 11th Division, which may have passed through San-lung-yu, whence a narrow-gauge railway ran northwards. Some fighting also took place about the Hsi-ta Ling, where the Japanese made several attacks against General Bachinski's detachment. What Japanese units were engaged is not known; they were detached from the 11th Division of the Ya-lu Army.

As has been said, General Linevich had proposed to take the offensive so soon as the 1st Siberian Corps reached him. It appears that General Kuropatkin had at first approved of the idea when it had been suggested by the commander of the First Manchurian Army, but subsequently his enthusiasm cooled, and he warned General Linevich that the Japanese might make such a wide turning movement in the east as to bring them upon the banks of the Hun Ho above Fu-shun. General Linevich seems to have thought that the

* This account of the capture of Redoubts 17, 18, and 19 is, so far as the Japanese movements are concerned, taken from a Japanese source. According to another Japanese source, however, the composition of the attackers was somewhat different from that described above, in that the 4th, and 29th *Kobi*, Regiments were in second line while the 29th Regiment provided the assaulting parties which seized Redoubts 17 and 18.

best method of bringing such a movement to an end, if it should be attempted, would be to exert indirect pressure elsewhere; and since the gap between the Japanese First and Ya-lu Armies offered a favourable objective, he for some time held to his plan in spite of the hesitation of the commander-in-chief. The 1st Siberian Corps was accordingly put in motion towards San-lung-yu. But the fighting upon the Kao-tai Ling position shook the resolution of the commander of the First Manchurian Army, and fearing that the Japanese might break through at that point he abandoned all ideas of counter-attack and recalled the corps to Hsi-hu-cheng. This hesitation in seizing upon the moment when the left of the Japanese 2nd Division had probably exhausted itself by its attacks upon Redoubts 17, 18 and 19 deprived General Linevich of the 1st Siberian Corps, for so soon as General Kuropatkin heard of its withdrawal, he moved it away for his screening operations in the west. All General Linevich could secure was permission to retain the two regiments which were with General Bachinski. Shortly after midnight the corps received its orders to start in the morning and to reach Pei-ta-pu, where it was to join the General Reserve, in two marches. In this way perished an offensive plan which certainly seems to have contained in it some chance of success.

Although the Ya-lu Army was again checked in the east, this was in no way due to lack of determination on the part of General Kawamura, but rather to the natural advantages conferred upon the defence by the mountainous nature of the scene

of action and also to the sterling leadership of both General Rennenkampf and General Danilov. The Ya-lu Army again checked.

After the dispatch of some four battalions to join General Liubavin and to hold the Tung-hsi-ho Ling* there remained upon the Tu-pin-tai position a force of sixteen and a half battalions, whose distribution was much the same as it had been on the 28th February, though the casualties sustained on that and previous days had greatly reduced the strength of most of the units. At dawn Colonel Polyanski collected some troops and made a counter-attack by which the Japanese were driven off the saddle north-east of Fountain Hill. In this engagement both sides suffered heavily, amongst those who fell upon the

* See p. 379. Two battalions of the 21st East Siberian Rifle Regiment, one battalion of the 22nd East Siberian Rifle Regiment, and three-quarters of a battalion of the 281st (Drissa) Regiment.

Russian side being Colonel Mozheiko of the General Staff. The sorely tried Chernoyar Regiment was now relieved by three battalions of the Bugulmin Regiment, which unit came in for some drastic treatment at the hands of General Rennenkampf. The acting regimental commander and some or all of the battalion leaders were superseded, and the command of the regiment was given to a lieutenant-colonel brought in from the Drissa Regiment.

After their repulse at dawn the Japanese 11th Division concentrated their fire upon Fountain Hill and the inner flank of the right section of the Russian line. The fire was maintained until about 2 p.m., when the Japanese pressed on in great force. Happening to be on Fountain Hill when the attack was delivered General Rennenkampf immediately moved up two and a half battalions of the Drissa Regiment which had been brought across early in the morning to Tu-pin-tai. These units formed his last reserve. Two of the battalions were thrown into the fighting line, the remaining two companies being posted in rear of the right section. This accession of strength produced the desired effect, for the Japanese were driven back and once more had to content themselves with fire action against the Russian right and centre.

Subsequently General Aliev, who had relieved General Ekk, incapacitated through illness, ordered the Russian left to advance; but the order was not carried out, for about 6 p.m. the Japanese again assaulted the Russian right. Again were the soldiers of the indomitable 11th Division beaten off; but nothing could kill the confidence in their invincibility which marked the victors of Port Arthur.

Severe fighting
by the 11th
Division.

Under cover of darkness they made a fresh attack about ten o'clock, and once more the Russians held their own in spite of the exhaustion which the incessant struggle of the past thirty-six hours had by now produced. The Japanese, however, were not yet done with. Before midnight they made still another effort; and only the effective employment of hand-grenades enabled the Russians this time to maintain their ground. Foiled once again, but still unbeaten and still determined to secure a victory, the attackers lay down close to the position, and not long after midnight were in motion again. The usual desperate struggle ensued, and at last success rewarded the perseverance of the Japanese, and Fountain Hill fell into their hands. Not long afterwards the Russians showed the

mettle which can be produced by resolute leadership; they made a counter-attack with the bayonet and drove the Japanese off the hill for which they had made such remarkable efforts. When dawn broke upon the 2nd March it was to find General Rennenkampf's line still unbroken, and the one thousand and eighty-eight casualties incurred by him in the previous twenty-four hours, high though the number was, was not too great a price to pay for success against a force of the prestige of the Japanese 11th Division. The fighting of the 1st March on the Tu-pin-tai position was equally creditable to both sides, the pertinacity in attack and stubbornness in defence being eminently characteristic of the Japanese and Russians.

No less gratifying to the Russians must have been the success of General Danilov farther east. On the morning of the 1st March his left flank was held by the 24th East Siberian Rifle Regiment,* and Three Finger Hill on the right was occupied by two battalions of the 23rd East Siberian Rifle Regiment. The General Danilov holds his own. artillery retained its original position on the ridge south of Hsi-chia-tzu, with two companies for escort; and south-west of that village were the three companies which formed the reserve. Ammunition had begun to run short the previous evening, but General Rennenkampf had sent up two hundred and fifty thousand rounds of small arm ammunition and fifteen hundred rounds for the guns, which had apparently arrived without mishap. Commencing early in the morning, the Japanese concentrated the fire of three batteries upon the position held by the 24th East Siberian Rifle Regiment, and about 11 a.m. made an attack which ended in failure against the eastern spur of Hill 206. After midday they turned their attention to Three Finger Hill, and during the afternoon and evening delivered as many as five assaults against that feature, but every effort was repulsed, as was a wide turning movement against Height 206 on the Russian left. In the day's fighting the defenders' artillery afforded invaluable assistance to the infantry. The Russian losses amounted in all to three officers and nearly five hundred other ranks; but during the day a welcome reinforcement had arrived, in the shape of the 85th (Viborg) Regiment from the General Reserve.

General Danilov, however, owed the success of his resistance in part to the presence of General Liubavin on the right. That

* Less one company in escort to the artillery.

commander had been ordered with his cavalry to the Tung-hsi-ho Ling, and three and three-quarter battalions had been detached by General Rennenkampf as a reinforcement to the mounted troops. Some delay seems to have occurred in collecting this mixed force and it was not until about 3 p.m. that General Liubavin was able to inform General Rennenkampf that he was ready to move off. He received instructions to take the offensive at once, and accordingly about 6 p.m. he sent two of his battalions* and four mountain guns towards Ta-ma-ku-shan, which force not only contributed materially to check the 1st *Kobi* Division in its attack against General Danilov, but compelled the Japanese to meet this threat by moving two and a half battalions and four mountain guns towards the Tung-hsi-ho Ling. Since the reports from General Danilov were of an alarming nature, General Liubavin dispatched a battalion and two mountain guns under Colonel Gurko of the General Staff to the Tung Ling. In addition two and a half squadrons were sent to General Danilov and two more were pushed out eastwards to keep touch with General Maslov's force, part of which was at Ying-pan and part at Mu-chi. This last measure was due to General Kuropatkin's uneasiness with regard to a wide turning movement by the Japanese in the east, a possibility which he seems still to have feared, notwithstanding the developments in the west.

By the 1st March the influence of the Japanese Third Army had begun to dominate the battle, as it continued to do till the end. Within its sphere of action during the day General Nogi's two western divisions—the 1st and 7th—and cavalry had made a great advance round the Russian right, with hardly any opposition from the insignificant Russian forces which had so far been in a position to check them, and his 9th Division had pressed on to Ssu-fang-tai. Though there had not been much fighting in this quarter, and though no great tactical defeat had so far been inflicted on the Russians, the threat of the Japanese Third Army had now made itself fully felt, and General Kuropatkin was making every endeavour to increase the small screen under General Birger already thrown out on the west, by a force of sixty-four battalions, to be obtained partly from his reduced General Reserve, but mostly at the expense of the Second Manchurian Army. He had also ordered the 1st Siberian Corps to countermarch back from the east. The great

Summary of
the 1st March.

* Fro 21st East Siberian Rifle Regiment.

straits to which the Russians were put by the premature expenditure of their General Reserve is illustrated by the efforts made by General Kaulbars to collect thirty-two battalions to furnish force for the screen, which resulted in the weakening of his fighting line and the bending back next day of the right of the Second Manchurian Army.

Outside the sphere of the Japanese Third Army, that is to say along the line, from Chang-chiao-pao to General Danilov's detachment, the Russians had not fared badly on the whole. It is true that round Chang-tan their forces had been driven in, but the losses inflicted on the Japanese had been so severe that a succession of such costly successes might lead to Marshal Oyama being compelled to draw upon his General Reserve in order to build up anew that portion of his line, instead of employing it at the decisive point. In the centre Putilov and One Tree Hills still defied the Japanese, and on the extreme left the Ya-lu Army had suffered an unmistakable defeat. Between these two portions of the field, at the Kao-tai Ling, the Japanese 2nd Division was pressing the left of the 3rd Siberian Corps and had now wrested four works from the Russians.

In strong contrast to the hurried collection of improvised forces and re-arrangement of strength being carried out by the Russians there was no similar commotion on the Japanese side. The Japanese armies continued their steady pressure all along the front, and the General Reserve still held aloof from the struggle. The simplicity of the task of the army which is able to continue its action on a pre-arranged plan as compared with that of a force which has given up its plan was on this day well illustrated.

Summary of
the 1st March
and night of
1st-2nd.

CHAPTER LXXII.

THE BATTLE OF MUKDEN—*continued*—OPERATIONS ON THE 2ND MARCH—COLLISION BETWEEN THE JAPANESE THIRD ARMY AND THE TROOPS COLLECTED BY GENERAL KUROPATKIN TO OPPOSE ITS MOVEMENT—THE JAPANESE SECOND ARMY CAPTURES CHOU-KUAN-TUN—MORE DETACHMENTS FORMED BY GENERAL KUROPATKIN—FIGHTING IN THE CENTRE—CAPTURE OF REDOUBTS 20 AND 23 BY THE 2ND DIVISION OF THE JAPANESE FIRST ARMY—THE YA-LU ARMY STILL CHECKED—THE JAPANESE GUARDS CROSS THE SHA HO DURING THE NIGHT OF THE 2ND-3RD MARCH.

(Plate 51 and Plan 62.)

WHEN morning broke on Thursday, the 2nd March, a marked change was apparent in the disposition of the Russian right. It was not merely that General Grekov's cavalry was now miles in rear of the line it had held throughout the winter: where the change was really significant was in the line of Russian corps which until the previous day had rested its right flank upon Chang-chiao-pao. In this line an ominous angle had been formed. It was now sharply bent back so that for some six miles the right flank of the infantry of the Second Manchurian Army ran approximately from south to north. The Provisional Rifle Corps had been withdrawn completely from the front, and the VIIIth Corps was now astride of the Hun Ho, with its right flank well refused. Beyond its left the Xth Corps prolonged the line generally east and west.*

* *The Provisional Rifle Corps* was concentrated in the area Tou-tai-tzu (south-west of Ma-tou-lan)—Ma-tou-lan—Ta-wang-kuan-pu.

The VIIIth Corps was thus disposed:—

Right bank of the Hun Ho—

At San-chia-tzu, 60th (Zamostye) Regiment.

At Wan-hsiu-tai, 53rd (Volhynia) Regiment.

Before the narrative of the day's fighting is commenced it will be convenient to describe the movements of the various fractions of force which General Kuropatkin was assembling to withstand the growing menace against his right. These forces have already been specified, but confusion will be obviated if they are enumerated once again. They consisted of the following :—

- (a) General Birger's detachment, from the General Reserve.
- (b) The 25th Infantry Division under General Topornin, from the General Reserve.*
- (c) General Vasilev's Composite Division, from the Xth Corps.
- (d) Thirty-two battalions, from the Second Manchurian Army.
- (e) The 1st Siberian Corps, from the First Manchurian Army.

As regards General Birger's force, it has already been related how it arrived late on the evening of the 1st March at Kao-li-tun; and throughout the 2nd it remained there, unaffected by the day's incidents elsewhere. The 25th Division, however, was ordered not

Foot-note continued from p. 381.]

Left bank of the Hun Ho—

At Chou-kuan-tun, three battalions of the 59th (Liublin) Regiment.

Between Chou-kuan-tun and Ku-chia-tzu, three battalions of the 58th (Praga) Regiment, and two battalions of the 57th (Modlin) Regiment.

Local reserve, one battalion of the 58th (Praga), one battalion of the 59th (Liublin), and two battalions of the 57th (Modlin) Regiments.

At Ku-chia-tzu, 56th (Jitomir) Regiment.

Local reserve at Hsin-tai-tzu, 55th (Podolia) Regiment.

At Ma-tou-lan, 54th (Minsk) Regiment.

The Xth Corps was thus disposed :—

Chan-ssu-pu—Yang-shu-lin-tzu, 1st Brigade 31st Division.

Yang-shu-lin-tzu—Meng-ta-pu, two battalions of the 33rd (Elets) Regiment.

At Fu-chia-chuang-tzu, two battalions of the 33rd (Elets) Regiment.

At Kao-chia-tai, 34th (Syev) Regiment.

The remainder of the Xth Corps under General Vasilev was now en route to join General Kuropatkin's screen.

The Second Manchurian Army Reserve :—

At Shu-kan-ko, 215th (Buzuluk) Regiment, 241st (Orsk) Regiment, and 5th Battery 28th Artillery Brigade.

* More accurately this force was the XVIth Corps (less the 41st Division). Of the 41st Division one brigade had been sent north to guard the line (see p. 263), and the other was with General Birger. The XVIth Corps was therefore reduced to the 25th Division and corps head-quarters. General Topornin was the corps commander.

to make for Kao-li-tun—as originally decided—but for Sha-lin-pu, to which place the newly formed division under General Vasilev was also directed. In reference to the further thirty-two battalions to be found by the Second Manchurian Army, it will be remembered that upon the previous evening General Kaulbars, in response to a demand from the commander-in-chief, had endeavoured to extricate his VIIIth Corps from the fight, and that this expedient had failed. Urgent demands for this force were again received on the morning of the 2nd, and he decided to form another composite division from the nearest troops at hand. His choice this time fell upon the 215th (Buzuluk), 241st (Orsk), 54th (Minsk), and the 60th (Zamostye) Regiments, to which was added the 5th Battery 28th Artillery Brigade, and he placed these units under the command of Major-General Golembatovski.* This composite force assembled about noon at Shu-kan-ko, preparatory to marching north to Sha-lin-pu; and since it was twenty battalions short of what General Kuropatkin required General Kaulbars proposed to make good the deficiency from his VIIIth Corps so soon as possible.

The 1st Siberian Corps, eighteen battalions strong, left Hsi-hu-cheng about 8 a.m., but its intervention in any fighting in the west could not be hoped for either on this day or the next.

To turn to the operations of the day: the Russian cavalry on the right had now split up into two distinct groups—a northern and a southern group. Round Ku-chia-tai were General Grekov's reserve, the 5th Ural Cossacks, and the newly arrived 2nd Independent Cavalry Brigade, while some ten miles to the south, at San-chia-tzu, were the fractions under Generals Pavlov and Eichholz. About 7 a.m. General Grekov reported to head-quarters of the Second Manchurian Army his proposed plan of action for the day. A reconnoitring detachment was to move along the right bank of the Liao Ho; he himself, with the remainder of the cavalry of the northern group, would move north-west towards that river and, passing through Yi-pa-tai, would then strike the Hsin-min-tun road; and a regiment from General Pavlov's force was to reconnoitre along the left bank of the Liao Ho. A reply was duly received from General Kaulbars, in which particular stress was laid upon the necessity of ascertaining the direction of the enemy's march during the 2nd. General Grekov was to send definite

The Russian
cavalry and
the Japanese
Third Army.

* The commander of the 2nd Brigade, 15th Division, VIIIth Corps.

information as to whether the Japanese were moving towards Mukden or on Tieh-ling. About eight o'clock he ordered the 5th Ural Cossacks to move out and to keep touch with the advancing columns of the Japanese; and starting northwards the Russian regiment was soon engaged with patrols which were probably from the Japanese 7th Division. It then fell back to Chi-kun-tai and after crossing the advanced units of the Japanese 1st Division reached Li-fan-tun about one o'clock. From here yet another Japanese column was soon descried heading towards the north-east. This was the main body of the Japanese 2nd Cavalry Brigade moving up along the Hsiao-shui Ho. After having scouted round the front of this force the 5th Ural Cossacks retired north-east over the Hsin-min-tun road and reached Chin-tui-tzu after dark. Here it spent the night after a day's work which had led to no casualties.

The Japanese cavalry held on undisturbed and on arriving at the high road bivouacked about three miles north-west of Ta-shih-chiao, with its outposts in touch with those of the Cossacks. It was joined during the evening by the detachment from Hsin-min-tun, which had crossed the Liao Ho at Ma-chang.

The steady advance of the Japanese Third Army had brought the bulk of it so far to the north-east that when General Grekov left his bivouac about 11 a.m. all chance of his force reaching Yi-pa-tai was out of the question. His late start is difficult to account for, unless it was due to a desire on his part to wait for information from two squadrons of the 1st Chita Cossacks, who were apparently across the Liao Ho.* Some time earlier he had sent four squadrons of the Chernigov Dragoons towards Ma-chang on the Liao Ho, but these, coming upon the Japanese 2nd Cavalry Brigade, were unable to approach the river until later in the day; and he himself with the remainder of the cavalry now under his own hand made off due north for Lao-pien on the Hsin-min-tun road.† This journey northwards was not without incident, for General Grekov had to

* It is stated in the *Russian Official History*, Vol. V, p. 200, in the narrative of the 2nd March, that these squadrons had been sent across the Liao Ho the previous day but according to a footnote, p. 184 of the same volume (reproduced on p. 353 of this volume), the whole of the 1st Chita Cossack Regiment was with General Grekov at Ku-chia-tai on the night of the 1st-2nd March.

† That is to say the reserve plus the 2nd Independent Cavalry Brigade (less four squadrons).

run the gauntlet of the Japanese 7th and 1st Divisions as well as of the 1st and 2nd Cavalry Brigades, which were just in front of the advanced units of the infantry. His journey, therefore, had all the inconveniences of a flank march, and his column, or at any rate his left flank guard, was continuously under rifle and artillery fire. On arriving at Lao-pien he appears to have become aware for the first time, and then only from information given him by the Chinese, that Japanese troops were in Hsin-min-tun.* This put an end to any question of crossing the Liao near that town and accordingly the Russian cavalry, after a typical day's work, bivouacked for the night at San-tiao-pu some four miles north of Kao-li-tun. During the night it got into touch with General Birger's detachment.†

The Japanese infantry columns, across the heads of which General Grekov just managed to make his way, marched on undisturbed until they were within a short distance of the old railway embankment. The remaining division—the 9th—was

now some distance behind, upon the right rear, but the 1st Cavalry Brigade had been transferred from the Second Army, with orders, apparently, to unite with the other brigade. By nightfall the brigade had reached Li-fan-tun. Shortly after midday the centre column, consisting of the 7th Division, arrived at Sha-lin-pu and here struck against one of the larger fractions of General Kuropatkin's screen, owing to the fact that the Russian 25th Division under General Topornin, which had been preparing to move from Mukden to Kao-li-tun along the Hsin-min-tun road, had early in the morning been directed upon Sha-lin-pu instead. A similar order had been given to another unit of the screen—the division under General Vasilev, and about two in the afternoon

* As a matter of fact it is more than probable that the cavalry detachment which had been at Hsin-min-tun had by this time left that town, owing to a protest from the Chinese Authorities.

† The northern group of Russian cavalry was therefore disposed for the night as follows:—

The 5th Ural Cossack Regiment (four squadrons) at Chin-tui-tzu.

Two squadrons of the 1st Chita Cossack Regiment, and four squadrons of the Chernigov Dragoons on the right bank of the Liao Ho.

Nine squadrons of the Chernigov Dragoons, the 1st Chita Cossack and Terek-Kuban Cavalry Regiments, see foot-note (+), p. 353, and the 20th Horse Artillery Battery (6 guns) at San-tiao-pu.

According to the *Russian Official History* there were ten squadrons at San-tiao-pu, but it is not clear how this figure is arrived at.

one of his brigades* arrived at Chan-ssu-tun, the remaining brigade being still on the left bank of the Hun Ho.† Shortly after the former brigade had arrived at Chan-ssu-tun its commander, General Shatilov, received a message from the chief of staff of the XVth Corps to the effect that Sha-lin-pu was occupied by the enemy and that he was to move on and attack the village from the south-west.‡ There was no delay in carrying out the order, and an hour later the Russian advanced guard, consisting of two battalions of the Orel Regiment, reached the shelter of the railway embankment immediately in front of Sha-lin-pu. During the advance a heavy rifle fire was maintained from that village, in which were units of the advanced guard of the Japanese 7th Division, and an enfilading fire was also opened from Tai-ai-pu against an attempt of the Russians to work round Sha-lin-pu from the south-west.§ General Shatilov's efforts now came to an end. He had no guns with his force and a Japanese battery was able to fire in complete security. When fighting ceased with the approach of darkness the Russian troops remained where they were, in possession of the embankment opposite Sha-lin-pu.

While this action had been taking place the Russian 25th Infantry Division had also been engaged immediately upon General Shatilov's right. At 2.15 p.m. it left Li-wan-pu for Sha-lin-pu, and two hours later the advanced guard reached Ma-tien-tzu, where it received information that the old railway embankment was in the hands of the Japanese.|| The divisional commander now gave verbal orders for the Ivangorod Regiment to attack Sha-lin-pu from the front and for the Yuriev Regiment to endeavour to envelop the village from the north. The Lithuania Regiment was to form the reserve and the 4th and 5th Batteries of the 25th Artillery Brigade were sent to the right flank. The remaining

* The 2nd Brigade 9th Division.

† The 2nd Brigade 31st Division.

This brigade had concentrated about 6 p.m. on the 1st March at a village one mile south-west of Ta-chang-ko and during the night went into quarters at Ta-su-chia-pu. Its original destination was Su-hu-chia-pu, but a change was made, for about 7 a.m. it moved towards Hsiao-ho-tun; when within a mile and a half of that place it was met by an orderly from the commander-in-chief with directions to move to Sha-lin-pu.

‡ See foot-note (*), p. 382.

§ The advanced guard of the Japanese 7th Division was found by the 13th Brigade. It was reinforced by the 15th Regiment from the 1st Division during the action.

|| The 99th (Ivangorod) Regiment formed the advanced guard.

batteries proceeded to a position at Ma-tien-tzu. When the advance developed the Japanese in Sha-lin-pu were in danger of being assailed on three sides, since General Vasilev, as has been related, was also attacking from the front and endeavouring to do so from the south-west. But the 25th Division received a check, for Chan-chia-fan was held by the enemy, and an enfilade fire from there delayed the attempt to envelop Sha-lin-pu from the north. These Japanese troops were from the 1st Division.* In addition to the assistance thus afforded, General Nogi reinforced the 7th Division about 5 p.m. with the 15th *Kobi* Brigade and the 2nd Artillery Brigade, and when night fell the village of Sha-lin-pu was still in the hands of the Japanese.† The fighting, however, had been decidedly severe, and the Japanese 13th Brigade, which had borne the brunt of it, had suffered six hundred casualties.‡ During the night the rear of the Japanese columns closed up; but save for an exchange of shots from time to time between the opposing outposts the night passed without incident.

Of the southern group of the Russian cavalry, that is, of the detachments of Generals Eichholz and Pavlov, General Eichholz's force was now reduced to a battery and four hundred and fifty horsemen, and was soon still further diminished. One and a half squadrons were requisitioned by the head-quarters of the Second Manchurian Army for service as flying posts; and another one and a half squadrons, with the battery, were demanded for General Golematovski's detachment in General Kuropatkin's screen. This left but two hundred and thirty mounted men, which General Eichholz handed over to the Zamostye Regiment at San-chia-tzu, while he himself departed to head-

The Russian cavalry. The detachments of Generals Eichholz and Pavlov.

* The main body of the 1st Division passed the night two miles west of Li-fan-tun, with advanced detachments on and over the embankment.

† At nightfall the distribution of the Russian 25th Division was as follows:—

The 98th (Yuriev) Regiment—southern portion of Chan-chia-fan and about half a mile of old embankment south-west of village.

The 99th (Ivangorod) Regiment—from the left of the 98th (Yuriev) Regiment to the Sha-lin-pu—Mukden road and also some detached buildings about one hundred paces in front of the old embankment.

The 97th (Lithuania) Regiment—in rear, with a detachment at Kau-lin-tai.

The 100th (Ostrov) Regiment reached Ma-tien-tzu during the action and remained there.

‡ The 13th Brigade belonged to the 7th Division.

quarters. As regards General Pavlov, his first anxiety was not to reconnoitre the enemy, but to find his commander, and with this object he started northwards with his ten squadrons, thus missing the dispatch rider who was looking for him with an order from General Grekov.* About 8.30 a.m. his force reached Chi-hu-yao, where it halted for three hours, and during this delay the Japanese 7th Division got so far to the eastward that General Pavlov recognized the necessity for covering the exposed flank of the Second Manchurian Army to the best of his ability, and moved parallel to the Japanese 7th Division.

Reaching Pa-chia-tai about one o'clock and proceeding in a north-easterly direction, he arrived some two and a half hours later at Ai-chia-pu. Soon the head of the Japanese 7th Division was seen to the north, and an interchange of rifle and artillery fire continued until dark. While this engagement was in progress General Pavlov received a note from General Kaulbars informing him that it had been decided to collect a cavalry force under the command of Major-General Tolmachev for duty with the Second Manchurian Army on the left of the Hun, and that he was to hand over eight squadrons to that commander. Left after that with but two squadrons and a battery General Pavlov continued to receive further orders of a somewhat confusing nature; and since the misunderstanding only grew deeper over the telephone he handed over this remnant of his command to General Tolmachev.†

Owing to the continued ill-concerted action of the Russian cavalry the great bulk of the Japanese Third Army was again able to advance practically unopposed and almost unreconnoitred until it came in contact with General Kuropatkin's screen. And on its inner flank the 9th Division also was not seriously engaged until it struck another fraction of that force. That division received instructions early in the morning to move eastwards from Ssu-fang-tai towards Chang-tan in order to co-operate with the 8th Division of the Second Army, but while

The Japanese
Third Army.
The 9th Division
sharply engaged.

* See p. 383.

† General Tolmachev had been in command of the 2nd Brigade of the Orenburg Cossack Division which had been broken up.

During the night he assembled fourteen squadrons and twelve horse artillery guns near Ai-chia-pu and Ta-wang-kuan-pu.

it was on the march it obtained news that Chang-tan had been evacuated by the Russians and consequently then headed about north-eastwards. No noteworthy incident appears to have occurred until about five o'clock in the afternoon, by which time the division was approaching the villages of Tsai-yen-tzu and Pei-ho-tzu. Here it was vigorously assailed by the composite force under General Golembatovski.

This force had assembled at Shu-kan-ko; but instead of proceeding northwards to Sha-lin-pu had been detained at the former village by a direct order from General Kaulbars, and had undertaken the offensive in accordance with a communication from General Kaulbars's successor—General von der Launitz.* The Orsk and Zamostye Regiments were directed against Pei-ho-tzu, but at the eastern edge of the village they came under artillery fire and began to suffer considerable losses, while the mud walls which encircled the village enabled the Japanese to make a very stubborn defence. Notwithstanding this, four companies succeeded in forcing their way into the village, and having done so immediately began to sing hymns with the object of warning the remainder of the force that Pei-ho-tzu was in Russian hands. Thus forewarned, the companies in rear refrained from firing upon the village and rushed forward to join their comrades.

Meanwhile the Buzuluk Regiment had been steadily advancing against Tsai-yen-tzu, under rifle and artillery fire both from that village and Pei-ho-tzu. Although the fire from the latter place took them in flank, when dusk came the Russians had got to within two hundred paces of the village, and shortly afterwards, supported on the right by the Minsk Regiment, they charged with the bayonet and drove out the Japanese, securing as trophies of the assault seven machine guns and seventy-five rifles, in addition to sixty-four prisoners. After this successful action the troops of General Golembatovski fell back to Shu-kan-ko, by order of General von der Launitz. This sudden and spirited attack seems to have been completely unexpected by the Japanese, who, according to the report of an eyewitness, had been advancing with a certain absence of military precaution. According to the same source the effect of the repulse upon them was very marked, for it would appear that a feeling of over-confidence had led to this unmistakable, if local, defeat. General Nogi's troops were now face to face with a

* See p. 390.

resistance of a much more determined character than that made by the Russian cavalry, which had now left the area bounded by the Liao Ho, the Hun Ho, and the Hsin-min-tun highway. Each of his divisions had this day been checked by infantry. General Kuropatkin's screen was now more or less in position, and it had inflicted the first repulse which the Japanese Third Army had experienced since its arrival from Port Arthur.

It was one of the ironies of war that the sharp reverse suffered by the Japanese 9th Division was indirectly due to the successful advance of the 8th Division immediately on its right, for General Golembatovski's presence at Shu-kan-ko so late as the afternoon of the 2nd was caused by the fact that General Kaulbars had become alarmed by the threat exercised by the Japanese 8th Division, the left column of which had reached Hsiao-li-pu-tzu.* It was this circumstance which led him to write personally to General Golembatovski the following note:—

The Japanese
Second Army.
The 8th Division.

“Such troops as have not yet marched north or north-east from Shu-kan-ko are to remain where they are pending further orders. They are to take up a position on the right bank of the Hun Ho in order to withstand the advance of the enemy from the south along the right bank. . . .”

This was complied with, and some time later General von der Launitz ordered General Golembatovski to assume the offensive and to occupy the line Pei-ho-tzu—Tsai-yen-tzu—with the result already described. The latter order was issued on account of the pressure put on the VIIIth Corps still farther to the east, by a successful attack on Chou-kuan-tun by the right column of the Japanese 8th Division and the whole of the 5th Division.

This seizure of Chou-kuan-tun was the main contribution made by the Japanese Second Army to the success which this day

* The 8th Division had resumed its advance at daybreak in two columns and a reserve, without encountering much opposition from the Russians.

Left Column.—Major-General Yoda. From Chang-chiao-pao, the 5th Regiment and three batteries of mountain artillery.

Right Column.—Major-General Kamada. From Chang-tan, the 16th Brigade and three batteries of field artillery.

Reserve.—1st and 2nd Battalions 31st Regiment, three batteries of mountain artillery, one battery of captured Russian guns, and two battalions of *Kobi* infantry.

crowned the Japanese efforts west of the railway. West of the Hun the 8th Division had before 8 a.m. occupied without resistance the villages of Chang-chiao-pao and Chang-tan, from which the Provisional Rifle Corps had fallen back before dawn. An important portion of the Russian line thus fell into Japanese hands, and, as described, it was now unmistakably bent back. In anticipation of this success Marshal Oyama had instructed General Oku beforehand how he should act, for on this occasion it was not intended that the Russians should retreat unmolested. At all costs they were to be made to fight decisively, and, to prevent their slipping from the toils of the net designed to fall round them, were to be pursued by the Second Army from a north-westerly direction.* Shortly before the orders for this movement were issued a Russian map was brought to army head-quarters, which showed that the villages behind the captured line had been prepared for defence, and this led to the belief that heavy opposition might still be met. Bearing this and his own instructions in mind, General Oku issued the following orders at 9.30 a.m. :—

1. The army will this day advance up the left bank of the Hun, and try to force the enemy to the north-east.*

2. The 5th Division, so soon as it has made the necessary preparations, will attack the enemy at Chou-kuan-tun, occupy it, and reconnoitre his situation at Ta-han-tai-tzu, Hsiao-han-tai-tzu, and Fu-chia-tun.

3. The 8th Division, so soon as it has made the necessary preparations, will advance and occupy Liu-ti-kan-tzu† and reconnoitre the enemy's situation at Tou-tai-tzu and Ma-tou-lan. This division will maintain connexion with the Third Army.

* The following footnote appears in the source from which these orders are quoted :—

“Marshal Oyama's order said *from the north-west*, leading to the supposition that the Second Army was to swing round its left in order to pursue from that point of the compass. General Oku evidently understood that he was to follow up from the south-west towards the north-east. Possibly the translator may be at fault, but it was found impossible to clear up the point.”

† This village is called Wang-pu-tsz in the document from which these orders are taken. The position of Wang-pu-tsz as given upon the sketch map accompanying it exactly corresponds with that of Liu-ti-kan-tzu upon the most accurate maps, and the latter name has therefore been inserted.

4. The 4th Division will advance so soon as it has made the necessary preparations, will occupy the line from Pao-hsiang-tun to Ku-chia-tzu, and will reconnoitre the enemy's situation at Yang-shu-lin-tzu and Meng-ta-pu.

5. The Heavy Artillery Brigade will endeavour with the least possible delay to move from its present position to one south of San-de-pu.

6. The army reserve will assemble so soon as possible immediately to the south of San-de-pu.

In accordance with the above, each division—in spite of the fatigue and privation incidental to the serious fighting of the past thirty-six hours—began to advance. It has been mentioned that the left column of the 8th Division reached Hsiao-li-pu-tzu, and the effect which this advance produced has been explained. The column on the right co-operated with the 5th Division in the attack upon Chou-kuan-tun, and its action has now to be described.

At eleven o'clock the 5th Division moved forward. The morning was raw and cloudy; snow was falling; and it was freezing hard. In the clearer intervals, when some glimpses could be secured of the objective, it was seen that, in addition to holding Chou-kuan-tun itself, the Russians had some works upon a kind of small cliff or bluff upon the river bank and some trenches between the cliff and village. No artillery could be made out near the place, but three batteries of field and one of heavy artillery could be seen to the east, in the neighbourhood of Ta-han-tai-tzu. Shortly after one o'clock the 5th Division began to concentrate in Chang-chuang-tzu and the men of the 5th Regiment of Mountain Artillery were at once set to work making emplacements for their guns all along the eastern edge of the village. By 2.45 p.m. the guns opened fire upon the Russian works on the cliff, while to the east the firing which had been heard for some time past showed that the right of the Japanese Second Army was also engaged.

At this juncture the narrative of this action will be broken off to describe what effect this converging movement of the Japanese against his right centre and left had by now produced upon General Kaulbars.

During the forenoon it had been clear to him that some redistribution of his front was absolutely essential, in view

The Japanese
Second Army.
The 5th Division
advances against
Chou-kuan-tun.

of the steady advance of the enemy, and of the depletion of the cadres which now remained to him for opposing it. Accordingly, about noon, he issued instructions to the following effect:—

Orders and counter-orders in the Second Manchurian Army.

- (1) One regiment was to be sent to the right bank of the Hun to occupy the line Wan-hsiu-tai—Hsiao-li-pu-tzu.
- (2) Chou-kuan-tun—Ku chia-tzu was to be considered as the advanced position.
- (3) Tou-tai-tzu—Hsin-tai-tzu was to be considered as the main position.
- (4) The army reserve was to consist of—
 - (a) two Rifle brigades at Ma-tou-lan and
 - (b) one Rifle brigade at Hsin-tai-tzu.

Since the first order proved impossible of fulfilment, for the left column of the Japanese 8th Division was already close to Hsiao-li-pu-tzu, General Kaulbars about half-past two ordered the VIIIth Corps back to the main position. It was at this time and for the same reason that he wrote the letter to General Golematovski already quoted, directing him to stay at Shu-kan-ko instead of marching north-east to his destination.* As a matter of fact the left column of the Japanese 8th Division did not proceed beyond Hsiao-li-pu-tzu; but General Golematovski nevertheless did good work at Shu-kan-ko, as has been seen.

About an hour afterwards the control of the residue of the Second Manchurian Army passed from the hands of General Kaulbars. He had previously been appointed by General Kuropatkin to assume command of the screen, but the situation of his own army had been too precarious to allow him to leave sooner. Now, however, having made all the arrangements which he considered necessary for the situation, he handed over the command to General von der Launitz, who had arrived some hours previously and had ridden over the ground in company with him.† He took away with him a portion of his staff, leaving the remainder and the chief of staff to his successor.

As so often happens when a change of this sort takes place, the first order of the new commander was an amendment of the

* See p. 390.

† General von der Launitz was on the staff of the Second Manchurian Army, but in what exact capacity is not known.

last one issued by the outgoing general. General von der Launitz thought that there might be some risk in withdrawing the VIIIth Corps, owing to the menace on the right bank of the Hun, and he gave orders that the corps was not to move without his special permission. Unfortunately some of the troops were already acting upon the last orders of his predecessor, and when the new instructions reached them, out of four regiments affected, apparently only one—the 59th (Liublin) Regiment—complied.* It was in Chou-kuan-tun, and had therefore to oppose alone the heavy attack which was being directed by the Japanese 5th Division and the inner column of the 8th Division against that village.†

To resume the story of that action: at 2.45 p.m. the Japanese mountain guns had begun to shell the works on the cliff, and from here the Russian 57th and 58th Regiments retired upon the Main Position. Five minutes later the infantry of the Japanese 5th Division advanced. The 41st Regiment, on both sides of the river, and on its right two battalions of the 42nd Regiment went forward against the Russians in long extended lines one behind the other.‡ To the left and across the river the right column of the 8th Division deployed three battalions of the 32nd Regiment to co-operate in the attack, and brought its three field batteries also into action. The Russian 59th Regiment did what it could to withstand this pressure on front and flank, and it was well seconded by the batteries of the 29th Artillery Brigade, which were still in the village; but the task was manifestly too great for the defenders. The guns soon had to cease fire, and were only got

* Only four regiments were affected by the order regarding retirement, as will be understood from the following which shows the positions of the units of the VIIIth Corps at the time:—

Already on the Main Position (Tou-tai-tzu)—the 53rd (Volhynia) Regiment.

With General Golematovski—the 54th (Minsk) Regiment.

Already on the Main Position (Hsin-tai-tzu)—the 55th (Podolia) Regiment.

In front line and affected by the order—the 56th (Jitomir), 57th (Modlin), 58th (Praga), and 59th (Liublin) Regiments.

With General Golematovski—the 60th (Zamostye) Regiment.

† It was now that General Launitz instructed General Golematovski to attack from Shu-kan-ko.

‡ One battalion of the 42nd Regiment had no less than twelve lines at about one hundred to one hundred and fifty yards distance. The 11th and 21st Regiments were kept back owing to their heavy losses of the previous day.

away with difficulty, the gunners having to man-handle them out of action; and by five o'clock some of the Japanese 5th Division made their way along the river bed and occupied the bluff which had been abandoned by the 57th and 58th Regiments. The defenders were now in extreme danger of being cut off. Before six o'clock the order to retire was given, and the 59th Regiment fell back to Hsin-tai-tzu under a heavy fire from the right column of the Japanese 8th Division, which took it in flank.* Within a few minutes the leading units of the 5th Division rushed into the village and immediately afterwards the national emblem of Japan was hoisted over its walls.† The right column of the 8th Division then proceeded to Wan-hsiu-tai.

When the Japanese 4th Division had occupied Pei-tai-tzu after its successful night attack the enemy still held on to Huang-ti. Almost opposite that village, at La-pa-tai, was a Japanese battalion, the commander of which sent out a reconnoitring party about 8 a.m. The works at Huang-ti were reported to be strong; but symptoms of unreadiness were observed by the Japanese scouts, and the battalion commander decided to try and seize the village by a sudden rush, which plan he successfully carried out at nine o'clock. Some time later the left of the division began to move on to Ku-chia-tzu, in which operation it was greatly helped by the 13th Artillery Regiment sent to support it. The batteries took position northwest of San-de-pu and were soon engaged in an artillery duel with Russian guns at Hsiao-han-tai-tzu. Later the Japanese guns moved forward to Pei-tai-tzu, and under cover of their fire the infantry reached Ku-chia-tzu with but little loss. The attackers drove out the garrison of that place, and shortly afterwards Erh-ta-tzu also fell into their hands. These movements upon his left had been visible to the commander of the Japanese 34th Regiment, and they showed him that the time was favourable for him also to join issue with the

* The four regiments of the VIIIth Corps affected by the order to retire were disposed for the night as follows :—

The 56th (Jitomir) Regiment at Hsin-tai-tzu.

The 57th (Modlin) Regiment at Fu-chia-tun.

The 58th (Praga) Regiment at Tou-tai-tzu.

The 59th (Liublin) Regiment at Hsin-tai-tzu.

† The 21st Regiment had by this come up and joined in the assault. The casualties in the 42nd Regiment during the day were thirty per cent. of its strength.

enemy. Leaving his trenches, therefore, he took Fu-chia-chuang-tzu about midnight.

So far as the Second Manchurian Army was concerned this capture terminated the fighting of the 2nd March. The result of the day's operations had been that that army was forced to yield its advanced position to the Japanese and to occupy

the new line Shu-kan-ko—Tou-tai-tzu—Fu-chia-tun — Chan-ssu-pu — Meng-ta-pu — Kao-chia-tai. The 5th Siberian Corps and Colonel Tomioka's detachment. Insomuch, however, as the Japanese Second Army stretched still farther to the east, it will be convenient to carry on this portion of the narrative

to Lin-sheng-pu and to describe the operations in the sector where Colonel Tomioka confronted the 5th Siberian Corps of the Third Manchurian Army. These, however, may be dismissed in a few words, for no fighting took place other than an exchange of artillery fire. Towards evening, it is true, the Japanese infantry made an attempt to advance, but this was checked. Nevertheless the retirement of the Xth Corps had rendered the position of the advanced post of the 5th Siberian Corps at Hei-lin-tai decidedly insecure, and General Dembovski withdrew it during the night. The demand for more troops which, as will be seen, was again made during the day by the commander-in-chief, reacted upon the 5th Siberian Corps. It had to furnish units for the reserve of the Third Manchurian Army, in relief of troops taken therefrom by General Kuropatkin, and by evening its strength had sunk to eighteen battalions and sixty-four guns.* The heavy guns were dismounted during the night.

Whilst all this fighting and the movements caused by it had been in progress on the west of the line of railway, General Kuropatkin had been again beset by fears for his communications.

* To the reserve of the Third Manchurian Army were sent the 243rd (Zlatoust) Regiment (corps reserve) and the 4th Battery of the 40th Artillery Brigade to Su-chia-tun. Two battalions of the 214th (Mokshan) Regiment to Hsiao-chi-shun-pu. Two squadrons of cavalry to Colonel Stakhovich at Lan-shan-pu.

The 5th Siberian Corps was after this distributed as follows:—

Right Section.—The 213th (Orovai) Regiment, two battalions of the 214th (Mokshan) Regiment, two battalions of the 216th (Insar) Regiment, and four batteries of the 28th Artillery Brigade.

Left Section.—The 242nd (Belebeev) Regiment, one battalion of the 244th (Borisov) Regiment, and three batteries of the 40th Artillery Brigade

Corps Reserve.—Three battalions of the 244th (Borisov) Regiment, and two battalions of the 216th (Insar) Regiment.

At this time he considered that the railway about Tieh-ling or Hu-shih-tai was menaced from the west, and the information which was at his disposal seemed to indicate that a division of the enemy had already crossed the Hsin-min-tun road and was making for one or other of those stations. That such a report should have gained credence is an indication of how ill the commander-in-chief was served by the cavalry under General Grekov, and, as may well be imagined, its receipt caused him the greatest anxiety. To oppose such a movement he had no reserve available, and all he could do was to send an urgent message to General Gerngross to hasten the arrival of the 1st Siberian Corps.* That corps was directed to halt for the night at Chan-sa-ma-tun and at daybreak on Friday the 3rd to march to the Emperor's Tombs, north of Mukden, with the object of protecting the city.† In addition, General Istomin, commanding the lines of communication, was hurried off to Tieh-ling to take command of all troops and administrative units which might happen to be there; and various drafts en route to join their units were stopped and placed at his disposal. Towards evening two further reports came in. One from Colonel Drozdovski of the Head-Quarters Intelligence Staff—dispatched from Lao-pien on the Hsin-min-tun road—reported the Japanese to be moving east; while another from General Grekov stated that some of the enemy were advancing northwards towards the Hsin-min-tun road. There was thus some discrepancy between these two dispatches, but neither furnished any confirmation of the report as to the presence of a Japanese division north of the Hsin-min-tun road.

Nevertheless, General Kuropatkin considered it advisable to assemble fresh troops to afford protection, direct or indirect, to the railway. For this he first called upon General Bilderling, the commander of the Third Manchurian Army, for three regiments and three batteries to be sent to Mukden—a

* On the previous evening the General Reserve had consisted of the 25th Division, the 145th (Novocherkask) Regiment and the 147th (Samara) Regiment. The 25th Division had now passed from General Kuropatkin's immediate control, and the Samara Regiment had been lent to General Bilderling (see foot-note (*), p. 398). Apparently the Novocherkask Regiment was still in General Reserve, but the words "no reserve available" are a literal translation of the text of the *Russian Official History*.

† The 1st Siberian Corps did not reach Chan-sa-ma-tun, but went into bivouac at a village about a mile south-west of Min-chia-tun.

request which General Bilderling not only complied with but on his own initiative supplemented by the gift of three more battalions and two squadrons.* These units were placed under the command of Major-General de Vitt, and thus another detachment was brought into being, which, after some contradictory instructions, finally received definite orders about 8 p.m. to march on Mukden and to take up a position west of the city, between the railway and the Emperor's Tombs, with its left towards the Hsin-min-tun road.† Some time after midnight this force had got as far as Mukden railway station.

Yet another detachment had to be created, this time for the immediate defence of the line. This force was made up of drafts amounting to four battalions which were at Su-chia-tun station, and of the three battalions of the Samara Regiment and a battery, which were taken from General de Vitt. Colonel Zapolski of the General Staff was placed in command and was ordered to proceed with his force to Hu-shih-tai station, where he was to take over another battalion of drafts and half a battery already there.‡ In addition orders were given that the 6th Rifle Regiment was to be railed to Tieh-ling.§

On the Japanese side Marshal Oyama now felt that the time had come to reinforce the enveloping movement from his General Reserve, and the 5th Brigade of the 3rd Division, accompanied by the divisional artillery and engineers, was ordered to march northwards on the morrow.

Marshal Oyama orders part of the General Reserve northward.

The task of the Japanese Fourth Army was still to pin the

* The units sent were the 12th (Velikolutsk), 138th (Bolkhov), and the 140th (Zaraisk) Regiments (the whole of the reserve of the Third Manchurian Army), three battalions of the 147th (Samara) Regiment, two squadrons of dragoons, two batteries of the 35th Artillery Brigade, and one battery of the 40th Artillery Brigade. The Samara Regiment really belonged to the First Manchurian Army but had been sent to the General Reserve (see p. 338). During the 2nd General Kuropatkin lent it to General Bilderling to reinforce the 6th Siberian Corps should such necessity arise.

† General de Vitt was the commander of the 2nd Brigade, 3rd Division, XVIIth Corps.

‡ In Vol II, p. 472, it was stated that Colonel Zapolski met his death in the successful assault made by the Russians on Putilov Hill on the 16th October 1904. That statement is incorrect, and its inclusion in Vol. II is due to the interpretation placed upon the words "Colonel Zapolski fell, stricken by a bullet," which were given in a Russian source consulted, and to the fact that no further mention of him was made.

§ This regiment was much below strength having suffered very severely at the battle of San-de-pu. See p. 188.

Russian centre to its ground and to prevent it reinforcing the right. Attack was thus implied and the soldiers of General Nodzu looked upon the weather conditions of the 2nd March as a direct assistance from Heaven. The snow fell heavily, and the air was filled with whirling flakes driven by a strong south wind which blew straight into the eyes of the Russians. Nevertheless, in spite of these conditions, the greater part of the Fourth Army made but little progress. Early in the morning the guns upon the left opened a heavy fire upon the positions of the XVIIth Corps; and the troops from the Japanese 6th Division—which had during the night got close up to Sha-ho-pu*—endeavoured to seize a Russian outwork; but although the attempt very nearly succeeded a counter-attack launched at the critical moment wrested the work from the attackers. Three times after this did the Japanese attempt to assume the offensive from La-mu-tun, each effort being repulsed. By the centre of the Fourth Army, about six o'clock in the morning, when the moon had risen, a general advance was made against the position of the 6th Siberian Corps, and the *Kobi* troops captured some of the advanced trenches of the corps, but an attempt to carry the success further was frustrated.

On the Japanese right the fighting was more severe and the 10th Division was heavily engaged with the Russian 1st Corps. Under cover of the driving snow, the commander of the 20th Brigade launched his brigade from Wa-hei-pu-tzu during the morning and sent it as far as the village of Hsiao-tu-pao-ku.† To this point the nearest hostile position was a group of redoubts some two thousand yards to the north at Hu-chia-wu-tun, and against these the Japanese advanced at about two o'clock. By this time, however, it had stopped snowing, and the white covering of the ground threw up objects with great distinctness, so that on emerging from the shelter of the village the Japanese were at once greeted with a rapid and concentrated fire from artillery, rifles, and machine guns. So heavy was the fire that it seemed as if another snowstorm had begun, for the eddies of snow scoured up by the incessant shrapnel at times reproduced the effect of a blizzard. Under it the left regiment of the Japanese brigade suffered heavily, losing in twenty minutes four officers and one

* See p. 370.

† The bulk of the 20th Brigade seems to have been withdrawn to this village after the unsuccessful attempt to advance on the previous day.

hundred and twenty-four men. Nevertheless the movement continued, and the attackers got within fourteen hundred yards of the enemy's position, their artillery in rear supporting them by an incessant bombardment. But they were severely handicapped by the defenders of Putilov and One Tree Hills. These hills dominated all the neighbouring terrain and enabled an enfilade fire to be poured into the advancing Japanese.

At five o'clock the brigadier was severely wounded by a fragment of shrapnel which struck him in the breast, and almost immediately afterwards two officers of his staff who had rushed to his assistance were hit, one dying within a few minutes. The attack, however, was continued without interruption and the Japanese reached the last rise in front of the advanced position of the enemy. The declivity down which they looked, facing the Russians, was swept by their projectiles, but, rushing down the slope the attackers climbed the other side of the valley and sprang into the first line of trenches. The defenders retired into some redoubts a hundred yards in rear, and then suddenly from these works and from all the fortifications on One Tree Hill they opened a heavy fire upon the lost trenches. The Japanese had no time to construct any proper cover, and had to content themselves with throwing up such earth as could be loosened and crouching behind it in the snow. During the night they made an attempt to rush the redoubts, but the Russians were on the alert, and they had to fall back to their scanty shelter, where they were to remain, suffering inconceivable hardships, for three days and nights. The Japanese 20th Brigade had three hundred and sixty casualties, which number was only twenty more than the 8th Brigade incurred in an abortive attempt to reach Liu-chiang-tun.

Along that strip of the River Sha where the Japanese Guards were still facing the 4th and portion of the 2nd Siberian Corps the day passed without noteworthy incident. Here passive defence seemed to have been firmly adopted by the

The 4th and 2nd
Siberian Corps.

The Japanese
Guard Division.

Russians, and the minor engagements which took place for the possession of the villages in the valley were without real importance. About midday the guns of the Umezawa Brigade and those of the Hijikata Battery opened fire across the valley, probably in sympathy with the 12th Division, whose pieces had been firing slowly all the morning and had at

noon begun a heavier bombardment. This fire, however, ceased after a quarter of an hour, as did that of the Hijikata Battery, although the guns of the Umezawa Brigade still continued in action for some time. The Russians made no reply, and before one o'clock the snow which had been threatening fell heavily and blotted out the whole landscape. During this enforced inaction, so far as the artillery was concerned, a short fight took place on the left, where the 1st Guard Brigade drove in a Russian advanced post opposite Ta Shan. During the afternoon the snow ceased and the Russian guns began to shell Chien-su-ma-pu-tzu, Chao-chien-hu-tun and the left battery of the Guards on Ti-ti Shan. But by evening no change had occurred in the general situation, and the 4th and part of the 2nd Siberian Corps still maintained their unenterprising attitude of passive resistance to a Japanese division. The night, however, was to witness a new development, for the Guards then forced their way over the river and thus took part in the general policy of an advance laid down by Marshal Oyama. But, insomuch as this movement was due entirely to the impasse which had been brought about farther to the right, it will be advisable to leave the account of action of the Guards at this point and to trace the course of events on this day in the extreme eastern section of the field.

During the night of the 1st-2nd a divisional order had been issued to the 12th Division, directing the 5th *Kobi* Brigade and General Shimamura's column in the centre to attack the hills north of Chang-chi-sai; and in accordance with this order, by 4 a.m.,

the leading units of that column were on the lower slopes of the hills on the left bank of the Sha.* By the time the first lines had reached the stream the Russians had abandoned their positions at the foot of the slopes on the right bank and had retired on their main entrenchments. A thousand yards in rear of the Japanese advanced troops marched General Shimamura with the reserves and batteries. The centre column, advancing from the river, occupied the hilly ground between it and the enemy's position, while the 5th *Kobi* Brigade co-operated on the right. The guns—two mountain batteries—came into action as soon as possible and covered the advance of the infantry to the ridge beyond, which was occupied at 7 a.m. without much resistance, except from the enemy's retiring patrols. The Japanese infantry on arrival at this point came under heavy rifle fire, but

The Japanese
12th Division.

* See p. 372.

they took what cover they could get and commenced entrenching themselves, in one place within seven hundred yards of the enemy.

General Shimamura could now see the character of the ground in front that lay between him and the Russian main line of trenches, and it by no means improved on closer acquaintance. The hill named Eagle's Nest, which rose boldly some two miles north-west of Chang-chi-sai, was seen to be steeper and rougher than had been supposed, the enemy's entrenchments seemed very complete, and there were machine guns posted to sweep all approaches. An unbroken line of abattis lay along the slopes one hundred yards below the trenches, and in places wire entanglements had been constructed. Moreover, a gully which lay to the immediate front of the Japanese was steep and difficult to cross. The position of the two columns was now insecure, if not actually precarious. But though it was natural that the troops should be anxious to face the task in front of them as soon as possible, without waiting for the 2nd Division, which was still held up at the Kao-tai Ling,* wiser counsels prevailed, and on learning the situation the divisional general ordered the two columns to stand fast. This decision was received with impatience by the regimental officers, who could not understand the reasons which prompted it, for naturally it was difficult at once to explain matters to subordinate commanders. All day the enemy's machine guns were very active, rifle fire went on, and both columns were heavily shelled from time to time, but the Russian artillery—two batteries west of Eagle's Nest and one battery on the saddle east of it—paid particular attention to the Japanese mountain batteries. At 4.30 p.m., however, a snowstorm put a stop to artillery action. Nothing of importance happened during the night, and two batteries of mortars were moved up under cover of darkness by the Japanese towards a position in a little valley immediately in rear of the infantry. The journey took longer than was anticipated, and dawn on Friday, the 3rd, found the guns no farther than just east of Chang-chi-sai. The left column of the division had assisted the advance of General Shimamura and the 5th *Kobi* Brigade with fire from howitzers and mortars until 4.30 p.m. when the snowstorm put an end to artillery fighting.

Thus the Guards and 12th Division of General Kuroki's army effected but little during the day, and indeed can scarcely be said to have engaged in any serious fighting. Far otherwise was

* See p. 373.

it with the 2nd Division on the east, where the struggle for the Kao-tai Ling position was renewed with unabated vigour by its left column. On the right General Ohara remained upon the ground he had occupied the previous day, for the enemy upon the Pei-taling-ku Ling was increasing in numbers. This enforced delay on the right might have endangered the whole position of the 2nd Division, and consequently the commander of the left column decided to drive back the enemy independently, without waiting for any assistance from General Ohara. The 29th Regiment was ordered to attack the Russians in occupation of Redoubts 20, 21, and 23; and before dawn that unit—less two companies with the 15th Brigade—began to assemble two miles south of Redoubt 18, taking with it six machine guns. These were to do excellent service during the day. When daylight broke, ushering in a piercingly cold morning, it was seen that the position to be attacked was indeed a strong one—a continuous ridge surmounted by a chain of peaks from which that crowned by Redoubt 21 stood out against the sky. Although every soul concerned in the attack is said to have felt that the order was probably his own death warrant there was no hesitation. Supported by the fire of three field batteries* and the mountain battery, the Japanese advanced, and at half-past nine the five companies on the right assaulted and captured Redoubt 23. Far more formidable, however, was Redoubt 20, and the remaining five companies attacking it made but little progress. Colonel Shimada, commanding the regiment, was killed and Major Tanakadata took his place. Placing himself in front of his men, that officer climbed the hill under a searching fire; but only one other officer and a few men kept up with him, and soon every member of the gallant little party was killed. Thereafter, assisted by the fire of the machine guns, which was especially useful in making the Russians keep their heads below the parapet, the Japanese made short advances of but a few yards at a time throughout the day; but the enemy's machine guns fired with great effect whenever any movement took place, and the casualties in the attacking companies were severe. Finally, about six o'clock, the redoubt was captured, after the company of the Chembar Regiment which was garrisoning it had lost all its officers and three-quarters of the rank and file. Then the whole of the

* Two of the field batteries were north-east of the Wang-fu Ling; the third was near Ying-pan.

Japanese 29th Regiment prepared to advance against Redoubt 21, but the latter looked too formidable and as it was now late nothing further was done this day. Of the ten Japanese companies which took part in the fighting over sixty-five per cent were killed or wounded.*

In front of Tu-pin-tai, where General Rennenkampf was still holding his own against the left division of the Ya-lu Army, the Russians were at a serious disadvantage. A hitch had occurred in the transport service from Fu-shun Junction, with the result that on the morning of the 2nd both artillery and infantry ammunition was running short. The Ya-lu Army again checked. Indeed, when the Japanese guns opened a desultory fire at dawn, the Russians deemed it prudent to husband their ammunition and to refrain from replying; and some Japanese reconnoitring parties were sent forward to discover whether the position had been abandoned by the defenders. Having ascertained that the Russians were still holding their ground, the Japanese made a vigorous assault and succeeded in driving them off Fountain Hill at the point of the bayonet. This hill completely dominated the right section of the Russian defence, and if it fell into the hands of the enemy the Russian line of retreat to Ma-chun-tan would be seriously exposed.

Realizing this, General Aliev without hesitation decided to recover the hill at all costs, and having hastily collected units from various regiments at hand, including the escorts to all the regimental colours of the force, he placed himself with drawn sword at the head of this improvised body.† Some of the soldiers thus raked together were bandsmen, and the advance began to the strains of the Russian national anthem, while the colour escorts marched with all the regimental colours flying. But though there were some features in this action which may seem to be out of date in the days of quick-firing guns and magazine rifles, no fault can be found with the spirit which animated the attackers. They succeeded in getting a footing upon a ridge north-east of Fountain

* This account of the operations of General Ishibashi's column is from Japanese sources. The description of the fighting given in the *Russian Official History* differs from it in certain respects. According to the Russian source Redoubt 20 was the first work to be captured and in that account it is not definitely stated that Redoubt 23 fell into the hands of the Japanese. The *Russian Official History* also describes some fighting on "Nameless Hill" between Redoubt 21 and the "Main Pass", which is difficult to identify.

† General Aliev commanded the artillery of General Rennenkampf's detachment, but had taken over General Ekk's duties owing to illness of latter. See p. 377.

Hill, and thus checked any further advance on the part of the enemy. On the ridge the regimental standards were set up, and the elevation in this way gained its name of Colours' Hill. Not satisfied with this success General Aliev determined to make a fresh attempt to gain Fountain Hill, and about five o'clock managed once more to seize it for his side. But in the face of the murderous fire which the baffled Japanese brought to bear upon the summit it was absolutely impossible to hold it, and the heroic party of Russians were driven back. With a determination which reflects the greatest credit on their arms the Russians also prevented the Japanese from regaining the disputed hill-top, and Fountain Hill remained neutral ground for six whole days. The severity of the fighting for this elevation can be gauged by the fact that an oak copse which covered it was almost completely cut down by the fire, while the ground between the stumps of the trees was strewn with corpses of both Russians and Japanese.

Against the left section of the Tu-pin-tai position the Japanese rifle and machine gun fire had been continuous, but an assault was repulsed, and with darkness the fighting ceased all along the front. The Russians had held their own only at the price of the expenditure of the last reserve, while the lack of ammunition, a fresh supply of which only arrived about six o'clock, had been a severe handicap. An hour earlier General Rennenkampf had ridden round the position and read out to the troops a congratulatory telegram from the commander-in-chief in which the writer requested that the thanks of the Emperor might be conveyed to all ranks for their stubborn resistance of the past few days. This expression of approval had been well deserved, for the troops at Tu-pin-tai had been fighting practically to their last man. In order to ease the strain upon his force General Rennenkampf had sent a message to General Bachinski, on his right, directing him to advance against San-lung-yu so as to take the Japanese in rear.* But the withdrawal of the 1st Siberian Corps to the west seems to have had the effect of paralysing the activity of General Rennenkampf's new subordinate, and nothing was done.

While the fighting round Tu-pin-tai had been in progress General Liubavin had also been engaged. In order to fill the gap

* General Bachinski was this day placed under the orders of General Rennenkampf, but he was reminded by General Linevich that his most important task was to cover the roads to Liu-chia-tzu and Hsi-hu-cheng.

which then existed between General Rennenkampf and General Danilov, his force had taken up a position between Heights 184 and 194 against which part of the 10th Brigade of the Japanese 11th Division made a determined attack about 9.30 a.m., directing its efforts mainly against General Liubavin's right. The fighting continued until well on in the afternoon and bayonets were crossed on more than one occasion, the Japanese being everywhere held off. During these encounters the Russians suffered heavily, some companies of the 21st and 22nd East Siberian Rifle Regiments being reduced to twenty rifles apiece. The action ceased with the approach of darkness and the Japanese fell back; but Height 184 was now in their possession.

Round Ku-chia-tzu, on the extreme east of the Russian battle front, General Danilov, with his three regiments,* still held the 1st *Kobi* Division of the Ya-lu Army in check, in spite of a succession of efforts which were made against him during the day. About 8 a.m. the Japanese attacked the right of the Russian position occupied by the 23rd East Siberian Rifle Regiment, and were repulsed, mainly owing to the devastating fire of the Russian machine guns. Several times during the morning the attempt was repeated, and at eleven o'clock the right of the Russian regiment was in serious difficulties, all the reserve being used up and the enemy being in places only forty paces off. But at this moment reinforcements reached the sorely tried unit. From the direction of the Tung Ling appeared the leading units of Colonel Gurko's small force, advancing to the attack, and two battalions of the Viborg Regiment also came up. Two companies were at once sent to the right, and the Japanese, now threatened in rear and under a heavy fire in front, retired hastily down the valley towards Hsiao-ta-ku-shan. On the left the 24th East Siberian Rifle Regiment had been less heavily engaged; and towards evening the fighting died away along the whole front. General Danilov suffered two hundred and fifty-three in casualties during the day; but during the night his force was augmented by the 6th Battery of the 7th Artillery Brigade.†

At Japanese General Head-Quarters the appreciation of the situation appears to have been that the extent to which heavy

* The 23rd and 24th East Siberian Rifle Regiments and the 85th (Viborg) Regiment.

† From the 1st Corps. See p. 348.

artillery was being employed by the Fourth Army would probably awaken a fear on the part of the Russians that that army might endeavour to force a way through their centre;

Japanese action
in the centre on
the night of the
2nd-3rd.

that this would undoubtedly chain most of the Third Manchurian Army to its position; that east of that portion of the field the state of affairs was somewhat different; and that since the

Russians there had held their own, apparently without particular difficulty, it was important to prevent them from profiting by this fact to move troops to their right, where they might overwhelm the Japanese left which had been brought to a standstill.

It appeared that indirect pressure must at all costs be applied to ease the strain in the west, and an intimation or an order—it is uncertain which—to this effect was conveyed to the First Army. Thus it was that General Kuroki determined to throw the Guards over the Sha Ho valley in order to relieve the situation. The commander of the Japanese First Army had hoped to avoid an isolated attack which was bound to cause, and in fact did cause him, very heavy loss. But the occasion demanded the sacrifice and he did not shrink from the task imposed upon him.

At 10 p.m. on the 2nd the final orders were issued for the Guards to cross the river and deliver a frontal attack against Tang-chia-tun and the trenches above and to the east of it. The operation was to be carried out by the 2nd Guard Brigade, to which

Night attack
by the Japanese
Guard Division.

two battalions of the 1st Guard Brigade were added as a reserve. To the 3rd Guard Regiment on the left was given as objective the village of

Tang-chia-tun and the hill north of it, while the 4th Guard Regiment on the right was directed against three spurs east of the village. These positions were held by the 17th and 18th East Siberian Rifle Regiments respectively. About 2 a.m. on the 3rd the advance of the Japanese began, and the Russian advanced posts were quickly driven in, the 3rd Guard Regiment then moving against Tung-chia-tun Shih Shan. It suffered heavy losses, however, and by 6 a.m. had been brought to a standstill, though within an hour it made a further attempt. This was soon checked and the troops, exhausted by the fighting, lay down near the Russian trenches, taking cover in the folds of the ground or behind the sandbags they had carried up. On the right the 4th Guard Regiment advanced from Ta-tzu-pu against the spurs, and in spite of tremendous losses made their way up to the obstacles, which the sappers set to work to demolish.

When this was accomplished the leading companies dashed forward and captured the advanced trenches. Immediately afterwards some companies were sent to seize the works on the spur north of Su-ma-pu-tzu, but they failed to do so, and then set to work to construct cover with sandbags. About half-past six a battalion of the reserve reinforced, and another attempt to advance was made, with no better result; and when daylight came the 4th Guard Regiment, which had lost in killed and wounded seven hundred and forty-three men, was clinging to the two spurs it had won, while in front of the third spur, north of Su-ma-pu-tzu, about two hundred survivors were crouching in ravines and dead ground close under the Russian trenches. But, although their losses had been heavy and the situation of those units which had crossed the river was distinctly precarious, the Guards had gained a footing upon the farther side of the valley, from which they were never driven back.

On the 2nd March, on the west, the left of the Japanese Third Army gained considerable ground, but the progress of General Nogi's troops, up till then practically unhindered by the Russians, was checked by the offensive action of the screen thrown out by

Summary of
the 2nd March.

General Kuropatkin, and its inner division was somewhat roughly handled. One result of this was that Marshal Oyama took measures to give relief indirectly by applying pressure in the centre of his line on the night of the 2nd-3rd. He also decided to throw a portion of his General Reserve into the fight for the next day, the 5th Brigade being ordered to move northwards on the 3rd. West of the railway the Japanese Second Army had also gained ground; but on the east of that line, with the exception of the capture of two redoubts by the left of the 2nd Division, the efforts of the Fourth, First and Ya-lu Armies had been well resisted by the Russians. So far General Kuropatkin's improvised measures to meet the situation on the west had worked well, though they had not yet been severely tested. Owing to the lack of information from his cavalry in that quarter he now exaggerated the actual danger threatening his communications, and was occupied in the creation of fresh protective detachments. When darkness fell on the 2nd March the honours of the day, so far as minor tactics were concerned, may be said to have been equally divided.



THE BATTLE OF MUKDEN.

View taken from a point south-west of Chao-chien-hu-tun looking north-east towards the position attacked by the Japanese between the 2nd and 7th March.

Ordnance Survey Office, Southampton, 1914.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

THE BATTLE OF MUKDEN—*continued*—OPERATIONS ON THE 3RD MARCH—PAUSE IN THE JAPANESE ENVELOPING MOVEMENT—THE 1ST AND 7TH DIVISIONS OF THE JAPANESE THIRD ARMY ATTACKED BY GENERAL TOPORNIN—GENERAL VON DER LAUNITZ ORDERED TO WITHDRAW ACROSS THE HUN—PURSUIT BY THE JAPANESE SECOND ARMY—DEADLOCK IN THE CENTRE AND EAST.

(Plate 52 and Plan 63.)

ON Friday, the 3rd March, the left and centre of the Japanese Third Army had so far outstripped the 9th Division on the right that General Nogi decided to hold back the two former fractions so as to allow the 9th Division to come up, and he assigned to the cavalry and to the 1st and 7th Divisions more or less passive rôles. The last three forces, however, were attacked by the Russians. The 2nd Cavalry Brigade, indeed, advanced so far as to bring it into collision with the detachment under General Birger which had been occupying Kao-li-tun.

On the previous evening General Kuropatkin, becoming alarmed for the safety of this isolated force, had directed it to fall back upon Mukden; and General Birger had at once made preparations to retire by the Hsin-min-tun road, which he had reason to believe was open, since the telephone between Mukden and Kao-li-tun was still in working order. Having communicated to General Grekov the contents of the order, and having at the same time requested that officer to cover his retirement, General Birger set his force in motion about three o'clock in the morning of the 3rd. But the rate of march was extremely slow and eight hours were required to cover the twelve miles to Lao-pien, a delay which rendered it extremely doubtful if the detachment would reach Mukden

unscathed.* At Lao-pien doubt was soon converted into certainty, for patrols sent forward from that village returned about noon with the unwelcome news that a hostile force was barring the way about Ta-fa-hsin.

The Russians had struck against a formidable body of the enemy, for General Akiyama's 1st Cavalry Brigade had now reinforced the 2nd Cavalry Brigade† and, further, some infantry had been lent to this amalgamated mounted force by order of General Nogi.‡ In all, the Russian detachment was confronted by a Japanese force of seven cavalry regiments, two battalions, and a battery of artillery. The strength of the Japanese was not known to General Birger, and he determined to attack their right flank, which was located between the village of Ta-fa-hsin and the Hsin-min-tun road. Shortly after 1 p.m. the fight began, and continued all through the afternoon until about six o'clock, by which hour Ta-fa-hsin was enveloped by the Russian infantry. By that time, however, it appears to have been brought home to General Birger that the enemy had fresh troops available, and he decided to break off the fight and to withdraw in a north-easterly direction, with the object of marching round the enemy and in this way reaching his goal at Mukden. And orders were issued for the detachment to retire under cover of darkness in accordance with this plan.§

It was indeed fortunate for General Birger that General Nogi had decided to hold back the centre and left of his army during this day. The Japanese cavalry did not pursue, a circumstance which favoured the Russians, whose retirement very soon degenerated into a movement of a number of isolated columns, the leaders of which were completely ignorant of their whereabouts.|| To anticipate somewhat, the bulk of the detachment eventually

* The force was greatly hampered by a column of transport over three miles long, which included the vehicles of a supply depot at Pan-chia-tun.

† See p. 385. This combined force will henceforth be known as the Japanese Cavalry Division.

‡ One battalion from the 1st Division and one battalion from the 15th *Kobi* Brigade.

§ The enormous baggage column had been sent off about five o'clock and reached San-chia-tzu safely at 8 a.m. on the following morning. In the engagement the Russians had five hundred and seventy-six casualties.

|| According to one Japanese source the Russian attack was thought to comprise twenty-five squadrons, a brigade of infantry, and some guns. This exaggerated estimate may have had something to do with the decision of the Japanese cavalry not to pursue.

reached San-chia-tzu* during the morning of the 4th, less twelve companies and a battery, which had moved to Mukden by another route and were then sent by the commander of the Second Manchurian Army to join Colonel Zapolski on the line Ta-hen-tun—San-tai-tzu.†

On the previous day the Russian cavalry force had resolved itself into two distinct fractions, which for convenience have been designated in the preceding chapter the northern and southern groups. Of these, the latter had by now ceased to exist as such,‡ and the part played by the former may be dismissed in a few words. It consisted of the nine squadrons under General Grekov's own hand at San-tiao-pu, and of the 5th Ural Cossacks at Chin-tui-tzu. But although General Birger's force was involved in a sharp engagement which led to heavy losses, and that commander had appealed to General Grekov for assistance during his retirement, the Russian mounted troops went through the day with practically no fighting and with absolutely no loss. General Grekov remained all day inactive in his bivouac, and it was only towards evening that he retired eastwards to San-chia-tzu,* the movement being covered by the 5th Cossack Ural Regiment, which after a feeble attempt to maintain touch with General Birger spent the night near Lao-pien.

Owing to the inactivity enforced upon the left of the Japanese Third Army, the events just described amounted to nothing more than minor episodes on the fringe of the battlefield. Serious fighting did not take place except in that sector of the field where the Russian 25th Division under General Topornin and a brigade of the Composite Division under General Vasilev were facing across the old railway embankment the 7th Division, the 15th *Kobi* Brigade, and portion of the 1st Division of the Japanese Third Army.§ During the night of the 2nd–3rd General Topornin had received a dispatch from the Russian commander-in-chief, in which he was warned of the danger

Action at
Sha-lin-pu.
General
Topornin
attacks the
Japanese.

* There are two villages of this name on the plan north-west of Mukden. A reference to the plan will show which village is referred to in each case.

† Six companies of the 161st (Alexandropol) Regiment; six companies of the 162nd (Akhalsikh) Regiment, and the 3rd Battery of the 45th Artillery Brigade.

‡ See pp. 387, 388.

§ Pending the arrival of General Kaulbars, General Topornin commanded all the Russian troops in this section.

threatening his right flank, and was ordered to make every effort to get into touch with General Birger, about whose position, as has been said, General Kuropatkin was perturbed; but the missive contained no instructions more definite than an expression of opinion from the commander-in-chief that General Topornin should clear up the situation and act as he thought best. A supplementary message from the Quartermaster-General, however, stated that three divisions of the enemy were approaching on the front Shih-li-ho*—Sha-lin-pu, and that attention was to be directed towards checking this hostile advance on Mukden. By 2.30 a.m. on the 3rd General Topornin had issued his orders for the day, which seem to have been framed in complete ignorance of the proximity of the Japanese 1st Division on his right. The policy of attack was again to be persevered in, and the Russian force was to continue to carry out the task of the previous day, with the grouping of its component parts unchanged. A right column was to advance against Sha-lin-pu and to envelop the Japanese left,† while General Shatilov with a brigade was told off to drive the enemy out of Tai-ai-pu and then to attack Sha-lin-pu from the south.‡ The reserve, under the command of General Vasilev, was ordered to take post at Ma-tien-tzu.§ At dawn an interchange firstly of rifle and later of artillery fire took place all along the front, and by 9 a.m. the right wing had succeeded in getting within seven hundred paces of Sha-lin-pu. While this movement was in progress the left wing under General Shatilov had been continuously engaged, and had five battalions in action against Tai-ai-pu, to which village Japanese reinforcements were hurrying up. A battery of the Russian 31st Artillery Brigade opened such a hot fire upon the village that the defending infantry began to evacuate it, retiring southwards towards a chain of sandy hillocks. But fresh Japanese troops came up, and soon a battery came into action south of the village and opened a well-sustained and accurate fire upon the Russian guns, causing heavy loss.

It was just when this slight check had been administered to General Topornin's left that the position of affairs on the other

* On the Hsiao-shui Ho east-south-east of Lao-pien.

† The 97th (Lithuania), 98th (Yuriev), and 99th (Ivangorod) Regiments with forty-eight guns under Lieutenant-General Pnevski.

‡ The 2nd Brigade 9th Division of General Vasilev's Composite Division

§ The 2nd Brigade 31st Division of General Vasilev's Composite Division, and the 100th (Ostrov) Regiment (less one company) from the 25th Division.

flank began to take an unfavourable turn, and the Yuriev Regiment on his extreme right got into difficulties. Some Japanese appeared to the right rear and not only enfiladed that regiment, but took it in reverse.* All the available local reserves of the Russians—including even the half company guarding the regimental colours—were soon absorbed, and the situation became so serious that General Pnevski sent his chief of staff to Ma-tien-tzu, to ask General Topornin to send some of the divisional reserve to the support of the threatened flank.

When that officer reached the XVth Corps head-quarters about 10 a.m. he found that General Kaulbars himself had just arrived, and to him, therefore, instead of to General Topornin he reported that the right flank had been turned and that the Yuriev Regiment was under fire from front, flank and rear, and was suffering great loss. No sooner had he delivered his message than another dispatch reached General Kaulbars, to the effect that a

General Kaulbars orders General Topornin to retire.

Japanese column, in strength about one division, was moving along the Hsin-min-tun road in the direction of Mukden.† These two reports, coupled with the absence of news of General Birger and with the fact that the only reinforcements definitely known to be en route—in the shape of General de Vitt's detachment—were expected to arrive from the south, convinced General Kaulbars that there was considerable danger lest General Topornin's right might be rolled up, in which case he conceived that Mukden would lie wholly uncovered from the west. In these circumstances he considered that he had no option but to order the retirement of General Topornin's force back upon that city. The withdrawal was effected without much difficulty, for the Japanese made no attempt to pursue, but contented themselves with harrying the retreating Russians with increased artillery fire. Considerable disorder seems to have characterized the retreat, but by 5 p.m. the regiments of the 25th Division concentrated at Yu-huan-tun, where they halted and proceeded to occupy a position. As regards the Composite Division of General Vasilev, it had at first been directed to form up astride

* These Japanese troops were from the 1st Regiment and the 2nd Brigade of the 1st Division.

† This force was either the Japanese cavalry which shortly afterwards became engaged with General Birger, or General Birger's force which was mistaken for the enemy.

the Hsin-min-tun road, on the line Ma-chuang-tzu—Sha-hei-tzu, but it was found that this position was held by General de Vitt's force which had been directed there early in the day by the commander-in-chief.* General Vasilev's troops accordingly moved to the neighbourhood of Huan-kutien. During the day's fighting the Russians lost forty-five officers and one thousand seven hundred and seventy-seven other ranks.

The propriety of General Kaulbars's action in withdrawing General Topornin's force at this juncture has been questioned. By it a tactically strong position was yielded to the enemy at a time when the Japanese Third Army had to a certain extent lost its cohesion, and when not one-half of General Topornin's force had as yet been engaged.† On the other hand, General Kaulbars was entirely ignorant of the break in the front of General Nogi's army; was unaware that General de Vitt had been sent to block the Hsin-min-tun road; and the inactivity of General Grekov left everyone without tidings of General Birger—which lack of news naturally gave rise to the idea that a Japanese force was between that general and Mukden. He therefore found himself in a difficult position. Nevertheless, the conclusion that he acted with unnecessary precipitancy seems to be justified. He had only just arrived, and seems to have been unduly influenced by his first impressions, based upon two dispatches, of disquieting but not necessarily alarming, import. Had reinforcements been sent at once to the Yuriev Regiment the balance would probably have been restored, and the time thus gained might have enabled it to be ascertained that no Japanese column was moving on Mukden by the Hsin-min-tun road, while a telephonic conversation with that city would probably have elicited the fact that General de Vitt was covering it on the north-west.‡

Working along the Russian line from west to east, the next body of troops whose action during this day claims attention is the force under General von der Launitz. This comprised

* The 4th East Siberian Rifle Regiment had been sent to General de Vitt from the 1st Siberian Corps.

† Out of thirty-two battalions sixteen were still in reserve, i.e., the 100th (Ostrov), 123rd (Koslov), 124th (Voronej) Regiments under General Vasilev, and four battalions local reserve to left column.

‡ General de Vitt had been ordered on the previous evening to take up a position near the Emperor's Tombs. See p 398.

the remnant of the Second Manchurian Army existing after the troops required to build up General Kuropatkin's screen had been withdrawn. During the night of the 2nd-3rd March dispatches and orders were received, issued, supplemented, and amended in quick succession. From the commander-in-chief came the initial order for General von der Launitz to concentrate on the line Chan-ta-pu—Tu-erh-pu, with a strong reserve at Su-hu-chia-pu. About 1 a.m. supplementary instructions were received over the telephone from General Kuropatkin personally, by which General von der Launitz was ordered to extend the distribution of his troops on his right across the Hun to Tun-san-pu, with his left to join up with the Third Manchurian Army at Lan-shan-pu, and from his reserve to send at once sixteen to eighteen battalions to General Kaulbars. Other messages followed, and the urgent nature of the instructions generally, in conjunction with the impossibility of issuing written operation orders in the normal way, led to verbal instructions being given by General von der Launitz to such of his subordinates as he could either summon to him or reach by telephone. The tenor of these orders was subsequently reproduced in operation orders which were issued between 1 and 2 a.m. on the 3rd, the substance of which was as follows :—

The Cavalry Force of General Tolmachev was to guard the right flank of General Golembatovski's detachment from the north.

General Golembatovski's detachment was to march along the right bank of the Hun to Tun-san-pu.

The Provisional Rifle Corps was to concentrate at Ta-wang-kuan-pu and move towards Chan-ta-pu.

The VIIIth Corps was to send one division to Ta-tai and will detail the other division to cover the retirement of the remainder of the Second Manchurian Army.

The remnant of the Xth Corps under General Gershelmann was to retire to Ta-tai and Tu-erh-pu.

As regards the Provisional Rifle Corps, the terms of this order were null and void, for the corps commander had been verbally warned to start at once and march via Ma-chia-pu, to report to General Kaulbars on the line Yan-tzu-tun—Chan-ssu-tun, and the instructions had already been once amended before the written orders were issued. Owing to the representation of the chief of staff of the corps as to the

complete exhaustion of some of the Rifle Regiments, General von der Launitz decided to send, in lieu of it, a force of which the nucleus was the 5th Rifle Brigade under Major-General Churin. This body marched off at 5 a.m.* The fatigue of the men and the fact that the road in places was blocked by transport vehicles, rendered its progress extremely slow, and Ma-chia-pu was not reached until nearly one o'clock. Here the exhausted brigade was directed by General Kaulbars to remain until further orders.

An eyewitness of this march has given a striking picture of the disorganization which characterized it. Over two hundred wagons drawn by oxen, donkeys, horses, and mules, and containing, together with military necessities, heavy tables, beds, lamps, baths, bolsters, cases of champagne, and even dog-kennels, blocked the way of the infantry, who straggling in disorder or crowded on the limbers and wagons of the artillery rushed from the ranks whenever opportunity offered to slake the thirst with which they were consumed.† The remainder of the Provisional Rifle Corps was either sent to, or collected without orders at, Su-hu-chia-pu about 9 a.m., and at that place the 6th Rifle Regiment was entrained and sent off to Tieh-ling.‡

The retirement of the rest of General von der Launitz's force was for several hours practically without interference from the Japanese, and by 11 a.m. the situation of his troops was as follows:—At Ta-wang-kuan-pu were four regiments of the VIIIth Corps under General Ivanov, the commander of the 15th Division,§ in action now against the 5th and 8th Divisions of the Japanese Second Army. On the

* General Churin's force actually consisted of the 17th and 18th Rifle Regiments, five and a half companies of the 19th Rifle Regiment, seven companies of the 20th Rifle Regiment, six companies of the 2nd Rifle Regiment, one company of the 3rd Rifle Regiment and the 1st Rifle Artillery Division.

† Lieutenant R. Ullrich, *The Trial under Fire of the Russian Army in the War of 1904-05*.

‡ The troops actually detailed to proceed to Su-hu-chia-pu were formed into a composite brigade under Major-General Dombrovski, commanding the 1st Rifle Brigade, and consisted of the 1st, 5th, 7th, and 8th Rifle Regiments, 2nd and 5th Rifle Artillery Divisions and one battery of old pattern field guns. As regards the other units mentioned, the *Russian Official History* states, "thither also came the 3rd, 4th, and 6th Rifle Regiments" (*Russian Official History*, Vol. V, Part 1, p. 230), which conveys the impression that these regiments gravitated towards the village without orders.

§ The 53rd (Volhynia) Regiment of the 14th Division, and the 57th (Modlin), 58th (Praga), and 59th (Liublin) Regiments of the 15th Division, VIIIth Corps.

arc formed by the villages Chan-ta-pu—Ying-erh-pu—Tu-erh-pu, were three regiments of the Xth Corps, under General Gershelmann.* Major-General Golembatovski was moving along the right of the Hun Ho.† The remaining units, worn out by want of sleep and weighed down by heavy loads, were straggling towards Su-hu-chia-pu.‡

The troops of the Japanese which during the night of the 2nd–3rd had lain facing this disintegrating force of General von der Launitz were, as will be remembered, the 9th Division of the Third Army and the Japanese Second Army under General Oku.

For the 9th Division the day was uneventful and it was able to march parallel and to the west of General Golembatovski's detachment without incident, so that by nightfall it had reached

Ta-chin-tu-tzu,§ from which village a flank guard was sent to Mo-men-tzu. The fact that this division was able to cover some ten miles during the day in spite of the existence of General Tolmachev's cavalry is accounted for by the fact that the latter force was chiefly employed in guarding General Golembatovski's flank guard from the north. To effect this the southern fraction of it overtook and passed General Golembatovski shortly after dawn and, towards 10 a.m., arrived at Ai-chia-pu, whence an outpost line was thrown out to the north-west by the now amalgamated detachment. Six squadrons which had been demanded by General Kaulbars were then sent off to Ma-tien-tzu, and a battery and another squadron were lent to General Golembatovski. Thus General Tolmachev found himself left—exclusive of his outposts—with but six weak squadrons, and compelled to accommodate and ration the staffs of the disrupted detachments of Generals Mishchenko and Pavlov and the Caucasian Cavalry Brigade.

The inextricable confusion into which the Second Manchurian Army was now falling originated to a great extent in the handling of the Russian cavalry. General Tolmachev, by carrying out his orders to guard General Golembatovski only from the north, had left the way open for the Japanese 9th Division to make

* The 33rd (Elets), 34th (Syev), and 122nd (Tambov) Regiments.

† Less the 59th (Liublin) and 60th (Zamostye) Regiments which had been sent to rejoin their corps (the VIIth) during the morning.

‡ The 121st (Penza) Regiment of the Xth Corps, and the 54th (Minsk), 55th (Podolia), and 56th (Jitomir) Regiments of the 14th Division, VIIIth Corps.

§ Via Pa-chia-tai.

a substantial advance; while General Kaulbars's fear that General Birger and General Grekov had been cut off from Mukden—an anxiety which led to the suppression of General Topornin's offensive—had been due largely to the manner in which General Grekov had performed the duties of securing and transmitting information. General Kaulbars's request for six squadrons had been addressed to General Pavlov, whose force, already reduced to far below six squadrons by General Kaulbars himself, had at the time of the receipt of the message no separate existence.*

It has been stated that the retirement of the troops under General von der Launitz was practically not interfered with until 11 a.m., but meanwhile the Japanese Second Army had by no means been entirely inactive. A couple of hours before

The Japanese
Second Army.

Its task.

midnight on the 2nd–3rd General Oku had issued his orders, in which he directed his troops to continue the pursuit on the 3rd, pressing the enemy to the north-east. The objective of the 8th Division was to be the line Hsin-kai-ho—Ai-chia-pu and, since its mission was to assist in surrounding the enemy's right, a strong connexion was to be maintained with the Third Army. The 5th Division, leaving one and a half battalions for the army reserve at Chou-kuan-tun, was to endeavour to reach the line Ta-chang-ko—Hsin-kai-ho. The 4th Division was to prolong this line to Kao-chia-tai and was to be assisted in its advance by the fire of Colonel Tomioka's force, which was to remain on its present front. That portion of the reserve which was in San-de-pu was to be ready to march at six o'clock and the 8th, 5th and 4th Divisions were to move half an hour later.

The 8th Division advanced in two columns. That on the left had started at 5.30 a.m. from Hsiao-li-pu-tzu and occupied Shu-kan-ko three hours later.† After leaving this village it was considerably delayed by fire from the left bank of the river, the

The advance of
the Japanese
Second Army.

Russians still being in occupation of villages on that side, and it was not until 11 a.m. that Li-chia-pu was occupied. By that time it was well in advance of the right column and had therefore to stand fast till the latter should get abreast of it. That column

* See p. 388. General Pavlov had passed on the dispatch to General Tolmachev, who complied with it.

† In this and other cases the start was made by a Japanese unit earlier than the hour prescribed in Army Orders. Considerable latitude was apparently allowed in the interpretation of the spirit of the orders.

had crossed to the left bank and by 11 a.m. had passed through Ma-tou-lan, but it was checked for a time by the units under General Ivanov at Ta-wang-kuan-pu.* Here it may be left in order that the account of the action of the other two divisions upon the right may be brought up to the same point.†

The 5th Division had been working in close connexion with the 8th Division upon its left, and like that division had advanced in two columns and a reserve. The left column‡ found Tou-tai-tzu held by some troops of the Russian VIIIth Corps, but these made no stand and retired about nine o'clock, before the Japanese guns could come into action. Soon after this Ma-tou-lan was taken. About a mile farther on the large village of Ta-wang-kuan-pu, which was thickly surrounded by trees, was reported to be occupied and the Russians brought three batteries into action north-east of the village.§ The Japanese 41st Regiment now deployed for attack and the mountain guns came into action south-east of Ma-tou-lan, while the right column also converged towards Ta-wang-kuan-pu.|| In the 4th Division the left column had moved at 6 a.m. and after occupying Hsiao-han-tai-tzu continued the pursuit of the Xth Corps, in which operation it was assisted by the divisional artillery at La-pa-tai. The march of the right wing of the division led over ground belonging properly to the 34th Regiment, which had occupied Pao-hsiang-tun at 5.30 a.m. and had at 8 a.m. entered Hei-lin-tai in conjunction with the left of Colonel Tomioka's troops. This village, it will be remembered, had been evacuated during the night by the troops of the advanced post of the 5th Siberian Corps which had been holding it. The head-quarters of the Second Army left Kou-tzu-wan at 9 a.m. and proceeded to San-de-pu. At that village and at Ku-chia-tzu was the army reserve.

To return to Ta-wang-kuan-pu, opposite to which the whole of the Japanese 5th Division and the right column of the 8th Division had come to a halt. Before the attack had time to develop the Russians had moved off, and as they left, flames

* See p. 416.

† The divisional reserve was by this time at Shu-kan-ko.

‡ The 41st Regiment and 5th Mountain Artillery Regiment, some cavalry and engineers.

§ This force was composed, as far as infantry is concerned, by four regiments of the VIIIth Corps under General Ivanov. See p. 416.

|| One battalion of the 21st Regiment; one and a half battalions of the 42nd Regiment; Independent Battalion Foot Artillery; one company of engineers and some cavalry. The remainder of the division was in reserve.

burst out from every quarter of the village, for they had set fire to the large depot of supplies which had been collected in the place.*

At this point of the narrative it may be of assistance to give a general survey of the day's events which have already been related on the north of the Hun Ho. At this hour General Grekov was still resting in his bivouac near Kao-li-tun; and General Birger, making

his way slowly back to Mukden, was just being informed at Lao-pien that his route was threatened by a hostile force which consisted—though he did not know it—of the two Japanese cavalry brigades and two battalions of infantry. Farther south

General Kaulbars had already broken off the fight which General Topornin was carrying on, not unsuccessfully, against the 7th Division and the 15th *Kobi* Brigade of the Japanese Third Army, and in consequence the Russian 25th Division and the Composite Division of General Vasilev were retreating upon Mukden—which was now covered from the north-west by General de Vitt—while six squadrons from General Tolmachev were starting northwards from Ai-chia-pu in response to a demand for mounted troops from General Kaulbars. Southwards, the 9th Division of the Japanese Third Army was found marching parallel to the Russian detachment of General Golematovski, which arrived at Tun-san-pu shortly before Ta-wang-kuan-pu burst into flames.

About this juncture General Oku thought it time to give fresh instructions regarding the conduct of the pursuit, for the basis of those already issued had been that the enemy would offer

a strong resistance, an assumption which had proved to be incorrect. At 11.30 a.m., therefore, the following orders were given out:—

General Oku's
new orders.

(1) The army will pursue the enemy on the line from Hsiu-hsiao-kua to Tu-nan-tou.

(2) The 8th Division, connecting with the 9th Division of the Third Army now engaged with the enemy at Tsai-yen-tzu, will go as far forward as the line Tu-nan-tou—Hsiao-pi-erh.†

* The order to retire was received in writing from General Ruzski who was now acting as chief of staff to General von der Launitz.

† This statement about the enemy apparently refers to the engagement on the 2nd with General Golematovski's troops. During the 3rd March the 9th Division was not engaged. See p. 389.

(3) The 5th Division will follow the enemy to the line Hsiang-ta-pu—Tu-erh-pu, its right taking the direction Ta-chang-ko, Ying-erh-pu, and Tu-erh-pu.

(4) The 4th Division will advance to the line Hsiu-hsiao-kua—Tu-erh-pu.

(5) When the right of the 4th Division passes the village of Hsin-tai-tzu,* Colonel Tomioka, with the troops from Wan-chia-yuan-tzu, will attack Wu-chang-ying. The remainder of his force will hold their present line.

General Oku was at this moment anxious regarding that part of the line held by Colonel Tomioka's detachment, and did not yet wish to move it bodily to the front, for the Fourth Army was still heavily engaged and in difficulties with the enemy at Putilov and One Tree Hills and Han-chia-pu.

When these orders were leaving the head-quarters of the Japanese Second Army General von der Launitz at Su-hu-chia-pu was engaged in explaining to the commander-in-chief over the telephone the state of affairs on the left bank of the Hun Ho.

General Kuropatkin, however, apparently had but an incomplete grasp of the general state of affairs existing west of the railway, and it was not until nearly two o'clock that he was sufficiently informed of the action of General Kaulbars to be in a position to initiate fresh action. The lack of news from the north-west of Mukden had caused him serious anxiety—and it was to protect the city from an advance along the Hsin-min-tun road that he had placed General de Vitt astride the highway on the line Hou-hua—Ma-chuang-tzu, with Colonel Zapolski a couple of miles farther to the north-east.† The 1st Siberian Corps, too, had been ordered to make a forced march to Mukden station and to send forward one regiment to reinforce General de Vitt. He now telephoned to General von der Launitz to leave the 15th Division of the VIIIth Corps on the left of the river; to post General Golembatovski on the right bank, north-west of Su-hu-chia-pu; and under cover of these units to withdraw the rest of his troops via Ma-chia-pu across the River Hun towards Sha-ho-tzu, with the object of concentrating at that point by the morning of

* Four and a half miles west of Lin-sheng-pu.

† Later in the day Colonel Zapolski's force proceeded to Hu-shih-tai, leaving one battalion on the line San-tai-tzu—Ta-hen-tun.

the 4th March not less than thirty battalions. Only a few minutes before the receipt of this order, however, General von der Launitz, in compliance with a dispatch from General Kaulbars, had amassed a miscellaneous collection of units and ordered them to proceed under General Rusanov to the line Yan-tzu-tun—Chan-ssu-tun, thus adding yet another detachment to those which had been formed during the past few days.*

An hour and a quarter later (3.15 p.m.) General Kaulbars received from the commander-in-chief a memorandum in which the new plan was fully set forth. The text of the document was as follows:—

General Kuropatkin's plans for the offensive.

“ I have made arrangements to concentrate on the right bank of the Hun Ho the whole of the Second Manchurian Army, with the exception of twenty-five battalions which will remain to form a rear guard at Su-hu-chia-pu, in the bend of the Hun Ho at Ma-chia-pu, and also on the right bank of that river. Provided that this concentration of troops is successfully carried out, and provided that we ourselves are not attacked to-day, we must to-morrow or the next day assume an energetic offensive against the Japanese who are turning our right flank. In view of this, and in order not to expose fractions of our forces to the enemy's blows, it appears undesirable (except under special circumstances) that the small bodies of troops which you have got together opposite Sha-lin-pu, should act offensively pending the time when we shall advance with our full strength. Until this assumption of the offensive by the whole of the force to be collected by me on the right bank, I suggest that you should employ the time that remains in ascertaining as accurately as possible the strength and distribution of the

* This detachment under General Rusanov was composed of units from the VIIIth, Xth, and Provisional Rifle Corps, namely, the 54th (Minsk), 56th (Jitomir), 121st (Penza), and the 3rd and 4th Rifle Regiments with the 41st Artillery Brigade and a company of engineers. Of the infantry the Minsk Regiment had been ordered to rejoin the VIIIth Corps from General Golembatovski's detachment during the morning and had arrived at Su-hu-chia-pu about 10 a.m. The Jitomir Regiment had fallen back before dawn from Hsin-tai-tzu and also reached Su-hu-chia-pu. The Penza Regiment had been in that village for some time acting as army reserve. The 3rd and 4th Rifle Regiments had also gravitated to that place during the morning of the 3rd but whether with or without orders is not clear. See foot-note (‡), p. 416.

enemy and in framing a proposal as to the best method of operating against him. Energetic measures are needed to ascertain where his main force is located; that is to say whether it is opposite yourself, or whether it is making a still wider turning movement. General Birger must be given some help. Send me your ideas as quickly as possible. I am moving to-day to Mukden."

To return to the movement of General von der Launitz's force, which soon degenerated into hopeless confusion. In the order issued for the withdrawal separate roads had been allotted to the artillery. But this provision was not observed, the guns mingled with the infantry, and the force proceeded in one disorganized mass. General Golembatovski was unable to cover the retirement on the right bank of the Hun Ho and was forced to fall back in face of the pressure of the left of the Japanese 8th Division; while upon the other bank the movement, as before, was carried out with extreme slowness due to the succession of checks which were of frequent occurrence. The left column of Japanese 8th Division, which had been waiting for the right to draw level, was able to resume its advance at 2 p.m., and having pushed back the detachment under General Golembatovski eventually came within range of Ai-chia-pu. This village was for a time held by a rear guard of the Russians, but a severe bombardment soon compelled it to retire, and the Japanese Division then bivouacked in the village, obtaining such shelter as could be obtained in the houses undamaged by the fire which the Russians had kindled before evacuating the place.

The right column of the division arrived at La-chia-pu about 2 p.m., and found the place occupied by part of the 5th Division, which made its own presence there superfluous—one of the rare instances of faulty staff work recorded on the Japanese side. It therefore tried to recross the river, but the banks were steep and the guns and wagons had to be sent back to the bridge at Ma-tou-lan. Eventually the column assembled for the night at Hu-chia-pu. The divisional reserve left Li-chia-pu at four o'clock and, moving west of the left column—which was at this hour in Hu-chia-pu, came under an enfilade fire from some of General Golembatovski's guns north of that village; but the Russian guns limbered up and retired when the Japanese deployed, and the reserve of the 8th Division spent the night at Tun-san-pu.

The pursuit by
the Japanese
Second Army.

Of the Japanese 5th Division the left column pushed on in pursuit of General Ivanov's troops; the 21st Regiment and three batteries of the right column returned to their proper road; while the remainder of the division tried to save as much as possible from the great conflagration which had been started by the Russians in Ta-wang-kuan-pu. Huge pyramids of stores, fodder, grain, flour, etc., and a large field bakery were blazing fiercely when the Japanese entered, but after strenuous exertions about one-third of this was saved, and a quantity of bread was eagerly seized by the troops, whose supply wagons were still miles in rear. The bread was frozen hard, but when it had been thawed it was found to be edible. In addition to the supplies and rations thus rescued from the flames about a hundred trucks were captured on the light railway which had been laid upon the ice of the Hun Ho as far as Chou-kuan-tun. The forward movement was soon resumed by the Japanese.

On the Russian side General Ivanov's troops were now also rapidly losing their cohesion. He had been ordered to retire on to the line Chan-ta-pu—Tu-erh-pu and to relieve General Gershelmann's troops which were to withdraw to Su-hu-chia-pu. These latter units were, however, merely to pass through that village en route to Ma-chia-pu and the actual defence of Su-hu-chia-pu was entrusted to General Ivanov.*

Meanwhile, between 6 and 7.30 p.m. a conglomeration of units from three different corps left Su-hu-chia-pu, only to find that the confusion increased at every step owing to the enormous amount of transport which blocked the road.† The passage of the Hun Ho at Ma-chia-pu by the single bridge which had been thrown across at that place was the final touch in the scene of chaos, some units having to wait for five hours for their turn to cross. In vain did General von der Launitz, who arrived at Ma-chia-pu at nine o'clock, call upon his chief engineer to construct two more crossing places over the ice. In the confusion and darkness it was found impossible to do this, and the transport was diverted along the left bank to the railway bridge up the river, leaving that at Ma-chia-pu for the troops.

* For this purpose General Golembatovski was placed under his orders but seems to have received orders from General von der Launitz as well.

† The 1st, 5th, 7th, and 8th Rifle Regiments of the Provisional Rifle Corps; the 55th (Podolia), and 60th (Zamostye) Regiments of the VIIIth Corps, and the 122nd (Tambov), and 33rd (Elets) Regiments of the Xth Corps.

The organization of the Second Manchurian Army had by this time completely collapsed. Corps, divisions and brigades which had split up and disappeared finally re-emerged in the form of hastily improvised detachments. Most of these makeshift units lacked adequate staffs, while the staffs, left high and dry, as the forces to which they belonged melted away, attached themselves to the nearest body of troops. And the transport was so congested that it was impossible to allot it the detachments continually being formed. The retiring Russian troops lacked even the protection of General Ivanov's detachment, for, owing to the fact that General Golembatovski had fallen back as far as Tun-tai-tzu, General Ivanov's right flank was in the air and he was compelled to edge away from Su-hu-chia-pu towards the east of the line he was holding.* Into the gap thus formed the Japanese thrust themselves like a wedge, and about ten o'clock the advanced troops of the 5th Division approached Su-hu-chia-pu, where the Russians were hurriedly superintending the loading and dispatch of trains to carry away the stores accumulated in that place. The last trains were got away about 11 p.m., under rifle fire, and soon the village was in flames, the explosion of the shells and the crackling of the small arm ammunition left behind being audible for some distance.

Of the pursuing columns the left eventually reached Hsiang-tapu, with an advanced party in Su-hu-chia-pu. The right column, on returning to its route, had been checked, late in the afternoon, at Ta-chang-ko, probably by some of the Xth Corps, but so soon as the Japanese guns opened fire the Russians fell back at once to Ying-erh-pu. Just as it was getting dark the column moved against this village, when five Russian batteries suddenly opened fire from the right front and forced it to postpone further operations until after midnight.†

The condition of the retreating Russians by now approached demoralization, and the disorder was by no means confined to the remnant of the Second Manchurian Army actually under General von der Launitz's own hand, for the march of General Rusanov's detachment was characterized by similar confusion. The Penza Regiment left Su-hu-chia-pu about 2 p.m.; two hours later it was followed by the Jitomir Regiment, while

* The River Hun gave no cover from fire.

† The exact position occupied by the divisional reserve during the night is not known: it was probably near Ta-wang-kuan-pu.

the Minsk Regiment did not leave the village until after six o'clock. The 3rd and 4th Rifle Regiments went astray, losing touch with the remaining troops of the detachment.

It is practically impossible to trace the movements of the various corps and divisions of General von der Launitz's command during the evening of Friday, the 3rd March. The most that can be done is to summarize the action of the whole of the original Second Manchurian Army during the day, dealing with each detachment in turn. This will entail the repetition of much that has already been narrated, but it will convey some idea of the situation of the Russians west of the railway.

(A) UNDER GENERAL KAULBARS.

General Grekov's Cavalry Detachment.—This force effected nothing during the day. General Grekov with nine squadrons retired to San-chia-tzu, while the 5th Ural Cossacks spent the night at Lao-pien. The casualties were *nil*.

General Birger's detachment.—This detachment fell back, by order of General Kuropatkin, towards Mukden, encountering the Japanese Cavalry Division en route.*

25th Division and Composite Division of General Vasilev.—These divisions were engaged, under General Topornin, with the 7th and 1st Divisions of the Japanese Third Army at Sha-lin-pu, but withdrew by order of General Kaulbars.

General Churin's detachment.—This consisted of troops of the Provisional Rifle Corps. It was sent by General von der Launitz to General Kaulbars, but reached Ma-chia-pu too late and too exhausted to be of any use. It arrived at Yan-tzu-tun at daybreak on the 4th March.

General Rusanov's detachment.—This was formed of five regiments and an artillery brigade drawn from three different army corps, and was sent by General von der Launitz to General Kaulbars. Of this force the 3rd and 4th Rifle Regiments lost their way and passed the night at Ma-chia-pu. The 54th (Minsk) Regiment also bivouacked in that village. The 121st (Penza) Regiment arrived at Chi-kuan-tun at 10 p.m., which village the 56th (Jitomir) Regiment also reached at dawn on the 4th. It is not known where the guns were during the night.

Cavalry detachment of six squadrons.—This force was demanded

* It is not known to what extent General Birger was under General Kaulbars.

by General Kaulbars from General Pavlov, but as the latter's command had ceased to exist it was supplied by General Tolmachev. So far as is known it reached Ma-tien-tzu.

(B) UNDER GENERAL VON DER LAUNITZ.

General Tolmachev's Cavalry Detachment.—This force was improvised on the 2nd March, and now amounted to nineteen squadrons. Six squadrons were sent during the day to General Kaulbars (see preceding paragraph). The bulk of the remainder of the detachment spent the night at Erh-tai-tzu, with outposts on the line Ai-chia-pu—Nin-kuan-tun.

General Golebatovski's detachment.—This withdrew to Tun-tai-tzu, and during the night sent two batteries and a battalion to the left of the Hun Ho, apparently to Erh-tai-tzu.

General Ivanov's detachment.—This was really the 15th Division of the VIIIth Corps, less the 60th (Zamostye) Regiment, but plus the 53rd (Volhynia) Regiment of the 14th Division and the 34th (Syev) Regiment of the Xth Corps.* At nightfall the detachment was distributed thus:—The 34th, 57th, and 59th Regiments, with five companies of the 58th Regiment and the 29th Artillery Brigade were at Ta-tai, the remainder of the 58th Regiment was making for Wa-hsiu-chuang-tzu; the 53rd Regiment was occupying Ying-erh-pu and Tu-erh-pu. Some time after midnight the troops were disposed as follows:—

Near Wa-hsiu-chuang-tzu† the 57th (Modlin), 59th (Liublin), five companies of the 58th (Praga), the 34th (Syev) Regiments, and the 29th Artillery Brigade.

At Su-chia-tun one battalion of the 58th (Praga) Regiment.

At Tu-erh-pu the 53rd (Volhynia) Regiment.

Before dawn, however, still further changes took place.

General Gershelmann's detachment.—This originally consisted of the 33rd (Elets), 34th (Syev), and 122nd (Tambov) Regiments of

* This detachment is frequently alluded to as the 15th Division in the *Russian Official History*.

† When General Ivanov's troops arrived there was a small mounted force from the Third Manchurian Army under Colonel Stakhovich in the village (two squadrons of his own 52nd Nyejin Dragoons and two squadrons of the Argun Cossack Regiment). General Ivanov on arrival considered that his men were so worn out that he determined to lead them to Ta-su-chia-pu where they would be in rear of the 5th Siberian Corps of the Third Manchurian Army. However, Colonel Stakhovich and a staff officer of the 5th Siberian Corps considered it their duty to remonstrate with him, and he eventually revoked his decision. Later Colonel Stakhovich received orders to get into touch with the staff of the Second Manchurian Army, and for this purpose proceeded with his force to Erh-tai-tzu.

the Xth Corps, i.e., what was left of that corps after General Vasilev's Composite Division had been formed and the 121st (Penza) Regiment had gone into army reserve. The 34th (Syev) Regiment became included in General Ivanov's Detachment and the other two regiments crossed the Hun at Ma-chia-pu during the night, and were collected at Sha-tou-tzu before dawn.

General Dombrovski's detachment.—This detachment, comprising the 1st, 5th, 7th, and 8th Rifle Regiments, concentrated during the night at Sha-ho-tzu.

Unallotted Units.—Certain units had by nightfall lost all connexion with corps or detachments. Thus the 55th (Podolia) Regiment of the 14th Division, VIIIth Corps, retired with that division from Hsin-tai-tzu at 7 a.m. and reached Su-hu-chia-pu. It left that place during the evening and was collected before dawn at Sha-ho-tzu. The 60th (Zamostye) Regiment had been returned by General Golematovski, and it proceeded to Su-hu-chia-pu. Later it was posted south of Ma-chia-pu to cover the crossing and remained in position during the night.

To turn now once more to the Japanese, the 4th Division by evening stretched northwards from San-chia-tzu to Hsiu-hsiao-kua, and from thence north-westwards to Huang-ti, while Colonel Tomioka's force remained generally on the line it had secured during the morning. Facing these two bodies now lay the 5th Siberian Corps of the Third Manchurian Army, which had been obliged to swing back in sympathy with the retrograde movement of the troops west of it, and by night it lay disposed along the arc Lan-shan-pu—Shao-chia-lin-tzu—Ta-liang-tun.* The head-quarters of the

* The 5th Siberian Corps during the night was disposed as follows :—

54th Division.—At Lan-shan-pu and in redoubts to the south of that village, two battalions of the 214th (Mokshan) Regiment, two battalions of the 216th (Insar) Regiment, and four batteries of the 28th Artillery Brigade. At Shao-chia-lin-tzu three battalions of the 213th (Orovai) Regiment with two mounted scout detachments and three machine guns. At Kuan-lin-pu in divisional reserve one battalion of the 216th (Insar) Regiment and one battalion of the 214th (Mokshan) Regiment.

61st Division.—The 242nd (Belebeev) Regiment near Ta-liang-tun, one battalion of the 244th (Borisov) Regiment at Kuan-lin-pu, three batteries of the 40th Artillery Brigade between Kuan-lin-pu and Ku-chia-tzu.

Corps Reserve.—In neighbourhood of Ta-su-chia-pu. Two and three-quarters battalions of the 244th (Borisov) Regiment, one battalion of the 216th (Insar) Regiment, one battalion of the 214th (Mokshan) Regiment, and one battery of the 28th Artillery Brigade.

The 243rd (Zlatoust) Regiment of the 61st Division was at Su-chia-tun in the reserve of the Third Manchurian Army, which now consisted of that regiment, the 11th (Pskov) Regiment from the XVIIth Corps, and one battalion of the 147th (Samara) Regiment.

Japanese Second Army passed the night at Hsin-tai-tzu, the army reserve being slightly in rear.*

During the day, in accordance with orders issued on the 2nd, portion of the Japanese General Reserve left the neighbourhood of Ta-tung-shan-pu. The units selected were from the 3rd Division, and consisted of the 5th Brigade, to which was added the divisional artillery and engineers, Major-General Nambo, the brigadier of the 5th Brigade being placed in command. The detachment had orders to pass in rear of the 5th and 8th Divisions and to form part of the Third Army on arriving in the front line. It is not certain how far the detachment had proceeded by nightfall on the 3rd, but its bivouac must have been short of Pei-tai-tzu, for it is on record that that village was passed on the 4th March.

Although the Second Manchurian Army had been driven in, some compensation was afforded to the Russians by the stubborn resistance made by the centre, which still proved too formidable for the Japanese Fourth Army. But the pressure of the Japanese

Third and Second Armies had forced back the Russian line more and more to the east, until at the close of the day the village of Ta-liang-tun, immediately to the left of the Fourth Army, marked the point from which it was refused. From morning until evening the heavy guns of the Japanese maintained a persistent bombardment. And to this the Russians replied, the shells from some of the howitzers of the XVIIIth Corps setting fire to the woodwork of the railway bridge over the Sha Ho about 4 p.m. Since any advance by the Fourth Army was more likely to meet with success if carried out from the left, the commander of the 6th Division made up his mind during the day to seize Han-chia-pu under cover of darkness. The attack was entrusted to the 23rd Regiment of the left brigade—the 24th—and at 10 p.m. it moved off. Advancing under the enemy's rifle fire, the regiment arrived within one hundred and fifty yards of its objective and, having previously deployed, charged the works round the village from east and west of the railway line, but the redoubts were too strong and too well defended to be taken.

* At Ta-han-tai-tzu and Hsiao-han-tai-tzu.

In the centre of the Japanese Fourth Army the 3rd and the 11th *Kobi* Brigades of the Okubo *Kobi* Division also began an attack. The enemy's position, however, was still too strong to be approached, and the offensive was abandoned until a more favourable opportunity for its resumption. On the right the 10th Division was condemned to a day of inaction; and the 20th Brigade, without food, water, or ammunition and lying within a hundred paces of the enemy was in a somewhat parlous situation.* Every effort to send forward food and cartridges was found to be in vain, and scores of volunteers were killed or wounded in attempting it. From the captured Russian trenches occupied by the men of the 20th Brigade signals made with improvised flags conveyed the serious plight of the Japanese and their urgent need for food. Finally an ingenious method was adopted to comply with their insistent demands. Boxes of ammunition and rations were packed and wrapped in any available material until the bundles assumed a spherical form, and these were then carried just before dusk to the crest of the ridge overlooking the position of the 20th Brigade. From here a push sent them rolling down the slope, and when darkness came they were retrieved by the famished soldiers below and the contents distributed. But the rations, composed chiefly of biscuit, aggravated the thirst of the defenders, which even snow could not assuage.

On the hills east of the plains that portion of the Russian line held by the 4th Siberian Corps was marked by an absence of hostilities. The quiet which had reigned over the rayon of the corps, together with the fact that its position was so strong that it could be defended with a comparatively weak force, now caused the commander-in-chief to look to this corps for more battalions. Before dawn General Zarubaiev received an order to send two battalions, four guns, and a troop of Cossacks to join the 1st Siberian Corps, and this new detachment—which included fractions of five infantry regiments—marched off at mid-day under Lieutenant-Colonel Ossovski.† By the commander of

* See p. 400.

† One company of the 5th (Irkutsk), two companies of the 8th (Tomsk), two companies of the 10th (Omsk), one company of the 9th (Tobolsk), and two companies of the 12th (Barnaul) Siberian Infantry Regiments, half a battery of the 1st Siberian Artillery Brigade, and one troop of the 7th Siberian Cossacks.

the First Manchurian Army three more battalions were ordered to reinforce the 2nd Siberian Corps upon the left.* The effective strength of the 4th Siberian Corps was thus reduced by five battalions.

The 2nd Siberian Corps could dispose of seventeen battalions, exclusive of the three battalions sent by the 4th Siberian Corps,† nevertheless the insistent attack of the Japanese Guards had compelled the Russians to use up all their reserves, and it was evident that General Zasulich could

The 2nd Siberian Corps and the Japanese Guard Division. not carry on the defence without assistance from outside. All was now more or less quiet upon the right flank, as well as in the centre, where the 2nd Guard Brigade was clinging to the ground won by it during the night;‡ on the left, however, a Japanese column consisting of about two battalions occupied the southern outskirts of Pien-niu-lu-pu. Since the security of his left flank depended on the possession of this village, General Zasulich ordered that it should be recaptured without delay, but the attempt resulted in failure, owing to the fact that the sector had been weakened by the withdrawal of troops sent to reinforce the right, and as night came on firing slackened for a time all along the front. Before midnight local attacks were renewed upon the Russian right flank, and the Japanese forced their way up to the wire entanglements, sweeping the trenches with rifle fire and throwing in hand-grenades. But the fire of the 17th and 18th East Siberian Rifle Regiments, aided by that of machine guns and batteries firing case, checked the assault and all the subsequent efforts made by the Japanese. After one of these attacks the defenders found two maps on the body of a dead officer of the Japanese General Staff, and these, showing as they did the Japanese dispositions from the extreme right, assisted to clear up many points which had hitherto been obscure to the Russians.

The attack on Pien-niu-lu-pu had not been initiated by the Guards, but by the left column of the Japanese 12th Division, which for some reason was not allowed to proceed. In the centre column

* One battalion of the 11th (Semipalatinsk), and two battalions of the 12th (Barnaul) Siberian Infantry Regiments were sent.

† Two of these battalions, from the 12th (Barnaul) Siberian Infantry Regiment, did not arrive till evening.

‡ See p. 408.

the mortars which were brought up during the night were with great difficulty got across the river at daylight, under shell fire, and arrived at the front about midday. About three o'clock they opened fire. An hour later the infantry advanced, but hardly had they done so when they were stopped by General Inouye, who sent word that a forward movement was inadvisable in view of the fact that the 2nd Division on the right had made no progress against the Kao-tai Ling position. 12th Divisional head-quarters had also received news to the effect that the Ya-lu Army was making no headway against Ma-chun-tan. When the counter-order arrived some of the 11th Regiment had already advanced and had suffered some loss from machine gun fire, but by holding their ground until dark they were able to fall back. Although General Shimamura's column thus effected nothing during the day it suffered two hundred and twenty-one casualties.

Farther to the east the Kao-tai Ling position still proved too formidable for the Japanese 2nd Division. Nevertheless, on the Russian side, the defence had been severely tried. The 10th East Siberian Rifle Regiment and the Chembar Regiment had suffered such losses that it was necessary to withdraw them from the front line and they had accordingly been sent to Pa-chia-tzu, where they were afterwards joined by a battalion of the Mtsensk Regiment. These units now acted as a reserve to the Kao-tai Ling troops. The command of the left of that position was entrusted to Major-General Bolotov, and he found his task one of considerable anxiety, for the troops which he took over were extremely exhausted and in such confusion that to restore order was far from easy, the more so on account of the deficiency of officers. Since the high ground west of Redoubt 21 was clearly the most important and also the most exposed part of the position, General Bolotov sent six companies of the Kirsanov Regiment to occupy it, and also took measures to extend the telephone system, to strengthen the defences, and to improve the arrangements for sending up food. Before dawn an attack was made by the Japanese troops already in possession of Redoubts 20 and 23. But the position, which included Redoubt 21, was so strong that they had no chance of obtaining a direct result; and they were forced to remain within two to six hundred yards of the Russian trenches until the 7th March, crowded on a

The centre
and right of
the Japanese
First Army at
a standstill.

narrow front, with units mixed up, and exposed to the great cold.

On the Russian side General Baumgarten was ordered about 10.30 a.m. to make a reconnaissance south and south-west of Tai-kou, but the attempt was soon rendered abortive by General Ohara's column. All through the day an exchange of artillery fire went on, and towards midday that of the Russians became so hot that one of the Japanese batteries was silenced. So effective indeed was the Russian fire that all movement on the Japanese side became extremely difficult, communication between the guns of General Ishibashi's column and their wagons in rear being impossible. During the evening an event of great importance occurred. A dispatch was received from the Japanese commander-in-chief which radically altered the plans of the commander of the 2nd Division. The latter apparently realized that if the line of the Ya-lu Army were broken a general defeat was not impossible, and that assistance could be rendered in the most direct manner by sending the 2nd Division to the dangerous point. He therefore suspended the attack on the Kao-tai Ling and ordered General Ohara to proceed north-eastward and to fight his way through the Ku-ling-tzu Ling, whence he was to endeavour to turn the flank of General Rennenkampf who was holding up the Ya-lu Army at Tu-pin-tai.*

Compared with its previous performances the operations of the 11th Division of the Ya-lu Army against the Tu-pin-tai position on the 3rd were not characterized by the same vigour. Firing had lasted almost without cessation during the night and

The Ya-lu Army still checked by General Rennenkampf. two Russian guns persistently shelled Fountain Hill upon which, according to the evidence of Russian scouts, the Japanese, in the construction of their breastworks, were forced to use the frozen bodies of the killed, for want of sandbags.† About

9 a.m. the Japanese advanced on the centre, but the attack, which lacked energy and precision, was repulsed with heavy loss. A second attempt made towards evening met with no better result. The latter effort was made against Fountain Hill and for a time it seemed as if it were about to succeed, for the Russians

* The 11th *Kobi* Regiment joined the 2nd Division this day from the 12th and was sent to General Ohara.

† *Russian Official History*, Vol. V, Part 1, p. 287. This incident is also mentioned in other Russian sources. Apparently the trenches were now unoccupied. See p. 405.

had expended every available reserve. But a battalion* from General Bachinski's force came up at the critical moment, and this reinforcement turned the scale in favour of the Russians, who had suffered four hundred and fifty casualties on the Tu-pin-tai position during the day. After this second repulse the vigour of the Japanese was apparently exhausted and they made no further effort. Against General Liubavin no serious action was taken throughout the day.

So inactive did the Japanese show themselves round Tu-pin-tai that General Rennenkampf considered that the time had come to take the offensive and therefore informed General Danilov that it was extremely desirable that his force should make a forward movement. Wu-lin-kou was named as the first objective, since the arrival of General Danilov's troops at that place would enable those at Tu-pin-tai to co-operate in a further advance. From the preparatory reconnaissances carried out it appeared to General Danilov that the best line of advance would be from his right flank, and towards evening he initiated a forward movement from that quarter. So soon, however, as his troops descended into the Hsiao-ta-ku-shan valley they came under a very severe machine gun and rifle fire and suffered considerable loss. An attack by the left against Height 206—carried out to divert the enemy's attention—succeeded, but it was driven back by a counter-attack, and General Danilov then came to the conclusion that without mountain artillery he would be forced to operate in the valley. This presented such grave risks that he decided to postpone any further attempt to advance.

It will be remembered that the left of the Ching-ho-cheng Detachment, originally consisting of a mixed force of four battalions, one squadron and two guns, under General Maslov, had for some time been moving outside the actual zone of fighting. Nominally under the command of General Rennenkampf, this force, by an inconvenient but characteristic system, had also been receiving orders direct from General Linevich, and from the commander-in-chief. By the latter's instructions General Maslov had by now sent two battalions† by forced march to Tieh-

* Of the 36th East Siberian Rifle Regiment. Two companies of the 288th (Kulikov) Regiment also arrived and were sent to the reserve of General Rennenkampf, and subsequently to General Liubavin.

† The 7th (Krasnoyarsk) and 10th (Omsk) Siberian Infantry Reserve Battalions.

ling. With the bulk of his force he took post himself at Ying-pan.*

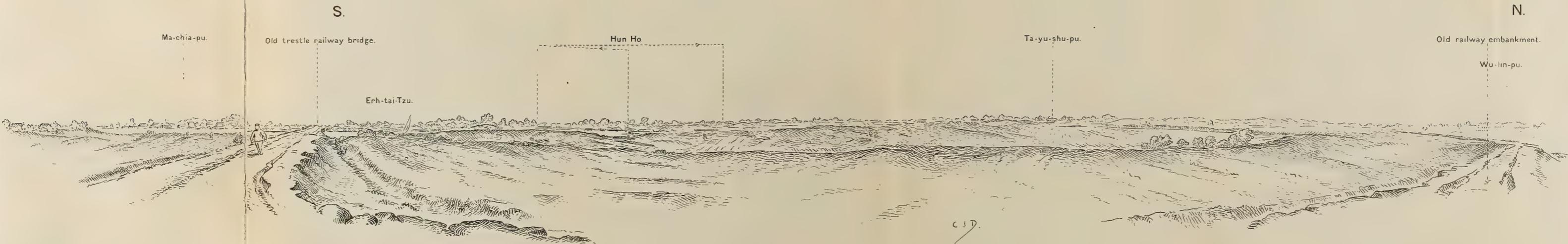
On the 3rd March the main interest again lay in the action on the west of the battlefield. The chief feature of the operations in that quarter was the fact that the Russian screen retired, after an offensive attempted by a portion of it, before the Japanese 1st and 7th Divisions and the 15th Brigade, and that the Second Manchurian Army was forced back across the Hun Ho in front of the Japanese 9th, 8th and 5th Divisions, causing the right of the Third Manchurian Army to swing back in sympathy. Both retirements of the Russians were carried out in considerable disorder, the Second Manchurian Army being completely disorganized and almost disintegrated. The action of the Russian screen absolutely lacked co-ordination. General Topornin initiated an attack which was strangled at its birth by superior control; General Birger was at the same time retreating, and fought to make his escape, and not to defeat the enemy; General Grekov did nothing. By the Russians an opportunity seems to have been lost, for if General Kuropatkin had been able to execute on this day the concerted attack by the separate portions of his screen on the extreme right of his battle front, which he was then provisionally arranging for the 4th or the 5th, it could not but have been serious for the isolated left and centre of the Japanese Third Army.

By the Japanese also an opportunity seems to have been lost through the deliberate nature of the pursuit by their Second Army of the Second Manchurian Army. This contention is borne out by the fact that the bulk of General von der Launitz's troops, disorganized as they were, were able to cross the Hun without great loss. Of General Oku's army, also, the 8th Division did not have proper scope, for the front allotted to it was so restricted that it clashed with the 5th Division. Excepting for the 5th Brigade, then on its way towards the Third Army, the Japanese General Reserve still stood fast. From this fact it seems that Marshal Oyama was endeavouring to compromise between

* Three companies of the 6th (Yeniseisk) Siberian Infantry Reserve Battalion, two companies of the 146th (Tsaritsin) Regiment, two guns of the Frontier Guards, one squadron of the Amur Cossack Regiment. South-east of Ying-pan was still one company of the 9th (Tobolsk) Siberian Infantry Reserve Battalion and three companies of that battalion and a squadron of the 1st Argun Cossack Regiment had remained at Hsing-ching.

two objects: to cut the Russian communications and to protect his own. Doubtless the deadlock on the east of the railway must have caused him anxiety; and, not knowing that the Russians on the west of the railway were already half-beaten, he must have regarded the necessity of being prepared for a heavy counter-stroke as being of primary importance. Nevertheless, it appears in the light of after-knowledge that if he had been in a position on the 3rd March, in conjunction with a vigorous offensive by the Third and Second Armies to throw his General Reserve against the retreating and disorganized right wing of the Russians, great results might have been achieved. As it was General Kuropatkin was enabled to begin collecting force for a counter-stroke on the right bank of the Hun Ho on the 4th or 5th March.

On the centre and east of the battlefield, though the Japanese still pressed, their forces were at a standstill. The Ya-lu Army, indeed, was checked in such a manner as to cause Marshal Oyama some anxiety and to occasion on the night of the 3rd a diversion of the 2nd Division of the Japanese First Army in order to assist General Kawamura.



THE BATTLE OF MUKDEN.

View of the Hun Ho valley taken from a point on the old railway embankment 400 yards north of Ma-chia-pu bridge, looking South, West and North.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

THE BATTLE OF MUKDEN—*continued*—THE RUSSIAN PLANS OF THE NIGHT OF THE 3RD-4TH MARCH—OPERATIONS ON THE 4TH MARCH—THE ENVELOPING MOVEMENT OF THE JAPANESE THIRD ARMY AGAIN CHECKED—ADVANCE BY THE JAPANESE SECOND ARMY—OPERATIONS IN THE CENTRE AND EAST—GENERAL KUROPATKIN DECIDES TO COUNTER-ATTACK THE JAPANESE THIRD ARMY UPON THE 5TH.

(Plan 64.)

IN Mukden there was little rest for the Russians during the night of the 3rd-4th March. Both General Kaulbars and the commander-in-chief had moved their head-quarters thither during the afternoon, and until dawn of the 4th, in the respective railway trains which served them as offices, discussion

General Kuropatkin proposes an offensive movement, but is forced to abandon it.

and deliberation went on.* At some hour during the night General Evert, the Quartermaster-General, conveyed to General Kaulbars the commander-in-chief's instructions to carry out a

vigorous offensive on the coming day, with the whole of the troops then on the right bank of the Hun Ho. The selection of the line of advance was, within certain limits, left to General Kaulbars; he might, if he wished, operate from his left so as to threaten the enemy's line of retreat, or, if he preferred it, from his right, so that after forcing back the enemy it would be possible for him to guarantee the safety of the railway northwards of Mukden.

However, when the plan had been explained to him General Kaulbars at once stated that he considered it impossible of execution, and confessed that he was still in ignorance of the whereabouts of several of the units which were to have passed over the Hun Ho in the night. To a suggestion that

* Throughout the 3rd the head-quarters of General Kuropatkin and General Kaulbars had been at Hsiao-ho-tun and Yu-huan-tun respectively.

every effort should be made to discover and direct these missing bodies to the most suitable localities General Kaulbars contended—not without reason—that any such attempt would increase the existing confusion, and that the troops should be allowed to rest wherever they had halted for the night. There was thus a considerable divergence between the views of General Kuropatkin and those of General Kaulbars. The commander-in-chief considered that sufficient troops would be available for an offensive movement early on the 4th, while to General Kaulbars it appeared that the concentration of adequate numbers was not possible until the morning of the 5th, when he himself proposed to attack. Both were ignorant of the general situation north of the Hun Ho at the time; but General Kaulbars had naturally been in a position to form a less inaccurate judgment than his superior. Probably on this account he was allowed to have his way, and thus it was that no arrangements were made to carry out the offensive upon the 4th March.

In spite, however, of this difference of opinion as to time, the intention of the two generals was in principle identical. Both were resolved to meet the growing danger in the west by a counter-attack on a large scale at the earliest possible moment. This point is of peculiar interest, for, as will be seen, Marshal Oyama failed to give his opponent credit for such tenacity.*

As an instance of the extent to which General Kuropatkin and General Kaulbars were in the dark as to the true state of things, it may be pointed out that neither of them, while this discussion as to the contemplated offensive was taking place, was aware that Su-hu-chia-pu was in the hands of the enemy. The former was the first to hear the news, which reached him in the shape of a telegram just before dawn.† The intelligence was entirely unexpected and caused profound anxiety in the mind of the commander-in-chief, for by seizing Su-hu-chia-pu the Japanese had gained an important crossing-place which would greatly facilitate the co-operation between their Third

* See p. 442.

† The telegram was from Lieutenant-Colonel Gasket of the Engineers who had been superintending the evacuation of Su-hu-chia-pu. It was handed in at 11.50 p.m. and reached General Head-Quarters about 4 a.m. Over four hours was thus occupied in transmitting this information by telegraph over a distance of about eleven miles.

and Second Armies, and he at once sent off instructions to General von der Launitz, impressing upon him the necessity of recapturing the place. The chaos into which the Russian organization had fallen is well illustrated by the sequel.

From his head-quarters at Sha-ta-tzu—within four miles of Su-hu-chia-pu—General von der Launitz replied that he had not heard of the loss of the latter place and was convinced that the report was entirely untrue, but that he would at once take steps to put the matter beyond all doubt. He accordingly dispatched a staff officer to reconnoitre towards the village, and when the fact of its capture was definitely established directed General Gershelmann to retake it, giving him the orders personally about 9 a.m. Some two hours later, however, an aide-de-camp of General Kaulbars arrived at General von der Launitz's head-quarters, with orders that if Su-hu-chia-pu was not already recaptured the attempt to regain it was not to be carried out, unless it could be done without heavy loss. This was duly conveyed to General Gershelmann, who at once proceeded to recast the orders which he had drafted on his original and more enterprising instructions. By this time it was about one o'clock, and Su-hu-chia-pu was not only not retaken, it had not been attacked.

To revert to the narrative of the events of the day, which will be continued from the Russian right: no better description of the condition to which the Russian battle disposition had been reduced by Marshal Oyama's strategy can be given than the

The events of
the 4th March.
Ineffectiveness
of the Russian
cavalry.

statement that their general front, from approximately a straight line was now to all intents a semicircle; and unfortunately for the Russians the railway, the possession of which was vital to them, did not run through the centre of the gigantic arc thus formed. Their right flank was at this time actually upon the railway, Colonel Zapolski's detachment being disposed round Hu-shih-tai station, towards which point General Birger's detachment was also wending its way. Some miles to the north-west, outside the main perimeter of Russian corps and detachments, and for all intents and purposes forming but little part of the Russian strength, was the cavalry detachment of General Grekov. On the morning of the 4th that commander was in entire ignorance both of the general condition of affairs and of the exact composition of his own force. At 7 a.m. he telegraphed to General

Kaulbars, asking for information as to the real situation along the front of the Second Manchurian Army and requesting that those of his troops which had remained with General Pavlov and General Eichholz should rejoin him without delay. The nature of this dispatch affords eloquent testimony to the indifferent reconnaissance work performed by the Russian cavalry and illustrates the confusion brought about by the custom of impounding units without informing all concerned. However, weak though he felt himself to be, and ill-informed though he admittedly was, General Grekov decided to carry out offensive operations in rear of the Japanese column which he had marked passing north-eastwards on the previous day. The 5th Ural Cossacks were ordered to proceed to Lao-pien, whence they were to deploy, with Pin-lo-pu on their left and their right about Shih-li-ho, to observe the enemy from the north, to maintain touch with General Birger, should he be located on the right, and to link up with three squadrons of the 1st Chita Cossack Regiment, which had moved out on to the line Yi-pa-tai—Shih-li-ho. With the squadrons actually under his own hand General Grekov's intention was to move in rear of the enemy advancing on Mukden.

On receipt of his orders the commander of the 5th Ural Cossacks sent out patrols. About 11 a.m. they ascertained that General Birger's force had retired during the night towards Mukden; and shortly afterwards the main body, on arrival at Shih-li-ho, came across about seventy wounded who had been left behind in the retreat. This discovery seriously detracted from the mobility of the Cossacks, for it was impossible for them to abandon these hapless soldiers to the mercies of the Hun-hu-tzu hovering about, or to leave them out in the piercing cold. The wounded were consequently placed on horses from which a corresponding number of Cossacks were dismounted, and this collection of sound cavalymen on foot and disabled infantrymen on horseback followed in rear of the column, escorted by a squadron. Japanese horsemen were soon seen to the south, and the Cossacks thereupon turned about and headed west. Patrols now sent back news that the villages south to south-west of Lao-pien were occupied by hostile cavalry,* and that

* Possibly patrols from the Japanese Cavalry Division, but so far as is known no Japanese cavalry were west of the line of the old railway embankment. It is more than probable that the cavalry observed belonged to the 1st Chita Cossack Regiment.

Japanese infantry were east of Ta-fa-hsin, the latter being from the 1st Division of the Third Army, which was advancing absolutely unopposed towards Ta-shih-chiao on the Hsin-min-tun road. The unexpected duty of having to transport and safeguard the aftermath of General Birger's fight of the previous day apparently militated against quick progress, and the Cossacks halted for the night at Hsi-san-kai, having suffered in casualties one man wounded.

General Grekov, with the main body of the cavalry, had moved off about 8 a.m., with the intention of making a long detour so as to get in rear of the Japanese, and proceeded for about eight miles parallel to, and north of, the Hsin-min-tun road.

In the afternoon, however, having heard that the General Grekov's 5th Ural Cossacks had to abandon their task, movements.

he renounced his original project and determined again to place himself on the Russian right, in other words, to return almost to the identical locality from which he had started, and moving through Lao-pien he reached his destination by night-fall. During the day he had moved from east to west and back again, had abandoned the intended operations in rear of General Nogi's army, and beyond some vague rumours originating from Chinese sources had secured no information whatever. The Russian casualties were *nil*; and from the records available it seems doubtful whether a single trooper of the eleven squadrons saw one Japanese soldier during the day.*

After its engagement on the previous day with General Birger the Japanese Cavalry Division pushed eastwards on the 4th and spent the night at Chen-hsin-tai-tzu, with the 3rd Cavalry Regiment in advance to the north-east.† Here

* At night the Russian Cavalry Detachment was distributed as follows:—

On the right bank of the Liao Ho, south of Hsin-min-tun, two squadrons of the 1st Chita Cossacks and four squadrons of the 51st (Chernigov) Dragoons.

Hsi-san-kai. Three squadrons of the 5th Ural Cossacks.

About half-way between Chin-tui-tzu and San-chia-tzu, with outposts on the line Shih-li-ho—Pin-lo-pu, the main body under General Grekov, i.e., four squadrons of the 1st Chita Cossacks, three squadrons of the Terek-Kuban Regiment, two squadrons of the 51st (Chernigov) Dragoons, two squadrons of the 52nd (Nyejin) Dragoons, and the 20th Horse Artillery Battery.

† The Japanese Cavalry Division now consisted of the 1st and 2nd Cavalry Brigades and the mounted battery, the 3rd Cavalry Regiment, part of the 9th Cavalry Regiment, and two companies of the 3rd Regiment.

it was echeloned on the left rear of the 1st Division, which went into bivouac between Ta-shih-chiao and Pin-lo-pu* after a day distinguished by no incident except a skirmish near Fan-hsi-tun between its advanced units and some mounted men sent out reconnoitring by General de Vitt.† The Russian horsemen were quickly driven in and were unable to obtain any clue to the enemy's strength.

To the south of General de Vitt's detachment was the force under General Topornin, which had taken up a position on the line Niu-hsin-tun—Yu-huan-tun—Three Houses, on the newly fortified west front of Mukden, with the Composite Division under General Vasilev in rear at Huan-ku-tien, as the reserve.‡ With this detachment the Japanese 7th Division collided during the day, somewhat to the surprise of General Oseko, who does not appear to have expected any resistance other than that of a rear guard. The Japanese quickly deployed, but it was not until about 5 p.m. that they made an advance, when their left flank attempted to push in closer. The movement was checked by the heavy fire delivered by the 3rd Division of the Russian 25th Artillery Brigade, when the Japanese were about one thousand yards from the Russian line, and fighting ceased towards evening. Although a night attack was expected by General Topornin it did not take place, and all was quiet until next morning.

For some unknown reason an impression appears to have been gained by the Japanese that the Russians north of the Hun were in full retreat. Indeed the Third Army had on this day been directed to reach the line Mukden station—Emperor's Tombs§ —Village about four miles west of Siding 97, an order which could have been issued only on the supposition that the Russians were thoroughly beaten in the western quarter of the field. In accordance with it the 9th Division was detailed

The Japanese
Third Army.
The 9th Division checked.

* See Plan 64.

† At twelve noon General de Vitt was informed that he was now under General Kaulbars.

‡ The 98th (Yuriev) Regiment, which had suffered severely on the 3rd, was in billets at Ku-chia-tzu.

§ North of Mukden. To distinguish these from the tombs east of the railway, they will in future be called the Northern Tombs.

to arrive at Mukden station by nightfall, but insomuch as the various Russian detachments north of the Hun Ho had aligned themselves as they had come up along the new western defensive position, the 9th Division, as well as the 7th, was soon checked. The former had commenced to move at dawn. The 18th Brigade, forming the right flank guard, advanced against Nin-kuan-tun so as to establish connexion with the 8th Division of the Second Army, while the main body headed for Chan-ssu-tun.

During the march the divisional commander received a dispatch from the 9th Cavalry Regiment to the effect that hostile cavalry were visible on the line Chan-ssu-tun—Yan-tzu-tun, and that they were covering the withdrawal of a large column which was falling back on Mukden. This information was incorrect and gave rise to the belief that the ground about Yan-tzu-tun would be found to be held only by a rear guard; and the commander of the 9th Division, misled by it, ordered the advanced troops to deploy for attack on arriving at Chan-ssu-tun, and sent three batteries of field artillery to a hill about three-quarters of a mile to the east. The Russian line was, however, held in greater strength than had been anticipated, for the detachment of General Churin had occupied the fortified western front, north of Yan-tzu-tun, during the morning, and twenty-four Russian field guns and a few howitzers opened on the Japanese guns. After an hour the latter were silenced and the Russians then shelled the Japanese firing line and placed it in a precarious position.

No better fortune had attended the right flank guard, for it was being pressed by a superior force of the enemy at Yan-tzu-tun. In fact it was only the approach of darkness, coupled with the fact that the Russians were reserving their strength for a counter-attack on the morrow, that saved the Japanese 9th Division from rougher handling. That division had now for the second time within a few days paid the penalty exacted for insufficient reconnaissance. Head-quarters of the Third Army, the 15th *Kobi* Brigade and the 2nd Artillery Brigade passed the night a mile or two south-west of the main body of the 7th Division, far short of the destination implied in the optimistic orders issued for the day.

For the Japanese Second Army General Oku had issued orders at 11 p.m. on the 3rd, directing it to continue the pursuit of the enemy, who was to be attacked on the line Ta-liang-tun—

Su-hu-chia-pu,* after which it was to endeavour to cross to the right bank of the Hun Ho.† At 6 a.m. the advanced troops of the 8th Division left their bivouacs and in the morning fog suddenly came upon the bulk of General Golembatovski's infantry, strongly entrenched in the village of Tun-tai-tzu.‡ The place had been well strengthened for

* The fact that this village was already occupied by Japanese units was not known at the head-quarters of the Japanese Second Army.

† The text of the orders was as follows :—

- (1) The army will continue to pursue the enemy to-morrow, and, attacking the enemy on the line Ta-liang-tun—Su-hu-chia-pu, will endeavour to cross to the right bank of the Hun.
- (2) The 4th Division will march at dawn and occupy the line from Kuan-lin-pu through Hsiao-su-chia-pu to Wan-hsui-chuang-tzu. Colonel Tomioka's detachment, conforming to the movement of the 4th Division, will attack the enemy first at Wu-chang-ying, next at Shang-tai-tzu, and, lastly, at Ta-liang-tun. The operations of this detachment will begin from the left, and a strong connexion with the right of the 4th Division will be maintained.
- (3) The 5th Division will move at dawn and attack the enemy at Su-hu-chia-pu.
- (4) The 8th Division will keep on the right bank of the Hun, assist the attack of the 5th Division, and endeavour to occupy the line Hou-sei-chia-pu§ to Hsiao-su-chia-pu.
- (5) The heavy artillery will leave Ta-han-tai at 6 a.m. and move to Ta-chang-ko. The remainder of the army reserve will leave Hsin-tai-tzu at 6 a.m. and march to the same place.
- (6) Army head-quarters will proceed to Ta-chang-ko, leaving Hsin-tai-tzu at 9 a.m.

§ This village cannot be exactly identified. It was between Ta-su-chia-pu and Ssu-fan-pu.

‡ The 8th Division advanced this day in one column distributed as follows :—

Advanced guard :—

Vanguard :—

- Half a section of the 8th Cavalry Regiment.
- 1st Battalion 31st Regiment.
- One company of the 8th Engineer Battalion.
- One battery of mountain artillery.

Main guard :—

- 2nd Battalion, 5th Regiment.
- Three batteries of mountain artillery.
- Three batteries of field artillery.

Right flank guard :—

- One section of the 8th Cavalry Regiment.
- 2nd Battalion, 31st Regiment.
- One battery of mountain artillery.

Left flank guard :—

- One section of the 8th Cavalry Regiment.
- 1st Battalion, 5th Regiment.
- 3rd Battalion, 5th Regiment.
- One battery of mountain artillery.

Main body of division :—

16th Brigade.

defence; the bank round it had been thickened, while the ditch, some seven to eight feet deep and ten feet wide, constituted a formidable obstacle, since the frozen sides stood vertical.*

Soon after 8.30 a.m. the Japanese attack developed. The mountain guns of the vanguard and right flank guard came into action, the 1st Battalion of the 31st Regiment advanced directly against the village, while the 1st Battalion of the 5th Regiment moved against the Russian right, obtaining a certain amount of cover from view from some clumps of trees. On the Russian side an unfortunate incident now took place. The commander of the Orsk Regiment, in an ill-judged exercise of initiative, decided to retire, and left the three battalions of the Buzuluk Regiment to bear the brunt of the attack of the 8th Division. Another misfortune occurred immediately afterwards, for when the officer commanding the Buzuluk Regiment sent back for reinforcements General Golematovski, the commander of the detachment, was nowhere to be found. Nevertheless for three hours his regiment, assisted by artillery fire from the left bank of the Hun, offered a strenuous resistance; but by that time, being without orders and surrounded on three sides, it was forced to give way, and fell back on Ta-yu-shu-pu and Ma-chia-pu, leaving some fifty killed and wounded, and thirty-two prisoners in the hands of the Japanese. During the retirement a charge was essayed by some of the Japanese divisional cavalry, but it was repulsed by fire. Shortly before 2 p.m. the Buzuluk Regiment reached Ma-chia-pu and was sent thence into reserve at Sha-tou-tzu, while the Orsk Regiment halted near the old embankment and was apparently handed over to General Gershelmann. The advanced guard of the Japanese 8th Division had meanwhile occupied the line Hsiao-yu-shu-pu—Ta-yu-shu-pu about eleven o'clock, while the cavalry attached to the division, together with an infantry battalion, was ordered to fill the gap between it and the 9th Division and thus to maintain connexion with the Third Army.

In the Japanese 5th Division the right column was at first checked by the units belonging to General Ivanov in Ying-erh-pu and to dislodge these without suffering somewhat heavy loss seemed difficult. Improvised mortars were therefore brought up

* The guns and one battalion of the 215th (Buzuluk) Regiment had withdrawn during the night to Erh-tai-tzu. See p. 427.

from which high-explosive bombs were fired into the village, and by their help it was captured. While this affair was taking place the remainder of the division concentrated in Chan-ta-pu. Farther to the right the 4th Division was busily engaged from an early hour in preparing its attack in accordance with the orders issued, while the reinforced 5th Brigade under General Nambo, which as already mentioned had on the 3rd marched north-westwards behind the Second Army, was now about Pa-chia-tai.

At this time General Oku seems to have shared the current belief that the Russians west of the railway had shot their bolt, and he now found himself confronted by a dilemma. To his left, so far as he knew, General Nogi's turning movement was progressing favourably, and since its ultimate result would be magnified by an increase to the weight of the blow in that quarter, General Oku wished to transfer the bulk of his army across the Hun. On the other hand, he knew that the Fourth Army to his right was making but little impression upon Putilov and One Tree Hills and he felt that possibly he should render assistance to General Nodzu.

The latter consideration seems to have appealed the more strongly to him, and he wrote to Marshal Oyama, offering the 4th Division to that army, and in anticipation of the reply issued fresh orders at 10 a.m. as follows:—

(1) The army will cross to the right bank of the Hun and direct its march so as to occupy a front from the old railway bridge (south of Ma-chia-pu) to Lu-kun-tun.

(2) The 4th Division without losing a moment must repulse the enemy before it, and then assist the 6th Division* on its right, at the same time covering the right flank and rear of the army. Colonel Tomioka's detachment will be under the orders of the commander of the 4th Division.

(3) The 8th Division will leave the neighbourhood of Hsiao-yu-shu-pu at 11 a.m., and marching through Wu-lin-pu and Nin-kuan-tun will proceed as far as the nameless village south-west of Ta-a-pu and Lu-kun-tun. Great care must be taken to maintain a strong connexion with the Third Army.

(4) The 5th Division, leaving Su-hu-chia-pu at 11 a.m., will advance to a line extending from the old railway bridge to

* Of the Fourth Army.

Sha-ta-tzu. Special care will be exercised to guard the gap which the northerly movement will cause between it and the 4th Division.

(5) Colonel Tomioka's detachment will be under the orders of the commander of the 4th Division.

(6) The reserve of the army is placed at the disposal of the commander of the heavy artillery brigade, and will leave Ta-chang-ko at 11 a.m. and move to Hsiang-ta-pu.

(7) Army head-quarters will proceed temporarily to Ta-chang-ko.

So soon as this order was dispatched, army head-quarters left Hsin-tai-tzu for Ta-chang-ko. At 12.30 p.m., in reply to General Oku's offer, an order came from Marshal Oyama, directing that the 4th Division should be given to the Fourth Army. Two hours later General Nambo's detachment from the General Reserve was placed under General Oku in exchange for that division. It was to push on without delay to Tu-nan-tou.

When the orders were received by the 8th Division during the afternoon its advanced guard was still on the line Hsiao-yu-shu-pu—Ta-yu-shu-pu, and the next move forward to be made was to the line Nin-kuan-tun—Wu-lin-pu. The right flank guard, however, was unable to advance, for from the portion of the old railway embankment running north from Ma-chia-pu a heavy fire was proceeding from infantry and two batteries. This came from some of the troops of General Gershelmann, who had by this time—in accordance with instructions—changed his attack on Su-hu-chia-pu into reconnaissance and was engaged in the latter task.* Accordingly the Japanese right flank guard halted and

The Japanese
Second Army.
The 8th Division.

* See p. 439. The situation of General Gershelmann's force was as follows:—The 8th Rifle Regiment and several batteries were near Sha-ta-tzu, with a company of the 241st (Orsk) Regiment (from General Golebatovski's detachment) in a redoubt in front of the village. The 33rd (Elets) Regiment and two companies of the 241st (Orsk) Regiment were holding the old embankment immediately north of the Hun. Continuing this line on the left of the Hun was the 122nd (Tambov) Regiment. Attached to this regiment were two battalions of the 241st (Orsk) Regiment and one battalion of the 60th (Zamostye) Regiment, which had halted at Ma-chia-pu the previous day. At that village and vicinity were seven batteries. The 7th Rifle Regiment was in reserve in rear of Sha-ta-tzu. On the left bank of the river on the line Erh-tai-tzu—Pei-cheng-tzu was another improvised detachment under Colonel Kuznetsov, consisting of the 59th (Liublin) Regiment, the 3rd and 4th Rifle Regiments and one battalion of the 58th (Praga) Regiment.

then joined the advanced guard behind the old embankment. Meanwhile the left flank guard pushed on. Meeting with very little resistance, it crossed the old railway embankment and occupied Nin-kuan-tun about 4 p.m., acting in co-operation with a detachment from the 9th Division of the Third Army. About the same time the vanguard reached Wu-lin-pu. A further advance being contemplated, the villages of Chi-kuan-tun, Sha-ta-tzu and Ma-chia-pu were bombarded as a preliminary; but the lateness of the hour and the fact that the 5th Division had not come up into line led to the cancellation of this plan, and the troops occupied themselves in strengthening their positions at Wu-lin-pu and Nin-kuan-tun. The main body of the division spent the night about Ta-yu-shu-pu.

After expelling the Russians from Ying-erh-pu the 5th Division had pushed on from Chan-ta-pu and occupied Ta-tai and Su-hu-chia-pu. The latter village was found to contain large stores of tinned rations which the retiring Russians had failed to burn, and the Japanese soldiers were allowed to help themselves to these provisions as they passed through the place. Everywhere the Russians fell back, except at the village of Erh-tai-tzu, which was held, though apparently not in any great force.* Against this place General Kigoshi detached a battalion of the 21st Regiment, and with the remainder of his force began crossing the Hun at 4 p.m. The weather conditions were unfavourable, for a high wind had raised a blinding dust; but the ice was firm and showed no signs of melting or even of being cut up under the traffic of thousands of feet and the wheels of innumerable vehicles and guns.† Soon after crossing the river the 5th Division reached the village of Tun-tai-tzu, which had been taken in the forenoon by the 8th Division, and later arrived at Ta-yu-shu-pu

* The Russian force in this village was the left wing of General Gershelmann's detachment.

† The following description of the Hun Ho about Su-hu-chia-pu is taken from a report furnished by an officer who accompanied the 5th Division on this day:—The river here is almost exactly similar in appearance to the Jumna or Ganges in India, if one can imagine intense cold prevailing instead of intense heat. There are the same great weary stretches of sand, the same sort of banks, and the same sort of scrubby jungle, but here, instead of mimosa thorn, almost all the growth on the banks is willow. The river bed just here is about eight hundred yards wide, of which more than two-thirds is sand. The banks of the Hun, like those of all the rivers of the plains of Manchuria, are either little cliffs, varying from ten to twenty feet high, or else gentle slopes of sand, gradually rising to the level of the surrounding country.

where that division had also preceded it. A very heavy artillery fire was now being directed against both divisions, chiefly from Ma-chia-pu and, just as daylight failed the 41st Regiment went forward in a south-easterly direction towards the river bed, while the 11th Regiment took up a position east of Ta-yu-shu-pu, facing the old embankment. Meanwhile the battalion of the 21st Regiment which had been sent against Erh-tai-tzu found that it was held in greater strength than had at first been supposed. The attack, therefore, was not pushed home, and the battalion was ordered to remain before the village, the capture of which was not considered a matter of great urgency. Throughout the day, in spite of the severe artillery fire during the afternoon, there were only fifty-eight casualties in the 5th Division. Almost all of these were from rifle fire and occurred among the ranks of the battalion before Erh-tai-tzu.

In front of the 4th Division, whose troops now formed part of the Fourth Army, but whose operations were intimately associated with those of the Second, the Russians resisted with considerable obstinacy. Their troops in this sector of the field were the

The Japanese
Fourth Army.
The 4th Division
attacks the right
of the Third
Manchurian
Army.

right flank units of the Third Manchurian Army—that is to say, the regiments of the 54th Division of the 5th Siberian Corps, which were occupying a position including the villages of Lan-shan-pu and Shao-chia-lin-tzu. To the right of this line, at Tu-erh-pu, was part of the 53rd (Volhynia) Regiment of the VIIIth Corps. Under cover

of artillery fire the left wing of the Japanese 4th Division,* advancing from Hsiu-hsiao-kua, gallantly stormed Lan-shan-pu about 1 p.m. The Russians made spirited but unavailing efforts to retake the place, and for the third attempt, made towards dusk, collected over sixteen battalions,† including over five battalions sent by the commander of the Third

* The 19th Brigade.

† 4 battalions 214th (Mokshan) Regiment, 54th Division, 5th Siberian Corps.

4 battalions 216th (Insar) Regiment, 54th Division, 5th Siberian Corps.

3 battalions 243rd (Zlatoust) Regiment, 61st Division, 5th Siberian Corps.

2 $\frac{3}{4}$ battalions 244th (Borisov) Regiment, 61st Division, 5th Siberian Corps.

2 $\frac{1}{2}$ battalions 11th (Pskov) Regiment, 3rd Division, XVIIth Corps.

16 $\frac{1}{4}$ battalions.

Manchurian Army. They approached to within twenty yards of the front line of the Japanese, but the latter, holding their fire and waiting until the enemy's ponderous advance came near, shattered his ranks and drove him back with heavy loss.* On the Japanese right the 7th Brigade engaged against Shao-chia-lin-tzu was subjected to a heavy flanking fire from guns near Hsiao-su-chia-pu and failed in its efforts to take the place. Some troops were therefore sent towards the north to threaten the enemy's retreat. On seeing this the defenders of the village became alarmed, and the main part of the 7th Brigade charged and drove them out, firing heavily on them as they retired.†

The left wing of the 5th Siberian Corps, formed by the 61st Division, was practically undisturbed throughout the day except by artillery fire, and in front of it Colonel Tomioka's detachment advanced only to Wu-chang-ying.‡

The course of the actual fighting has been described, from that taking place on the western flank up to that occurring

* The Japanese 19th Brigade suffered nearly one thousand casualties in this attack.

† The Russian losses in the fighting round Lan-shan-pu and Shao-chia-lin-tzu amounted to two thousand nine hundred and thirty-four, of which two thousand and forty-two were incurred by the 54th Division. The Japanese 4th Division lost at least one thousand five hundred of all ranks.

‡ At night the position of the troops in this quarter of the field was as follows:—

Russians:—

At Pu-chia-tzu, the 57th (Modlin) Regiment.

At Wa-hsiu-chuang-tzu, the 53rd (Volhynia) Regiment and one battalion of the 243rd (Zlatoust) Regiment.

Opposite Lan-shan-pu, the 216th (Insar) Regiment, one and a half battalions of the 214th (Mokshan) Regiment, two battalions of the 11th (Pskov) Regiment, and half a battalion of the 243rd (Zlatoust) Regiment.

Opposite Shao-chia-lin-tzu, the 213th (Orovai) Regiment, two battalions 214th (Mokshan) Regiment, one battalion of the 244th (Borisov) Regiment, and half a battalion of the 242nd (Belebeev) Regiment.

At Ta-su-chia-pu, two and three-quarter battalions of the 244th (Borisov) Regiment, one and a half battalions of the 243rd (Zlatoust) Regiment, and half a battalion of the 11th (Pskov) Regiment.

At Pei-tai-tzu-yen, one battalion of the 243rd (Zlatoust) Regiment.

South-east of Pei-tai-tzu-yen, the 34th (Siev) Regiment.

At Su-chia-tun, one battalion of the 58th (Praga) Regiment, and the 5th Rifle Regiment.

Near Ta-liang-tun, three and a half battalions of the 242nd (Belebeev) Regiment.

Japanese:—

The 4th Division was on a line from Kuan-lin-pu to Lan-shan-pu.

Colonel Tomioka's detachment was at Wu-chang-ying. This detachment was now, equally with the 4th Division, attached to the Fourth Army.

on the railway line, and it is now necessary to relate what steps were being taken by the Russians to deal with the situation as it developed. A further redistribution of command was made, and about one o'clock the forces of Colonel Zapolski and General Birger—in addition to that of General de Vitt—were placed by the commander-in-chief under General Kaulbars, who at once made a fresh subdivision of the troops under his control. The River Hun now ceased to be the dividing line between General von der Launitz and himself, and a road which ran practically east and west from Chan-ssu-tun to Mukden was substituted for it. North of that road all units were to be directly under General Kaulbars; south of it the general control was to be exercised by General von der Launitz, but his powers were somewhat limited by the details of a further subdivision made by General Kaulbars. Thus, all the troops in the area between the Chan-ssu-tun—Mukden road and the Hun Ho were to take their orders from General Tserpitski* and those—of the Second Manchurian Army—south of the river were to be under General Gershelmann. The order for this distribution was followed about 5.30 p.m. by operation orders, of which the gist was as follows:—

General Birger's detachment (8 battalions, 24 guns) was to defend the line San-tai-tzu—Ta-hen-tun.

General de Vitt's detachment (15 battalions, 24 guns) was to defend the line Sha-hei-tzu—Ma-chuang-tzu (inclusive).

General Topornin's detachment (25th Division of the XVIth Corps, and the Composite Division of General Vasilev, less one brigade) was to defend the line Ma-chuang-tzu—Chan-ssu-tun—Mukden road.†

General Tserpitski's detachment (about 30 battalions) was, if possible, to occupy during the night the old railway embankment and the village of Nin-kuan-tun, with a view of taking the offensive in a westerly direction early next morning.

General Gershelmann's detachment (about 20 battalions) was to take up a line from the Hun Ho to the right of the Third Manchurian Army and was to be prepared to advance against Su-hu-chia-pu at dawn.

The Reserve (2nd Brigade, 9th Division) was to be at Lu-kun-tun.

* The commander of the Xth Corps which was, by this, broken up.

† Presumably inclusive, though it is not so stated.

*The mounted troops (Dragoons)** were to concentrate in the area between the Hsin-min-tun highway and the main line of railway in the vicinity of Siding 97.†

The 1st Siberian Corps at Mukden would form the General Reserve of the commander-in-chief.

The orders show that General Kaulbars was still in ignorance of the situation of his troops. General Birger's force was only on its way to Hu-shih-tai railway station, and allowing for the time which must elapse before the orders could reach him he could not possibly take up the position indicated until the 5th March. General Tserpitski's detachment was to include all the troops between the Chan-ssu-tun—Mukden road and the River Hun, and to comprise about thirty battalions; but actually in the area at the time were the detachments under Generals Churin, Rusanov, and Muilov, and some of General Gershelmann's detachment of the previous day—in all about forty-eight and a half battalions.‡ Again, of the troops of the Second Manchurian Army south of the Hun Ho, which were to be taken over by General Gershelmann, some of the units under General

* The Dragoon Regiments in the Russian army in Manchuria were at this time disposed as follows:—The 51st Chernigov Dragoons were in General Grekov's detachment; of the 52nd Nyejin Dragoons, two squadrons were with General Grekov, two in the Third Manchurian Army, and two with General de Vitt. Of the Primorsk Dragoon Regiment, three squadrons were with the 1st Siberian Corps, two squadrons with the 3rd Siberian Corps, and one with General Danilov. It is probable that the squadrons here referred to were those with General de Vitt and the 1st Siberian Corps.

† Three villages in the neighbourhood are given in the original text, one east and two west of the railway.

‡ General Muilov was the commander of the VIIIth Corps which, like the other corps of the Second Manchurian Army, was now dissolved. He was at this time in command of a reserve at Sha-tou-tzu (of fifteen battalions and one hundred and twenty-four guns) which seems to have consisted of such infantry units and guns as were not with the improvised detachments in the front line. The infantry comprised the 1st and 5th Rifle Regiments of the Provisional Rifle Corps, the 215th (Buzuluk) Regiment from General Golembatovski's detachment (see p. 398), the 55th (Podolia) Regiment of the VIIIth Corps and three battalions of the 60th (Zamostye) Regiment.

In these orders General Tolmachev's cavalry is not mentioned. During the day that force proceeded from Erh-tai-tzu to Ma-chia-pu where it crossed the Hun about noon and about 4 p.m. apparently opened fire against the Japanese 8th Division. After dark it withdrew to the left bank about a mile south-west of the railway bridge. During the night the Trans-Baikal batteries and two squadrons were sent to Yan-tzu-tun to General Tserpitski. After this there only remained five squadrons, the command of which devolved on General Prince Orbeliani, who was now recovered.

Ivanov had edged eastwards towards the Third Manchurian Army, where they had been sequestered by General Bilderling and divided between his army reserve and the 5th Siberian Corps.*

As a matter of fact, however, these orders, issued by General Kaulbars in his capacity as commander of the screen and as having some authority over the remnant of the Second Manchurian Army which had been handed over to General von der Launitz, were subsequently amended to harmonize with fresh instructions received from the commander-in-chief himself. In General Kuropatkin's railway carriage discussion on the course to be pursued had continued all day.

Various plans had been put forward; but the conflict of opinion as to the best measures to be taken had finally been reduced to two definite and distinct proposals. One was a counter-attack on the Japanese Third Army; the other a withdrawal northwards from Mukden—or, in less guarded phraseology, a retreat. Towards evening it seemed that the latter proposal had gained the day, and a general order containing the necessary instructions for the whole army was actually drafted and placed before General Kuropatkin; but the commander-in-chief, still believing in the possibility of success, withheld his signature, although he gave his sanction to warning the Third and First Manchurian Armies of the possibility of an early withdrawal from the Sha Ho position.

General Kaulbars was summoned to the council to consider the question of what task should be assigned to him in the offensive which had then in principle been decided upon. There appeared to be two methods by which the offensive could be carried out. General Kuropatkin considered that the more feasible plan would be to operate from the right, from the line Sha-*hei-tzu*—*Hou-hua*—*Ma-chuang-tzu*, while General Kaulbars favoured an advance by his left, from the line *Ma-chia-pu*—*Yan-tzu-tun*. After some discussion as to the difficulty of launching an attack against the strong *Dembovski Position*† General Kaulbars

* The 34th (Siev) Regiment of the Xth Corps, and the 58th (Praga) Regiment of the VIIIth Corps were in the Third Manchurian Army reserve about *Su-chia-tun*. The 53rd (Volhynia) and 57th (Modlin) Regiments of the VIIIth Corps together with forty guns now formed part of the 5th Siberian Corps.

† See footnote (*), p. 270.

concurrent in the view of the commander-in-chief, who then came to the following decision:—On the 5th the troops of the reinforced Second Manchurian Army were to assume the offensive, directing their blow against the left of the Japanese Third Army, with not less than fifty battalions. The object of the movement was to be the capture of the Dembovski Position and the old railway embankment by all the troops on the right bank of the Hun. For the operation General Kaulbars was to dispose of one hundred and twenty-five and three-quarters battalions and three hundred and sixty-four quick-firing guns.*

The exact strength of the Japanese likely to be encountered was not known. As a matter of fact it amounted to ninety-three battalions and four hundred guns.†

* *Russians.*

Name.	Bns.	Guns.	—
Colonel Zapolski.	6	8	(Three battalions of the 147th (Samara) Regiment and three battalions of drafts.)
General de Vitt.	11½	24	(The 12th (Velikolutsk) and 138th (Bolkhov) Regiments and three and a half battalions of the 140th (Zaraisk) Regiment.)
General Topornin.	32	88	(The 25th Division XVIth Corps; 2nd Brigade 9th, and 2nd Brigade 31st, Divisions, Xth Corps.)
1st Siberian Corps.	18	64	(Nine battalions from 1st, and nine battalions from 9th, East Siberian Rifle Divisions.)
General Tserpitski.	19¾	72	(The 5th Rifle Brigade and 2nd Rifle Regiment amounting in all to eight and three-quarters battalions; three battalions of the 54th (Minsk) Regiment; and the 56th (Jitomir), and 121st (Penza) Regiments.)
General Gershelmann and Colonel Kuznetsov.	25½	96	(The 122nd (Tambov), 33rd (Elets), and 59th (Liublin) Regiments, three and a half battalions of the 241st (Orsk) Regiment, one battalion of the 58th (Praga) and 60th (Zamostye) Regiments, and the 3rd, 4th, 7th and 8th Rifle Regiments.)
Reserve at Shat-tzu.	13	12	(Three battalions of the 60th (Zamostye) Regiment, the 55th (Podolia) and 215th (Buzuluk) Regiments, and the 1st Rifle Regiment.)
	125¾	364	

This decision, at first communicated verbally, was confirmed about 10.30 p.m. by the following written instructions to General Kaulbars:—

“ In view of the fact that the impending action of your army intimately affects the operations of our other armies and that on your action will depend the success, not only of the operations, but of the campaign itself, I consider it necessary to give you the following instructions for to-morrow’s operations against the enemy who is threatening us both from the west and from the north-west. I order you to advance early to-morrow morning (5th March) and, after driving the enemy westward to make good and hold the line Hsiao-yu-shu-pu—Dembovski Position (near Ku-chia-tzu), and beyond that along the old railway line, with your left flank either upon it, or in front of it, at your discretion. Bearing in mind that the enemy is evidently trying so to dispose his forces as to threaten our rear I consider it necessary to direct your special attention to making the most ample dispositions to meet such threat. For this purpose, since I have placed the 1st Siberian Corps at your disposal, I suggest that it may be possible to mass fifty battalions on your right flank to strike the enemy’s left as with a mallet and thus to roll him up from north to south.”

After the above had gone out, General Kuropatkin about midnight signed the following instructions to the commanders of the Third and First Manchurian Armies, the contents of

Continued from p. 454.]

+ *Japanese.*

—		Bns.	Guns.
Third Army	... ..	42	174
Second Army.	{ 8th Division	12	36
	{ 5th Division	12	36
	{ Independent, heavy, and captured artillery units	—	118
	{ 5th Brigade (General Nambo) } From	9	36
	{ 1st, 13th and 14th <i>Kobi</i> Brigades (General Oki) (See p. 457) } General Reserve.	18	—
		93	400

The Russian forces enumerated above contained 75,000–80,000 bayonets. Allowing 700 bayonets to each Japanese battalion the Japanese force similarly enumerated amounted to 65,100 bayonets.

which were, however, first transmitted to the recipients by telephone :—

“ Three divisions of the enemy, after executing a wide turning movement against our right along the Liao Ho—while at the same time attacking our left along the Hun Ho—have advanced in the direction of Mukden ; and before we succeeded in withdrawing our right and collecting sufficient force to withstand the turning movement they occupied the line Shan-chia-tzu—Hou-hun-tai—Chan-ssu-tun—Lin-min-san-tzu—Su-hu-chia-pu—Ta-tai—Lan-shan-pu—Shao-chia-lin-tzu. They have forced back the troops which were at first on the right of the Hun and the right of the Third Manchurian Army to the line Hou-hua—Ma-chuang-tzu—Yu-huan-tun—Yan-tzu-tun—Ma-chia-pu—Erh-tai-tzu—Ta-su-chia-pu—Ta-liang-tun. I have ordered General Kaulbars to assume the offensive during the course of to-morrow, the 5th March, with the battalions now assembled on the right bank ;* by dealing a blow so as to envelop the enemy’s left to drive him westwards ; to take the old railway embankment ; and to recapture the Dembovski Position near Ku-chia-tzu.

“ The Third Manchurian Army will occupy the line Erh-tai-tzu—Pei-tai-tzu-yen—Su-chia-tun—Kao-li-tun—Shan-kan-tzu and maintain itself there.

“ The First Manchurian Army will maintain itself on its present position.”

General Kaulbars had now to make fresh dispositions in order to put into effect at once the newly formed decision of his superior, an operation involving some difficulty, for he had no chief of staff, and his quartermaster-general had been left with General von der Launitz. To some extent the difficulty was got over by General Kuropatkin, who detailed his Quarter-Master-General and all his staff officers to assist General Kaulbars ; but the drawback to a system which led to hardworked staff officers having to fill a double rôle at a crisis of a battle will be readily understood. For over two hours General Kaulbars and his temporary assistants worked unceasingly.

Meanwhile the Japanese commander-in-chief was taking measures to deal with the impasse west of the line of railway.

* Some of the troops included in the attacking force were, however, on the left bank. See footnote (*), p. 454, and Plan 64.

For some time it had been quite obvious to Marshal Oyama that on its present lines the enveloping movement being carried out by the Third Army could not possibly lead to decisive results, and he had already—on the 3rd—taken the first step necessary

to ensure success by sending off the 5th Brigade from his General Reserve towards the north. On the 4th March he launched almost all of the remainder of the General Reserve in that direction, ordering off the 1st, 13th, and 14th *Kobi* Brigades under General Oki from the neighbourhood of Ta-tung-shan-pu. He also took further steps in order to save time in the concentration of force at the decisive point. He arranged that the 5th Brigade should relieve the 9th Division, and that the 9th Division should leave the line, pass in rear of the 7th Division and emerge between it and the 1st, this transfer of units being accompanied by a gradual edging northwards of the whole of the Third Army, which it was hoped would at last enable it to operate from the line of the Pu Ho between Ta-shih-chiao and Ta-wu-chia-tun and thus squeeze the enemy into Mukden.

The necessary orders for this operation were sent out during the night, and the commander of the 9th Division received his instructions to advance to Ta-shih-chiao, which movement he prepared to carry out at dawn.*

To turn now to the lesser events of the day in the centre and left of the battlefield: in the centre—along the line Lin-sheng-pu—Liu-chiang-tun—where the original Japanese Fourth Army was confronting the XVIIth, 6th Siberian, and 1st Corps, the former deadlock still continued, and the 4th March was marked by practically no fighting other than the exchange of artillery fire, which, indeed, seems to have diminished little since the 1st. Severe damage was done by it to the trenches of the XVIIth Corps. Some infantry attacks against the 6th Siberian Corps were repulsed without much difficulty, although in one attempt made after nightfall the Japanese reached the obstacles in front of the Russian trenches and did some destruction with hand-grenades. About 6 p.m. all the siege guns and howitzers in the rayon of the two corps were

Operations
in the centre.
The Japanese
Fourth Army
still unable
to advance.

* To ensure success, however, the move was postponed till nightfall. See p. 472.

on their way to Mukden. News of the fighting by the 5th Siberian Corps had been filtering through to the XVIIth Corps on its left, and had naturally lost nothing en route, so that the possibility of having to fall back was freely discussed. Moreover, the troops were repeatedly warned to be prepared to retire at a moment's notice.

About 10 p.m. came orders from General Bilderling to the effect that in view of the retirement of the 5th Siberian Corps the XVIIth and 6th Siberian Corps were to evacuate the positions then occupied and to take ground a little to the rear. To the last-named was assigned the line Kuan-tun—North Shan-kan-tzu : in other words a fortified position was to be abandoned in favour of open terrain but little farther back where, owing to the frozen state of the ground, it would be almost impossible to obtain cover. The corps commander, recognizing the disadvantage of the scheme and being loth to abandon the line on which his men had beaten off seven attacks, requested permission to remain where he was. His appeal was strengthened by a protest from the commander of the 1st Corps, who pointed out that if the 6th Siberian Corps retired the whole of Putilov Hill, which was the right flank of the First Manchurian Army, would be exposed. Some time after midnight orders were sent for the 6th Siberian Corps to stand fast, and for the XVIIth Corps to leave strong rear guards on its present positions and to retire to the second line of entrenchments with the main body. But before these instructions were received—as will be narrated—both divisions of the latter corps had retired, thus leaving the right flank of the 6th Siberian Corps totally exposed.

In the rayon of the 1st Corps efforts made by the Japanese 10th Division to advance against Liu-chiang-tun met with failure. And in this particular sector a smart piece of work was carried out on the Russian side by the scouts and two companies of the Wilmanstrand Regiment. Silently approaching the left of the Japanese 20th Brigade about midnight in perfect silence, they managed to get to within a few yards of the Japanese outposts without being observed. When challenged they replied in Japanese and, profiting by the momentary respite thus gained, dashed forward with cheers. There was then a bloody hand-to-hand fight with bayonet and rifle butt, for the difficulty of distinguishing friend from foe prevented firing. The Japanese were forced back, and it was only when reinforcements arrived that the

Russians were finally driven off, taking with them three Japanese machine guns.

Immediately east of the 1st Corps the 4th Siberian Corps passed yet another day in practically complete tranquillity, the only occurrence to be chronicled being an unsuccessful attack made on the outposts by some troops of the Japanese 10th Division.

In the Japanese First Army it was fully believed that by evening General Nogi, if not actually in Mukden, would at any rate be in a position dominating the city from the north-west, and it was expected that the Second Army would arrive at the railway bridge across the Hun about the same time. With

The Japanese
First Army.
The Guards
hold their own.

everything thus apparently pointing to an early and successful termination of the battle it seemed imperative that the First Army should not imperil the main issue by allowing itself to be forced back, and that it must hold its own at all costs throughout the day. Since General Kuroki considered that everything now depended upon the ability of the Guards to pin the 2nd Siberian Corps to its line, he had sent word to that division that it must maintain its pressure on the enemy. A heavy musketry fire had been kept up during the night of the 3rd-4th and the Japanese on the left bank of the Sha Ho had feared that the 2nd Guard Brigade would be driven back across the river, but when dawn broke on the 4th March the situation was seen to be unchanged.

Nevertheless General Watanabe's troops had passed through a most precarious time, and were so exhausted and disorganized that if the Russians had made a determined effort the brigade must have been driven off its hardly won position. As it was, the slight attacks made had been repulsed, ammunition and rations had been brought up by dismounted cavalrymen during the night, and the 2nd Guard Brigade was able to look forward to the coming day with more confidence. By half-past nine an artillery duel was in progress all along the line, some of the Japanese batteries on Ti-ti Shan again shelling the trenches which lay in front of the 2nd Guard Brigade, and General Umezawa's guns were all in action. About 11 a.m. everything quieted down; the guns on both sides became silent; and nothing was to be heard but the occasional crackle of musketry from the north side of the valley. The lull in the fighting continued till night, broken only at 3.30 p.m. by a Russian battery which fired a few shells at Pagoda Hill. This cessation of action was probably due to a change in the weather, for the still

clearness of early morning had given place to a piercing wind which raised clouds of blinding dust for the greater part of the day.

During the night, however, fighting again broke out. At 10 p.m. a force consisting of two battalions of the 16th Regiment and a battalion of the 1st Guard Regiment attacked a spur north-east of Su-ma-pu-tzu, the knoll being easily taken by the advanced guard and some engineers, who employed hand-grenades with great effect. After this the Japanese troops on the north of the river were rearranged, though this was done with considerable difficulty. One battalion of the 16th Regiment was left to hold the knoll; next on its left was the 4th Guard Regiment, with one battalion of the 1st Guard Regiment; farther still to the left came the 3rd Guard Regiment, with another battalion of the 1st Guard Regiment; the three detached companies of the 4th Guard Regiment rejoined their unit; and one battalion of the 16th Regiment was given to General Watanabe as reserve and the other to General Asada.

The Japanese 12th Division was condemned to inactivity throughout the day. It will be remembered that its advance was to have been contingent upon the capture of the Kao-tai Ling position by the 2nd Division upon its right,* and since that did not take place, a further movement was not made. During the afternoon, however, news was apparently received of the suspension of the attempt against the Kao-tai Ling and the alteration in the rôle of the 2nd Division, and General Inouye decided to make a change in his arrangements.* The centre column and the 5th *Kobi* Brigade were to retire from the positions they had been holding upon the right bank of the Sha, while the left column was to carry out an attack against Pien-niu-lu-pu.

In the order containing the details for this operation the influence of the exaggerated notion of the progress made by the Third and Second Armies is noticeable, for it was expressly stipulated that after capture the position was to be held by the minimum of men so that as many as possible might be available for the pursuit—evidently regarded as a contingency likely to occur within but a few hours. The withdrawal of the centre and right columns was effected after dark with complete ease; and during the night the commander of the left column, General Imamura, issued orders for the attack against Pien-niu-lu-pu to commence at 4.30 a.m. on the 5th.

* See p. 433.

As has been seen, on the previous day the rôle of the 2nd Division had been suddenly altered, and as a result General Ishibashi on the left made no movement whatever on the 4th. On the right General Ohara, leaving the 39th *Kobi* Regiment on the position

which his column had occupied since the 26th February, assembled the 30th Regiment, the newly arrived 11th *Kobi* Regiment, and two mountain batteries at South Yang-tan-san, for the move towards Ma-chun-tan. The cessation of hostilities consequent on this change of tactics seemed to the Russians evidence that their obstinate resistance had shaken the resolution of the Japanese 2nd Division. General Ivanov considered that the moment was eminently favourable for assuming the offensive—as it undoubtedly was—and both he and his chief of staff repeatedly reported this fact to First Manchurian Army head-quarters and suggested a detailed plan for so doing. For some reason, however, no action was taken.

While it is true that the Ya-lu Army had by now fought itself to a standstill, it had nevertheless inflicted such casualties upon the Russian forces opposed to it that the latter were in no position to take advantage of the pause in the Japanese advance. Indeed

upon the Tu-pin-tai position, where General Ekk had now resumed command, the losses suffered had made a serious inroad into the fighting efficiency of the units. The Drissa Regiment

was in such an exhausted condition that it had to be relieved by the 36th East Siberian Rifle Regiment. But seven companies of the latter only produced three hundred and twenty-eight men; and other regiments were scarcely better off. In the Chernoyar Regiment three companies only mustered seventy men, a state of affairs almost equalled in the Bugulmin Regiment in which one hundred and fifty-eight men were all that could be brought into the fight by two companies. During the day, therefore, a species of tactical stalemate dominated the situation.

General Liubavin, however, who had been unmolested during the night, was attacked between 7 and 8 a.m., and the Japanese succeeded in getting within six hundred paces of his position; but accurate volleys checked their advance. Towards evening the firing died down, and about nine o'clock it ceased altogether. It appeared to General Danilov as if the Japanese opposite his position had been reinforced during the night, and with the idea of

diverting their attention from any proposed attack he started an offensive movement from his right; but it failed completely, and the three companies of the Viborg Regiment carrying it out lost over sixty per cent. of their strength. Later the Russians drove the Japanese from Height 262; and with that elevation and the Tung Ling ridge in his hands General Danilov was fairly secure from envelopment by the 1st *Kobi* Division.

The bulk of the remaining fraction of General Rennenkampf's force—the detachment under General Maslov—had quitted Hsing-ching on the 2nd, and was for the most part garrisoning Ying-pan, while the Omsk and Krasnoyarsk Reserve Battalions, which had been sent off earlier to reinforce the garrison of Tieh-ling,* were now ordered by the commander-in-chief to return to General Maslov, in view of the expected arrival of the 3rd Rifle Brigade at that place from Europe.†

Still farther to the east was a small force which, since before the battle of Liao-yang, had been employed independently. This detachment, under Colonel Madritov,‡ had been for some weeks previous to the 1st March in the neighbourhood of Huai-jen-hsien;§ but on that date, owing to the evacuation of the village of Hsing-ching by General Maslov, Colonel Madritov considered it his duty to protect the commissariat stores in that place and accordingly moved there on the 2nd.§ From there he continued reconnoitring, but without coming into collision with any of the enemy until the morning of the 4th, when a detachment from his force drove off a small party of Japanese and Hun-hu-tzu about twelve miles east of Hsing-ching.

On the 4th March, in spite of the impression which seems to have been generally current among the Japanese that the Russians were retiring—possibly gained from the action on the west on the previous day—and in spite of the efforts made, not much progress was achieved by them. On the west the Japanese Third Army was checked far short of the destination which had been assigned to it; portions of the Japanese Second Army gained some ground; but the Fourth, First and Ya-lu Armies had done little more than hold their own. Indeed the inaction of the First Army had encouraged

Colonel
Madritov's
detachment.

Summary of the
4th March.

* See p. 434.

† See footnote (*), p. 538.

‡ For its composition, see Appendix 16.

§ See Plan 54.

the Russians to contemplate a local counter-stroke against its 2nd Division. But behind the front lines important developments were in progress. On the Russian side General Kuropatkin had finally decided on a great counter-stroke against the left of General Nogi's army, to be made on the 5th, by a force of fifty battalions; and had issued definite orders for it. On the Japanese side Marshal Oyama had at last decided to throw practically all his General Reserve into the fight on his left.

Nevertheless, it seems that a sense of failure must have been felt by both commanders on that night. Marshal Oyama must have realized that his enveloping movement had been unwisely started; that the Russians had regained their cohesion west of the railway; and that the fortified position west of Mukden might enable them to balance their loss of moral by the sense of security which a defensive line was certain to confer. And, on the side of the Russians, General Kuropatkin can scarcely have failed to appreciate how different his situation would have been if he had omitted even the 1st Siberian Corps from the procession of units which he had prematurely hurried to the east. That corps, it is true, had arrived back in the west late on the afternoon of the 3rd, but it was wearied after a forced march and depleted by many stragglers. In seven days it had marched nearly a hundred miles, without taking part in any action; and its absence from the really dangerous flank had forced General Kuropatkin to be an almost passive witness of the steady progress of the Japanese Third Army. That this advance had by now so lost its impetus that even with his hastily devised detachments he was able to hold it in check must have emphasized the tactical assistance of which the 1st Siberian Corps might have been to him.

With the intention on the part of both sides to carry out a vigorous offensive on the following day, the battle had by now reached a point of absorbing interest. Both commanders were working under a severe handicap. The disadvantage under which Marshal Oyama laboured was that he was about to initiate a complicated and hazardous manœuvre which was little distinguishable from a flank march in face of an enemy in position. On the other hand, the Russian counter-attack would have to be executed, not by corps and divisions with their orthodox organization, but by a collection of detachments which had even on this day increased in number.

CHAPTER LXXV.

THE BATTLE OF MUKDEN (*continued*)—OPERATIONS ON THE 5TH MARCH—THE FAILURE OF THE RUSSIAN COUNTER-STROKE AGAINST THE JAPANESE THIRD ARMY—THE THIRD MANCHURIAN ARMY REFUSES ITS RIGHT—OCCUPATION OF PIEN-NIU-LU-PU BY THE JAPANESE 12TH DIVISION—GENERAL RENNENKAMPF MAINTAINS HIS POSITIONS AGAINST THE YA-LU ARMY—GENERAL KUROPATKIN DETERMINES TO RENEW THE COUNTER-ATTACK ON THE 6TH MARCH.

(Plate 53 and Plan 65.)

SUNDAY, the 5th March, was to witness the counter-stroke of the reinforced Second Manchurian Army against the enveloping Japanese Third Army. About two in the morning General Kaulbars, with the help of his borrowed staff, finished his orders for the coming operation; and Disposition No. 11 to the Second Manchurian Army—which ran as follows—was communicated to all concerned :—*

MUKDEN,

5th March, 1905.

2 a.m.

Information about the enemy is as follows:—Near San-pu-ho a hostile column has been observed consisting of cavalry and one infantry regiment. My intention is to drive the enemy westwards beyond the line of the old railway (i.e., the villages of Ma-chia-pu—

* The screen which had been under General Kaulbars had now absorbed the troops of General von der Launitz, and the title Second Manchurian Army had been revived.

Ku-chia-tzu (eastern)—Pei-hsin-tu-pu), and in advancing to envelop his left flank.

1. Cavalry.

Colonel Voronov.
Primorsk Dragoons 4 squadrons.

Will continue its reconnaissance exploring all the country between the railway,* and the Hsin-min-tun road. Object:—To discover the strength and direction of the enemy's columns.

The remainder of the cavalry will continue the task assigned to it of operating on the flanks and rear of the enemy.

2. Infantry.

(a) Right column.

Lt.-Gen. Gerngross.

1st Siberian Corps	18 battalions.
Composite Division, XVIIth	} 12 battalions.
Corps (1)	
Composite Division, Xth	} 16 battalions.
Corps (2)	
147th (Samara) Regiment ...	3 battalions.
Total 49 battalions, 115 guns.	

(b) Centre column.

Lt.-Gen. Topornin.

25th Infantry Division ...	16 battalions.
Total 16 battalions, 48 guns.	

(c) Left column.

Lt.-Gen. Tserpitski.

56th (Jitomir) Regiment ...	4 battalions.
121st (Penza) Regiment ...	4 battalions.
122nd (Tambov) Regiment...	4 battalions.
33rd (Elets) Regiment ...	4 battalions.
8th Rifle Regiment	2 battalions.
5th Rifle Brigade	8 battalions.
5th and 7th Rifle Regiments	4 battalions.
215th (Buzuluk) Regiment	4 battalions.
Total 34 battalions, 72 guns, 16 field guns, 12 howitzers.	

Will assemble at 9.15 a.m. on the line Hsiao-hen-tun—Hou-hua and will advance against the left flank of the enemy, enveloping it and driving it westwards.†

Will stand fast upon its position until the enveloping movement of the right column is developed and until the enemy retreats beyond the line Chiao-hen—Yao-tien-tun. It will then attack in the direction of Chan-su-tun—Ma-tien-tzu.

Will hold on obstinately to its present position, pivoting on Ma-chia-pu. It will attack simultaneously with the 25th Division, with the view of capturing the old railway line from the Hun Ho to Ku-chia-tzu (inclusive), where it will consolidate itself.

* The Harbin—Port Arthur line.

† These orders are translated verbatim from Appendix 44, *Russian Official History*, Vol. V, Part 1. In a précis of these same orders, given in the text of the *Russian Official History*, Vol. V, Part 1, p. 317, instead of "westwards" the word "southwards" appears as being the direction in which the Japanese were to be driven by General Gerngross.

(1) General de Vitt's detachment.

(2) General Vasilev's detachment.

(d) Reserve.

Maj-Gen. Ganenfeldt.
 55th (Podolia) Regiment ... 4 battalions.
 241st (Orsk) Regiment ... 4 battalions.
 Total 8 battalions.

Will be at Lu-kun-tun.

3. *Transport* will be parked as follows:—

Right and centre columns.—North of Mukden between the railway and the Mandarin Road.

Left column.—Between the railway and Mukden, north of the Hsin-min-tun Road.

4. *Medical* arrangements and the situation of parks will be at the discretion of the column commanders.

5. *Substitutes for command*.—Lieutenant-General Ruzski, and General of Cavalry von der Launitz.

6. Reports to be sent to Hou-hua (the village with a tower).

KAULBARS, BARON,

General of Cavalry,

Commanding Second Manchurian Army.

It will be noted that there was no mention of destroying the Japanese Third Army or even of cutting it off from the other Japanese armies, and but little more was stipulated for than to drive it behind the old railway embankment; it would almost seem as if the Russian counter-offensive after all aimed merely at regaining the position which had been abandoned the day before. In the actual detail of the orders, too, there are certain points which call for remark. In the first place, the comparatively large force of cavalry under General Grekov was not specifically mentioned, and the vague intimation that the cavalry was to continue the task of operating on the flanks and rear of the Japanese appears to indicate a certain misgiving on the part of General Kaulbars as to its ability to carry out successfully a more definite mission. Again, it will be noticed that although General Gerngross was ordered to advance against the enemy's left flank there was neither any precise information as to where that flank lay, nor yet any explanation that this point had not so far been cleared up. The wording indeed was such as to give the impression that the position of the outer flank of General Nogi's troops was a matter of common knowledge—which was far from being the case.

Further, excepting that he was named as one of the substitutes for command, the new distribution of troops left General von der Launitz completely unemployed; and he appears to have

been divested of his powers, and to have been transformed, by a stroke of the pen, from the leader of a considerable body of troops into a mere spectator of the fight.* Then, there were certain units which appear to have been overlooked. The name of General Birger was not mentioned, though probably it was recognized that until his detachment should reappear it was useless to issue orders for it. But it is strange that no reference whatever was made to the detachment under Colonel Kuznetsov, which was playing a really important rôle in the neighbourhood of Erh-tai-tzu. Colonel Zapolski's detachment appeared only in part.† The Minsk and Zamostye Regiments as well as the 1st and 2nd Rifle Regiments were omitted from the detail of regiments to be employed. The cavalry detachment under General Tolmachev was not alluded to; and similarly the Praga, Volhynia, Modlin, and Syev Regiments—all of which had drifted into the area of the Third Manchurian Army—were apparently overlooked. The case of these four unallotted regiments appears to have been brought later to the notice of General Kuropatkin, who was without any troops at his immediate disposal; and he gave instructions that the three last-named should form the nucleus of a new General Reserve.‡

The commander-in-chief also observed the vagueness in the order affecting General Gerngross, and at 8 a.m. wrote to General Kaulbars, pointing out that it was advisable to state where the enemy's left flank lay, and that unless this were done, the troops endeavouring to turn the enemy's left might suddenly discover their own right being turned. He also commented on the danger of placing a large number of battalions on a narrow front and marked his appreciation of the serious nature of General Kaulbars's task with the words: "This is a historic day and one most important to Russia."

Although General Birger's detachment found no place in the plan of operations, yet, insomuch as it was on the right of the

* His staff officers joined General Kaulbars, and he himself appears also to have proceeded to Hou-hua.

† Colonel Zapolski's detachment consisted—as regards infantry—of four battalions of drafts, one battalion of the 162nd (Akhaltsikh) Regiment, four companies of the 161st (Alexandropol) Regiment, and three battalions of the 147th (Samara) Regiment. Only these latter battalions are mentioned in Disposition No. 11.

‡ These three regiments were ordered to proceed to Mukden but did not start until about 6 p.m. and consequently did not assemble at Mukden until the morning of the 6th.

Russian line of battle it will be convenient to deal with its action before the counter-stroke is described. During the morning it at last emerged from obscurity and arrived at Hu-shih-tai station, where it was met by an order from General Kuropatkin to the effect that it was to drive off a hostile force which had been reported as moving towards that place. The report, however, proved to be without foundation and General Birger decided to rest his troops after their four days' exhausting march. During the day he was joined by the 10th Rifle Regiment, which had just arrived from Europe and detrained at Siding 97.* That regiment then placed a strong outpost line from San-tai-tzu to the railway, joining up on the left with Colonel Zapolski and on the right with General Birger at Hu-shih-tai station.† Generally speaking the 5th March passed quietly in this portion of the field, for only small parties of Japanese cavalry and Chinese brigands were seen by the Russians, and no event more serious than the damage to a telegraph pole on the railway has to be recorded.

To turn to the operations of the Russian cavalry under General Grekov. About 7 a.m. the commander ordered the 5th Ural Cossack Regiment to occupy Pin-lo-pu as a central point and then to deploy so as to connect up with the squadrons of the Chita Regiment in Chin-tui-tzu, on the right, and on the other flank with the right of the troops defending Mukden. The next task was to locate the Japanese left and, having done this, the regiment was to follow up the turning movement and to cover the roads leading northwards and towards the railway. With the main body General Grekov proposed to move to La-la-tun and after a short halt to push on southwards. Having made these arrangements, he reported to General Kaulbars shortly after seven o'clock that the most northerly point in occupation of the Japanese was close to Lao-pien—a statement which, though not absolutely contradictory, seems inconsistent with a dispatch he had forwarded the previous evening to the effect that a battalion and three squadrons of the enemy had passed through Lao-pien and moved in a north-westerly direction.

General
Birger's
detachment.

The Russian
counter-attack.
General
Grekov's
cavalry.

* From the 3rd Rifle Brigade. See p. 462.

† Colonel Zapolski moved from Hu-shih-tai station to San-tai-tzu early in the morning.

Shortly after eight o'clock the 5th Ural Cossacks moved off towards Pin-lo-pu, and within a short time their patrols came under fire, the Chinese stating that there were large numbers of Japanese cavalry and infantry in the village. This information—which as regards the presence of infantry was incorrect—had a disconcerting effect upon the commander of the Cossacks, for without making any further effort to verify its truth he diverted his march to the north-west, when he again came under fire. Some time during this operation he appears to have sent in a report of his experiences. This drew a reply from the chief staff officer of the cavalry detachment, who blamed him for his dilatory conduct, stated that General Grekov was about to attack Kou-tzu-yen, and ordered him to seize San-tai-tzu and Wu-pi-lin-tzu.*

The troops at this time in Pin-lo-pu were from the Japanese Cavalry Division, which had concentrated at that place during the morning without having been opposed or even discovered. Indeed, the presence in this portion of the battlefield of a mounted force of the size of the Japanese Cavalry Division does not appear to have been suspected by the Russian cavalry.

Between 3 and 4 p.m. General Grekov was about three miles north of Kou-tzu-yen with the bulk of his force. On arrival there he modified the orders to the 5th Ural Cossacks, and at the same time sent two squadrons of the Chernigov and two of the Nyejin Dragoons to capture Kou-tzu-yen.† In this attack the 20th Horse Artillery Battery co-operated. The Japanese garrison, which was merely an advanced post, fell back; and shortly afterwards the Russian cavalry occupied Wu-pi-lin-tzu and San-tai-tzu, which had also been abandoned by the Japanese. Some troops were left by General Grekov to hold the line San-tai-tzu—Kou-tzu-yen—Ta-wu-chia-tun, and the remainder of his force during the course of the night gained touch with the right of the infantry under General Kaulbars. About 8.30 p.m. General Grekov reported to that commander, giving a summary of the day's work, the disposition of his main body,‡ and the information that Pin-lo-pu was apparently occupied

* The reply was sent off about 2.15 p.m.

† It is not known exactly what this modification of orders was.

‡ The position given comprises six villages on a line running generally north-east from Ta-wu-chia-tun to the Liao Ho.

by "the advanced guard of some Japanese column." Thus his operations, which should have been directed to act in rear and upon the flank of the enemy, ended in a passive covering of the flank after one small encounter near Kou-tzu-yen. One man had been wounded during the day.

As regards the progress of the main portion of the counter-attack, in the small hours of the morning General Gerngross, who was waiting in a carriage of the commander-in-chief's train, was visited by General Kaulbars and informed verbally of the contents of Disposition No. 11. He immediately

Operations of the
Right Column
under General
Gerngross.

dispatched telegrams to subordinate commanders, warning them of the movement which was about to take place, and shortly after 5 a.m.

received a written copy of the disposition. But, for some reason, he did not issue operation orders until five hours later, or until one hour after the time laid down by General Kaulbars for the advance to begin—an unpromising start in a movement in which time was an essential factor.* According to them the part to be played by the right column resolved itself merely into an initial deployment along the line Pa-chia-tzu—Niu-hsin-tun, to be carried out by successive echelons from the right, while Colonel Zapolski's detachment was given a defensive rôle to play. Pending the preparation of his plan General Gerngross had made a feeble attempt to forestall any action of the Japanese against his right by sending the scouts

* These orders are headed "1st Siberian Corps, Order No. 93," though as a matter of fact, of the forty-nine battalions under General Gerngross only eighteen belonged to that corps.

Their details were as follows:—

Colonel Zapolski's detachment ($5\frac{1}{2}$ battalions and 4 guns) was to occupy Ta-hen-tun, San-tai-tzu and Kun-chia-tun, relieving the 4th East Siberian Rifle Regiment in the first-named village.

General de Vitt's detachment ($14\frac{1}{2}$ battalions and 36 guns) was to leave sufficient troops to garrison Sha-hei-tzu, Hou-hua and Redoubts 1 and 2 and then to advance in echelon from the right on to the line Pa-chia-tzu—Fan-hsi-tun.

General Vasilev's Composite Division (16 battalions and 40 guns) was to leave garrisons to hold Ma-chuang-tzu, Tzu-kuan-tun and Redoubt 3 and then to advance on Yi-tzu-tai and Niu-hsin-tun after General de Vitt had taken up the line referred to in the preceding paragraph.

Column Reserve.—1st Siberian Corps under General Kondratovich ($17\frac{3}{4}$ battalions and 56 guns) to advance in rear of the right detachment to Hsia-kan-tzu, Lou-chia-fen, and Ta-hen-tun, and farther, if so ordered by General Gerngross.

of the 33rd East Siberian Rifle Regiment to Pa-chia-tzu and Pao-tao-tun. The former village was occupied without incident, but the 1st Regiment of the Japanese 1st Division soon drove out the Russians and advanced upon Hsiao-hen-tun, which was held by part of the 4th East Siberian Rifle Regiment. The regimental commander there sent out scouts to discover the enemy's strength in Pa-chia-tzu, and received the intelligence that it amounted to five or six companies and a squadron. About noon General Gerngross sent word to Colonel Zapolski to detach the Samara Regiment and to carry out a flank attack in conjunction with part of General de Vitt's detachment, which had assembled in Hsiao-hen-tun.

Meanwhile, in accordance with his instructions, General de Vitt had been making the necessary arrangements for the detachment under his command, and he now included the Samara Regiment in the operations to be carried out. The Primorsk Dragoons had also been placed under him, and that regiment had left its bivouac immediately north of Mukden shortly after seven o'clock and pushed out patrols for some eight miles to the north and north-east.* From them the intelligence came in that there was a large force of hostile infantry in Tsao-hou-tun.† General de Vitt's dispositions were as follows:—The Velikoutsk Regiment was to occupy the position Pa-chia-tzu—Hsiao-hen-tun; the Bolkhov Regiment was to advance on the latter village and Fan-hsi-tun; the Zaraisk Regiment was to form the reserve on the eastern edge of Sha-hei-tzu; and the Samara Regiment, taking up a position facing south near Pao-tao-tun, was to cover the other units of the detachment. These movements, however, were so slowly carried out that it soon became clear that the counter-attack was not likely to develop much power during the little daylight that was left.‡

As regards the remaining fractions of General Gerngross's right column, the reserve moved towards Ta-hen-tun, while the

* Towards evening the Primorsk Dragoons concentrated at Wan-kan-tun.

† Apparently this large force was nothing more than the 3rd Battalion of the 1st Regiment of the Japanese 1st Division.

‡ The 12th (Velikolutsk) Regiment did not leave Sha-hei-tzu until after 6 p.m. The 138th (Bolkhov) Regiment by 3.15 p.m. had only got as far as Hou-hua and it was half an hour later before the 140th (Zaraisk) Regiment took up its allotted position in reserve. The 147th (Samara) Regiment which was to cover the operations of the other units did not arrive at Pao-tao-tun until after four o'clock.

detachment under General Vasilev remained standing by, some of its guns shelling the enemy from a position north-east of Tzu-kuan-tun. By the delay which thus marked the development of General Gerngross's plan the greater part of the day was lost, for by the time that everything was ready for the blow which was to descend upon the enemy's left only some two hours remained before darkness.

Opposite this leisurely initiation of the Russian counter-stroke the Japanese Cavalry Division as well as the 1st and 7th Divisions remained practically stationary during the day; but their inactivity was far from being due to any tactical inertia.* A difficult

manœuvre was to be carried out by the Japanese Third Army, for the successful execution of which secrecy was vital; and accordingly it had been resolved to stand fast until nightfall before attempting either to transfer the 9th Division from

the line or to move the whole Third Army northwards.† Just about the time when General Gerngross had at length got his column ready for its advance orders were circulated throughout the Japanese Third Army for the 1st Division to extend to its left as far as Pin-lo-pu, while the 9th Division was to move with all speed in rear of the 7th Division to Ta-shih-chiao on the Hsin-min-tun road, the manœuvre being covered by the 7th Division, which was to endeavour to divert the attention of the enemy to its front.

But, slow as were the preliminary movements of General Gerngross's column, some good result might have been produced had it been allowed, even late in the afternoon, to attempt to carry out the task allotted to it. This, however, was not to

be. The left column of the counter-stroke—that of General Tserpitski—had been attacked during the day by General Oku and, in response to appeals for assistance, General Kaulbars decided to reinforce him both from his own reserve and at the expense of General Gerngross. Thus,

the main idea underlying the operation underwent a change, for the force of the blow to be delivered was reduced.

It will be convenient to break off the narrative of the right

* The 6th Cavalry Regiment from army troops of the Japanese Second Army was now with the Cavalry Division.

† See p. 457 and foot-note (*) *ib.*

column of General Gerngross at this point and omitting any account of the action of General Topornin's centre column for the moment, to describe what had been happening to that of General Tserpitski on the left to cause this alteration in the Russian plans.

General Tserpitski's column, comprising the detachments of General Rusanov, General Gershelmann, Colonel Muller and General Churin, was holding a position which extended from the Chan-ssu-tun—Mukden road through Yan-tzu-tun, Chi-kuan-tun and Sha-ta-tzu to Ma-chia-pu, a distance of some five and a half miles.* This position included Redoubts 7 and 8 and was well strengthened, for the villages held had been put into a state of defence. Generally speaking it was sufficiently strong to warrant the belief that it could be held against an enemy considerably superior in force. In this favourable situation General Tserpitski received a copy of Disposition No. 11 before dawn and, unlike General Gerngross, was able to issue his column orders about six o'clock, allotting to each of his detachments its sector of defence and its line of advance when such should be ordered. North of the river were to be the detachments of Generals Rusanov and Gershelmann, the right of the former resting on Yan-tzu-tun, while General Gershelmann's left was to be in the northern part of Ma-chia-pu. On the left bank Colonel Muller was to continue the line to Erhtai-tzu, exclusive. The reserve, which was to be under General Churin, was to be at Ta-a-pu.†

* *General Rusanov*, three battalions of the 54th (Minsk), 56th (Jitomir) and 121st (Penza) Regiments, the 1st Rifle Artillery Division and the 41st Artillery Brigade.

General Gershelmann, the 33rd (Elets) Regiment, the 8th Rifle Regiment and the 2nd Rifle Artillery Division.

Colonel Muller, the 122nd (Tambov) Regiment with sixteen guns.

General Churin, the 5th Rifle Brigade, the 2nd and 7th Rifle Regiments, thirty-two guns and twelve howitzers.

† The reserve consisted of twelve battalions (5th Rifle Brigade; 2nd and 7th Rifle Regiments) thirty-two guns and twelve howitzers.

In Disposition No. 11 the 215th (Buzuluk) Regiment was shown as being part of General Tserpitski's column. As a matter of fact this regiment owing to its utter exhaustion and losses had been sent to join the Second Manchurian Army Reserve (see p. 445), and General Tserpitski had lost all touch with it. On the other hand the orders make no mention of the 54th (Minsk) Regiment nor of the 2nd Rifle Regiment, both of which, however, were now receiving orders from General Tserpitski. The 1st Rifle Regiment was at Chin-chia-tun, but its position was unknown to either General Kaulbars or to General Tserpitski and it consequently received no orders on the 5th.

Against this column the Japanese Second Army delivered an attack which had been decided upon the night before and for which General Oku had issued the following orders shortly before midnight:—

The Japanese
Second Army
attacks General
Tserpitski.

(1) To-morrow, 5th March, the army will continue its attack, drive back the enemy towards the east, and advance to the line Hei-tun—Lu-kun-tun.

(2) Part of the 5th Division will at dawn drive back the enemy before it and try to occupy Ta-a-pu and the village of Hei-tun. The main body will assemble in the neighbourhood of the old railway bridge, and special care will be taken to keep connexion with the 4th Division south of the Hun.

(3) Part of the 8th Division will at dawn drive back the enemy before it and try to occupy Lu-kun-tun. The main body will assemble at Wu-lin-pu.

(4) The 3rd Division will assemble at 7 a.m. at Tu-nan-tou.*

(5) The 5th and 8th Division commanders will lose no time in reconnoitring the enemy's position west of Mukden, and will inform the army commander regarding it with the least possible delay.

(6) The reserve of the army will assemble at 7 a.m. at the western corner of Ai-chia-pu.

On the left of the Japanese Second Army the 8th Division advanced in two wings,† and while that on the right contained the

Continued from p. 473.]

The reserve received an unexpected reinforcement during the morning by the arrival at Sha-ta-tzu of one battalion of the 215th (Buzuluk) Regiment and three battalions of the 60th (Zamostye) Regiment. The latter units belonged to the VIIIth Corps; and, on its disruption, had strayed into the area of the Third Manchurian Army where they had been for a time impounded.

* By this was meant the 5th Brigade of the 3rd Division plus the divisional artillery and engineers, all under General Nambo.

† *Right wing.*—Under Major-General Yoda:—

One battalion of the 5th Regiment.

One battalion of the 31st Regiment.

The 8th Mountain Artillery Regiment, less one battery.

One company of engineers.

Left wing.—Under Major-General Kamada:—

Two battalions of the 5th Regiment.

The 16th Brigade, less one battalion.

The 8th Cavalry Regiment, less one squadron.

The Independent Brigade of field artillery.

One battery of the 8th Mountain Artillery Regiment.

One battery of captured 3·5-inch mortars.

Two companies of engineers.

enemy the left wing advanced on Yan-tzu-tun, supported by the artillery north-east of Ta-yu-shu-pu. Viewed from the Japanese side the right of General Tserpitski's line was seen to comprise defensive works which, though not so elaborate as those at Liao-yang, were nevertheless strong and well concealed. As regards the approach, the ground was perfectly flat excepting for some hollow roads, Chinese graves, low banks and slight undulations, which gave a certain amount of cover, of which the attackers took the fullest advantage. Nevertheless, the protection was quite inadequate, and the troops engaged were compelled to bring up sandbags and also to endeavour—though without success—to improvise shelter by scraping up the frozen surface of the ground with the entrenching shovel. The field of fire was therefore naturally good for the Russians; and it had been further improved by the removal of all trees from that portion of ground over which the attack must pass. But the most striking feature of the defence works was the skill with which they were concealed in the folds of the ground, some being invisible at a distance of one hundred and fifty yards.

The redoubt at Yan-tzu-tun had a command of three and a half feet, and the perimeter amounted to one hundred and fifty yards, excluding the gorge. It was strengthened by wing parapets sixty yards long, and in front of the whole were abattis and military pits. North of the village a hollow road was held for about five hundred yards, while the rest of the defences consisted of the village wall. A similar redoubt of stronger profile was at Chi-kuan-tun, while south of that village lay a group of houses called Fu-kuan-tun, with a line of trenches in front of it about two hundred yards long, one of which had a parapet at ground level. The excavated earth had been heaped up behind to make a background to conceal the heads of the men firing. The bank of the sunken road near the village had also been turned into a parapet, along which each man in the firing line had hollowed out for himself a niche.

General Tatsumi's plan was to make a holding attack upon Chi-kuan-tun and Sha-ta-tzu* with the two battalions in Wu-lin-pu,

* This portion of the Russian line had been allotted to the 8th Rifle Regiment, but as it appeared rather weak General Gershelmann sent the 7th Rifle Regiment to occupy the interval between the former regiment and Chi-kuan-tun. This regiment had been sent to him from the column reserve about 9 a.m. See p. 480.

while the main attack was made upon Yan-tzu-tun with the troops in Nin-kuan-tun.* From about 3 to 4 a.m. the sound of musketry was heard in the direction of Chi-kuan-tun, caused by the Russians firing on the Japanese patrols, who had advanced very close to the works; and at 7 a.m., when the patrols became visible to the defenders through the early morning mist, the musketry began again, and continued for over two hours. The Japanese replied to this fire from Wu-lin-pu, as they wished the Russians to think the attack was coming from this quarter. At 8 a.m. their artillery came into action against the Russian guns near Sha-ta-tzu. The latter had been reinforced since the previous evening and continued to be reinforced during the day. The 5th Division, to which was assigned the task of attacking Ma-chia-pu, was now behind, so the Russian batteries round that village were able to bring a very deadly enfilade fire against the 8th Division guns. These were unable to hold their ground, and after attempting a change of position amongst some sandhills in order to gain protection—a change which exposed them to enfilade fire from Sha-ta-tzu—they left the sandhills altogether and, crossing the embankment, came into action about twenty yards on the far side of it.

They were now comparatively safe from the direction of Ma-chia-pu, but the embankment made an excellent target to range on, and during the whole of the 5th a continuous bombardment was kept up on them by the Russian batteries near Sha-ta-tzu. The practice of the latter was excellent: having the range exactly, they were able to search both sides of the embankment very thoroughly, and on this occasion they concentrated their fire steadily on the same target, instead of constantly changing the objective in their usual manner. The Russian batteries at Ma-chia-pu, finding that the Japanese guns had left the sandhills, began to concentrate on Hsiao-yu-shu-pu, where General Tatsumi's head-quarters were, and on the ground between the villages over which reinforcements might be expected to advance; but their fire, although it had the effect of keeping the Japanese in Hsiao-yu-shu-pu under cover, did not interfere with the infantry reserves concealed behind the sandhills.

About 9.30 a.m. the main attack was set in motion from

* The 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 5th Regiment and the 17th and 32nd Regiments; these two latter having advanced to Nin-kuan-tun during the night.

Nin-kuan-tun. The 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 5th Regiment moved forward against Yan-tzu-tun; the 1st Battalion of the 17th Regiment, deploying at the south-east corner of Nin-kuan-tun, advanced against the southern side of the same village, while the 2nd Battalion of the 32nd Regiment on the right of the 1st Battalion of the 17th Regiment moved against Fu-kuan-tun.

Unsuccessful
attack on
Yan-tzu-tun.

No opposition was at first encountered, and it seemed as if the Russians had already retired. Seeing the apparent success of the main attack, General Yoda ordered the 2nd Battalion of the 5th Regiment, behind a sandhill near Hsiao-yu-shu-pu, to advance across the embankment to Wu-lin-pu; and just about the time this battalion began to move off, the main attack arrived within seven hundred yards of Yan-tzu-tun and Fu-kuan-tun, and was subjected to a heavy fire from the Russian lines. The main attack, advancing over the open ground, suffered severely, and being unable to proceed, fell back a short distance. The effort of the 2nd Battalion of the 32nd Regiment met with no better fortune. When the Russian fire began, this battalion was about one thousand yards from Chi-kuan-tun, and it succeeded in advancing another two hundred yards or so to a position in line with Wu-lin-pu. Here it remained, while reinforcements followed in quick succession to the same line. The latter suffered little during their advance, and extended to at least five paces were able to move rapidly, continuing to come up till about twelve o'clock.

At this hour General Yoda received a report from General Kamada, the commander of the troops in Nin-kuan-tun, to say that since the enemy at Yan-tzu-tun appeared to be retiring, he proposed to attack once more, and asking if General Yoda would detach part of the 31st Regiment in Wu-lin-pu to co-operate. A reply was sent back to say that the orders were to co-operate with the 5th Division in their operations against Sha-ta-tzu, and that, since the enemy was in considerable strength at that place it was not possible to detach any more troops. The combined attack, therefore, did not take place at this stage. General Yoda, however, in case the 31st Regiment should advance later against Chi-kuan-tun, ordered two companies of the 2nd Battalion 5th Regiment, now in Wu-lin-pu, to occupy some broken ground south-east of Wu-lin-pu, which faced Sha-ta-tzu.

At 2 p.m. information was received that the 5th Division had not yet reached the embankment, so that the original plan of an

attack on Chi-kuan-tun in co-operation with that of the 5th Division on Sha-ta-tzu could not be carried out. Accordingly it was decided to advance upon Yan-tzu-tun again, and General Yoda was ordered at 2.40 p.m. to assist the operation with the two batteries of field artillery at the embankment, while continuing to fire at Sha-ta-tzu with the mountain guns. At 4 p.m. twelve 5.9-inch howitzers which had been given to the 8th Division arrived and took up a position in the neighbourhood of Ta-yu-shu-pu. Before this, however, the division had come to a standstill, its losses having reached a total of about one thousand all ranks.

In spite of this an advance was again made about 4.30 p.m. both by the troops in Nin-kuan-tun and by those in Wu-lin-pu. The main attack got no farther than in the morning, being met with an overwhelming fire from Yan-tzu-tun.* The right attack sent forward one company of the 31st Regiment against Chi-kuan-tun, which succeeded in reaching some broken ground three hundred and fifty yards from the Russian trenches. The defenders let them approach, and then opened a deadly fire which caused many casualties. The company could now neither advance nor retire, and had to remain in its place till dark, when it fell back to Wu-lin-pu.

The 5th March ended, therefore, without any real progress having been made by the Japanese 8th Division; but the artillery of the 5th Division at Ta-yu-shu-pu had drawn off the attention of the Ma-chia-pu batteries. Further, in addition to the twelve 5.9-inch, six 3.5-inch howitzers were sent by the army commander to the sandhills which the mountain guns had been compelled to vacate in the morning. With the aid of these pieces it was hoped to break down the Russian resistance during the following day.

In order to carry out its share in the day's operations the Japanese 5th Division had first to attack Sha-ta-tzu, and for this the Independent Brigade of field artillery and the batteries of 4.7-inch guns took up a position on a small hill south-west of

The Japanese
5th Division.

Hsiao-yu-shu-pu, while the mountain guns with their shorter range, came into action, about thirteen hundred yards south-east of Ta-yu-shu-pu.

This force of artillery, amounting to seventy-eight guns, fired

* The Russian reserve under General Churin came up during the day and prolonged General Rusanov's front towards the north.

on the enemy's infantry and artillery, helping General Surizawa in the attack, which was made by the 9th Brigade against the centre and left of that portion of the line occupied by General Gershelmann's troops.* Before dawn the Japanese infantry advanced boldly against the railway embankment north of Ma-chia-pu, which was held by the Elets Regiment. The defenders, however, held on bravely, and a hand-to-hand contest ensued, in which hand-grenades and bombs from bamboo mortars were employed with great execution by the Japanese. Finally, about 7 a.m., the Elets Regiment broke and fled, and the Japanese immediately dragged two machine guns to the top of the captured embankment, from which position they enfiladed the line held by Colonel Muller on the left bank, inflicting heavy loss. General Gershelmann now ordered three batteries to shell the machine guns, and by this means he caused their withdrawal. But, as if in reply to this move, the Japanese field pieces redoubled their efforts against his forces and those of Colonel Muller, so that the Tambov Regiment began to suffer even more severely than it had done from the machine guns.

The fighting now practically assumed the character of an artillery duel of great intensity, for against the seventy-eight guns of the Japanese the Russians were employing an even greater number. The rapidity of fire and the ranging—especially on the Russian side—were remarkable; but in spite of this little loss was suffered by the Japanese. Occasionally the Russian gunners mistook their target. For several hours they wasted much ammunition by bombarding the sandhill near Ta-yu-shu-pu from which the Japanese had withdrawn their guns the previous evening; and it was not until later in the day, when the balloon was sent up, that the error was discovered. At times even the smallest target would tempt them to open fire; and a Japanese photographer who had the temerity to expose himself was instantly greeted with three salvos. But on the whole the superiority in this artillery duel remained with the Russians throughout the day.

Nevertheless, when the embankment north of Ma-chia-pu fell into the hands of the Japanese, General Gershelmann became

* The Japanese 41st Regiment was on the right and the 11th Regiment on the left. The 21st Brigade was in reserve.

alarmed lest his front should be penetrated, and sent to General Tserpitski for reinforcements. The latter responded about 9 a.m.

General
Tserpitski's
uneasiness.

by dispatching from his reserve the 7th Rifle Regiment, which was then placed in the rear of the Elets Regiment. In addition to this disquieting request from General Gershelmann General Tserpitski thought he had cause for anxiety about his right, where General Rusanov's detachment was engaged with the Japanese 8th Division, and where he imagined the enemy's main attack against him would develop. He accordingly represented his views to General Ganenfeldt, the commander of the reserve of the whole counter-attack. That officer at once put himself into communication with General Kaulbars and from him received permission to send eight battalions to General Tserpitski, which, however, were to be used only in case of absolute necessity. He was directed at the same time to move the remainder of the reserve to Sha-ta-tzu, in order to support Colonel Muller who was guarding the crossing at Ma-chia-pu.* This order was received at 2.15 p.m.; and from that time the Russian counter-attack may be said to have been deprived of all momentum.

This message was apparently crossed by a dispatch from General Tserpitski, which was sent off shortly after one o'clock, and contained the startling information that he was being attacked by more than three divisions. A report of this tenor, when weighed with the inactivity of the enemy between Yan-tzu-tun and the Hsin-min-tun road, seemed to point to a new development of affairs, to the fact that the Japanese were now bent upon penetration instead of envelopment. This impression seems to have been transmitted to General Kuropatkin, who adopted an unfortunate but characteristic course. He communicated direct with General Tserpitski, calling up that officer on the telephone at 3.15 p.m., and instructed him to hold the village of Erh-tai-tzu at all costs, since otherwise the right flank of the Third Manchurian Army would be exposed. Subsequently he gave a further order, that General Tserpitski should chiefly concern himself with

* The reserve of General Kaulbars only amounted to eight battalions, i.e., the 55th (Podolia) and 241st (Orsk) Regiments, see p. 466, and it is therefore not understood what was meant by the expression "the remainder" unless it implied the three battalions of the 215th (Buzuluk) Regiment, see foot-note (+), p. 473.

barring the approach of the enemy to Mukden, and demanded from the latter an assurance that he would not retire unless ordered to do so by himself.

Like the commander-in-chief General Kaulbars was becoming more and more influenced by the danger apparently threatening his left, for in addition to sending his reserve towards that flank and in ignorance of the fact that his superior was communicating direct with General Tserpitski, he took the more drastic step of drawing upon the column of General Gerngross for the same purpose. When he had received the alarming dispatch from General Tserpitski General Kaulbars had telephoned to General Kuropatkin and reported that General Gerngross was advancing very slowly; that since a considerable force was reported opposite General Tserpitski he would be compelled to reinforce the left column; and that for this purpose he proposed to move a brigade from the centre column to the left, and to replace it by a similar force to be drawn from General Gerngross.

It appears that no reply was received to this suggestion and that at 3.15 p.m. General Kaulbars, on his own responsibility, dispatched to General Gerngross, the following message, which was received one hour and twenty minutes later:—

“The enemy is concentrating his forces with a view to penetrating our line on the sector Yan-tzu-tun—Ma-chia-pu. I enjoin Your Excellency to detach without delay one brigade from General Vasilev’s detachment and to send it with all speed to Yu-huan-tun. There it will replace a brigade of the 25th Division which has been moved to protect our left. You will also order General de Vitt’s detachment to advance to the line Fan-hsi-tun—Tsuan-pan-che, where it will halt until the situation on our left clears up. You are to distribute your reserve as follows:—the detachment at Yu-kua-yu-yen is to move to the line Ma-chuang-tzu—Hou-hua while the detachment now at Ta-hen-tun is to be placed conveniently for supporting the right of General de Vitt.”

Later this order was amended, and the brigade from General Vasilev’s division was ordered to move direct on Sha-ta-tzu, while General Topornin’s column was left untouched. By that time the brigade detailed was on its way and passing in rear

of the centre column: it therefore pushed on direct towards Sha-ta-tzu.*

To return to the commander-in-chief's instructions to General Tserpitski: his solicitude about Erh-tai-tzu was perhaps due to a sudden awakening to the fact that in General Kaulbars's Disposition No. 11 no mention had been made of the detachment holding it. As a matter of fact the place was not threatened by the Japanese, but General Kuropatkin himself now placed it under General Gershelmann. And this issue of orders direct from General Head-Quarters, and in ignorance of local conditions, led to a natural sequel. The detachment at Erh-tai-tzu, which was under Colonel Kuznetsov, was so to speak the link between General Kaulbars and the Third Manchurian Army. During the morning—as will be told later—the right of the latter army in falling back impinged upon Erh-tai-tzu, and General Artamonov being the senior officer present then took over command of the village.† Later came the order from the commander-in-chief placing it under General Gershelmann, but—to anticipate slightly—further changes were made during the day, so that it was not until evening that it actually came under General Gershelmann's control. In all, five changes of command took place at this important tactical point during the day, and it was perhaps fortunate for the Russians that matters passed quietly in that locality.‡ Indeed so secure did Ma-chia-pu and Erh-tai-tzu seem to General Gershelmann that when General Tserpitski, in accordance with the spirit of General Kuropatkin's instructions, sent reinforcements to his subordinate, the latter saw no necessity for sending the troops to the two villages and kept them in reserve at Sha-ta-tzu.§

The comparative immunity from attack enjoyed by Erh-tai-tzu had a simple explanation—none other than the fact that the Japanese 5th Division was unable to carry out the task assigned

* The brigade was the 2nd Brigade, 9th Division, Xth Corps consisting of the 35th (Bryansk) and 36th (Orel) Regiments. It left Huan-ku-tien about 4.15 p.m. and arrived at Sha-ta-tzu at 2 a.m. on the 6th March.

† General Artamonov was the commander of the 54th Division, 5th Siberian Corps, Third Manchurian Army.

‡ It was originally under Colonel Kuznetsov, then General Artamonov took it over, next it passed to General Gershelmann, after that it was put under the commander of the 5th Siberian Corps, and finally again came under General Gershelmann.

§ Two and a half battalions and four howitzers.

to it. Ordered to "drive back the enemy before it," it had by 7 a.m. seized the old embankment immediately north of the Hun, but with this success it had shot its bolt, the fire from the Russian guns condemning all further attempts at advance to utter failure. Erh-tai-tzu therefore was not turned, and although many and gallant attempts were made by the Japanese 5th Division to push on, none succeeded. When darkness fell its casualties amounted to no less than one thousand five hundred. The only danger threatening Erh-tai-tzu, therefore, was the battalion in Su-hu-chia-pu. That unit made another attempt after nightfall to seize the village, but this likewise failed, for the Russians were strongly entrenched and showing no inclination to retire.

Such was the fighting which took place in the rayon covered by the left of the Russian counter-stroke—that is to say opposite the column commanded by General Tserpitski.* From the Russian point of view the situation was never really serious,† but the alarmist tone of the dispatch of the column commander, coupled with the commander-in-chief's anxiety regarding Erh-tai-tzu, had induced the latter to interfere in the arrangements of the fight, and had misled General Kaulbars into weakening the counter-attack at the point where every bayonet was urgently required.

Shortly after the Japanese 5th and 8th Divisions had started to carry out their missions for the day a dispatch from General Nogi was received at Second Army head-quarters to say that, in view of Marshal Oyama's plan for prosecuting the enveloping movement, he would cease attacking the enemy in front with the Third Army and would move it towards the north-west;‡ but that, since the troops opposite Lu-kun-tun were in close touch with the Russians, he would drive in the latter before handing over that portion of his line to the Second Army, and would leave elsewhere a thin screen in front of them, to cover the withdrawal of the bulk of the Third Army, which would proceed north-west. The dispatch also

The move of
the Japanese
Third Army
northwards.
The 3rd Division
sent to relieve
the 9th.

movement, he would cease attacking the enemy in front with the Third Army and would move it towards the north-west;‡ but that, since the troops opposite Lu-kun-tun were in close touch with the Russians, he would drive in the latter before handing over that portion of his line to

* In the forty-two battalions forming the column of General Tserpitski the losses amounted to thirty-two officers and one thousand four hundred and eighty-eight other ranks; of these seventeen officers and six hundred and two other ranks belonged to the 122nd (Tambov) Regiment alone.

† At the close of the day General Tserpitski had over seven battalions which had not been engaged.

‡ This dispatch was received by General Oku at 8.20 a.m.

contained an extract from Marshal Oyama's orders of the previous night so far as they affected the Second and Third Armies. But General Oku was already acquainted with these provisions and had indeed based his own army orders upon them. General Nogi's communication, however, gave him the clue as to what should be the destination of General Nambo, and he accordingly issued from his head-quarters at Ai-chia-pu the following orders at 10 a.m.:—

(1) The enemy's front is from the old railway bridge through Sha-ta-tzu to Yan-tzu-tun. The 5th Division is attacking him from Hou-sai-chia-pu, one mile south-west of Hsiao-yu-shu-pu, and the 8th from Wu-lin-pu and Nin-kuan-tun. The 9th Division of the Third Army is now deployed from Nin-kuan-tun and north of it, but the division is about to be transferred to the north-west.

(2) The commander of the 3rd Division* will carefully consult with the commander of the 9th Division, and, when the latter division is removed from Chan-ssu-tun, the 3rd Division will take its place with as little delay as possible, and will deploy on a line facing Chang-shih-chang.†

(3) The 3rd Division will move at once to carry out the above orders, proceeding through Ssu-fan-pu and Tsa-chia-tun.

When orders were given to General Nambo to go northwards and replace the 9th Division, the improbability under existing conditions of the 5th and 8th Divisions being able to take the positions before them—more especially the village of Yan-tzu-tun—had already become apparent to General Oku. Since no improvement occurred during the next few hours, at 2.50 p.m. he gave further instructions to General Nambo. They were as follows:—

The 3rd Division will deploy on a line from Chan-ssu-tun to Hsing-ming-tun, and will attack the enemy who now occupies the ground from Chang-shih-chang to Yu-huan-tun.

Part of the 9th Division, now before the enemy in the region about to be occupied by the 3rd Division, will temporarily

* By 3rd Division is meant, apparently, the reinforced 5th Brigade from the 3rd Division, commanded by General Nambo. This force is constantly referred to as "the 3rd Division," but some Japanese accounts describe it, it seems, more properly, as General Nambo's detachment.

† This village cannot be exactly identified but it is probable that it was in the immediate vicinity of Redoubt No. 6.

come under the command of the commander of the latter division.* The main body of the 9th Division is leaving the village of Chan-ssu-tun to-day.

At this time it happened that General Nambo and his staff were on the sandhill west of Nin-kuan-tun, where they had arrived at half-past two, and at half-past three some of his battalions came up behind the hill, while the remainder of the force, with the artillery farther to the west, wended its way northwards, well hidden from the enemy. By 3.45 p.m. orders had been given to the various subordinate commanders, and the whole force moved towards its destination; but the transfer of command was not completed this day.

Still farther to the west, quite unknown to the Russians, another Japanese force was marching northwards in order to throw its weight into the scale when the struggle on their communications north of Mukden should take place. This was the bulk of the three *Kobi* brigades from the Japanese General Reserve, which at some time in the afternoon reached Yen-chia-huan. During the day also, so far as can be ascertained, the head-quarters of the Japanese 3rd Division and the 18th Regiment left the General Reserve.† Thus, west of Mukden, during the 5th March two currents of troops were flowing in parallel but contrary directions. The Russians, diverting part of the flood with which they had intended to overwhelm the Japanese Third Army, had turned a stream of units to the south, while the Japanese tide flowed slowly towards the point long selected by Marshal Oyama—the north.

It is now time to resume the narrative of the right of the Russian counter-attack and to carry it on from the point where the various units composing General Gerngross's column were left

* This had been arranged by the staff of the Second Army and the commander of the 9th Division.

† It is certain that upon the 6th March these units were in rear of General Nambo's detachment from the 3rd Division (see p. 507), but the exact date upon which they were dispatched northwards cannot be exactly determined. It seems that they did not leave with General Nambo on the 3rd March; but since they were close behind that commander's detachment on the 6th their departure from Ta-tung-shan-pu must have taken place upon the 4th or 5th, and of these dates the latter is the more probable. With the departure of the 18th Regiment Marshal Oyama's General Reserve was now completely exhausted (see Appendix 19), but it is possible that some *Kobi* troops may by this have come up to form a small force under his immediate control.

getting into position for the combined advance. Of General de

Vitt's detachment the Samara Regiment remained in occupation of Pao-tao-tun, where it was in touch with patrols of the Japanese 1st Division and also with two of General Grekov's squadrons.

Generally speaking, in place of occupying Fan-hsi-tun and Tsuan-pan-che, as laid down in General Gerngross's orders, this detachment had to be satisfied with the occupation of the former village only—a state of affairs brought about by its delay in starting and by the resistance met with later from the advanced units of the Japanese 1st Division.* As regards the Composite Division under General Vasilev, it has already been related that it was awaiting the advance by General de Vitt and about four o'clock sent one brigade southwards to assist General Tserpitski. The remaining brigade† continued to hold its positions until about midnight, when orders were received, apparently from General Kaulbars himself, for it to go to Tzu-ho-tsuan-tun on the left bank of the Hun.‡ It is not known what circumstances led up to its dispatch southwards; but the most likely explanation is that General Kaulbars had either forgotten, or had never been informed, that the 2nd Brigade, 9th Division, had already been sent to Sha-ta-tzu.§ The 1st Siberian Corps, which, it will be remembered, formed the reserve of General Gerngross's column, reached the Northern Tombs about five o'clock, and shortly afterwards proceeded to the south-east of Hou-hua, where it was joined by the 4th East Siberian Rifle Regiment, which had been relieved in Ta-hen-tun by Colonel Zapolski.||

Some time after midnight of the 5th–6th, in consequence of the

* At night, General de Vitt's detachment was disposed as follows :—

The 147th (Samara) Regiment at Pao-tao-tun.

The 12th (Velikolutsk) Regiment (14 companies) in Pa-chia-tzu and Hsiao-hen-tun.

The 140th (Zaraisk) Regiment at Hsiao-hen-tun.

The 138th (Bolkhov) Regiment (14 companies) at Fan-hsi-tun.

† The 2nd Brigade, 31st Division.

‡ Of it the 124th (Voronej) Regiment was holding Tzu-kuan-tun and the space between Niu-hsin-tun and Ma-chuang-tzu. Of the 123rd (Koslov) Regiment two battalions were near Huan-ku-tien, one battalion was in Ma-chuang-tzu and one battalion half a mile north of that village.

§ See the *Russian Official History*, Vol. V, Part 1, p. 349.

|| This regiment had been pushed on in advance of the remainder of the corps to assist General de Vitt on the 3rd. See foot-note (*), p. 414.

transfer of the 2nd Brigade, 31st Division, of General Vasilev's detachment across the Hun Ho, the 35th East Siberian Rifle Regiment was detailed to hold the line Niu-hsin-tun—Ma-chuang-tzu and thence to a village one mile west of Hou-hua.

No more than a passing mention has so far been made of the centre column under General Topornin; but as a matter of fact the operations in which it was engaged do not call for a lengthy description, for beyond an artillery duel, in which both the Japanese 9th and 7th Divisions took part, no action took place in that quarter of the field. During the day the commander-in-chief instructed General Topornin to hand over the command of his column to General Pnevski and take over that of the General Reserve then being got together, and to devote his attention to organizing a collection of drafts.* In the evening, however, General Kaulbars protested against this encroachment on his powers as the commander of the counter-stroke, and General Kuropatkin accordingly gave instructions for General Topornin to hand over the General Reserve to General Dembovski and to resume command over the 25th Division—or centre column.† He also stated that the troops of General Vasilev which had been sent across the Hun would recross that river and join the 25th Division.

The action of one small force in the area of the counter-stroke has yet to be noted. This was the cavalry detachment formerly under General Tolmachev, now commanded by General Prince Orbeliani who had recently been discharged from hospital.‡

It will be remembered that these squadrons had the previous night betaken themselves to the left bank of the Hun and had gone into bivouac close to the railway bridge. There they remained throughout the 5th, apparently without orders, possibly forgotten, and certainly inactive.

So far as the operations of the 5th March are concerned, the failure of the Russian counter-stroke was complete, for during the whole day the detachment of General de Vitt had

* See p. 467.

† General Topornin resumed command of the Centre Column on the 6th.

‡ See foot-note (‡), p. 452.

The centre
column under
General
Topornin.

Prince Orbe-
liani's cavalry
detachment.

advanced barely a couple of miles, while the remainder of the troops taking part had made no forward movement at all. To this unfortunate result several causes contributed. In the first place, the plan of operations reproduced in a particularly vicious form the characteristic Russian method of attacking by instalments, and so rendering the movement of nearly every sub-division of troops contingent upon the success of some other body. Thus, in Disposition No. 11 General Kaulbars laid down that the centre and left columns were to stand fast until a certain objective had been reached by the right column under General Gerngross. And that commander, in his turn, reproduced the same piecemeal system in the orders to his column, in which General de Vitt's detachment was at first to engage unaided. This method had been tried at San-de-pu, where it met the fate which it deserved; and that it should have been again adopted less than two months later shows a certain lack of adaptability among the Russian commanders. Again, for an attack based upon such a system to have any chance of success it would be imperative that the column whose movements governed the action of the remainder of the force should carry out its task with the greatest possible punctuality, energy, and dispatch—qualities which were not displayed in the halting advance of General de Vitt.

Another factor which militated against a success was the habit of surrendering the initiative on the smallest provocation and hurrying off troops, urgently required where they were, to counteract pressure in another quarter. It is true that General Tserpitski at one time reported that he was attacked by three divisions when, as a matter of fact, he was able to hold his own without difficulty and had nearly eight battalions not engaged at the close of the day. It is important to note, however, that, even had he been assailed by three divisions, he would have been approximately equal to the enemy, whose attack would have had to be made against a skilfully entrenched position. The net result of the Russian counter-stroke may be summed up in a sentence. The column which was to drive home the blow took nearly twelve hours to get into a position of readiness; portion of it advanced about two miles; its casualties were under twenty-five; and it was depleted by sixteen battalions without adequate reason.

After the transfer of the 4th Division from the Japanese Second

to the Fourth Army, the Third Manchurian Army was opposed by the latter alone.* By that time the position of General Bilderling's army had undergone a somewhat important change, for while the two flank corps still faced generally south, part of the XVIIth Corps lay along the railway and looked west.

It will be remembered that according to the instructions for the Third and First Manchurian Armies, issued by General Kuropatkin about midnight of the 4th-5th, the former was to withdraw to a new position. General Bilderling therefore issued his orders to the following effect:—

The Third Manchurian Army refuses its right. *The 5th Siberian Corps* was to occupy a fortified position along the line Erh-tai-tzu—Pei-tai-tzu-yen—Su-chia-tun station (inclusive).

The XVIIth Corps was to continue the line from Su-chia-tun station along the railway to Han-chia-pu and thence to Kao-li-tun (inclusive).

The 6th Siberian Corps was to occupy a position from Kuan-tun to Shan-kan-tzu station (inclusive).†

This last order was cancelled as the result of representations made by the commander of the corps and by General Meiendorf commanding the 1st Corps, on the left.

As regards the 5th Siberian Corps, the 54th Division on the right was to hold the section Erh-tai-tzu—Pei-tai-tzu-yen, while the 61st Division was to carry on the line to Su-chia-tun station,‡ the withdrawal of the corps being covered by two squadrons of the

The 5th Siberian Corps. Nyejin Dragoons and by three rear guards thrown out from the retiring divisions.§ Such units of the VIIIth Corps as were in the rayon of the 5th Siberian Corps were to march to Hsiao-ho-tun en route to join the General Reserve.

To carry out the above orders Colonel Stakhovich|| moved off about 3.15 a.m., covering the rear of the corps. About the same

* The Third Manchurian Army consisted of the 5th Siberian, XVIIth, and 6th Siberian, Corps.

† The position of this station on one of the field railways is unknown.

‡ It is not clear which division was entrusted with the defence of Pei-tai-tzu-yen.

§ Two from the 54th, and one from the 61st Division.

|| Colonel Stakhovich was the commander of the 52nd Nyejin Dragoon Regiment.

time the main body of the 54th Division was set in motion, and under protection of its rear guards arrived on its new line at dawn, when it at once set about making preparations to resist attack.* The 61st Division had started some two hours earlier, and by a quarter-past five the rear guard took up a position at Ku-chia-tzu. The Japanese were now employing a search-light, its light being directed chiefly up on to the position occupied by the XVIIth Corps. Since they were noticed to be advancing, the battery with the Russian rear guard opened fire. The main body, however, continued its retirement and arrived without further incident upon its sector of the new position.

But just about the time when the two divisions of the 5th Siberian Corps arrived upon their new line the Japanese 4th Division began to undertake the pursuit in earnest. It advanced in two columns, the 7th Brigade being on the right and the 19th on the left, and by about midday

The Japanese 4th Division pursues the 5th Siberian Corps. both were engaged. The latter brigade, leaving a portion of its strength at Hsiao-su-chia-pu, advanced against Wa-hsiu-chuang-tzu, which it occupied without resistance, and then continued its march to Ta-su-chia-pu, where it drove in a small piquet of Russians. The village consisted of two separate portions, a southern and a northern, and the Japanese were preparing to push on into the latter when a fierce artillery fire was suddenly opened upon the quarter occupied by them. Four batteries were counted at Pei-tai-tzu-yen, four more enfiladed the village from the south-east, and from the north-west many other Russian pieces joined in. Under this concentrated fire an officer's patrol was sent into the northern section of the village and soon returned with the intelligence that a Russian force of at least a regiment in strength was advancing from the north and had almost reached its northern edge.

General Hayashi decided to meet this counter-attack by an immediate offensive, although his staff suggested remaining on the defensive, and drawing his sword and placing himself at the head of his troops led the way, his soldiers cheering loudly as they followed. The space between the two sections of the

* The 11th (Pskov) Regiment had marched to Hsiao-ho-tun where it arrived about 8.15 a.m. to form part of the reserve of the Third Manchurian Army.

village was quickly traversed, and, doubling through the north section, the Japanese just succeeded in seizing the outer wall when the leading line of the advancing Russians was but fifty yards away. They instantly emptied their magazines into the approaching enemy who, taken by surprise and suffering severe loss, halted and gave way. But the retreat was orderly and admirably carried out, and as the Russians fell back to Pei-tai-tzu-yen no signs of panic were observed in their ranks. They left three hundred dead upon the field. The Japanese 19th Brigade lost one hundred men, most of whom had been put out of action by artillery fire; but as some compensation they captured in the village three thousand rifles, nearly forty thousand rounds of ammunition, and several well-stocked magazines full of bread, wine, frozen meat, and preserved fruit. A large amount of coal and clothing and quantities of wire were also found as well as some maps.

Meanwhile the 7th Brigade had been advancing from Kuan-lin-pu and had occupied Pen-chia-tzu, Ku-chia-tzu and Yen-chen-pu without any opposition save from the Russian guns; and steadily pushing forward in groups of five or six the Japanese reached and occupied Ta-ching. The latter portion of the advance was distinguished by a curious episode. From their position the Russians observed a party of Japanese cavalry, some of whom carried white flags, gallop forward ahead of the advancing infantry; but any speculation based upon the conventional use of these emblems was soon set at rest; for when the Japanese horsemen had fixed some half-dozen of the flags in the ground they retired quickly; and it was soon apparent that the flags were merely to indicate the frontage to be occupied by the units of the 7th Brigade.* Ta-ching was not rich in warlike stores as had been the case with Ta-su-chia-pu, but some barrels of vodka and cases of champagne were found.

During the afternoon it became clear that the Japanese 4th Division could not advance any farther in face of the opposition shown by the 5th Siberian Corps, and it accordingly occupied the line Yen-chen-pu—Ta-ching—Ta-su-chia-pu, while the two divisions of the Russians maintained the line on to which they had fallen

* This incident is vouched for by the commander of the 61st Division 5th Siberian Corps.

back at dawn, having lost ten officers and five hundred and twenty-seven other ranks during the day.*

In the XVIIth Corps a policy of order and counter-order produced the inevitable result.† The evacuation of the position was to be begun by the 3rd Division on the right, and all the troops were to be on their new alignments by dawn.‡ In accordance with this arrangement the commander of the 3rd Division set his troops in motion about 1.45 a.m., and by a quarter to five they were upon the positions allotted to them. But in spite of all precautions as to secrecy the evacuation was observed by the Japanese, who were using searchlights, and the commander of the 24th Brigade of the 6th Division saw in it an opportunity to resume, with the aid of the Tomioka detachment on his left, the attack on Han-chia-pu, which had ended in failure two days before. The 24th Brigade, therefore, at once occupied the abandoned trenches, as well as the villages of Ying-wo,§ Ssu-fan-tai and Yen-chen-pu. The Russian 35th Division had begun to withdraw at 3.15 a.m., but long before it reached its new line a dispatch reached General Dobrzinski conveying an important amendment to the orders already received.

A doubt had arisen in the mind of General Kuropatkin as to the suitability of the line which he had laid down for occupation by the Third Manchurian Army, and at 1.55 a.m. he had telephoned

* The 216th (Insar) Regiment was sent to Hsin-chia-feng to form the corps reserve.

† The XVIIth Corps had by this been reduced to half its strength, as will be seen from the following :—

3rd Division—

- 9th (Ingermanland) Regiment.
- 10th (Novoingermanland) Regiment.
- 11th (Pskov) Regiment—Third Manchurian Army reserve.
- 12th (Velikolutsk) Regiment—With General de Vitt.

35th Division—

- 137th (Nyejin) Regiment.
- 138th (Bolkhov) Regiment—With General de Vitt.
- 139th (Morshansk) Regiment.
- 140th (Zaraisk) Regiment—With General de Vitt (except two companies in the Railway Redoubt).

‡ To the 3rd Division was allotted the line Su-chia-tun station—Bridge north of Han-chia-pu (exclusive). The 35th Division was to carry on the line to Kuan-tun.

§ Ying-wo was captured at 8.40 a.m. A Russian 5.9-inch howitzer was taken by the Japanese in the village.

to General Bilderling, directing that the 5th Siberian and XVIIth Corps were to place strong rear guards upon the positions they were then holding, and to contest every foot of ground in their retirement, while the 6th Siberian Corps was to hold on to its line. The contents of this order were communicated by Third Manchurian Army head-quarters to the commander of the XVIIth Corps at 2.55 a.m., and an hour and twenty minutes later the commander of the 35th Division received the dispatch referred to above, in which the general situation was explained and he was ordered to re-occupy his abandoned positions without delay. This was carried out so far as the Nyejin Regiment was concerned without hindrance, but the Morshansk Regiment came under such a heavy fire from Ying-wo that it was forced for a time to suspend all movement.

General Orlov, in command of the 3rd Division, received similar instructions verbally from the commander of the XVIIth Corps at apparently about the same time, and therefore detailed the Novoingermanland Regiment, which was on the left of the division, to advance and re-occupy Ying-wo and Ssu-fan-tai. At a quarter-past five the colonel of that regiment launched a battalion to the attack of each village, leaving two battalions in reserve; but on perceiving this movement the Japanese lit up the ground with searchlights and opened such a fierce fire from rifles and machine guns that the attack died away, and the Novoingermanland Regiment fell back to the railway embankment north of Han-chia-pu. In carrying out this movement the regiment refused its left flank, with the result that a gap was formed between the 3rd and 35th Divisions which lost touch with each other.

General Orlov now sent a report to the corps commander announcing his failure, and in reply received orders to renew the offensive. This time he decided to precede the infantry attack with artillery fire. Consequently, the batteries of the 3rd Division were told off to shell Ssu-fan-tai and Yen-chen-pu; the batteries of the 35th Division co-operated in the bombardment. The fire from these pieces continued throughout the forenoon, and at 11.15 a.m. the corps commander informed General Orlov that he was to capture Yen-chen-pu in addition to the two villages already mentioned to him. Since the task now to be faced was the attack of an entrenched position nearly three miles in length and forming a re-entrant to the attackers, General Orlov

was determined to await the full effect of his artillery fire; and it was after one o'clock when the infantry advance was renewed. Like the previous effort it failed, and at 8 p.m. the corps commander, recognizing the futility of further attempts, directed that operations should cease. The 3rd Division resumed its position along the railway.

While these efforts were being made by the 3rd Division the 35th Division continued to hold on to the position it had taken up before dawn; but its situation was one of great difficulty, for when the Novoiagermanland Regiment refused its flank and touch was lost between the two divisions, the Japanese advanced from Ssu-fan-tai and began to enfilade the line held by the Morshansk Regiment, and five companies had to be sent to hold them off. The Japanese 11th Brigade had also pushed forward, and a severe artillery fire was kept up by the Japanese, who were using their 11-inch howitzers with great effect, especially against the Railway Redoubt.* During the evening the Nyejin Regiment, which was in front, was so enfiladed from Ying-wo that it was compelled to retire to the second line.

Thus by the evening of the 5th the XVIIIth Corps was holding the line prescribed for it in General Kuropatkin's order of the previous night: all attempts to comply with the counter-order having been totally unsuccessful.

Where the Okubo *Kobi* Division was facing the 6th Siberian Corps some fighting took place, but it was due chiefly to a misunderstanding on the part of the Japanese, who had to pay a heavy price for inaccurate intelligence. Information having been received during the morning to the effect that the 6th Siberian Corps and the Okubo *Kobi* Division. the Russians in front were retiring, the Okubo *Kobi* Division, with the 3rd *Kobi* Brigade on the right and the 11th *Kobi* Brigade on the left, advanced against Nan-kang-tzu. Suddenly the 6th Siberian Corps opened fire with rifles and artillery, and inflicted nearly one thousand six hundred casualties on the Japanese, who at 4 p.m. retreated to their former position. This attack was fully supported by the Japanese siege artillery, and the 11-inch howitzers continued to shell Sha-ho-pu without intermission. To this the Russians could make

* This redoubt was garrisoned by two companies of the 140th (Zaraisk) Regiment.

no effective reply since their heavy guns had been already moved.*

The unduly optimistic news which had percolated to the Japanese 10th Division during the night of the 4th-5th had given rise to the belief that the Japanese Third Army had been more successful in its movement than had really been

the case. The plan adopted by the commander

The First Man-
churian Army.

The 1st Corps
and the Japanese
10th Division.

of the 10th Division, therefore, was to press so as to divert the attention of the Russians from the north-west of the battlefield. In accordance with this scheme the 8th Brigade was ordered to attack at dawn. At 4.30 a.m.

the 11-inch howitzers opened against the positions held by the Russian 1st Corps, and one battalion of the 40th Regiment, with a section of engineers, was detailed to attack the western side of Liu-chiang-tun, while the 10th Regiment was told off to assail the same village from the east. At the first sign of daylight the leading units advanced by rushes and arrived close up to the walls of the village, which was held by some companies of the Caspian Regiment. They then began to suffer severely from the fire of the Russian machine guns, which severed all communication between their first and second lines.

At this time, however, a portion of the 10th Regiment occupied a corner of the village and displayed the national flag so as to encourage their comrades who were in such difficulties on the left. This signal was soon observed by the brigadier, who immediately ordered a battalion of the 40th Regiment, which was standing in reserve at Pu-tsao-a, to reinforce the first line; but before this could be carried out the Russians made a counter-attack against the 10th Regiment, in which all except one of its senior officers were killed or wounded. Since the battalion from Pu-tsao-a could not reach the front owing to the hail of bullets from the Russian machine guns, the 10th Regiment was forced to hold on as best it could, using hand-grenades and bombs thrown from bamboo mortars to keep off the

* By evening the Third Manchurian Army was disposed as follows :—

The 5th Siberian Corps on the line Erh-tai-tzu—Su-chia-tun. Corps reserve, one regiment, at Hsin-chia-feng.

The XVIIth Corps on the line Su-chia-tun—Han-chia-pu—Kuan-tun. Corps reserve, one battalion, at Chang-chia-pu-tzu.

The 6th Siberian Corps on the line Kuan-tun—Sha-ho-pu; and thence generally eastward. Corps reserve, two battalions, at Pao-chia-a-tzu.

Army reserve, nine battalions, at Hsiao-ho-tun.

Russians. When night came the Japanese retired to their former positions. During the day the casualties of the 10th Division (including the 10th *Kobi* Brigade)* amounted to two thousand three hundred and sixty-two, and these figures reveal what sacrifices are required—and sometimes in vain—when troops are launched against strongly fortified positions. A small party of two officers and twenty men which had concealed itself in a house in Liu-chiang-tun remained in the village until morning, when they were called upon to surrender. They refused unanimously and when their ammunition was exhausted they were quickly dispatched by the Russians.

In resisting these attacks the Russian Ist Corps had been assisted to some extent by the 4th Siberian Corps on its left, for the artillery of the latter had during the morning opened fire against Fan-shen and Pu-tsao-a; but with the exception of this co-operation the day was again one of tranquillity for the 4th Siberian Corps. Indeed, the continued inactivity of this corps had by this been brought to the notice of General Kuropatkin, and he accordingly telegraphed during the day direct to General Zarubaiev, enjoining him to make a demonstration by assuming the offensive. This, however, does not seem to have been done, and later, during the evening, the commander-in-chief again reverted to the subject. On this occasion he spoke to the chief of the staff of the corps over the telephone and informed him that he had collected a reserve and proposed to deliver a decisive blow in the morning against the Japanese right flank. To assist this movement by attracting the enemy's attention towards the centre, General Kuropatkin impressed upon his hearer the necessity of making a demonstration during the night. These instructions were duly conveyed to General Zarubaiev who, as will be seen later, issued orders for the assumption of the offensive along his whole front.†

Where the Japanese Guard Division was confronting the 2nd Siberian Corps the position of the former was still hazardous, for it was still disposed astride of the Sha valley; and on the northern bank the troops of General Watanabe lay clinging to the bare

* The 10th *Kobi* Brigade formed part of the Okubo *Kobi* Division, but it appears to have acted with the 10th Division on this day. No details of its action are forthcoming.

† See p. 533.

slopes of the foothills, unable to move by day and exposed to sudden attacks by night. Sleep was therefore impossible, and this state of affairs had to be endured for three days more, aggravated at night by the extreme cold and by day by the cutting wind, which detracted much from the warmth of the sun.

The 2nd Siberian Corps and the Japanese Guard Division. Little or no communication with the south side of the valley was possible during daylight except by telephone, and the removal of sick and wounded, as well as the supply of rations, had to be carried out at night. Yet, owing to the efficiency of the departments concerned and the good clothing of the men, there were no cases of frostbite, except in the case of wounded who could not be collected. The men remained eager to go on, so keen indeed were they that they killed time by gambling for the honour of carrying the wire-cutters in the next attack. The danger of fetching water from the river by day was very great, and in attempting it many men were killed. Telephone communication with the south side of the river was kept up all through the fighting, though the wire was often cut by bullets. Relays of orderlies were used to supplement the telephone and men were often able to creep singly across the valley by daylight, but no signalling was done. Ammunition was brought up by hand, sometimes by the drivers of the ammunition ponies, sometimes by reserves, while at night men from the firing line were occasionally sent back to fetch it.

The 5th March was a bright clear day following a night of twenty-eight degrees of frost. The infantry and artillery fire which had begun at 10 p.m. the previous night went on until daylight, and the situation of the Guards, though still hazardous, had distinctly improved. It was noted by them that the infantry of the 12th Division to the right had been thrown across the valley during the night, and were occupying Pien-niu-lu-pu and the low hills above and to the west, from which they were engaging the Russians to their immediate front. The Guards' line had also extended to its right, and a spur, due north of Su-ma-pu-tzu, which had been obstinately striven for, was now in Japanese hands. From here to the left flank of the 12th Division now lay a gap of but little over a mile, but it was to a certain extent filled by Chien-su-ma-pu-tzu which was held by some of General Umezawa's brigade. The orders for the Guards on this day were to the effect that they should hold on to

the positions they were then occupying. In these circumstances, and since the 2nd Siberian Corps received no instructions to assume the offensive, the day passed in desultory artillery firing in which the Russians brought only some sixteen guns into action. During the night, however, infantry fire broke out and at times became very heavy, while artillery occasionally joined in. Most of the firing, which commenced shortly after midnight, was due to the 4th Guard Regiment in whose ranks there seems to have been an idea that the Russians were retreating. The whole Russian line thereupon replied, thinking that the Japanese were attacking. Daylight of the 6th showed that these fears were without foundation.

The occupation of Pien-niu-lu-pu, which had been noticed by the Guards, was consequent upon the decision of the commander of the 12th Division already narrated,* the execution of the task having been entrusted to the left column under General Imamura,

whose orders were to the following effect:—

The occupation of Pien-niu-lu-pu by the Japanese 12th Division.

The 24th Regiment was to drive the enemy out of Pien-niu-lu-pu and then, aided by a section of engineers, was to take his first line on the slopes north of the village. The 47th Regiment, supporting the attack, was to capture a similar line of trenches one and a half miles north-west of Pien-niu-lu-pu, and was to be assisted by a section of engineers. The reserve was to consist of three companies taken from the two regiments engaged; and the operations were to begin at 4.30 a.m.

The southern part of the village was already—and had been for some considerable time—in Japanese hands, and the attack on the village was limited to seizing that portion of it on the right bank. At 5.30 a.m. the 24th Regiment assaulted—one battalion against the village itself, while the other passed east of it. Little resistance was encountered; and the Russian captain in command, who was captured, stated that he had orders to retire if attacked in strength. Judging on the evening before that an attack was impending, he had withdrawn most of his men and had himself remained with a small body. When retiring on the approach of the 24th Regiment he had fallen into a ditch and was captured. The 24th, pressing on after a brief pause, re-formed and drove the enemy out of their first or

* See p. 460.

lower trenches, but coming on stronger defences and redoubts well protected by wire entanglements, was brought to a standstill. It then made good the ground it had won by entrenching. In touch with the 24th Regiment, and on its left, was the 47th, which after the first line of trenches had been taken was counter-attacked. The Russians, however, were repulsed with loss. Subsequently, three hundred of their dead were found in the neighbourhood of the first line of trenches. During the remainder of the day, General Imamura's column, after consolidating its position by trenches, exchanged rifle fire with the enemy from time to time, and intermittent artillery fire also went on. At 1.30 p.m. the Japanese 47th Regiment was reinforced by the regimental reserve of one company from the left bank of the Sha Ho, and at five o'clock the Russians made a local counter-attack against it. This was repulsed, and firing then died away. During the day General Shimamura's column went into reserve, generally south of Pien-niu-lu-pu. The 5th *Kobi* Brigade remained on the left bank of the Sha Ho, with its right about Ta-pei-kou.

In the Japanese 2nd Division it had been decided to refrain from further attempts upon the Kao-tai Ling position and to send off General Ohara to endeavour to operate against Ma-chun-tan to help the Ya-lu Army.* In accordance with this plan the column upon the left had but a passive rôle to fill and, had it not been called upon to repel a reconnaissance in force carried out by two battalions and four guns from the east towards Ying-pan, would have passed the day almost in complete inactivity. On the right General Ohara deployed his brigade, with the 30th Regiment on the outer flank and the 11th *Kobi* Regiment on the left, and with his two mountain batteries opened fire from a position north-east of Men-ya-pu-tzu. Before this display of the offensive General Prince Tumanov evacuated the Hsiao-ta Ling and Ku-ling-tzu Ling; and withdrawing to a position near Ta-fang-tzu, towards which General Baumgarten sent his reserve of four companies, he got into touch with the left of the Russian troops on the Pei-ta-ling-ku Ling. Meanwhile patrols sent out by him reported that about five o'clock some companies of the enemy accompanied by mountain guns had crossed the Hsiao-ta Ling; and in consequence of this report General Linevich ordered

* See p. 433.

four battalions to be sent from the Kao-tai Ling to strengthen Prince Tumanov.* To augment these reinforcements the latter drew upon the troops of General Bachinski on the Hsi-ta Ling, which were entirely then unopposed, to the extent of a battalion and four guns, leaving three battalions of the Kulikov Regiment to hold the pass. These, however, were forced to retire on the night of the 5th-6th since the evacuation of the Hsiao-ta Ling and Kuling-tzu Ling left them in the air. They accordingly fell back to a new position near Huang-ti. Thus, as a result of the 5th March, the left flank of the 3rd Siberian Corps had been forced to give way, and General Ohara had made good a few miles of his march to Ma-chun-tan. The dispatch of the four battalions to Prince Tumanov exhausted the reserves of the 3rd Siberian Corps; and this weakening of its strength, brought about by the advance of General Ohara, forced General Ivanov to abandon all hope of assuming the offensive which he and his chief of staff had more than once suggested to the commander of the First Manchurian Army.†

In the east of the battlefield the efforts of the Japanese were now chiefly devoted to wresting from the Russians the position south of Ma-chun-tan. For this the operations of the 2nd Division against the Kao-tai Ling had been suspended. In the Ya-lu Army, the attack of the 11th Division against Tu-pin-tai on the 5th was assisted by the operations of part of the 1st *Kobi* Division on the right, whose own efforts against Pi-ta were regarded as strictly secondary. Early in the morning the 11th Division began to shell the Tu-pin-tai position, and by 11 a.m. high-explosive shells began to fall in the valley leading to Ma-chun-tan up which ran the Russian communications. This artillery preparation was followed about half-past one by an energetic attack against the Russian centre and left. So serious did matters become that the Russian line began to waver in one place; but the 6th Battery of the 26th Artillery Brigade under Lieutenant-Colonel Puntov performed such good service that the Japanese had to fall back. Later, between three and four o'clock, the 11th Division resumed the offensive, and starting from Fountain Hill

General Rennenkampf's detachment and the Ya-lu Army.

* Only two were actually sent on the 5th, i.e., two battalions from the 2nd East Siberian Rifle Regiment.

† One battalion of the 146th (Tsaritsin) Regiment and two battalions of the 6th (Yeniseisk) Siberian Infantry Regiment were withdrawn from the front line to form a new corps reserve.

delivered an equally vigorous attack against the right of the Tu-pin-tai position; but the attempt failed, and the assailants again retired. After this an exchange of rifle fire continued until dark. The Russians on the Tu-pin-tai position lost five officers and three hundred and seventy-eight other ranks during the day.

While these attacks were occupying the defenders at Tu-pin-tai General Liubavin was resisting an advance which was being pressed with great vigour, especially against his left. But in spite of his critical situation he was sparing of his modest reserve, and his prudence was amply justified, for the Japanese suddenly unmasked a strong attack against his right, evidently with the idea of penetrating between him and General Rennenkampf and falling upon the rear of Ma-chun-tan. Using his reserve, however, General Liubavin was able to reinforce the real point of danger, and the Japanese broke and fled.

In the section of General Rennenkampf's detachment which was held by General Danilov the day passed quietly on the whole; and a reconnoitring force under Captain Prince Dolgorukov, which was sent out by General Maslov from Yao-kou, discovered that there was no Japanese force in evidence which might outflank General Danilov from the east. Although the circumstances in this portion of the field were apparently such as would have warranted an assumption of the offensive by the Russians, curiously enough, nothing was done. Indeed during the evening General Danilov assembled his commanding officers at a council of war at which it was decided to restrict operations to the defensive.

When during the evening the reports from the various sections of the battle front had been sifted at Russian General Headquarters General Kuropatkin was forced to acknowledge that "very little had been done." At the same time, however, he did

General Kuropatkin determines not to give up hope, and was of the opinion that the situation could still be retrieved if General Kaulbars could only carry out on the 6th the task which he had been unsuccessful in executing on the 5th. At 8.45 p.m. he issued the following directions to each of his three armies:—

"We have now discovered that Nogi's Army is operating against our extreme right. The 1st, 7th and 9th Divisions having been definitely located; as for the 11th Division, it is quite certain that it is opposing the Ching-ho-cheng

Detachment.* During the day all our troops, and especially the Ist Corps and the 2nd Siberian Corps, have successfully repulsed the attacks of the enemy, on numerous occasions taking the offensive, during which the Ist Corps captured two machine guns and more than a hundred prisoners. To-morrow the troops of the First and Third Armies will maintain their positions. When the slightest opportunity offers they will make local counter-attacks, so as to prevent the enemy from massing his reserves at the points along his front chosen by him for attack, or from moving them round to his extreme flank. The Second Army will carry out the task that has been allotted to it with the utmost energy, bearing in mind that the sooner this is accomplished the less resistance will the enemy be in a position to make. During the night I want the enemy to be harassed by scouts and detached companies, as we must remember that he is more exhausted and more shaken by losses than we are."

At the same time General Kuropatkin was careful to make arrangements in case the counter-attack should again fail. He realized that if General Kaulbars should be unable to push back the Japanese Third Army it would be dangerous to allow the Third and First Manchurian Armies to remain longer on the positions then occupied; and that in these circumstances it would be necessary to abandon the line of the River Sha and to withdraw behind the well-fortified Mukden—Fu-shun line. An order was therefore drawn up by the Head-Quarter Staff for the withdrawal of the Third and First Manchurian Armies to the Hun Ho. It received the signature of the commander-in-chief, but it was not issued, and army commanders were notified of its contents by telegraph or telephone and were warned to take all preliminary measures.

Finally he took steps again to build up a General Reserve. During the forenoon of the 5th he had not one single unit under his own hand, for although he had ordered the wandering battalions of the Second Manchurian Army which had strayed into the area under General Bilderling to be sent
 The Russian General Reserve. Mukden, these did not reach him till the 6th.† He collected the 5th Rifle Regiment, which had made its way to Hsiao-ho-tun; and besides this two

* i.e., General Rennenkampf's detachment.

† See p. 489. The evidence as to whether all or part only of these regiments joined the General Reserve on the 6th is conflicting.

composite battalions from the 4th Siberian Corps* and two battalions of the Krom Regiment from the 6th Siberian Corps joined the reserve. But its strength was still inadequate and a further makeshift battalion was added to it, the composition of which reveals the straits General Kuropatkin was reduced to for men. This improvised unit was formed of a pontoon battalion, two companies of balloon troops, a sapper company, a mixed transport escort, two companies of the Mukden Battalion, the same number from a Siberian Reserve Battalion, a mixed force of depot guards and a company from railhead. It was hoped that on the 6th the General Reserve would amount to twenty-two battalions.

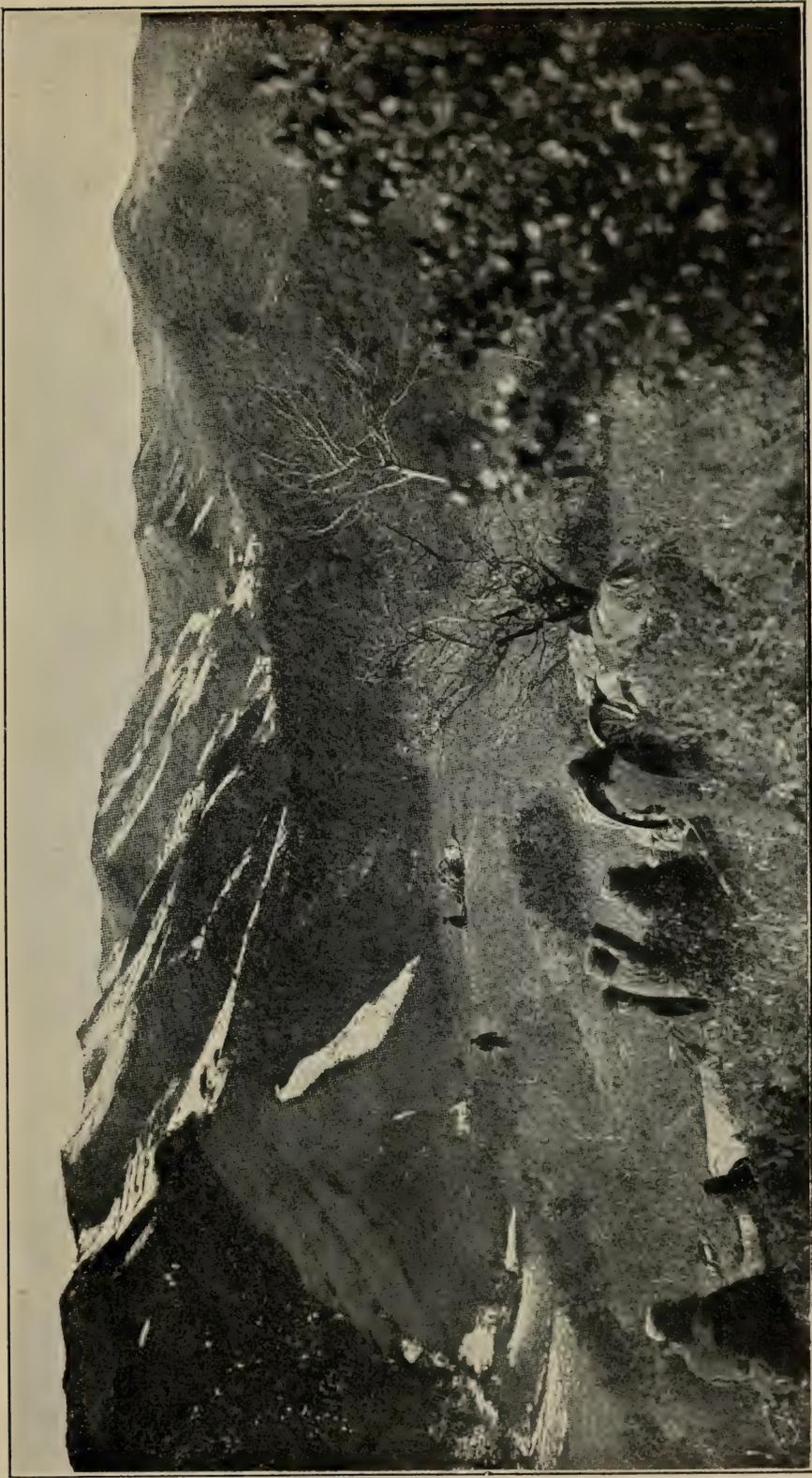
The feature of the battle on the 5th March was the absolute failure of the Russian counter-stroke in the west, in spite of the fact that the difficult task of collecting a force to carry it out had been effected. And, consequently, though the Japanese Third Army did not make much progress, it had not been beaten back and was so far in a stronger position by the three *Kobi* brigades from the General Reserve which were somewhere in rear of it. Apart from the faults in the execution of the Russian counter-stroke, to which reference has been made, its failure was to a great extent due to the fact that it was an isolated offensive effort.

For this day General Kuropatkin had assigned to each of his three armies an entirely different task. The Second Manchurian Army was to counter-attack; the Third Manchurian Army was to swing back pivoting on its left; and the First Manchurian Army was to hold on to its positions. By this scheme in which the offensive was confined solely to one-third of the total Russian force, nothing was done to divert the attention of the Japanese from the point at which pressure was to be applied. It seems that if the Third Manchurian Army had been also assigned a rôle of aggression the Japanese could scarcely have ignored the gap existing between their Second and Fourth Armies, and that the 5th Division of the former would probably have been devoted to guarding that breach. General Tserpitski would in that case not have been exposed to that combined attack, which excited alarm, reacted on General Kaulbars and the commander-in-chief,

* These two battalions had arrived during the morning at Hsiao-ho-tun, apparently without any definite instructions. They were, in these circumstances, taken over by the commander-in-chief.

and robbed the right column of the Russian counter-stroke of its chance of success. The withdrawal of the Third Manchurian Army not only accentuated the limitation of the offensive to General Kaulbars, but added a fresh danger to the Russian side, for it led to the creation of a gap in the position of the XVIIth Corps at the point where the main line of railway and the Mandarin Road ran through the front.

By nightfall on the 5th for the Japanese the die was definitely cast, for practically the whole of their General Reserve had left its central position and was due west of Mukden. And again is a comparison of the plans of the rival commanders of interest. General Kuropatkin was next day to renew the counter-stroke of his Second Manchurian Army, which had failed, while Marshal Oyama was about to endeavour to gain ground northwards with his Third Army and his General Reserve, and would be in process of executing a flank march across the front of the entrenched position from which the Russians were about to deliver their counter-attack.



JAPANESE MOUNTAIN ARTILLERY IN ACTION NEAR SAN-LUNG-YU DURING THE BATTLE.

[5th March, 1905.]

(To face p. 504.)

CHAPTER LXXVI.

THE BATTLE OF MUKDEN—*continued*—OPERATIONS ON THE 6TH MARCH—THE JAPANESE THIRD ARMY GAINS GROUND TO THE NORTH — THE RENEWED RUSSIAN COUNTER-STROKE AGAINST THAT ARMY FAILS—ATTACK UPON HAN-CHIA-PU BY THE JAPANESE FOURTH ARMY—RENEWAL OF THE OFFENSIVE AGAINST GENERAL RENNENKAMPF'S DETACHMENT BY THE YA-LU ARMY—GENERAL KUROPATKIN WISHES TO WITHDRAW HIS CENTRE AND LEFT BUT IS DISSUADED.

(Plan 66.)

ON the 6th March the main focus of action still lay on the right bank of the Hun Ho, and the progress of the operations in that region, though on a smaller scale, bore a general resemblance to that during the initial stages of the battle. The feature of the early days of the struggle had been the error into which

The development of the action on the west.

General Kuropatkin had been led as to the direction of his opponent's main attack; this had induced him to abandon the proposed offensive from his own right, and at the expense of that flank to reinforce his left: only to discover that it was in the west that Marshal Oyama had been all along preparing to force the final decision. In the area between the River Hun and the Hsin-min-tun highway a tendency towards a similar development had been noticeable upon the 5th March. On the 6th it took place. The Russians, operating from their right, were preparing to renew the counter-offensive which had missed fire upon the previous day. Against the left of this counter-stroke the Japanese brought to bear a pressure which was analogous in tactical tendency to that applied by the Ya-lu Army against the Russian Ching-ho-cheng Detachment at the end of February; and it led to a similar result. It was interpreted by the Russians as being the main effort of the

Japanese, and it caused the Russian offensive to wither away just in that area where vigour was essential. This ruse again helped the Japanese to move their Third Army undetected.

It would be incorrect to state that General Kuropatkin was upon the 6th March so completely misled as he had been in the closing week of February, but it is certain that his rival's action left him so bewildered as completely to sap the vigour of the active operation he had been projecting.

This undetected movement of the Japanese Third Army was such an important and essential part of the Japanese plan on this day, and the method of its execution was so remarkable a tactical manœuvre as to justify further reference before its actual

The Japanese
Third Army
gains ground
to the north.

progress is described. As has been mentioned,* while the whole of that army was steadily to press on northwards towards the Russian communications there was to be an internal transfer of strength within it in the same direction, which to a limited extent was comparable with the operation of "castling" in chess. The 1st Division on the left was to continue its march to the north, which would leave a gap between it and the 7th Division in the centre. This gap would be filled by the 9th Division then forming the right of the Third Army, which was to leave its position, march behind the 7th Division, and reappear in the front line on its left. The gap left by this transfer of the 9th Division was in its turn to be filled by General Nambo's reinforced 5th Brigade from the 3rd Division of the Second Army. This operation from its very nature was distinctly hazardous, and required absolute secrecy, accurate staff work, and exact timing for its successful execution.†

On the night of the 5th-6th March the Japanese 1st Division, leaving small detachments at Kao-li-tun and Tsuan-pan-che, had set out towards the north; and during the forenoon of

* See p. 457.

† The movement to be carried out will be understood from the following diagram:—



Position till night 5th-6th.

Position 6th March.

the 6th its head-quarters, the 2nd Brigade, and the artillery were at Hao-san-chia-tzu, while the remainder of the infantry was occupying a village some two miles to the north-west and Pin-lo-pu to the north-east. The Cavalry Division, which had been in occupation of the latter village, had moved out north-westwards to San-tai-tzu, a movement which would have been more directly to the north or even north-east, had it not been for the presence of General Grekov. The extreme right of the 7th Division was relieved at dawn by the 5th Brigade of the 3rd Division, which had passed the night at Hsing-ming-tun, and the 7th Division, then setting its face to the north, at once headed for Ta-shih-chiao. Behind the 5th Brigade came the 18th Regiment. The 9th Division had withdrawn from the front line during the night and had assembled about Kao-lin-tai.* It spent the remaining hours of darkness in passing in rear of the 7th Division, and by 9 a.m. on the 6th its head-quarters, which were leading the column, arrived at Ta-shih-chiao. General Nogi, with his army reserve—the 15th *Kobi* Brigade and the 2nd Artillery Brigade, was marching meanwhile on a parallel route some distance to the west, with Ma-shan-chia-tzu as his destination.† Towards the same village the three *Kobi* brigades under General Oki were also marching from Yen-chia-huan, and were on arrival to be handed over to General Nogi.‡

Save for one incident the manœuvre was carried out with a smoothness truly remarkable; but that incident was so serious as to threaten to throw out of gear the carefully planned arrangements of the Third Army staff, and indeed seemed not unlikely to upset the whole Japanese plan of battle. At about 10.30 a.m., while the head-quarters of the 9th Division were awaiting in Ta-shih-chiao the arrival of the division, which was at least a couple of miles back, the detachment of the 1st Division which had been left at Kao-li-tun came streaming back to Ta-shih-chiao, having been worsted in an engagement with the enemy;

* The 5th Brigade of the 3rd Division filled the gap thus left, as well as the space vacated by the extreme right of the 7th Division.

† Head-quarters and Third Army reserve arrived at Ma-shan-chia-tzu at 11 a.m.

‡ The time of the arrival of General Oki's force at Ma-shan-chia-tzu is unknown, Japanese accounts being in disagreement as to whether it reached its destination on the 6th or 7th. The former date is more probable.

and soon a hostile force estimated at twelve battalions appeared towards the north-east. For the moment the company of the 1st Division and the head-quarters of the 9th Division formed the only available defence of Ta-shih-chiao; and the situation appeared critical, for there was now a gap between the 1st and 7th Divisions into which the Russians might penetrate within a very short time. Gallopers were sent off in hot haste to General Nogi, begging him to send his reserve to Ta-shih-chiao, while others went back to meet and hurry on the leading units of the 9th Division still about a mile away.

Much depended on how long the garrison of Ta-shih-chiao would be able to hold its own, for the occupation of that village was an integral feature of the Russian counter-attack, the details of which have now to be described.

At one o'clock in the morning General Kaulbars issued Disposition No. 12 for the Second Manchurian Army, in which were contained his orders for the second essay at a counter-stroke; and its initial paragraph shows clearly how little the

The renewal
of the Russian
counter-stroke.

manceuvre of the Japanese Third Army—at that moment actually in progress—was suspected by the Russians.* It was stated that the concentration of the enemy was being effected in the angle between the Hun Ho and the old railway embankment, that farther to the north, roughly as far as the Hsin-min-tun road, “some infantry and cavalry” had been discovered, and beyond that highway “small cavalry units” had been seen. Against this supposed disposition of the enemy the Second Manchurian Army was directed to continue its turning movement from the right; but evidently despairing of being able to enumerate the exact constitution of the heterogeneous forces which now made up his army, General Kaulbars departed from the usual custom of specifying the units in detail,† except in the case of the column under

* These orders are reproduced in Appendix 20.

† The following dispatch which reached Russian General Head-Quarters during the 6th illustrates the confusion which still existed in the Second Manchurian Army:—

“Lieutenant Kornilov, the senior staff officer of the 1st Rifle Brigade, reports that the 1st Rifle Regiment has been for three days on the right bank of the Hun Ho south-west of Chin-chia-tun, without orders and apparently unemployed. Would it not be possible to order that this regiment should be attached to the General Reserve?”

This regiment remained unattached throughout the 6th March. On the 7th it was placed under General Petrov.

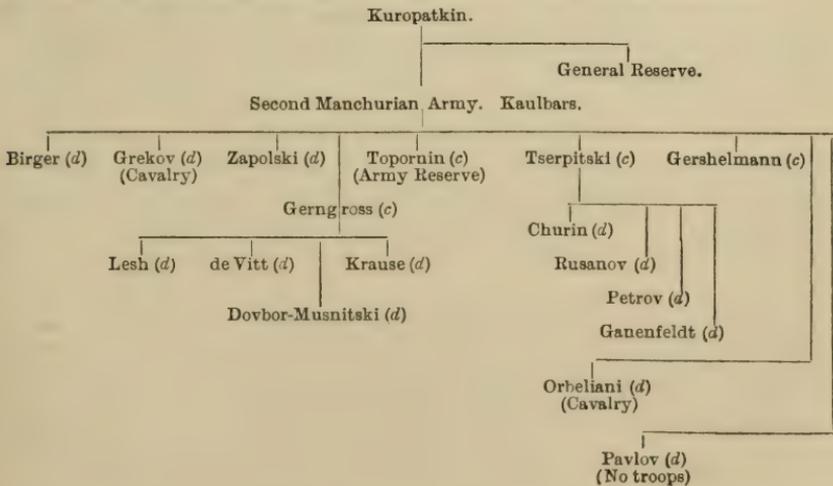
General Topornin.* Briefly the contents of Disposition No. 12 may be summarized as follows:—The main attack of the Japanese was expected to develop against General Tserpitski's column, and the Russian plan was to place Colonel Zapolski at Ta-shih-chiao as a screen, and with the remainder of the Second Manchurian Army in four columns to continue the left wheel initiated the previous day, with the object of occupying the line Sha-lin-pu—Chia-shen-tzu—Lien-chia-pu.† Over and above the troops taking part in the wheel were the detachment under General Birger and the cavalry. The task of General Birger was to remain in the vicinity of Hu-shih-tai station and to safeguard Mukden from the north. Of the cavalry the detachment under

* This column now included the 2nd Brigade 31st Division; but that brigade was at present on the left bank of the Hun.

† The four columns and their destinations were as follows:—

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| (1) General Gerngross. | } | General de Vitt to the line Yen-chia-huan
—Kao-lin-tai. |
| (2) General Tserpitski. | | 1st Siberian Corps to the line Chan-ssu-tun
—Nin-kuan-tun. |
| (3) General Gershelmann. | | Wu-lin-pu and the old railway embankment south of it. |
| (4) General Topornin. | | To hold on to its present position. |
| | } | (a) To remain in its present position. |
| | | (b) To act as the reserve. |
| | | (c) To support the 1st Siberian Corps by fire. |

Insomuch as the organization of the Second Manchurian Army had completely collapsed the Russian counter-attack was now carried out, not by the normal subdivisions of corps, divisions and brigades, but by improvised forces which are known by the names of the commanders appointed to lead them. The following diagram shows, more graphically than can be done in the text, the constitution of the counter-attack. Units marked (c) are alluded to in this chapter as *Columns*, those marked (d) as *Detachments*.



General Grekov was to prevent small hostile parties extending northwards, and if possible to operate on the flanks and rear of the Japanese; the Primorsk Dragoon Regiment was to advance on Ta-shih-chiao and to conform generally with the movements of General Gerngross's column; while Prince Orbeliani was to proceed westwards and to reconnoitre the enemy's forces.* Similar instructions were given to General Pavlov, but, since his force had ceased to exist several days before, they were naturally inoperative until he managed to borrow some squadrons from some other source.†

Although the issue of General Kaulbars's orders for the day began at 1 a.m., so late as nine o'clock in the morning of the 6th no copy had reached the commander-in-chief. He was then informed verbally of their contents, and their details left him a prey to considerable anxiety. He saw that instead of the forty-nine battalions available on the previous day to deal the decisive blow, only thirty-three were now to be employed, and further, that they were to be split up into four columns, one of which was, practically speaking, to move directly along the front of the positions held. Another weak point in the scheme appeared to be the fact that the main strength of the Second Manchurian Army was to remain inactive pending the success of this one column under General Gerngross. The commander-in-chief, who appears on this occasion to have been genuinely unwilling to interfere with the initiative of his subordinate, nevertheless, felt bound to acquaint the latter with his views; and this he did at 10.15 a.m., in a telegram which ran as follows:—

“It appears to me that the out-flanking force has been given a task which may prove to be beyond its powers.‡ If the enemy does not himself take the offensive, would it not be advisable to direct Topornin and Tserpitski to co-operate with Gerngross and to seize Li-wan-pu and Nin-kuan-tun? But, of course, you can judge better on the spot and this is merely my advice.”

* To Li-kua-pu, Yan-tzu-tun and Lin-min-san-tzu.

† No mention is made of cavalry in Disposition No. 12. General Grekov received his orders verbally, while separate instructions were sent to the other mounted units.

‡ By this is apparently meant the column under General Gerngross.

Having sent off this message, which seems to have been a compromise between taking the supreme control of the counter-attack into his own hands, and allowing General Kaulbars to conduct it in his own fashion, General Kuropatkin proceeded to discuss the situation over the telephone with the commander of the Third Manchurian Army. With questionable judgment he described General Kaulbars's plans to General Bilderling in gloomy terms, and concluded his conversation with the following words:—

“If we do not succeed to-day it will be harder to-morrow, and then we shall never succeed. The Second Army is not acting energetically; its orders are wretched and, what is most important, yesterday was entirely wasted.”

An operation which was about to be carried out upon orders which the commander-in-chief himself stigmatized as wretched did not seem to carry with it much hope of victory. And events were to prove that General Kuropatkin's anxiety was not without foundation.

On the extreme right of the Russian line, General Birger received Disposition No. 12 at dawn, and he at once made arrangements for watching the roads leading to Hu-shih-tai from the north and for getting into touch with General Grekov on the right.* The day passed without incident, and in the evening General Birger received an order from the commander-in-chief, directing him to move at dawn upon the 7th to San-tai-tzu. The defence of Hu-shih-tai station was then to pass to Colonel Gromov, who was under the commander of the lines of communication.†

Shortly after 6 a.m. an officer of General Kaulbars's staff visited General Grekov in his bivouac and explained to him

* In addition to his own force General Birger assumed command of five battalions of drafts and half the 5th Battery, 9th Artillery Brigade, which were at Hu-shih-tai station. During the evening of the 6th his force was further strengthened by a battery of the 3rd Rifle Artillery Division which detained at the station.

† Colonel Gromov's force was now made up of the five battalions of drafts and the half-battery which General Birger had found at Hu-shih-tai station, and of the two companies of the 241st (Orsk) Regiment which the latter had taken over at Kao-li-tun. In addition, there were two companies and a squadron of Frontier Guards and a half-squadron made up from details of the 6th and 9th Siberian Cossack Regiments.

his mission for the day.* By these instructions the cavalry commander was relieved of the necessity of detaching squadrons to watch the right bank of the Liao, for the Ussuri Cossack Regiment which was at the time on that bank was added to his force.† As regards the operations of the day, early in the morning, while the left of the cavalry outposts was being relieved by the Primorsk Dragoons,‡ some Japanese—probably from the Cavalry Division—showed themselves in front, whereupon the outpost line fell back. This appearance of the Japanese was construed by General Grekov as a direct threat on the railway, and he at once fell back with his main body to Hui-tu-kan, some four miles north-east of La-la-tun. From here at 3.15 p.m. he forwarded an ambiguous dispatch to General Kaulbars, in which he assured his superior that he had gained Hui-tu-kan before the Japanese, that the latter were surrounded, and that he was pursuing and attacking them so as to drive them southwards.§ The pursuit and attack, however, amounted to nothing. Some quite unimportant fighting was caused by the march of the Japanese Cavalry Division from Pin-lo-pu to San-tai-tzu, which led to an engagement between the Japanese flank guard and the Russian outposts about one mile west of San-tai-tzu; and when evening came the sum total of intelligence gleaned by the Russian cavalry was that in Pin-lo-pu and Erh-tai-tzu were hostile troops amounting to about two and a half battalions and four squadrons.|| The presence of the bulk of the Japanese Cavalry Division in San-tai-tzu was not realized. The action of General Grekov's force on this day may be said to have comprised a few minor skirmishes, in which but little

* See p. 510. General Grekov's bivouac was about a mile and a half south of La-la-tun.

† This regiment was one of the units told off for the protection of the railway, see foot-note (*), p. 263. It appears to have operated in the area north of Hsin-min-tun.

‡ On the line Kou-tzu-yen—Ta-wu-chia-tun.

§ This dispatch is difficult to understand, and in the German translation of the *Russian Official History* the translator has rendered the incident to read that some Japanese cavalry who had broken through the Russian line were pursued by General Grekov, headed off, and forced to retreat.

|| By 2 p.m. at Erh-tai-tzu there were actually two whole regiments of cavalry, i.e., the 6th Cavalry Regiment from the Japanese Cavalry Division and the 1st Cavalry Regiment from the 1st Division. In Pin-lo-pu were the 1st Regiment, head-quarters of the 1st Brigade and one squadron of cavalry.

information was gained and in which the casualties amounted to two.*

To turn now to the actual counter-stroke: with the duty of reconnaissance carried out in such an inefficient manner, General Gerngross had to carry out his outflanking movement in complete ignorance of the fact that the left of the Japanese Third Army had been strengthened since the previous evening.

General Gerngross's column.
Operations till 1 p.m.

To make matters worse he only received a copy of Disposition No. 12 four and a half hours after it had been issued, when, realizing that at least an hour would be required to reach General de Vitt with an order, he altered the detail of Disposition No. 12 slightly, and directed the 1st East Siberian Rifle Regiment, with a battery and two squadrons of Frontier Guards under Colonel Lesh, to move off at 7.15 a.m. from Hou-hua and to proceed to Tsuan-pan-che and Ta-shih-chiao, where the force was to await the regiments detailed from General de Vitt's detachment. It was not until a quarter-past eight† that General Gerngross issued the orders for his column, which were as follows:—

The task of the 1st Siberian Corps and attached units (the division of General de Vitt and two squadrons of Frontier Guards) is to occupy the line Lan-shan-tai—Nin-kuan-tun.

In order to cover the operation from the direction of

* The disposition of General Grekov's cavalry during the night of the 6th–7th March was as follows:—

On the right bank of the Liao Ho, on a line running north from Wu-chia-kan-pu-tzu, were five squadrons of the Ussuri Cossack Regiment.

From the left of that regiment to the vicinity of San-tai-tzu were five squadrons of the 1st Chita Cossack Regiment; the remaining squadron was apparently on flying post.

Thence to Ta-wu-chia-tun were two squadrons of the 52nd Nyejin Dragoons.

About one and a half miles south of La-la-tun was the main body (four squadrons of the 5th Ural Cossack Regiment, three squadrons of the Terek-Kuban Regiment, the 51st Chernigov Dragoons, and the 20th Horse Artillery Battery).

It will be noticed that the squadrons of the 51st Chernigov Dragoons and the 1st Chita Cossack Regiment had returned from the right bank of the Liao Ho, south of Hsin-min-tun. The former returned during the morning; the latter seems to have crossed to the left bank during the night of the 5th–6th.

† That is seven and a quarter hours after Disposition No. 12 had been issued by General Kaulbars.

Hsin-min-tun, Ta-shih-chiao will be occupied by Colonel Zapolski's detachment.*

1. *Flank guard.*

Colonel Lesh.		
1st East Siberian Rifle		
Regiment	3 battalions.	
1st Battery, 1st East		
Siberian Artillery		
Brigade	8 guns.	
Frontier Guards ...	2 squadrons.	
Machine guns...	4 guns.	
Total 3 battalions, 2 squadrons,		
8 guns, 4 machine guns.		

Will move off at 7.15 a.m. and proceed to Fan-hsi-tun and thence along the Hsin-min-tun highway to Ta-shih-chiao, where it will await the arrival of the 12th (Velikolutsk) and 147th (Samara) Regiments,† and then immediately move off to the villages Chiao-hen, Yen-chua-huan, Yen-chia-huan, Lan-shan-tai. Halt until 10 a.m. at Chiao-hen. Bivouac at Lan-shan-tai.

2. *Main body.*

(a) *Right detachment.*

General de Vitt.		
138th (Bolkhov) Regi-		
ment	4 battalions.	
140th (Zaraisk) Regi-		
ment... ..	3½ battalions.	
35th Artillery Brigade	16 guns.	
9th East Siberian		
Artillery Brigade ...	8 guns.	
2nd Rifle Artillery		
Division	8 guns.	
Machine guns of the		
1st East Siberian		
Rifle Division ...	4 guns.	
Total 7½ battalions, 32 guns, 4		
machine guns.		

Will assemble at 9 a.m. at the nameless village south of Liu-chia-huan, moving through Fan-hsi-tun and Yi-tzu-tai. Thence it will move to Hou-hun-tai, Yao-tien-tun, Hou-lin-tun, Hsing-ming-tun, Kao-lin-tai. Halts at Yao-tien-tun till 11 a.m., Hou-lin-tun till 12.30 p.m., and Hsing-ming-tun till 1.30 p.m. Bivouac at Kao-lin-tai.

(b) *Centre detachment.*

Maj.-Gen. Dovbor-Musnitaki.		
2nd Brigade, 1st East		
Siberian Rifle Divi-		
sion	6 battalions.	
1st East Siberian		
Artillery Brigade ...	24 guns.	
Total 6 battalions, 24 guns.		

Will assemble at 9 a.m. at Tung-chia-tun and will move southwards by Height 24.5 to Li-wan-pu and Chan-ssu-tun where it will bivouac. Halt at Height 24.5 till 11.15 a.m. and Li-wan-pu till 12.30 p.m.

* This detachment, it should be noted, was not under General Gerngross, and the above sentence was not an order to Colonel Zapolski, but an intimation to General Gerngross's column that orders had been issued to Colonel Zapolski, from another source, for the occupation of Ta-shih-chiao.

† The 12th (Velikolutsk) and 147th (Samara) Regiments are not elsewhere mentioned in these orders. They belonged to General de Vitt's original force and were presumably the two regiments detailed to occupy Ta-shih-chiao in accordance with Order No. 2, Disposition No. 12, for the Second Manchurian Army, see Appendix 20.

‡ Two companies were garrisoning the Railway Redoubt in the rayon of the XVIIth Corps. See p. 494.

(c) *Left detachment.*
 Maj.-Gen. Krause.
 33rd, 34th, and 35th
 East Siberian Rifle
 Regiments 8½ battalions.
 9th East Siberian
 Artillery Brigade ... 24 guns.
 Machine guns... .. 6 guns.
 1st East Siberian Sapper
 Battalion 2 companies.
 Telegraph Company... 1 company.
 Total 9 battalions, 24 guns,
 6 machine guns, 2 sapper
 companies, 1 telegraph
 company.

Will move out of Hou-hua at 8 a.m. to Ma-chuang-tzu, Niu-hsin-tun, Yu-huan-tun, Nin-kuan-tun, where it will seize the sand-hills at Lin-min-san-tzu and entrench. Halt at Yu-huan-tun until 11.15 a.m. Bivouac in the neighbourhood of Nin-kuan-tun.

From the tone of these orders it might be assumed that they were framed for the execution of a tactical manoeuvre in which opposition in any force was not likely to be encountered. The detailed calculation as to time and space, and the fixing of localities where the several detachments were to bivouac, shows how completely the idea that the Japanese were concentrating near Ma-chia-pu dominated the minds of the Russian generals. The wheel depended largely upon the occupation of Ta-shih-chiao by a screen—an operation assumed apparently to be likely to present no difficulties.* But here General Gerngross was to meet with an unexpected opposition which upset all his synchronization and effectually threw out of gear the development of the counter-stroke.

Colonel Lesh had received his instructions before the above orders left General Gerngross's hands, and he moved out of Hou-hua at 7.45 a.m., just half an hour later than the time ordered by the column commander. Tsuan-pan-che was found to be held by a hostile force estimated at one company,† and against that village Colonel Lesh at once deployed for attack. One battalion was sent south of the main road, and a battery took up a position south-east

* The occupation of this village was to be carried out by a succession of reliefs. In Disposition No. 12, General Kaulbars laid down that two regiments from General de Vitt's detachment of General Gerngross's column should march thither and hold the place until relieved by Colonel Zapolski. When the disposition reached General Gerngross he found that further delay would be caused by carrying out these instructions to the letter, and he accordingly directed Colonel Lesh to occupy the village until the necessary instructions could be sent to General de Vitt. Ta-shih-chiao was, therefore, to be occupied as follows, and in the following chronological sequence:—
 (a) By General Gerngross's right flank guard under Colonel Lesh; (b) By two regiments from General de Vitt's detachment of General Gerngross's column; (c) By Colonel Zapolski's detachment which was acting under orders direct from General Kaulbars.

† The 12th Company of the 15th Regiment, 1st Division.

of Fan-hsi-tun, while shortly afterwards another battalion was sent up into the firing line. At 10.15 a.m. Colonel Lesh was joined by Colonel Zapolski, whose detachment was on its way from Pa-chia-tzu to Ta-shih-chiao, and his force was diverted to Tsao-hou-tun to prolong Colonel Lesh's right.* Against this display of strength the company of Japanese holding the village could make no effective resistance, and since the main body of the 1st Division was at this time moving northwards, support from it could not be reckoned upon. The defenders therefore retired in haste on Liu-chia-huan about 11 a.m. Colonel Lesh now pushed his remaining battalions out on the left and after a short fight wrested a village from the Japanese.† At this time the situation on the Japanese side was, as has already been narrated, distinctly disquieting, for in addition to the attack made by Colonel Lesh, another Russian force was making its presence felt. This was the Samara Regiment which, together with a battery, three scout detachments and a couple of machine guns, had left Pao-tao-tun at 5.15 a.m. and two hours later had united with the troops in Pa-chia-tzu.‡ There a halt had been made until eleven o'clock, when six and a half battalions moved out towards Tsuan-pan-che, while one battalion was sent to cover the right flank at Tsao-hou-tun. The Japanese company in Kao-li-tun now fell back on Ta-shih-chiao, where General Oshima and his staff were viewing this hostile advance with justifiable alarm.§

Urgent messages, it will be remembered, had been sent by the Japanese to the leading units of the 9th Division and to the reserve, and the former responded by sending forward three battalions and the artillery of the advanced guard. On arrival at Ta-shih-chiao the infantry were hurried on to Kao-li-tun, while the guns, which were soon joined by the 2nd Artillery Brigade, took up a position along a stream south-east of the former village.|| About one

* Colonel Zapolski's detachment had left San-tai-tzu at 8.15 a.m.

† This village, the name of which is unknown, is shown on the plan between Hou-hun-tai and Tsuan-pan-che. It was garrisoned apparently by a detached post on the left of the Japanese 7th Division.

‡ Three and a half battalions of the 12th (Velikolutsk) Regiment and one battery of the 9th East Siberian Artillery Brigade. The 147th (Samara) and 12th (Velikolutsk) Regiments were the regiments detailed apparently for the occupation of Ta-shih-chiao. See foot-note (+), p. 514.

§ General Oshima was the commander of the 9th Division of the Japanese Third Army.

|| From the Third Army Reserve. Immediately on receipt of the request for assistance General Nogi sent all the reserve (15th *Kobi* Brigade and the 2nd Artillery Brigade) with the exception of one battalion.

hundred and fifty Japanese field and mountain guns were now in action at a range of little more than two thousand yards, and when the remainder of the 9th Division came up the Japanese attacked the Russians and drove them back towards Pa-chia-tzu.*† By this time the Japanese company in Liu-chia-huan had been reinforced from the 7th Division,‡ and a heavy fire was opened upon Tsuan-pan-che, which inflicted severe loss on the 1st East Siberian Rifle Regiment.

From his post of observation at Hou-hua General Kaulbars witnessed this unexpected revelation of Japanese strength, and realized that a prompt attempt to grapple with the situation was most necessary. Before the final issue he had been so struck with the slowness of General de Vitt's progress that he ordered General Gerngross to communicate with him on the subject. The latter accordingly sent off a dispatch at 12.30 p.m., instructing General de Vitt to accelerate his movements and to co-operate vigorously with Colonel Lesh, while General Kaulbars himself sent a staff officer bearing a similar order. By the time General de Vitt received these injunctions, however, the favourable opportunity had passed and the Japanese had retrieved the situation.§

Meanwhile the centre detachment under General Dovbor-Musnitski had reached the neighbourhood of Tung-chia-tun about 11.45 a.m. and driven back the small garrison of the Japanese 7th Division. Having taken up a position in the village and upon the

* The number of Japanese guns is from an official document. In the 9th Division there were thirty-six mountain guns and in the 2nd Artillery Brigade seventy-two field guns, as well as six captured Russian guns. Total one hundred and fourteen guns. Apparently some artillery of either or both the 1st or 7th Divisions must have co-operated.

† The Russians were probably the flank battalion of General de Vitt's force; but the *Russian Official History* makes no mention of this Japanese counter-attack.

‡ In Liu-chia-huan were the 1st Battalion of the 25th Regiment and two battalions of the 27th Regiment. South of the village was half a battalion of the 28th Regiment.

§ At 1 p.m. the troops under General de Vitt, Colonel Lesh and Colonel Zapolski were disposed as follows:—The 147th (Samara) Regiment and two and a half battalions of the 12th (Velikolutsk) Regiment were in Tsuan-pan-che. Between that village and Liu-chia-huan was the 1st East Siberian Rifle Regiment. The batteries of the 9th East Siberian Artillery Brigade and the 40th Artillery Brigade were unlimbered behind a stream east of Tsuan-pan-che. One and a half battalions of the 12th (Velikolutsk) Regiment were in position south-east of the same village. The 140th (Zaraisk) Regiment was holding the "nameless village over a mile south of Liu-chia-huan." The 138th (Bolkhov) Regiment was in reserve at Yi-tzu-tai. The 147th (Samara) Regiment and 12th (Velikolutsk) Regiments were now transferred to Colonel Lesh's command. Colonel Zapolski's detachment was about Tsao-hou-tun.

high ground west of it General Dovbor-Musnitski decided to await until General de Vitt's troops should come up into line. From the direction of Yao-tien-tun the Japanese 7th Division now opened a heavy artillery and rifle fire, under cover of which the 9th Division was hurrying northwards to Ta-shih-chiao. As regards General Krause's left detachment, it approached Niu-hsin-tun about 10.45 a.m. Here it stopped to allow that of General Dovbor-Musnitski to come up on the right, and then, about noon, with a view of co-operating with that detachment, General Krause moved forward a short distance and took up a position between points 23.2 and 24.5, with his right in touch with General Dovbor-Musnitski. While this movement was being carried out the Japanese artillery opened fire from the direction of Li-wan-pu.*

By 1 p.m., therefore, the situation on the outer flank of the left wheel to be made by the Second Manchurian Army was as follows:—Colonel Lesh had failed to occupy Ta-shih-chiao, and the Velikolutsk and Samara Regiments, as well as Colonel Zapolski's detachment, were still awaiting to get into that village. The question of successive relief had disappeared in the unexpected opposition encountered, and Colonel Zapolski and Colonel Lesh—who had now absorbed the two regiments which were to relieve him—instead of being in Ta-shih-chiao were held up on a line three to four miles short of it. To the south of this ineffective screen the bulk of General Gerngross's column was holding the line—nameless village†—point 24.5, its time-table now completely dislocated.

While such had been the course of events on the Russian right up to 1 p.m., of the other forces under General Kaulbars, General Topornin's column had remained on its position undisturbed except by long-range fire. During the forenoon orders were received for the 2nd Brigade of the 31st Division to go to Hou-hua. With but a three-hour halt after their fatiguing night march, therefore, the units of this force recrossed the Hun and moved northwards again at 12.15 p.m.‡

General Topornin's column. Operations until 1 p.m.

Farther south, against the column of General Tserpitski the

* This fire came from the 5th Brigade of the Japanese 3rd Division.

† South of Liu-chia-huan.

‡ Although the 2nd Brigade 31st Division was five to six miles from General Topornin's column it now formed part of it. This transfer took place presumably on receipt of Disposition No. 12 (q.v.), before which hour both this brigade and the 2nd Brigade 9th Division formed the reserve of the Second Manchurian Army.

Japanese confined their efforts almost entirely to artillery action. At 12.20 p.m. General Tserpitski telephoned to the commander-in-chief that things were going well on his position; but this optimism

waned within the next three-quarters of an hour. General Tserpitski's column. Operations until 1 p.m. By one o'clock the Japanese fire had become unmistakably heavier and shells began to fall in Ta-a-pu, inflicting considerable loss on the column reserve under General Ganenfeldt; and General Tserpitski then reported to Second Manchurian Army head-quarters that the Japanese were concentrating against his left and that their fire was becoming much heavier. About this time, too, he sent to General Topornin, asking if the 2nd Brigade 31st Division could be sent to Lu-kun-tun.*

On the left of General Tserpitski was the column under General Gershelmann,† whose task throughout the day was to be a purely passive one, namely, to defend his position on both banks of the Hun Ho near Ma-chia-pu. Here, up till 1 p.m., nothing but artillery fire took place.

To return now to the right of the counter-attack: General Gerngross, who had received no information as to the success or otherwise of Colonel Zapolski's detachment, decided to stop the advance of his column until Ta-shih-chiao should be occupied

General Gerngross's column. Operations after 1 p.m. Ta-shih-chiao. Thus the whole Russian counter-stroke was to be suspended until one village should be captured, and the rôle which San-de-pu had assumed in the last battle was now to be filled by Ta-shih-chiao.

At 2.45 p.m., therefore, with the object of helping Colonel Lesh, he sent an order to General de Vitt, directing him to seize Shan-chia-tzu and Hou-hun-tai and then to push on to Ta-shih-chiao; and about the same time, or somewhat earlier, he informed Generals Krause and Dovbor-Musnitski that point 245 was not to be passed until further orders.‡ Shortly after four o'clock active operations recommenced on the Russian side, when Colonel Zapolski's detachment—acting apparently without any connexion with General Gerngross—tried to turn the Japanese left in

* That brigade was now on its way to Hou-hua.

† In addition to his own force of the 33rd (Elets), 122nd (Tambov), and 241st (Orsk) Regiments and two batteries of the 5th Rifle Artillery Division, General Gershelmann had now under his command the 2nd Brigade 9th Division and two batteries from General Vasilev's division.

‡ Near Niu-hsin-tun.

Kao-li-tun. This attempt failed, for although only one Japanese regiment—the 7th—was in occupation of the village, it proved far too strong for the improvised battalions of raw drafts which now formed the bulk of Colonel Zapolski's command.

Just about the time when this unsuccessful attack was being launched General Gerngross's chief of staff arrived at Yi-tzu-tai in order to endeavour to secure some co-ordination between the detachments of General de Vitt and Colonel Lesh. The method adopted by him to carry out his mission seems to have been limited to taking personal command over all the troops on the spot; and by his orders, and unknown to General de Vitt, the Zaraisk Regiment was sent to attack the nameless village south of Liu-chia-huan. This assumption of authority, however, was justified by success, for the Russians drove out the troops of the Japanese 7th Division which were holding the place.* Two battalions of the Bolkhov Regiment followed in rear and took up a position between the nameless village and the Hsin-min-tun road, opposite Liu-chia-huan.† But a further advance proved to be impossible in the face of a cross fire brought to bear from Shan-chia-tzu and Liu-chia-huan, which places were occupied by the left units of the Japanese 7th Division and the right of the 9th Division respectively.

Thus the renewed attempt of the Russians to get possession of Ta-shih-chiao had failed upon the right and left, and, in the centre, Colonel Lesh was meeting with no better success. The 1st East Siberian Rifle Regiment was now about eight hundred yards from Liu-chia-huan, and had suffered so many casualties that practically the whole regiment had been absorbed into the firing line. Time after time attempts were made to push forward, but the steady fire of the Japanese brought all to a standstill. An effort made by the commander of the Samara Regiment to gain ground to the right failed similarly, and finally Colonel Lesh ordered both it and the 1st East Siberian Rifle Regiment to fall back. Whether this retrograde

* According to the *Russian Official History* (Vol. V, Part 1, p. 391) the 140th (Zaraisk) Regiment by 1 p.m. had occupied the "nameless village two versts south of Liu-chia-huan." (See foot-note (§), p. 517.) On p. 392 of the same volume it is stated (as above) that the Zaraisk Regiment was ordered "to attack the nameless village south of Liu-chia-huan" at 4.15 p.m. Possibly there were two nameless villages; if so, the latter cannot be identified.

† The remainder of the 138th (Bolkhov) Regiment appears to have followed later.

movement was carried out or not is not clear, for at 6.15 p.m. a categorical order was received from General Gerngross for the offensive to be continued, and the two regiments advanced once more. Although the operation was carried out with energy and determination, the musketry and machine gun fire of the Japanese again brought it to a standstill, and the losses incurred were so heavy that Colonel Lesh sent word to General Gerngross that he had decided to postpone the attack on Liu-chia-huan till after nightfall.* It was not carried out, however, since Colonel Zapolski, whom Colonel Lesh asked to co-operate with him, had by then come to the conclusion that his makeshift battalions were unfitted for such an undertaking. Not only did his units greatly lack training and experience: he was severely handicapped by the lack of any organization in his force, while the arrangements for supplies, ammunition, and medical necessities had completely broken down. As an independent detachment the improvised force under Colonel Zapolski had proved a total failure, and it must have been with a sense of relief that he received a notification from head-quarters of the Second Manchurian Army shortly after 7 p.m. to consider himself under General Gerngross, who was at the same time instructed to supply the detachment with what it required.

While Colonel Lesh had single-handed been making his last unsuccessful attempt to gain possession of Liu-chia-huan the detachment under General de Vitt appears to have done nothing to assist him, and the other two detachments of General Gerngross's column—those of General Dovbor-Musnitski and General Krause—merely remained in position, carrying on an artillery duel with the enemy, and waiting for the success upon their right which was to be the preliminary for their further advance. When darkness fell, therefore, General Gerngross and Colonel Zapolski between them had failed to seize Ta-shih-chiao, and since the occupation of that village had now come to be the dominant feature of the wheel southwards that operation was no longer feasible on the 6th.

It is now time to return to the operations of the columns under Generals Topornin, Tserpitski, and Gershelmann, the account of which has already been brought up to 1 p.m. The

* Colonel Lesh's detachment had suffered nearly fifteen hundred casualties. The 1st East Siberian Rifle Regiment alone had lost twenty-five officers and eleven hundred other ranks.

first-named column, although forming the reserve to the counter-attack, was, somewhat curiously, not only left in position on the front line, but was assigned the duty of co-operating by fire with the advance of the column under General Gerngross. Since early morning accordingly it had been engaged in a long range artillery duel and in the exchange of rifle fire. Shortly after one o'clock the village of Yu-huan-tun was fiercely bombarded by the Japanese, and even the ground to the east occupied by the Yuriev Regiment was shelled, with the result that before the counter-stroke had made any appreciable progress, the rear-most unit of the column which was forming the reserve was under a galling fire.* During the afternoon the 2nd Brigade of the 31st Division, which it will be remembered was again summoned north, was ordered to proceed to Lu-kun-tun; but owing to its slow progress, caused by exhaustion, General Topornin was ordered by General Kaulbars to lend a regiment temporarily to General Tserpitski, who was sending in alarming reports. At 9.15 p.m., therefore, the Lithuania Regiment was sent to Lu-kun-tun, and the force under General Topornin was by this reduced to three regiments, all of which though nominally in reserve had been under fire throughout the day.†

The course of the events of the day which occurred in the rayon of General Tserpitski's column is of peculiar interest, for it was again largely due to the alarmist reports received from him that the attention of Russian General Head-Quarters was diverted from the right flank of the counter-stroke to the left. It is well, therefore, to describe what cause the Japanese really gave him for his anxiety. Opposite General Tserpitski was the detachment of General Nambo and also the 8th Division, the doings of which will be separately dealt with. By dawn the former force was on the line Li-wan-pu—Nin-kuan-tun, the artillery in position on the ground north-east of Chan-ssu-tun. Either in the forenoon of the 6th, or during the previous night, General Nambo had received orders from General Oku

* This bombardment was, so far as is known, carried out by the artillery with the 5th Brigade of the 3rd Division which was in position near Chan-ssu-tun.

† The 2nd Brigade 31st Division had got to Ma-chuang-tzu before the orders for its fresh destination reached it. It arrived eventually at Lu-kun-tun about 11 p.m.

to attack along the line Yu-huan-tun—Redoubt 7; but he had felt that it would be inadvisable to attempt to carry out this task without a full reconnaissance, and accordingly devoted the forenoon to endeavouring to discover the strength and disposition of the Russians to the front.* By one o'clock General Oshima had come to the conclusion that the force opposite to him consisted of about a division; but for some reason the attack was delayed, and it was not until nearly five o'clock that any movement seems to have been made. Nevertheless this display of activity on the part of the Japanese 5th Brigade had filled General Tserpitski with uneasiness lest the enemy might break through by the Chan-ssu-tun—Mukden road, and at 3.15 p.m. he telephoned to Second Manchurian head-quarters, asking for a brigade. On the Japanese side, at 4.15 p.m., a dispatch was sent by General Oku to General Nambo informing him that the 8th Division was seriously engaged and ordering him to connect up with it and to attack at once. When this message was received the artillery opened fire against Yu-huan-tun and the ground south of it, while a portion of the right of the 5th Brigade moved against General Tserpitski's centre; but night was now approaching, and the action ceased.†

On General Tserpitski's right and centre nothing had as yet occurred to justify alarm; but on his left the Japanese 8th Division had been carrying out a more vigorous attack. Surveying the Russian position to his front from the sandhills west of Nin-kuan-tun, General Oku had realized that General Tserpitski's left attacked by the Japanese 8th Division. it was truly formidable, but since word came in from General Nogi during the morning to say that his Third Army was continuing to extend northwards, the commander of the Japanese Second Army determined to hold the enemy at all costs and prevent him moving troops to that flank. In the 8th Division, therefore, the artillery fire which had begun at 8 a.m. was steadily maintained until two o'clock, and the bombardment was followed by a determined attack against Chi-kuan-tun.‡ At that hour the 13th Artillery Regiment, which had returned from the 4th Division, was sent

* The reconnaissance was carried out by the 1st Battalion of the 6th Regiment which moved out for this purpose at 6 a.m.

† See p. 550.

‡ This was in General Rusanov's portion of the front of General Tserpitski's column.

to the 8th, whose guns now amounted to one hundred and eight pieces.

Reconnaissances carried out by the 8th Division during the forenoon pointed to an advance from the south-west as being likely to give more cover than one from the other flank. So soon as the order to attack was actually received—at 12.50 p.m.—preparations were made to carry it out, and word was sent to the 5th Division on the right, which at this moment was about to attack Sha-ta-tzu.* Two companies of the 5th Regiment and one from the 31st Regiment were now ordered up to Wu-lin-pu, and these dribbled over the embankment a few men at a time;† but the movement had been seen by the Russians in Sha-ta-tzu, who opened a severe artillery fire, without, however, inflicting much loss. At 1.30 p.m. General Yoda himself followed with two more companies of the 31st Regiment, and at a quarter to three the advance began, with the men extended at unusually close interval.‡ When the Japanese began to move the Russians poured in a hot fire on them, both shrapnel and musketry, and the casualties were soon so severe that to an eyewitness it appeared as if half the attackers had either been shot down or were retiring wounded. Some companies of the 32nd Regiment advancing from Nin-kuan-tun suffered especially heavily, for they were on absolutely flat ground, exposed to flanking fire from Fu-kuan-tun. When they reached a point about quarter of a mile from the objective it was realized that a further advance was hopeless.

The fire from the Russian line now became so heavy that the attack came to a standstill. The failure of the Japanese guns to reach the well-hidden Russian batteries, the severe enfilade fire from Ma-chia-pu, and the excellent cover from behind which the Russian infantry had been shooting, had all contributed to the repulse of the Japanese. General Oku and his staff had been watching the action with undisguised anxiety, and so heavy were the casualties and so pronounced was the check administered that to onlookers who shared the point of vantage enjoyed by the head-quarters of the Second Army it seemed as if disaster were imminent.§ This opinion, however, was not

* This village was held by General Petrov's detachment of General Tserpitski's column.

† The Japanese troops which had been in Wu-lin-pu the previous evening had fallen back behind the embankment during the night.

‡ The extension is stated to have been only to two paces

§ Barzini, *The Battle of Mukden*, p. 228.

shared by General Tatsumi, the commander of the 8th Division, who resolved to endeavour to carry out under cover of darkness the task which had proved too heavy by day; and General Oku was relieved by the arrival of some reinforcements, as well as by the promise of others.* A battalion of the 34th Regiment came up from the 4th Division, and at 9.30 p.m. a dispatch was received from General Head-Quarters stating that a regiment of the 13th *Kobi* Brigade would come under General Oku's command, whereupon a message was sent to Yen-chia-huan to call it up.† Head-quarters of the Japanese Second Army passed the night at Ssu-fan-pu, at which place and Tsa-chia-tun, was the army reserve.

But the rebuff which he had administered to the Japanese 8th Division in no way reassured General Tserpitski. At 3.20 p.m. he telephoned to General Kaulbars, reporting that he was being heavily attacked and repeating his request for a brigade of infantry to be sent to his assistance. Half an hour later he reported that a "terrific" artillery fire was being brought to bear on Sha-ta-tzu, and asked once more for a brigade. At a quarter-past five he again repeated his request, adding that the Japanese were concentrated against him in superior strength, and that he himself was suffering enormous losses. The cumulative effect of such reports, in conjunction with the failure of General Gerngross to relieve the pressure, naturally could not fail to alarm General Kaulbars, who was now distinctly anxious lest General Tserpitski might be unable to maintain his position. Consequently he sent the 2nd Brigade of the 31st Division, as has been already stated, from Ma-chuang-tzu to Lu-kun-tun, and lest that brigade should not arrive in time called for a regiment from General Topornin. The demands of General Tserpitski for reinforcements eventually reached the ears of the commander-in-chief, and from him came in reply a battalion—withdrawn from the Third Manchurian Army—and two battalions of the Syev Regiment.‡ But it is to be remarked that, insistent though his

* At 5 p.m. an order was issued from the head-quarters of the Second Japanese Army directing General Tatsumi to return the 5th Cavalry Regiment—which had been attached to the 8th Division since its withdrawal from the Cavalry Brigade on the 1st March—to its own division—the 5th.

† See foot-note (+), p. 485.

‡ The battalions of the 34th (Syev) Regiment did not, however, reach General Tserpitski until the following morning.

appeals for assistance had been, General Tserpitski had at the close of day, in addition to the units sent him by General Kaulbars and General Kuropatkin, two intact regiments in his own reserve,* not to mention the 2nd Brigade of the 9th Division which he had obtained from General Gershelmann.† And further, the losses which he had characterized as enormous amounted but to nineteen officers and seven hundred and thirty-four other ranks, or about five per cent. of his strength.

As regards the southernmost column of the Russian counter-attack—that under General Gershelmann—from noon there was a lull for nearly an hour in front of its position; but then the guns of the Japanese 5th Division renewed their bombardment of

General
Gershelmann's
column.
Operations
after 1 p.m.

Ma-chia-pu; and about this hour a dispatch was received from General Tserpitski, requesting support for the attack against Wu-lin-pu and the railway embankment should it be carried out. An hour later General Gershelmann received a message from General Kaulbars by which he was ordered to prepare to attack Su-hu-chia-pu; and he therefore directed the artillery to deal with the hostile guns at Ta-yu-shu-pu and to bombard Lien-chia-pu.‡ But the attack never got beyond this initial stage, for the Japanese 5th Division had now begun to conform with the advance of the 8th Division on its left. In spite of the fire which assailed them in flank and rear from the southern portion of Ma-chia-pu the troops of the 5th Division managed to reach the bed of a stream between the embankment and the villages Sha-ta-tzu and Ma-chia-pu.§ But farther than this no progress could be made, and a fitful fire went on till night. General Gershelmann, however, fearing that this cessation of activity on the part of the Japanese might be followed by

* The 121st (Penza) and the 55th (Podolia) Regiments. These regiments made an attempt to push to the front in the evening, but were compelled by the Japanese artillery fire to fall back behind Ta-a-pu. Of the other infantry units in the reserve the 215th (Buzuluk) Regiment had reinforced General Rusanov, and the 60th (Zamostye) Regiment had been sent to General Petrov.

† Until Disposition No. 12 was received, constituting General Topornin's column the reserve of the Second Manchurian Army, that position was filled by the 2nd Brigade 31st Division and the 2nd Brigade 9th Division. The former brigade was then attached to General Topornin (see foot-note (†), p. 518), and the latter apparently to General Gershelmann, whose authority, however, seems to have been conditional.

‡ This message was received through General Tserpitski.

§ Its front line had been reinforced by the 42nd Regiment

an accession of energy, brought up the Bryansk Regiment* to Ma-chia-pu, and requested General Artamonov to open fire on the enemy's guns in Ta-yu-shu-pu.† Six batteries of the 54th Division, therefore, co-operated with General Gershelmann's artillery, and though a spirited reply was made by the Japanese guns, no attack developed, and at 8.15 p.m. all firing ceased.‡ The Japanese 5th Division had lost some eight hundred killed and wounded during the day.§

There is now left but one force within the sphere of the Russian counter-stroke whose action has still to be described. This was the cavalry detachment of Prince Orbeliani, which after a day of complete inactivity on the 5th had passed the night near the railway bridge south of Mukden.|| This Prince Orbeliani's detachment now amounted to five squadrons, and cavalry. with it, in addition to its own commander, was General Pavlov, who had no troops left. This latter fact, however, was even so late as the 6th, unknown to head-quarters of the Second Manchurian Army, and three separate and contradictory orders were sent to General Pavlov, who was finally directed to reconnoitre on the north-west of the army towards the Pu Ho. Unfortunately, when the third order arrived he had already started towards Lin-min-san-tzu, acting on an earlier communication, and for this purpose he had been compelled to borrow two squadrons from Prince Orbeliani. That commander about noon received instructions to reconnoitre to the west,¶ but since this would bring him to precisely the same area to which General Pavlov had already gone the order was cancelled and he was directed to remain in his bivouac. Meanwhile General Pavlov, with his borrowed squadrons, was riding along the rear of the Russian position, unable to find an

* Of the 2nd Brigade 9th Division.

† General Artamonov commanded the 54th Division, 5th Siberian Corps, Third Manchurian Army.

‡ Several batteries from the 61st Division also assisted General Gershelmann. See p. 530.

§ During the night two companies of the 5th Division left at Su-huchia-pu and Ta-tai attacked Erh-tai-tzu, but were repulsed.

|| This force consisted nominally of two squadrons of the 1st Verkhne-Udinsk Cossack Regiment, three squadrons of the Terek-Kuban and six squadrons of the Daghestan Cavalry Regiments, but the last-mentioned nine squadrons had, however, been formed into three in consequence of their reduced numbers.

¶ See p. 510

opening through which he could safely emerge. He got as far as Lu-kun-tun, where an order reached him to push on to Hou-hua. At that village he brought home to the Second Manchurian Army head-quarters the fact that his own force had been for some time non-existent. He was then sent to Sha-hei-tzu. The operations of Prince Orbeliani's cavalry amounted to three squadrons spending another day in camp, while two were borrowed to proceed by a circuitous route to a point in rear of the Russian line.

The General Reserve under General Kuropatkin's own hand had during the abortive counter-attack been used in a manner unlikely to lead to any decisive result. During the morning it consisted of twenty-two battalions and six batteries,* and before noon two of the batteries were sent to reinforce General Churin's detachment—in the column of General Tserpitski—while somewhat later another battery was dispatched to Colonel Zapolski's detachment, but these guns did not reach their destination, for the battery commander was unable to find the force which he was to join. A more serious inroad upon the strength of the General Reserve, however, was made in the afternoon. The commander-in-chief had during the morning expressed his anxiety at the fact that a gap existed between Colonel Zapolski's detachment and General Birger's detachment at Hu-shih-tai station, and about half-past three sent a force of four battalions and eight guns under Colonel Tsikhovich, together with the 10th Rifle Regiment, to protect the front Ta-hen-tun—San-tai-tzu—Wan-kan-tun.

It is somewhat remarkable that, instead of utilizing this portion of his reserve to strengthen the column which was to envelop the Japanese left flank and was meeting with strenuous resistance in its task, General Kuropatkin should have preferred to create yet another independent detachment and to assign to it a passive rôle. The incongruity of the proceeding appears to have struck General Kaulbars, and accordingly, as Colonel Tsikhovich was passing Hou-hua about 4 p.m. he was stopped by a staff officer of the Second Manchurian Army. But the new destination assigned to Colonel Tsikhovich's force did not promise any greater prospect of activity, for it was diverted across the Hsin-min-tun road and sent to occupy the line between

* Five of the batteries, with three companies as escort, were at Lan-tien-tun; the remainder of the General Reserve was about Mukden station.

Niu-hsin-tun and Ma-chuang-tzu. The commander of the 10th Rifle Regiment, Colonel Misevich, now took command, as the senior officer. General Kuropatkin, though he made no effort to get back this detachment from General Kaulbars, was still perturbed about the gap in his front north of Mukden and decided to send another regiment from his reserve to occupy the vacant space, the Modlin Regiment being told off for the purpose.* Thus on the 6th March eight battalions and thirty-two guns were detached from the General Reserve upon missions which in no way harmonized with the striking of a decisive blow, and left the reserve deprived of practically one-third of its strength. To meet this drain some other source of supply had to be tapped and about 9 p.m. the commander-in-chief telephoned to General Zarubaiev to send at once to Mukden from the 4th Siberian Corps six battalions, with a battery and half a squadron of Cossacks, by the arrival of which reinforcement he counted on having the General Reserve increased on the following day to twenty battalions and thirty-two guns.

On the left bank of the Hun, during the 6th March, the sector of the battlefield extending from Erh-tai-tzu on the Hun Ho to the railway at Su-chia-tun was held on the Russian side by a detachment at the former village and by the 5th Siberian Corps of the Third Manchurian Army.† Reference has already been made to the fact that the village was attacked without success by the Japanese during the night of the 5th-6th, but the operation was of the nature of a reconnaissance and was made by a small force. With Su-hu-chia-pu in his possession General Oku could afford for the present to neglect Erh-tai-tzu, and although a gap of over four miles undoubtedly existed between the right of his 5th Division and the left of the 4th Division—which now formed part of the Japanese Fourth Army—no apprehension of a Russian counter-stroke was entertained, and Erh-tai-tzu was left undisturbed throughout the day. At that village General Golembatovski arrived during the evening and as the senior on the spot took over the command.‡

* This regiment, however, did not actually move off until 4 a.m. on the 7th March.

† The detachment now consisted of the 59th (Liublin) Regiment, five companies of the 58th (Praga) Regiment, the 3rd and 4th Rifle Regiments and a battery of the 28th Artillery Brigade.

‡ It is not clear who was commanding on the arrival of General Golembatovski, but it appears to have been Colonel Kuznetsov.

During the day the 5th Siberian Corps was attacked by the Japanese 4th Division, the movement being part of a combined operation by the 4th Division, Colonel Tomioka's detachment, and the 6th Division against Han-chia-pu, a place which had become of great import to either side, as it marked the angle of the salient now existing in the line of the Russian XVIIth Corps. Early in the morning the guns of the 4th Division opened on the line of the 5th Siberian Corps, at the headquarters of which the possibility of assuming the offensive was at the time under discussion. In view of the Japanese attempts against Erh-tai-tzu which had been repulsed in the night General Artamonov wished to attack Ta-su-chia-pu, but General Dembovski, the corps commander, vetoed the proposal and would not allow the position to be quitted. Nevertheless, he revealed his belief in the principle of mutual co-operation in a practical manner by ordering seventy-two guns from the 28th and 40th Artillery Brigades to support General Gershelmann on his right; and these batteries opened fire against the Japanese guns on the far side of the river at Ta-yu-shu-pu.* About three o'clock troops from the Japanese 4th Division advanced against the left of the 5th Siberian Corps, but the artillery of the defenders was much too strong and they were repulsed with heavy loss.

The operations against Han-chia-pu, in which the Japanese 4th Division had thus played an indirect and abortive part, amounted in reality to a struggle for the possession of the Railway Redoubt immediately south of that village. Situated as it was near the point of the angle formed by the positions of their 3rd and 35th Divisions the redoubt was of the utmost importance to the Russians, for the loss of it would have exposed the line held by the XVIIth—and even the 6th Siberian—Corps to enfilade fire. For this reason the Japanese concentrated all their energies against it, and early in the morning opened a heavy fire from Ying-wo and Ssu-fan-tai against the XVIIth Corps, paying special attention to the redoubt itself. Over one hundred shells varying from six to eight inches in calibre fell in Han-chia-pu, and in the redoubt thirty-two projectiles from the Japanese 11-inch howitzers caused enormous damage, wrecking all the splinterproofs and tearing away large portions of the parapet. While this bombard-

* See p. 527.

ment was going on the 24th Brigade of the Japanese 6th Division was concentrating at Ying-wo and Ssu-fan-tai, and from these villages annoyed the troops of the Russian 35th Division by a sustained enfilade fire.

About 1 p.m. some Japanese—probably from the 11th Brigade—were observed by the Russians to be advancing against the line of the 35th Division, and simultaneously a fresh Japanese battery came into action near Ssu-fan-tai, but shortly after four o'clock this had been reduced to silence by the fire of two batteries of the 35th Division told off to deal with it. An hour later troops of the Japanese 6th Division endeavoured to capture the Railway Redoubt from Ying-wo and Ssu-fan-tai, but they were repulsed. A renewed attack made before nightfall was also beaten off. About this time the sorely tried garrison of the work was reinforced by a company,* while two companies of the Novoingermanland Regiment came up and occupied the ditch as well as part of the railway line opposite Ying-wo. So soon as darkness fell efforts were made to repair the damage effected by the Japanese siege pieces, but the wreck was so complete that by morning only a portion of the parapet was restored and nothing whatever had been done to the splinterproofs and obstacles. The Japanese meanwhile occupied a former Russian siege gun emplacement near Ying-wo, where they were only some three hundred paces from the Railway Redoubt and almost in rear of some trenches in front of it—a situation which, when taken in conjunction with the damaged condition of the redoubt, promised to facilitate the task of the 6th Division on the morrow.

On the left of the XVIIth Corps the troops of the 6th Siberian Corps were not called upon to resist any particularly heavy attack. About 7 a.m. the positions of the corps, especially those near Kuan-tun, were subjected to fire from the Japanese siege and field artillery, and this bombardment was followed up an hour later by an advance against the latter village, but the artillery fire and infantry volleys of the defenders broke up the attack although some of its foremost groups actually succeeded in reaching the advanced line of obstacles. Here, however, a fougasse successfully exploded gave the *coup-de-grâce* to the Japanese advance. A counter-attack by the 6th Siberian Corps appears to have been considered; but

* From the 139th (Morshansk) Regiment.

since he had no reserve, General Sobolev considered it highly dangerous to allow his troops to leave their trenches, and telephoned instead to head-quarters of the Third Manchurian Army, begging that he might be granted even a couple of battalions from the army reserve. The request was granted, and the reinforcements were sent to Ta-yen-erh-tun.* With the repulse of the attack described above the 6th March passed in comparative quiet in this quarter of the field, although on both sides the artillery fire was continued till nightfall.

To the east of the bridge-head at Sha-ho-pu, where the Okubo *Kobi* Division on the one side and the 6th Siberian Corps upon the other were spending the day in an artillery duel, was the sector of the field containing the important features of Putilov and One Tree Hills. Here the right of the First Manchurian Army and the right division—the 10th—of the Japanese Fourth Army were to pass yet another day in operations characterized only by the unceasing artillery fire which for more than a week had sounded in this portion of the fight. So formidable had the two hills become after the months of labour devoted to them by the Russian engineers throughout the prolonged cessation of the struggle in the winter that the Japanese realized that it was only by manœuvre or by a success in some other portion of the field that the defenders could be forced to relax their grip on these two points. The 6th March was, therefore, an artillery day pure and simple, the object of the Japanese 10th Division probably being to prevent troops being detached from the Russian 1st Corps and sent to reinforce the XVIIth Corps near Han-chia-pu. Both field and siege guns were employed by the Japanese, the fire being concentrated for the most part upon Putilov and One Tree Hills. But although the trenches were severely knocked about the casualties were few. One lucky shell from the Japanese, however, struck the magazine of a Russian howitzer battery during the afternoon, placed two guns out of action and killed and wounded over a dozen of the guns' crews, amongst them being the battery commander. No other incident of note has to be recorded, and about eight o'clock in the evening the firing died away on both sides.

* One battalion of the 217th (Krom) Regiment and one battalion of the 147th (Samara) Regiment.

In consequence of the order received from the commander-in-chief, on the previous evening,* to the effect that the attention of the Japanese should be attracted to the 4th Siberian Corps, General Zarubaiev had ordered the right flank to take the offensive in order to help the 1st Corps, while the centre was to advance straight to its front, and the left was to co-operate with the 2nd Siberian Corps. These instructions were, however, interpreted in a somewhat unenterprising spirit. The movement from the right was not carried out with much vigour, for it was found that the 1st Corps was not in need of assistance, and the detachment told off for this purpose fell back about 5 a.m.† The demonstration from the centre was insignificant in numbers and was divided into two columns, of which the right moved at 6.15 a.m. along a hollow which it immediately occupied.‡ Leaving one company here to safeguard its retreat, the remainder of the column moved to the west, where it met with a stubborn resistance. The trench occupied by the Japanese was charged with the bayonet, but the explosion of a fougasse placed fifty-two of the attackers out of action, nearly half of this number being killed on the spot. Meanwhile the left column had made an advance and come into collision with some of the Japanese, who were probably from the 1st Guard Brigade.§ It was met with a hail of bullets and hand-grenades which caused very heavy losses, including Colonel Sukachev, its commander, who was mortally wounded. His successor then broke off the attack and led back the force, which had lost over two hundred and thirty of its strength. Simultaneously with the action of these two columns a couple of scout detachments demonstrated from the left flank. The effect of the action of the 4th Siberian Corps, however, may be said to have been inappreciable. Its artillery co-operated with that of the 1st Corps during the day; but on the whole the part played by General Zarubaiev's troops was distinctly a minor one. During

* See p. 496.

† This detachment consisted of three companies and a scout detachment under Lieutenant-Colonel Aksenov.

‡ Right Column; two companies of the 10th (Omsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment and a scout detachment under Captain Aldatov.

It has been found impossible to locate the route of either of the columns of the demonstration from the centre.

§ Left Column; two companies of the 9th (Tobolsk) and one company of the 10th (Omsk) Siberian Infantry Regiments, and a scout detachment under Colonel Sukachev, who was in general command of both the columns.

the night of the 6th-7th the chance of their exercising any real influence on the battle was rendered still smaller, for a portion of them under Colonel Borisov was sent to Mukden to the General Reserve, in response to the demand made by General Kuropatkin.*

In the Japanese Guard Division the feeling of optimism as to the general situation, which had been so evident on the previous day, underwent a considerable modification on the 6th March, for it was more or less recognized that the whole Japanese front was held up, and that desperate fighting must be going on upon the flanks. It was also realized that there was a possibility that the 4th Siberian Corps might advance against the weakly defended interval between the Japanese First and Fourth Armies. In this contingency it had been decided by General Kuroki that his army could, and should, advance in spite of the fact that enormous losses would be incurred by doing so. The attitude of the division was, therefore, one of expectation; and it was ordered to stand fast until the situation should develop. And since the efforts made by General Zarubaiev were futile, the 6th March was in fact a quiet day for the Guard Division, for after the early morning there was but little even of the customary exchange of gun and rifle fire. When darkness fell, however, a force from the 2nd Siberian Corps launched a determined attack against part of the 2nd Guard Brigade. This was beaten off, though only with difficulty; and some hours after midnight the 2nd Guard Regiment near Tung-chia-wen was assailed by several battalions from the 17th and 18th East Siberian Rifle Regiments. There was no moon and the attackers were not seen until they were within fifty yards of the Japanese position. A sharp fight ensued, in which two Japanese machine guns did great execution at less than one hundred yards range, and the Russians then fell back.

In the Japanese 12th Division the comparative quiet which distinguished this day on the east of the railway was even more marked, although before dawn three companies of Russians made a counter-attack against portion of General Imamura's

* See p. 529. The following units were dispatched—Three and a half battalions of the 8th (Tomsk), one battalion of the 9th (Tobolsk), and one battalion of the 10th (Omsk) Siberian Infantry Regiments, one battery of the 26th Artillery Brigade, and half a squadron of the 7th Siberian Cossack Regiment.

front, which led to two hours' fierce fighting. It was only with the assistance of machine guns and hand-grenades that the Japanese beat off their assailants, who, four times at least, got up to within thirty yards of the position. By 6 a.m., however, the attack had been repulsed and the firing died down. During the rest of the day the artillery was silent, and nothing but intermittent sniping went on. For this division the 6th March was the most uneventful day since the battle had begun.

Similarly, by the Japanese 2nd Division but little was effected. On its left the situation was unchanged. On the right, General Ohara continued his advance, pressing back Prince Tumanov to Tu-chia-pu-tzu; and in sympathy with the latter's retrograde movement the Kulikov Regiment* withdrew from Huang-ti to take up a new position on the high ground at Hsia-tun-kou. The retirement of the

The Japanese
2nd Division.

Russians was well carried out, every small feature being utilized to check the Japanese, who were hampered by the fog which hung over the valleys until midday. In these conditions the advance made by the Japanese amounted to less than two miles. On the Russian side the continued retirement of Prince Tumanov seriously disturbed the commander of the First Manchurian Army, for the possibility of a hostile penetration between the 3rd Siberian Corps and General Rennenkampf became increasingly apparent. General Linevich, therefore, considered it expedient to place his chief of staff—Lieutenant-General Kharkhevich—in supreme command of Prince Tumanov's force, the 36th East Siberian Rifle Regiment, the Kulikov Regiment, and of such reinforcements as had been or might be sent up.†

The retirement of Prince Tumanov had not only reacted on the Kulikov Regiment; its influence was also felt in General Rennenkampf's detachment, of which the extreme right flank, consisting of two companies of the 21st East Siberian Rifle Regiment, was constrained to give way by the threat of General Ohara's column. The latter force had now gained touch with the 22nd Brigade of the 11th Division of the Ya-lu Army, and that this tactical advantage was exploited by the Ya-lu Army is

General Rennen-
kampf's detach-
ment and the
Ya-lu Army.

* It is not clear whether this regiment was now complete or still disposed of three battalions only. See p. 500.

† General Kharkhevich actually assumed command on the following morning, 7th March.

seen from the renewed energy with which its operations on the 6th were pressed. Until midday the Japanese remained inactive. After that hour their artillery came into action and the infantry carried out a series of attacks against the Tu-pin-tai position, first against the centre and later against the right flank. Up till 7 p.m. every attack was repulsed; but by that time the reserve of the defenders was reduced to one company, and their situation was becoming serious. Half an hour later their resistance was put to a further test, for the Japanese, regardless of their losses, once more rushed forward against the centre of the position, which was held by units of the Chernoyar Regiment. These received the onslaught with the bayonet, but being absolutely exhausted after their trying work of the day and being without reserves they were forced to give way a little. For the moment it seemed as if their line would be broken. Nevertheless, they managed to hold their ground, and when three companies of the 22nd East Siberian Rifle Regiment were brought up from other portions of the line they made a combined counter-attack with bayonet and hand-grenades. By this the Japanese were driven off, leaving two machine guns in the hands of the Russians. Though it was now midnight, there was to be no rest for the wearied defenders. Four times before dawn was the attack renewed against their centre, while two attempts were made to drive in their right flank. But to all these attempts they opposed an unyielding resistance, and every one was successfully beaten off.

Somewhat less trying had been the experience of General Liubavin, although he, too, had to expend all his reserve. About noon the artillery fire to his front increased, and the Japanese troops opposite him advanced, evidently with the intention of enveloping his detachment on both flanks. By four o'clock their firing line was less than eight hundred yards away and he had but one company left in reserve. Two hours later this company had been expended, and dismounted Cossacks were being pushed up to take their place in the firing line. Meanwhile the Japanese had been pressing on until their front line was less than three hundred paces off, and they might launch an assault at any moment. The onslaught was not long delayed, but the defenders putting forth their utmost efforts met it with a rapid and accurate fire. Against this the Japanese were unable to stand, and before they reached the last eighty yards they broke and rushed

back. This proved to be their final effort, for the fighting now died away, and when darkness fell only occasional rifle shots were exchanged.

The junction which had been made between the left of the Ya-lu Army and the right of the 2nd Division had caused the weight of the attacks made by the former to be directed from their left, and consequently the force under General Danilov was left relatively undisturbed by the 1st *Kobi* Division. So quiet indeed was the situation that about 7 p.m. General Rennenkampf sent word to General Danilov to suggest that he should return the battalion of the 21st East Siberian Rifle Regiment from the Tung Ling to support General Liubavin, but General Danilov appears to have been reluctant to deprive himself of any troops and asked for a categorical order.* The 1st *Kobi* Division did nothing but shell the position in front of it, and the day passed without noteworthy incident.

On the extreme left of the First Manchurian Army the reconnoitring detachment of Prince Dolgorukov was engaged at Teihsin-tzu by a small Japanese mixed force which brought up two mountain guns into action and attempted to turn the Russian right. In view of the superior strength of the enemy, who had about two companies of infantry and two squadrons of cavalry, Prince Dolgorukov refused battle and fell back. Farther south, Colonel Madritov spent the day in pursuing the enemy encountered by him upon the 5th, and when the latter got away the Russian detachment retired and passed the night ten miles east of Hsing-ching, in the neighbourhood of which place it remained until the battle was over.

The fact that large bodies of the enemy had been located during the day on or near the Hsin-min-tun road does not appear to have caused General Kuropatkin particular anxiety, but when news came in in the evening that General Gerngross had failed to reach Ta-shih-chiao affairs assumed a different complexion. And reality was aggravated by rumour, for about the same time it was reported from various sources that a Japanese force some six thousand strong was fifteen miles north of Mukden. This latter intelligence, as may be supposed, had a particularly disquieting effect upon the commander-in-chief, and

* This order arrived on the following morning, but it was not until 8.45 p.m., on the 7th, that the battalion was sent off.

haunted as he always was by the fear of being cut off from the north, he found himself face to face with the question whether the First and Third Manchurian Armies should remain upon their present positions or should retire across the Hun Ho. Such a withdrawal, by contracting the front occupied by those armies, would enable some troops to be detached to reinforce the Second Manchurian Army.

By about 8.15 p.m. he had made up his mind and decided to withdraw the First and Third Armies behind the River Hun. But the fears which prompted him to take such extreme measures were by no means shared by his lieutenants. General Bilderling, with whom the commander-in-chief engaged in an explanation over the telephone as to his action, took a bolder line. He maintained that a retirement to the Hun would be advisable only when all means of achieving success from the positions then held had been exhausted, and expressed confidence that the hostile forces reported north of Mukden could not be of any strength and could therefore easily be kept in check by units from the General Reserve reinforced by the 3rd Rifle Brigade, which was then approaching Mukden.* The commander-in-chief, however, remained deaf to these arguments, and later called up General Bilderling's chief of staff, to whom he also expressed his anxiety over the reports from the north and confided his intention of retiring to the Mukden position, where he proposed to re-form and strike the enemy. All arrangements for the movement were to be made and twelve battalions were to be got ready to proceed to the Second Manchurian Army at Lu-kun-tun.

Nevertheless, General Kuropatkin's resolve was quickly to be changed, for shortly after the above conversation he was summoned to the telephone by General Kaulbars, who begged him not to give orders for the retirement.† Shaken in his resolution by the strenuous protests of two of his army commanders he directed the Chief of Staff to withhold the issue of the order.

On the 6th the Russian counter-stroke in the west failed

* The 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th Rifle Regiments. The 10th had already arrived. See p. 468.

† The exact hour of this incident is unknown, but from internal evidence it was probably between 9 p.m. and midnight. Apparently General Kaulbars had been advised by telephone that this order was about to be issued.

as completely as it had on the 5th, though the troops carrying it out did a considerable amount of fighting; and so far the Japanese Third Army succeeded in its hazardous manœuvre.

Summary of
the 6th March. It was ignorance of the disposition of the latter force and the unexpected display of strength by General Nogi at the point upon which the attack was to pivot that was largely responsible for the Russian lack of success. Over and above this there was great vacillation, delay and a complete lack of co-ordination in its execution. The effect of this second failure of the Second Manchurian Army on the Russian commander-in-chief was that during the evening he practically gave up all idea of carrying out an offensive from the position his troops were then holding. Later, as will be seen, he issued orders for the withdrawal beyond the Hun Ho which he had already foreshadowed to his army commanders on the 5th.

On the left bank of the Hun Ho it appears to have been fully recognized by the Japanese that events must wait upon the out-flanking movement of the Third Army. Two points in the action in this region, however, call for remark: the energy with which the Japanese Fourth Army was seizing upon the favourable chance presented by the salient in the line of the XVIIth Corps, and the fact that touch had at last been established between the Japanese First Army and that of the Ya-lu.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

THE BATTLE OF MUKDEN—*continued*—OPERATIONS ON THE 7TH MARCH—THE SECOND MANCHURIAN ARMY ORDERED TO STAND FAST—GENERAL KUROPATKIN ORDERS THE THIRD AND FIRST MANCHURIAN ARMIES TO FALL BACK TO THE HUN HO AFTER DARK—THE JAPANESE THIRD ARMY DRIVES IN THE RIGHT OF GENERAL GERNGROSS'S COLUMN—UNSUCCESSFUL ATTACK BY THE JAPANESE 3RD DIVISION AGAINST GENERAL TOPORNIN'S SECTION OF THE MUKDEN DEFENCES—CAPTURE OF HAN-CHIA-PU BY THE JAPANESE FOURTH ARMY—RENEWED FIGHTING ON THE EAST—END OF THE SECOND PHASE OF THE BATTLE.

(Plate 54 and Plan 67.)

THE information which had been obtained at Russian General Head-Quarters from prisoners and from the reports sent in by secret service agents by the night of the 6th-7th March pointed to the fact that some special manœuvre was being carried out by the Japanese Third Army. But beyond this little was gleaned of the actual details of the operation. It was, for example, incorrectly surmised that the left of the Japanese Third Army was now formed by the 9th Division. The existence of the Japanese Cavalry Division composed of the brigades under Generals Tamura and Akiyama had, naturally enough, not yet been fully realized; one *Kobi* brigade was known to be in rear of General Nogi's troops, but it was thought to be the 5th, which as a matter of fact at this time formed part of the Japanese First Army in quite another sector of the battlefield; and of the movement of the three *Kobi* brigades from the Japanese General Reserve no news whatever had been received. The Japanese 3rd Division, too, was

Information
on both sides.

wrongly located, for it was supposed to be in the centre of the whole line—in front of the XVIIIth Corps—instead of upon the ground just vacated by the 9th Division. And, further, the Russian information was completely at fault as regards the situation of the Japanese 5th Division, which, in spite of the fact that by far the greater part of it had been operating on the right bank of the Hun Ho for some days, was placed somewhere on the line Erh-tai-tzu—Hsiao-chi-shun-pu on the left bank.

Ignorance, however, was by no means confined to the Russians, for on the Japanese side the reports as to the enemy's movements had for some days been at variance with the facts. So far as can be inferred, on the west of Mukden the Japanese expected daylight of the 7th to reveal the Russian position evacuated and the enemy either out of sight or in full retreat; and everywhere—even in the Third Army itself—it was thought that General Nogi might be placed in a critical position by the action of the Russian troops thus withdrawn.

Shortly after midnight of the 6th–7th General Kaulbars had apparently come to the conclusion that a further effort with his Second Manchurian Army was not possible, and at 1 a.m. he circulated an order to the effect that his troops were to remain upon their positions during the 7th. About this time, also, General Kuropatkin finally made up his mind to withdraw his Second and First Armies behind the Hun Ho, and telephoned to that effect to the commanders of those armies. But it appears that during the night, without informing General Kaulbars of this important decision, he called upon him to submit a plan for again taking the offensive.* From the records available it is not clear whether an appreciation of the general situation was required or merely a scheme for a fresh attack by the Second Manchurian Army. At any rate General Kaulbars interpreted the request in the former sense, and at 7.15 a.m. on the 7th forwarded to the commander-in-chief a note containing his views.

General Kaulbars stated that, in his opinion, there was only one method of escaping from the difficult situation in which the Russian army now found itself, namely, to assemble on the front Su-hu-chia-pu—Ta-shih-chiao a force superior to that of

* It is not known at what hour this message from the commander-in-chief reached General Kaulbars.

the Japanese and from that line to attack them with the object of hurling them back to the west or south-west: that this plan, however, would require that the Second Manchurian Army should be heavily reinforced at the expense of the Third and First. For this he recommended that the Ist Corps should be taken from the latter, and the XVIIth and 5th Siberian Corps from the former army, and that they should be added to the troops of the Second Army west of Mukden; and that the offensive movement should be started upon the 8th March with a total of two hundred and twenty battalions, exclusive of a new General Reserve to which twenty battalions should be allotted.*

It will be noted that General Kaulbars considered it possible to hold the twenty-mile front Ma-chia-pu—Liu-chiang-tun with twenty-six battalions,† although the Japanese disposed of considerably more than twice that number along that distance and had almost pierced the particular portions of the Russian front occupied by the XVIIth Corps. Again, to effect the proposed concentration in time for an early attack upon the 8th, the Ist Corps would have to march some seventeen miles upon the 7th. There were serious objections to the plan, but the inactivity which would be necessarily enforced upon the Russians during the 7th, by which the Japanese would be enabled to make counter-preparations, or to take even more active measures, was the gravest drawback.

Nevertheless, and in spite of the fact that he was at the time practically committed to the withdrawal of two-thirds of his force, when General Kuropatkin perused this scheme he seems to have considered it practicable, and he directed a staff officer to summon General Kaulbars to the head-quarters railway train to discuss details with the Chief of Staff and the Quartermaster-General. But the meeting did not take place, for the Japanese—as will be described later—were at that moment engaged upon a fierce attack against the Second Manchurian Army, which demanded General Kaulbars's undivided attention, and, later, required his presence in person.

Left without the presence of the author of this plan, the commander-in-chief soon put aside the project and proceeded with

* This appreciation is given in full in Appendix 21.

† i.e., four battalions from the 5th Siberian, XVIIth and Ist, Corps, and fourteen from the 6th Siberian Corps.

the issue of the orders to put into effect his own decision made at midnight. At nine in the morning he dispatched the following telegram to General Linevich and caused similar instructions to be telephoned to General Bilderling:—

General Kuro-patkin issues orders for the Third and First Manchurian Armies to withdraw.

“The enemy has taken up a position threatening Mukden and our line of retreat.

His troops are moving westwards. The operations of the Second Army are not meeting with success sufficiently rapidly. In order to place all three armies in a better position, and in order to concentrate sufficient troops, I have decided that the Third Army should move to a position at Mukden, occupying the Coal Siding and Chan-sa-ma-tun as advanced points.* I have also decided that the First Army should retire, but before going right back to the positions at Fu-shun and in the neighbourhood it should make a stand on intermediate positions. It is particularly important that we should keep in our hands the Fu-shun mines and the railway to Fu-shun.† During the day send back all your artillery and other stores, and when darkness falls to-day (7th March) begin to withdraw your troops. You must send back the siege guns of the 1st Corps. Send, as quickly as possible, the entire 72nd Division to my Strategical Reserve‡ in Mukden, where it will concentrate south of the Imperial Tombs.§ To do this the division will have to make a forced march; please let me know where you think the reserves should be sent and what task should be assigned to them. I may add that I am firmly of opinion that the First Army has done its duty to the last, and that its operations have not been the cause of our retreat to Mukden.”

The order to these armies, however, could not be expected to produce any effect during the 7th upon the Northern Front—by which name the Russians designated the strip of ground running westwards from Siding 97 to the angle of the Hsin-min-tun road

* The Coal Siding referred to was at Hsiao-ho-tun.

† The Fu-shun coal mines were of great value to the railway.

‡ i.e., the General Reserve.

§ Upon the Russian maps the tombs both north and east of Mukden are given the same name—Imperial Tombs. It seems that those north of Mukden were meant.

near Tsuan-pan-che. Upon this front a collection of Russian Operations on the Northern Front. The Japanese 1st Division approaches the railway. mounted troops was carrying out reconnaissance duties on no co-ordinated scheme. A mixed half squadron was operating from the Hu-shih-tai garrison; farther west were the squadrons from General Birger's force; and beyond that came the Primorsk Dragoons. In rear at Sha-hei-tzu was General Pavlov with a force now increased to six squadrons.* By this screen the presence of the Japanese 1st Division was soon felt, for before daylight the patrols of the Primorsk Dragoons were forced back from Ta-wu-chia-tun and at dawn discovered a force of all arms approaching the place. Slowly this hostile body felt its way southwards; by midday Hou-hsin-tun was in its hands, and by 5 p.m. the Japanese 1st Division had deployed its whole strength between that village and Fang-tzu-hu. The Primorsk Dragoons and the squadrons of the Orenburg Cossacks—from General Birger's force—retired in good order, and passing through General Pavlov's force took post behind the line San-tai-tzu—Kun-chia-tun.†

Farther to the north General Grekov had felt this pressure before the remainder of the Russian cavalry on the Northern Front, and at six o'clock in the morning had been attacked along the line San-tai-tzu—Kou-tzu-yen by units both from the Japanese 1st Division and the Cavalry Division, and had been forced north-westwards with his main body, apparently without offering any serious resistance.‡ The Japanese Cavalry Division halted south of La-la-tun, near the village where General Grekov

* General Pavlov had taken under his command the 4th Ural Cossack Regiment which was in the neighbourhood of Sha-hei-tzu, and this brought his total force up to six squadrons.

† General Pavlov had by this moved up to the line Pao-tao-tun—Hei-ni-tun—Wan-kan-tun.

‡ On the evening of the 7th March General Grekov's cavalry was disposed as follows:—

Five squadrons of the Ussuri Cossack Regiment—on the right bank of the Liao Ho, with its left opposite Lu-chiao-pu, twenty-four miles north of Mukden.

Five squadrons of the 1st Chita Cossack Regiment—on the line Lu-chiao-pu—Hsin-liu-nai, eighteen miles north-north-west of Mukden.

Four squadrons of the 5th Ural Cossack Regiment—on the section Hsin-liu-nai—Ma-ku-chia-tzu.

Main body—three squadrons of the Terek-Kuban Regiment, six squadrons of the 51st Chernigov, and two squadrons of the 52nd Nyejin, Dragoon Regiments and the 20th Horse Artillery Battery passed the night three miles north-east of La-nao-tun.

had passed the previous night, and sent the 6th Cavalry Regiment eastwards to Ta-hsin-tun and the 16th north-west to La-la-tun. The 1st Division pushed on due eastwards and then wheeled to its right so as to descend upon the line Hou-hsin-tun—Fang-tzu-hu, with the results already described.

Even before the Japanese 1st Division appeared upon this line, the east of which was little more than three miles from the railway, the safeguarding of that great artery of communication had been a source of increasing anxiety to General Kuropatkin. On the morning of the 7th the dangerous section appeared to be that between Siding 97 and Mukden itself.* To protect it, there were between the siding and Tsao-hou-tun—where Colonel Zapolski's detachment was stationed—only cavalry posts supplemented by a few weak piquets drawn from the battalions of drafts, although the gap was to a certain extent closed about 10 a.m., when the Modlin Regiment came up from the General Reserve and took post at San-tai-tzu. The detachment under General Birger had also received orders during the night to leave Hu-shih-tai station and to proceed to San-tai-tzu. It accordingly left its position on the railway about 7 a.m., and avoiding the Japanese 1st Division moved via Ku-san-tun. Shortly after three o'clock the two columns in which the force was marching arrived at San-tai-tzu and Kun-chia-tun.† The Modlin Regiment on being relieved at the former village then retired to the Northern Tombs. During the afternoon General Birger received an order from the commander-in-chief to send a battalion and two guns to occupy Pa-chia-tzu, and when this was carried out the situation at nightfall on the Northern Front was as follows:—

At Kun-chia-tun—ten companies of the 162nd (Akhalsikh) Regiment, eight guns and one company of drafts.

* "The line north of Siding 97 could be looked upon as more or less safe," *Russian Official History*, Vol. V, p. 428. The defence of the railway immediately north of the siding was carried out by a battalion of the 217th (Krom) Regiment and two guns sent from the General Reserve to Wan-kan-tun; by Colonel Gromov's force at Hu-shih-tai station, see p. 511; and by a newly arrived battalion of the 9th Rifle Regiment, four hundred and seventeen Frontier Guards and some drafts at Hsin-tai-tzu station, where another battalion of the 9th Rifle Regiment was also expected during the day. This station is about fourteen miles north-east of Hu-shih-tai station in a direct line.

† Eleven companies of the 161st (Alexandropol) Regiment and two batteries of the 45th Artillery Brigade at San-tai-tzu. Ten companies of the 162nd (Akhalsikh) Regiment and one battery of the 3rd Rifle Artillery Division at Kun-chia-tun.

At San-tai-tzu—seven companies of the 161st (Alexandropol) Regiment and fourteen guns.

At Pa-chia-tzu—one battalion of the 161st (Alexandropol) Regiment and two guns.

At the Northern Tombs—The 57th (Modlin) Regiment.

Colonel Misevich's force was ordered to proceed to Ta-hen-tun, but, apparently this movement did not take place until the following morning.*

Leaving the Northern Front, it may be said that insomuch as General Gerngross's column—with the remainder of the Second Manchurian Army—was merely to remain upon its position during the 7th hostilities were likely only at such points as the Japanese chose to attack. General Gerngross now commanded five detachments—those of Colonel Zapolski, Colonel Lesh, General de Vitt, General Dobvor-Musnitski and General Krause. And since the three latter forces were not in the line of advance north and north-eastwards which the Japanese Third Army still continued to carry out during the day their operations amounted to little more than artillery and rifle fire directed upon points held by the enemy and upon any columns which could be descried making their way north. In the case of the detachments of Colonels Lesh and Zapolski the situation was different, for they could not be ignored by the Japanese 7th and 9th Divisions, and along the front of both an artillery duel started in the morning, the fire of the Japanese being concentrated principally on the village of Tsao-hou-tun, to the left of which place was Colonel Zapolski with his composite battalion of the Akhaltsikh Regiment.† About 11 a.m. hostile infantry were reported to the north, about Wan-niu-tun. The appearance of this force, which was the 36th Regiment on the right of the Japanese 9th Division, caused Colonel Zapolski to inform General Gerngross that his right was in danger of being turned; but the latter was unable to send any reinforcements, for since before daybreak the Japanese had been extremely active before Yu-huan-tun, where it seemed not unlikely they might pierce the Russian line, and towards which place General Gerngross had already sent his reserve—the detachment under Colonel

The Japanese
9th Division
attacks Colonel
Zapolski's
detachment.

* This delay may have been caused by the fact that another order had detailed Colonel Misevich to proceed to Yu-huan-tun. See p. 553.

† The 7th, 9th, 11th and 15th Companies.

Misevich.* Colonel Zapolski, therefore, had to hold on as best he could, and between 4 and 5 p.m. his position became very difficult. The gravity of the situation was observed by the commander-in-chief, who arrived at General Gerngross's head-quarters about 5 p.m., and, as described, gave orders that Colonel Zapolski should be reinforced immediately by a battalion and two guns from General Birger's detachment.† These troops proceeded to Pa-chia-tzu, to which place Colonel Zapolski's detachment fell back from Tsao-hou-tun after dark.‡

Meanwhile, at Tsuan-pan-che Colonel Lesh was maintaining an artillery fight with the guns of the Japanese 7th Division, and his position was not improved by an order from General Gerngross to send as many troops as possible to the new reserve which the latter was trying to collect. About four o'clock in the afternoon he dispatched two battalions of the Velikolutsk Regiment to Ma-chuang-tzu. The withdrawal of these units was observed by the Japanese, who apparently interpreted it as indicating the retirement of Colonel Lesh's detachment. They increased their artillery fire, and about half-past six advanced, forcing back Colonel Lesh's right wing and exposing his guns north of Tsuan-pan-che. Seeing the danger Colonel Lesh himself went to the batteries and ordered them to be man-handled out of action; and by this means all but one were got away. Of that battery only six guns could be saved despite the gallant efforts made by parties from the 1st East Siberian Rifle Regiment under Staff-Captain Riabenko and Lieutenant Nikitin. Finally, a whole company was sent forward to save the two pieces left behind, but it was surrounded and had to force its way out with the bayonet.

While these efforts to withdraw the artillery were being made the regiment holding Tsuan-pan-che was also in difficulties.§ For hours the outer walls of the village had been useless for defence, so severely had they suffered from the guns of the Japanese 7th Division, and the machine guns had had to be withdrawn. The

* To supply the want of a reserve which had been felt by Colonel Misevich's force, General de Vitt sent the 138th (Bolkhov) Regiment and a battery to Ma-chuang-tzu, where they arrived during the evening.

† See p. 545.

‡ Later during the night the remainder of Colonel Zapolski's troops retired to the Northern Tombs.

§ The 147th (Samara) Regiment.

situation quickly became worse. The Japanese batteries were now shelling not only the village but the ground in rear of it, and before long both flanks of the Russian regiment were turned and its commander, Prince Makaiev, was killed. Since ammunition was running short and he had no information as to what was happening to Colonel Zapolski, Colonel Lesh decided to withdraw the Samara Regiment from Tsuan-pan-che and about eight o'clock gave orders for its retirement. The remnant of the regiment moved in good order to Fan-hsi-tun, and the 1st East Siberian Rifle Regiment fell back to Hsiao-hen-tun. The Japanese 7th Division then occupied Tsuan-pan-che.

Thus the line Tsao-hou-tun—Tsuan-pan-che passed into the hands of the Japanese who, however, appear to have acted with particular caution probably engendered by a suspicion that the commander of the Second Manchurian Army south of the Hsin-min-tun road had withdrawn most of his strength during the night in order to launch a strong counter-stroke against the left flank of the Third Army. The Japanese force operating against Tsao-hou-tun had greatly exceeded the meagre garrison under Colonel Zapolski, and behind the attacking line were large reserves. As early as 3.30 p.m. the whole of the 9th Division was along the Pu Ho, from Wan-niu-tun to below Kao-li-tun, while at the same time the entire 7th Division was astride the Hsin-min-tun road facing Tsuan-pan-che. Behind the right of the 9th Division was practically the whole of the reserve artillery of the Japanese Third Army,* and the greater part of the reserve brigade was at a village roughly halfway between Pin-lo-pu and Ta-shih-chiao.† But this list does not exhaust the units at General Nogi's disposal in this quarter of the field, for the *Kobi* brigades which had been sent from the General Reserve were this day placed under his orders. Of these the 1st *Kobi* Brigade had the 15th *Kobi* Regiment at Pin-lo-pu and the remainder of its strength at Chen-hsin-tai-tzu. The 13th *Kobi* Brigade—less the 51st *Kobi* Regiment‡—was at Ma-shan-chia-tzu, while the 14th *Kobi* Brigade was little over a mile to the north-west on the Hsin-min-tun road. Indeed, with such great weight available it seems as if more might have been effected by the Japanese Third Army on the 7th.

* The 2nd Artillery Brigade.

† The 15th *Kobi* Brigade.

‡ Now with the Second Army. See p. 592.

From the action of the Third Army alone it might be conjectured that an erroneous conception dominated the Japanese tactics; and that this was the case is proved by the operations of the 3rd Division of the Second Army farther to the south, for a portion of that division was detailed to make an attack by the Japanese 3rd Division against Yu-huan-tun. attack, with the express object of saving the Third Army from a danger which did not exist. In order to describe this attack fully it is necessary to revert some fourteen hours and to transfer the narrative to that portion of the front held by General Topornin.

As it had been on the previous day the force under General Topornin was in position along the line Niu-hsin-tun—Yu-huan-tun—Three Houses—Redoubt No. 6, which was approximately two miles long; and since this line was on the 7th March the scene of one of the bloodiest engagements of the battle, a detailed description of it is essential. Generally speaking, the position, which ran north and south, consisted of redoubts, of villages placed in a state of defence and of trenches which had been dug during the previous year. The ground in front of it was absolutely open and the field of fire was on the whole excellent from the defender's point of view, although it was somewhat restricted in the centre by a slight elevation upon which stood the village of Li-wan-pu.

As regards the field fortifications, at Niu-hsin-tun, upon the right flank was a lunette in the north-western corner of the village, while east of it was Redoubt No. 4, intended to enfilade the rear of the position proper, should it be penetrated. Some twelve hundred yards south-west of Niu-hsin-tun lay Redoubt No. 5, a well traversed work provided with splinterproof shelters. Yu-huan-tun, a village, about a mile and a half in perimeter, consisted of strongly built houses, some of stone, and all surrounded by mud walls, the resisting power against projectiles of which was considerably increased by the effect of the low temperature at night. Some six hundred yards to the south was the cluster of buildings to which the Japanese soldiers gave the name of Three Houses,* and still farther south was Redoubt No. 6, of a type similar in most respects to No. 5. Although the redoubts were

* This hamlet is alluded to in Japanese sources as San Gen (i.e., Three Houses). The Russian equivalent is Tsantun.

undoubtedly strong, Yu-huan-tun was a weak spot in the line, for the village of Li-wan-pu enabled an enemy to approach more or less unseen to within comparatively short range, while in rear of it the ground was so open that cover for reserves was almost impossible to obtain. The defence of the whole front was entrusted to six and a half battalions and forty-eight guns, while five more battalions and one and a half sapper companies were in reserve. But for some unknown reason the section between Three Houses and Yu-huan-tun was, until the reserves were brought up, completely unoccupied.*

To the Japanese 5th Brigade, it will be remembered, orders had been sent at 4.15 p.m. on the afternoon of the 6th, directing it to attack so as to assist the 8th Division, which was in difficulties on the right. This had been carried out only to a limited extent when the approach of darkness had brought operations to a close.† The order to attack still held good, and of the Russian position that portion of it between Yu-huan-tun and Three Houses had been selected as the objective; but a more urgent reason than the necessity for assisting the 8th Division rendered attack imperative on the morning of the 7th. During the night reports came in to the effect that the Russians were falling back in such numbers that the position of the Japanese Third Army barring their line of retreat would be seriously imperilled. Everything possible was, therefore, to be done to divert the attention of the Russians, and the primary duty of the Japanese 3rd Division was to endeavour to attract superior force against itself. Indeed, Major-General Nambo, to whose brigade—the 5th—the duty was entrusted, had orders to conceal his strength, the better to lure the Russians towards the south-west. The ground had been reconnoitred upon the 6th March by a battalion from that brigade, and General Nambo had come to the conclusion that the capture of Three Houses was of the first importance, since from it Yu-huan-

* The following units held the position :—The 98th (Yuriev) and 99th (Ivangorod) Regiments, three and a half battalions of the 100th (Ostrov) Regiment, one and a half companies of the 16th Sapper Battalion and six batteries of the 25th Artillery Brigade. Of these, three battalions of the 98th (Yuriev) and two battalions of the 99th (Ivangorod) Regiments with the sapper companies formed the reserve.

† See p. 523.

tun could be more or less turned. The 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 33rd Regiment, therefore, were told off to capture the hamlet, while upon the left the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 6th Regiment were directed to march against Yu-huan-tun, heading towards its southern edge. A small party was detached to move beyond the outer flank of these latter battalions and to demonstrate by fire, with the intention of drawing attention from the real attack, and the 18th Regiment was to assist in a similar manner from the vicinity of Chan-ssu-tun.

At 4 a.m. upon the 7th March the force deployed and silently advanced towards its goal, but the Russian patrols were on the alert, fire was opened both from Three Houses and the southern portion of Yu-huan-tun, and as the Japanese approached two battalions of the Yuriev Regiment charged with the bayonet from the direction of the former place against the Japanese 33rd Regiment. In a moment the cheers of the Russians were answered by roars of *Banzai* from the attackers and a hand-to-hand fight ensued, lit up by the almost continuous flashes from rifles or hand-grenades. The Russians who had charged out could not withstand the impetus of the Japanese, their counter-attack came to a standstill, and they quickly fell back some four hundred yards. Three Houses was immediately rushed by the Japanese 33rd Regiment and the garrison was almost annihilated.* Meanwhile, upon the left, the two battalions of the 6th Regiment were seizing the southern corner of Yu-huan-tun. At about two hundred yards from the place the fire from the Russians began to tell, and a rush was made upon the village about 6 a.m. The outlying walls were gained without difficulty, but the houses in rear had been loopholed and had to be attacked one after another and in some cases to be set on fire before the garrisons could be expelled. By these tactics the southern portion of the village was gradually cleared of the Russians; but they remained firmly established in the northern part.

In the attack upon Three Houses the right of the two battalions of the 33rd Regiment had been greatly exposed to a flanking fire from Redoubt No. 6, and the reserve battalion of the regiment was now directed against that work; but in the face of the accurate volleys from its defenders† the Japanese were

* Of two companies only sixty-one men survived.

† Two companies of the 98th (Yuriev) Regiment.

unable to make headway, and eventually its commander—one of the few surviving officers—drew off to his left and joined up with the main body of the 33rd. Meanwhile day had begun to break, and the Russian guns opened a heavy fire upon the Japanese.* One battery engaged the Japanese artillery at Li-wan-pu and the others concentrated their fire upon the captured southern part of Yu-huan-tun and Three Houses. Against the latter place the fire was especially severe, but the 33rd Regiment had gone forward to conquer or die, and clinging to the meagre cover afforded by the walls all ranks resolved to sell their lives as dearly as they could. Some hours passed without further success being gained by either side, and the Russians profited by the lull to bring up most of their reserves into the front line. Finally, about eleven o'clock, a long line of Russian columns led by mounted officers was seen by those inside Three Houses to be advancing against that place.† Fire was opened upon them as they came near and they were beaten back with loss.

About this time General Kuropatkin received a pessimistic report as to the situation of Yu-huan-tun, and he sent word to General Kaulbars, recommending him to repair personally to that quarter and take charge of the operations for regaining the village.‡ When acknowledging this dispatch the latter mentioned that he was sending his army reserve§; and the commander-in-chief promised to send troops from those under his own hand.|| In addition to these reinforcements assistance was forthcoming to General Topornin from his right and left. About 11.30 a.m. General Kuropatkin telephoned to General

* The Russian artillery had taken position as follows:—Three batteries south-east of Niu-hsin-tun, one battery to the right and one to the left of Redoubt No. 5. One battery east of Yu-huan-tun.

† The Russians had now been reinforced by a battalion of the 34th and one from the 35th East Siberian Rifle Regiments from General Krause's detachment.

‡ The report received by General Kuropatkin implied that the whole village was in the hands of the Japanese.

§ The 2nd Brigade of the 31st Division. The 2nd Brigade 9th Division was also, to a certain extent, forming part of the army reserve. See footnote (+), p. 526.

|| Two battalions of the 34th (Syev) Regiment, one battalion of the 217th (Krom) Regiment and a battery of the 29th Artillery Brigade were dispatched to Yu-huan-tun, but before arriving at that place these units were overtaken by an order to return to the General Reserve. They accordingly withdrew to Wa-fang, but were subsequently called up to the front. See p. 553.

Gerngross to send Colonel Misevich's detachment from Ma-chuang-tzu to Yu-huan-tun;* General Gerngross on his own initiative ordered the commander of the 9th East Siberian Rifle Division to co-operate energetically in case of an attack by the Japanese; while from the left help was also forthcoming from General Tserpitski, the Lithuania Regiment arriving from Lu-kun-tun about eleven o'clock, to which place later came General Tserpitski's reserve under General Ganenfeldt.†

By one o'clock the Russian guns were playing upon Yu-huan-tun and Three Houses with deadly effect, and in the latter place the situation of the occupants, crowded into an area one hundred yards by fifty, rapidly became critical. No spot was safe from bullet or shell, and the dust caused by the latter served to hide the enemy and to mask his movements. Nevertheless, amongst the Russians, a sense of defeat seems to have prevailed, for at 1.15 p.m. General Kaulbars received a telegram from General Topornin to the effect that the 25th Division was beginning to give way—tidings which seemed to be confirmed by a telephone message received immediately afterwards saying that the troops were in full flight. Prompt action was clearly necessary and General Kaulbars galloped at once to Yu-huan-tun, only to find that the situation had been completely misrepresented and that the Russians were holding their own. A counter-attack was now ordered and three battalions of the Syev and Krom Regiments were brought up from Wa-fang for its execution, and during their advance were joined by part of the Yuriev and Lithuania Regiments. Instructions were also sent in haste to General Tserpitski to advance to the attack from his section of front. But assistance was not forthcoming from that quarter, although General Kaulbars had been led to expect that it only required his permission for a spirited offensive to be launched.‡

It was now about 2 p.m. The bombardment ceased, and, line upon line of Russians, looming up like giants in the mirage, were descried advancing over the plain by the Japanese holding Three

* This detachment moved off in due course and arrived about 3 p.m. at Redoubt No. 5 where it began to deploy. It was, however, kept back by General Kaulbars and took no part in the fight.

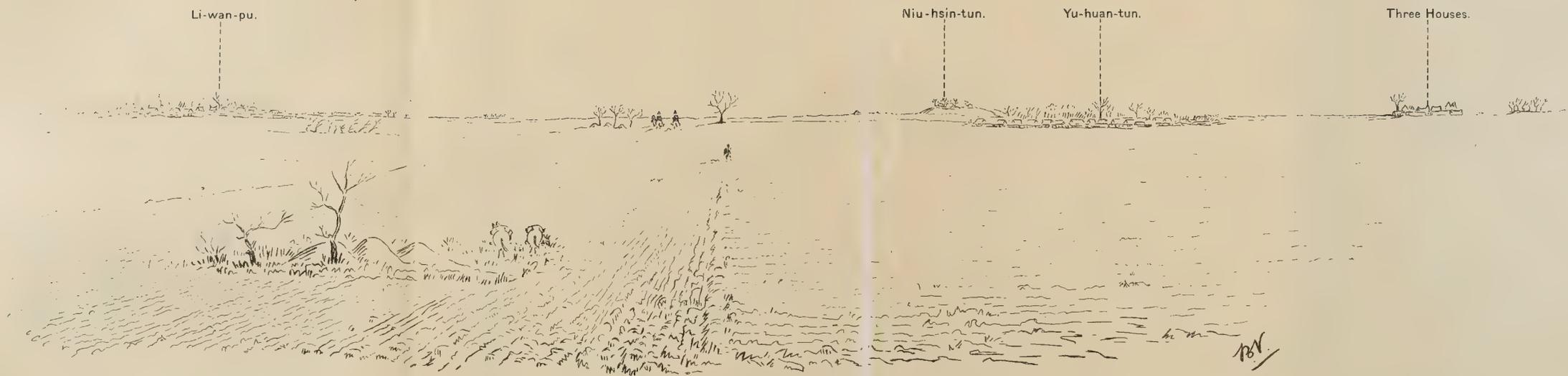
† The 97th (Lithuania) Regiment formed part of General Topornin's force, but had been lent to General Tserpitski. See p. 522.

‡ See p. 556.

Houses. On they came, littering the ground with dead and wounded, for they formed an easy target to the few Japanese left to fire at them. The first line, driven back, was pushed forward by the impulse of the second, and at length reached the little cluster of houses with its brave defenders. A fierce bayonet struggle took place. But it was of short duration, for most of the officers of the 33rd Regiment were dead, amongst them the regimental commander and the colonels of two of the battalions; and the remnant of the regiment broke from the scanty shelter of Three Houses and took refuge in the southern portion of Yu-huan-tun. But there the battalions of the 6th Regiment were engaged in a contest no less bitter, for the Russians had been reinforced by the 2nd Brigade of the 31st Division from the army reserve—the regiments of which had pushed on into the fight with bands playing. For hours a desperate struggle raged inside the village, across the centre street, which ran east and west, and at first all the efforts of the Russians to recapture the strongly constructed houses of the southern portion were in vain, for they were time after time forced back by the fire poured in from behind the walls and from the roofs.

At 3.15 p.m. two guns were dragged up and an attempt was made to batter down the defence at point blank range, but against the stone and hard mud walls of the Chinese buildings the shell proved of no effect. Towards dusk two old pattern field guns arrived and also opened fire, but they likewise failed to dislodge the Japanese. The only thing that seemed possible was to blow up the houses, and messengers were sent off to Mukden for explosive. It was not required, however, for the Japanese were now running short of ammunition and, since it was obvious that the Russians would not rest satisfied until the place was recaptured, it was decided to withdraw the 5th Brigade. Two battalions were sent forward from Li-wan-pu, and covered by this force and aided by the darkness the wounded and survivors withdrew through the ring of Russians now almost encircling the village.* Of the brigade

* Major Okoshi, of the 6th Regiment, had been sent back with a party escorting the regimental colour, and had been charged with a message to General Nambo explaining the situation of the regiment. Within a few minutes all the party except one soldier were killed or wounded. The



THE BATTLE OF MUKDEN.

View taken from the south of Li-wan-pu, showing the open ground over which the Japanese 5th Brigade advanced on the 7th March, 1905, against Yu-huan-tun and Three Houses.

there were left unwounded but thirteen hundred of all ranks—the remnant of five thousand five hundred men ; but in actual numbers the losses of the Russians were even more severe, for of the troops participating in the action there fell one hundred and forty-three officers and five thousand two hundred and sixty-six non-commissioned officers and men. As has been seen, the fighting was of a most desperate nature, and the tenacity exhibited by both sides had been in the highest degree creditable.

By its display of unflinching courage the Japanese 5th Brigade showed upon this day an heroic spirit of self-sacrifice ; and, although the attack was really uncalled for, its conduct is on that account no less worthy of admiration. Amongst those who fell was the gallant leader of the 33rd, Lieut.-Colonel Yoshioka. He had been senior adjutant of the 3rd Division, and had begged to be allowed to command a regiment. On this, the first occasion upon which he led in action, he lost his life but so signally distinguished himself that the whole army rang with his name for days.

It will be remembered that General Tatsumi, commanding the Japanese 8th Division, had determined on the previous evening not to accept defeat at the hands of General Tserpitski, but to make a

unwounded man conveyed the colour to safety, and Major Okoshi thereupon shot himself after writing the following letter :—

Sir,

The reason I left the regiment, leaving the regimental and battalion commanders behind and not sharing in their fate, is simply because I was ordered to do so by the regimental commander, in order to report the situation of the regiment to Your Excellency.

I knew before I left the village of the danger en route ; but I had hoped to return to the regiment once more after I had reported myself to Your Excellency, and to die for my country with my brother officers and dear soldiers. I regret to say, however, that I am severely wounded. I will therefore commit suicide and follow the same journey to heaven as the other officers and soldiers have done. It is to my deepest regret that my right hand is useless for committing *hara-kiri* as a warrior should. I will, therefore, die by my revolver. Have sympathy on my being unable to die like a *Samurai*. I thank Your Excellency for your kindness to me in the past, and sincerely wish Your Excellency good luck in your military life.

I am too faint to write any more.

6.30 p.m. on the 7th March under the enemy's artillery fire from the west, and at a nameless village south of Li-wan-pu.

Major OKOSHI.

To His Excellency,
Major-General NAMBO.

fresh effort against the Russian works during the night of the 6th—7th. This was ordered to take place in two wings, the left to advance from Nin-kuan-tun on Yan-tzu-tun, and the right from Wu-lin-pu against Chi-kuan-tun. In the former the commander—Colonel Tsugawa of the 5th Regiment—collected over one thousand men from various units and with some of these made an attempt to work round the north corner of Yan-tzu-tun and then to attack at dawn with the rest. The advance began about 4.30 a.m., but unfortunately the troops detailed for the flanking movement went too far to the north, so that when dawn broke they were still at a distance from Yan-tzu-tun and therefore unable to co-operate. Portions of the 5th and 17th Regiments, however, succeeded in gaining the shelter of some Chinese graves in rear and within fifty yards of Redoubt No. 8, and a few men even got inside the village, where they were taken in flank from the redoubt and from a hollow road which ran north of the village. The assault thus ended in failure, but a small number of Japanese which had meanwhile made its way into the ditch of the redoubt refused to retire and remained, throwing hand-grenades over the parapet. A company of Russians was then sent into the ditch and bayoneted some of this stubborn band and made prisoners of the rest. The attack upon the right fared no better. It was under Captain Oyama, adjutant of the 4th Brigade, who collected about four hundred men from the troops in Wu-lin-pu and made a gallant effort to rush Redoubt No. 9. But though this operation was better timed than that on the left the Russian fire was too deadly and the Japanese had to retire with heavy loss.

When, therefore, General Tserpitski rode round his line at dawn on the 7th it was to find that his troops had beaten off the Japanese; and the intelligence aroused in him a feeling of optimism in marked contrast to the uneasiness which had led to his appeals of the two previous days. Before nine o'clock he reported to General Kaulbars that all attacks had been beaten off and that his men were keen for a fight. In fact, so eager did they appear to General Tserpitski that he suggested in his dispatch that he might be allowed to assume the offensive, should a favourable opportunity arise. He received a guarded reply from Second Manchurian Army head-quarters, asking what point he proposed to attack and in what way the detachment at

Portion of the Japanese 8th Division makes an unsuccessful attack against General Tserpitski's line.

Erh-tai-tzu and the 5th Siberian Corps could co-operate. Having discussed this problem with his staff, General Tserpitski telephoned to General Kaulbars the information required.* But by the afternoon his enthusiasm appears to have cooled, and he was again beset by his old fears. When General Kaulbars rode to Yu-huan-tun and found that affairs there were in a much more favourable state than he had been led to expect,† it occurred to him that an offensive movement of more extended scope than a mere local counter-attack might be of great service, and he determined to take advantage of the eagerness which was alleged to be animating General Tserpitski's troops. He accordingly sent off a staff officer to inform the latter that a favourable moment for his suggested offensive action had arrived. But as time went by no sign of activity was visible along the Russian front. And when the staff officer returned about half-past three it was to report that General Tserpitski then considered attack impossible in view of the losses he had sustained and of the fact that the enemy in front of him had been reinforced. This refusal apparently extinguished in General Kaulbars all hope of making a counter-stroke.

As a matter of fact, since daylight the operations against General Tserpitski had been of a minor nature. The Japanese 8th Division made no attempt to attack after the unsuccessful issue of the early morning, and the rest of the day was spent by it in reorganizing its scattered units. Against the section of the Russian front held by General Churin a heavy artillery fire was kept up all day; against General Rusanov it was of much less intensity; while upon the left General Petrov was left practically undisturbed after 10 a.m. This lull in the attack was due to the exhaustion of the Japanese 5th Division, which since the 1st March had been more heavily engaged than the remainder of the army, and was by this time so attenuated in numbers that it could only play a passive part. So unfitted was it indeed for more heavy fighting that some movements observed in General Petrov's section, which were thought to indicate the preliminaries of a Russian counter-attack, caused considerable anxiety at divisional head-quarters.‡ During the

* The conclusion arrived at is not known.

† See p. 553.

‡ It seems that the movement noted was caused by the dispatch of the 55th (Podolia) and 1st Rifle Regiments to Ta-a-pu by General Petrov, in consequence of fears of a Japanese penetration at Yu-huan-tun.

night the commander withdrew his first line to the sandhills about a mile west of the railway embankment, where it immediately entrenched itself. Before this took place, however, the depleted division had received some reinforcements to compensate for the excessive wastage which had taken place. In the evening an infantry draft one thousand strong arrived from Japan, while during the day General Oku had sent up a battalion of the 21st Regiment from his reserve.* But it is now clear that the 5th Division could have effected nothing to justify the uneasiness felt and expressed by General Tserpitski.

The enforced inactivity of this fraction of the Japanese forces allowed General Gershelmann also to pass the day in comparative quiet. He had now included in his sector of defence the detachment in Erh-tai-tzu, and in addition to his own troops he had conditionally at his disposal the 2nd Brigade of the 9th Division.† The day in this quarter was marked by an exchange of artillery fire on a moderate scale with the Japanese 5th Division. About 3 p.m., in response to a telephone message from army headquarters three batteries were sent off to Ta-a-pu; and later General Tserpitski, who was in no straits whatever, telephoned to ask if General Gershelmann could spare some infantry and artillery. The latter replied by sending the Orel Regiment with two old pattern batteries and portion of a quick-firing battery.

The operations west of Mukden had undergone a marked change from those of the previous two days. The Russians were now entirely on the defensive, for the counter-stroke of the Second Manchurian Army had been tacitly abandoned; and the weight of the offensive carried out by the Japanese was no longer pressing against the Russian left but against the right and centre. The final result of the day in this quarter of the field was that the Japanese 1st Division was practically in rear of the Russian army and within three miles of its line of communications; General Gerngross had been forced to abandon the line Tsao-hou-tun—Tsuan-pan-che; and, although success had attended the Russians in their

General Kuro-
patkin sends
further orders
to the Third
and First
Manchurian
Armies.

* A battalion of the 31st Regiment was also sent to the 8th Division.

† The 2nd Brigade 9th Division was part of the Second Manchurian Army reserve.

repulse of the onslaught made against Yu-huan-tun, General Kaulbars was unable to profit by the success to make a strong counter-attack to neutralize the advantage gained by the Japanese Third Army. This inability to strike with adequate force at the critical moment was to a great extent due to the same cause as had militated so seriously against the Russian counter-stroke on the 5th and 6th—the nervousness of General Tserpitski, and his failure to view the situation in his immediate front in proper perspective.

Early in the afternoon it became plain that the balance of success inclined to the Japanese; and this fact induced General Kuropatkin to issue further and more definite orders to the other two armies to fall back to the Hun Ho. At twenty minutes past three he directed the necessary telegrams to be dispatched. According to these the Third and First Manchurian Armies were to retire secretly during the night, leaving strong rear guards on their positions, which were to hold on as long as possible. The instructions regarding the front to be occupied by the armies were as follows:—

(1) The Third Manchurian Army was to occupy the bridge-head, from the River Hun to Fort No. 5 east of Mu-chang, after detaching sixteen battalions to the General Reserve in Mukden.

(2) The First Manchurian Army was to occupy the position Fu-ling—Fu-shun, with its right flank on Fort No. 5, while the detachments of Major-General Danilov and Major-General Maslov were to cover the roads from the line Fu-shun—Ying-pan towards Tieh-ling.

The First Manchurian Army was to send twenty-four battalions to the General Reserve.

(3) The Second Manchurian Army and the corps attached to it were to cover the movement, holding the enemy on the line Wan-niu-tun—Tsao-hou-tun—Yu-huan-tun—Yan-tzu-tun—Sha-ta-tzu and particularly firmly on his right.

At the same time, since the retirement of the Third Manchurian Army would leave the left flank of the Second Manchurian Army in a difficult situation orders were sent to prepare a defensive line from Yan-tzu-tun to Sha-tou-tzu; and when this was occupied the position at Sha-ta-tzu was to be considered as an advanced one.

To pass now to the centre of the battle: by the 7th March General Nodzu had come to the conclusion that some vigorous

effort must be made to relieve the impasse opposite Sha-ho-pu and Putilov and One Tree Hills and also to assist General Nogi's army, which, according to the incorrect accounts which were then current, was in imminent danger. It was a similar belief, as will be remembered, which had led to the desperate attack of the 5th Brigade of the 3rd Division against Yuhuan-tun and Three Houses. Moreover, when the enforced delay of the First and Ya-lu Armies was also taken into consideration, the chance of an ultimate victory for the Japanese had actually begun to grow somewhat doubtful. To General Nodzu it seemed that if the Russian centre could be broken the situation on the Japanese flanks would be automatically relieved. The village of Han-chia-pu, therefore, assumed an importance even greater than had been the case the previous day, and the attack upon it was not to be merely a tactical incident confined to the troops immediately facing it. The 4th Division was ordered to seize the line Pei-tai-tzu-yen—Su-chia-tun railway station as an integral portion of the operations. And for this the divisional commander, appreciating the significance of Hsiao-chi-shun-pu, concentrated his efforts principally upon that place round which a stubborn fight was to rage till early morning of the 8th March.

The village of Hsiao-chi-shun-pu was held by six companies of the Borisov Regiment, with a scout detachment and two machine guns, while a smaller village about half a mile to the north-west was garrisoned by five companies of the Zlatoust Regiment. Between the two places was a lunette held by a company, while in rear, in local reserve, were three companies at Su-chia-tun station, and behind them three batteries in position. A mile farther to the north-west were three more battalions.* Captain Mochalov of the Borisov Regiment was commandant in Hsiao-chi-shun-pu.

The Japanese batteries opened fire early in the morning and about eight o'clock a considerable force was noticed by the Russians to be concentrating in Ta-ching.† This force soon came on,

* The 2nd Battalion of the 244th (Borisov) Regiment, and the 1st and 4th Battalions of the 243rd (Zlatoust) Regiment. These were the divisional reserve of the 61st Division.

† This was apparently from the 7th Brigade.

and the defenders of Hsiao-chi-shun-pu allowed it to approach to within seven hundred yards, when they opened fire and forced the attackers to halt and entrench where they were, as best they could. Shortly afterwards the garrison was strengthened by the arrival of two companies, with which arrived General Podvalnyuk the commander of the 61st Division. About 9 a.m. the Japanese again pressed on, this time from Ta-su-chia-pu as well, whence the attack was made by the 19th Brigade. But up to midday they were entirely unsuccessful, although their artillery had caused considerable losses in the garrison of Hsiao-chi-shun-pu, the machine gun detachment having been absolutely annihilated. Between three and four o'clock the action recommenced with renewed vigour, and General Podvalnyuk considered it advisable to bring up the divisional reserve to Su-chia-tun station. At 7.15 p.m. a portion of the Japanese 7th Brigade advanced on a broad front, with its right on the branch railway, and managed to reach the trenches on the west of Hsiao-chi-shun-pu. The 11th Company of the Borisov Regiment, led by Captain Mochalov, counter-attacked, and after a hand-to-hand encounter drove back the Japanese who fled leaving many dead behind. But the Russian company had suffered no less heavily, losing amongst others its commandant. Other attempts by the Japanese 4th Division were made up till midnight but all were repulsed. The 61st Division of the 5th Siberian Corps, and particularly the Borisov Regiment, maintained their positions with skill and determination, at a cost of twenty-eight officers and five hundred and seventy-six non-commissioned officers and men.

But the gallantry displayed by the 5th Siberian Corps at Hsiao-chi-shun-pu was discounted by a defeat of the XVIIth Corps at Han-chia-pu. As has already been narrated, the Japanese 6th Division, assisted by the Tomioka Detachment, had succeeded

The Japanese
6th Division
captures Han-
chia-pu.

in approaching the Railway Redoubt on the evening of the 6th and, during the night selected officers had been sent forward to make a thorough reconnoissance of the ground. Upon the information brought back the divisional commander

determined to assault the work at dawn, directing his attack from the south and west; and hand-grenades, ladders, and other material useful either to demolish or cross obstacles were got together. The 23rd Regiment deployed all three battalions in the front line and advanced from the south, while the 48th Regiment

and the bulk of Colonel Tomioka's detachment approached from the west; and when day broke the leading line of the attackers was some three hundred yards from the objective. From the Railway Redoubt and from the guns of the 35th Artillery Brigade a fire of great intensity was now directed on the Japanese, whose advance on such a large scale and in broad daylight is stated to have afforded one of the most striking spectacles of the whole battle.

Before the redoubt itself could be assaulted, however, it was necessary to deal with the Nyejin Regiment south-east of it, and towards that regiment the Japanese, making use of the deserted Russian fire and communication trenches, managed to approach with comparatively small loss. Between ten and eleven o'clock the fire of the Japanese field and siege guns attained its maximum intensity, and suffocating smoke and clouds of dust completely enveloped not only the Railway Redoubt but the whole of Han-chia-pu itself. Some time about noon the preparatory bombardment ceased, and the Japanese immediately charged up to the redoubt from three sides, and hurled hand-grenades into it. The Zaraisk and Morshansk companies within it, having lost six officers and two hundred and eighteen men, shaken and deafened by the detonations and half poisoned by the gases from the high-explosive shells, were unable to hold their own, and abandoned the work, streaming east and north-east, and carrying with them in their flight some of the Nyejin Regiment on the left. That regiment was vigorously assaulted at the same moment as the Japanese rushed the Railway Redoubt, but thanks to the enfilade fire of the 6th Artillery Brigade of the 6th Siberian Corps from the direction of Kuan-tun, it was able to hold its own, except for the flight of the right section of the defence, carried away by the garrison of the captured work.

When the redoubt had fallen the capture of Han-chia-pu was at once effected, and the Morshansk Regiment, which had been holding that village as well as the line of railway immediately north of it, had to be withdrawn. It had suffered very heavily, especially in officers, and appears to have become demoralized so soon as retirement was ordered. At first only three hundred to four hundred men could be collected, and with these Colonel Sivitski, the commander of the regiment, attempted to advance to regain the village, but they could not be got to proceed in face of the devastating fire which was poured on them

from rifles and machine guns, and a further retirement was made towards Kao-li-tun. The Russian 3rd Division was ordered to make a fresh counter-attack; but General Orlov was only able to detail about half his force for the purpose, since the withdrawal of more troops from the railway line would have enabled the Japanese 4th Division, at that time attacking Hsiao-chi-shun-pu, to cross the line and thus get in rear of the XVIIth Corps. The counter-attack was bravely carried out regardless of loss—one battalion losing almost all its officers and five hundred and twenty-five other ranks within a short space of time; but it failed, although two young officers and a handful of men actually reached the edge of the village. About 4 p.m. a fresh attempt was made, with no better success.

While the regiments of the Russian 3rd Division were thus making gallant but fruitless efforts to re-take Han-chia-pu, in the 35th Division the Commander of the Nyejin Regiment was trying to restore the Morshansk Regiment to some sort of order. He succeeded in collecting some eight hundred to nine hundred men and these, supported by a battalion of the Nyejin Regiment, recaptured Redoubt No. 1 from the Japanese.* Farther they could not force their way, both on account of extreme exhaustion and a complete absence of reserves. However, the fight was restored, and the gap between the 3rd and 35th Divisions was filled.†

A further attempt against Han-chia-pu was made by the Morshansk Regiment from Redoubt No. 1, and failure again met the Russians; and about 6 p.m. the necessity for a continuation of such operations disappeared. News was brought to the corps commander, General Selivanov, of the orders for the retirement to the Hun Ho; and to avoid further losses he ordered the attack to be broken off and a generally defensive attitude to be resumed. Thus, after a day of strenuous fighting, the Japanese

* Two redoubts were in the central third of the distance between Han-chia-pu and Kuan-tun. Of these, Redoubt No. 1 was the closer to Han-chia-pu.

† At 4 p.m. the right of the 35th Division rested on the stream immediately north-east of Han-chia-pu. The left of the 3rd Division at this time was slightly east of the branch railway and about a mile north-west of Kao-li-tun. The intervening space was filled by a company of the 10th (Novoingermanland) Regiment and a mixed company of the 139th (Morshansk) Regiment.

were allowed to retain possession of the Railway Redoubt and Han-chia-pu. On both sides the losses had been exceptionally severe. The Japanese 6th Division had suffered over two thousand casualties, and those of the Russian 3rd Division amounted to thirty-seven officers and two thousand four hundred and ninety-eight non-commissioned officers and men. The 35th Division lost in all nearly sixteen hundred, of whom seventeen officers and one thousand and forty-nine other ranks were from the Morshansk Regiment alone.

In conjunction with the Japanese operations against Han-chia-pu the Okubo *Kobi* Division had endeavoured to take Sha-ho-pu. For this an extensive artillery preparation was made during the forenoon, and shortly after 2 p.m. an attack was delivered, but it was repulsed without much difficulty by the 6th Siberian Corps. During the remainder of the day nothing but intermittent firing went on in this portion of the field. Similarly, to the east, where the Russian 1st Corps and the Japanese 10th Division were confronting each other, the strong fortifications on Putilov and One Tree Hills caused the deadlock which had so long existed to continue for another day. The artillery duel, however, went on as furiously as ever.

All along the strip of battle front between One Tree Hill and Ma-chun-tan Tuesday, the 7th March, was passed in almost perfect calm, although at the latter place the activity of the Ya-lu Army led to energetic fighting. In the First Manchurian Army any prospect of the offensive had definitely ceased to be contemplated for some days, and now even passive defence gave way to preparations for retreat. On the Japanese side the feeling that a Russian retirement was but a matter of a short time seems to have prevailed. With the 4th Siberian Corps the day passed quietly, and by evening an extraordinary silence had fallen along its whole front. And, likewise, where the 2nd Guard Brigade was facing the 2nd Siberian Corps, there was practically no activity; even an occasional round from the Japanese guns on Pagoda Hill failing to elicit any response. Shortly after midday the continued inaction of either side led to a formal truce, during which the dead and wounded were collected and exchanged across a line mutually agreed upon. Farther east the Japanese 12th Division was sniped at intervals

The left of
the Japanese
Fourth Army.

Inactivity
of both sides
between One
Tree Hill and
Ma-chun-tan.

during the morning, but there was no gun fire except for ten minutes, at 11.30 a.m., after which all was quiet for nearly four hours. In the 2nd Division General Ohara continued his advance upon the right against the detachments of General Baumgarten and General Kharkhevich, which, however, were too strong to be brushed aside, and little progress was made. The Japanese First Army therefore had an easy day; but it was regarded as merely a temporary lull before strenuous exertion. Everywhere in the army the feeling that the Russians were about to retreat had been gaining ground. The truce—which was made at the instance of the Russians—the movements of men and wagons, and an unusually large number of camp fires at night were interpreted as signs indicating the possibility of a pursuit all along the line at a moment's notice.

The quiet which reigned in the Japanese First Army, however, was not shared by the Ya-lu Army farther to the east, for here the attempts to drive in the Russian left flank were persisted in with no less energy than before. Early in the morning a battalion of the 22nd Brigade* took the offensive, directing its efforts against Colours' Hill. It succeeded in securing a temporary advantage, though the accurate fire of the artillery of the defence aided by a counter-attack made by a mixed infantry force drove it back again with heavy loss. Amongst those that fell was General Mayada, the brigade commander, who was shot through the head while directing the fight from a hill-top five hundred yards away. At this time all the Russian reserves on the Tu-pin-tai position were used up and a hundred Cossacks had to be dismounted so as to form a nucleus on which to draw if required. This continued pressure of the Japanese, coupled with the retirement of the Kulikov Regiment,† again roused the fears of General Rennenkampf for the safety of his right flank, and he had no infantry left to fill the gap or even to gain touch with the left of the 3rd Siberian Corps. A squadron and a half were accordingly sent out on the right, but the precaution proved to be unnecessary for, as already explained,‡ General Linevich had by this taken steps to hold the ground south-west of Ma-chun-tan, and had reunited various small detachments for that purpose under

* Of the 11th Division.

† See p. 535.

‡ See p. 535.

the command of General Kharkevich. The squadron and a half returned, therefore, to Ma-chun-tan in the evening.

Having failed against the centre of the Tu-pin-tai position, the Japanese about 11 a.m. turned their attention to the left flank, and this effort and three others made during the next four hours were all repulsed. Victory was dearly purchased by the Russians, for one battalion of the 36th East Siberian Rifle Regiment had only one hundred and ninety-four of all ranks left when fighting ceased.* Against General Liubavin's position the Japanese also delivered an attack shortly after midday, but thanks to the action of the Russian mountain guns from Height 194 they were driven back about 3 p.m. In General Danilov's section no active operations took place on either side. About four o'clock fighting everywhere died away, and a report was received from General Liubavin to say that a large column of Japanese transport was moving south, and that this apparently pointed to retirement on the part of the enemy. Guns could be seen moving in the same direction, and in order to clear up the situation scouts were sent out from the Russian side. These soon returned with the report that the enemy had withdrawn, leaving only small parties. As regards this retrograde movement, the evidence that it took place is fairly strong; but the Japanese records available do not enable an opinion as to its meaning to be hazarded. To a certain extent the point is immaterial, for almost simultaneously with the intelligence brought back by the Russian scouts there arrived from First Manchurian Army head-quarters the order for General Rennenkampf's detachment to fall back behind the Hun Ho.

The retirement which General Kuropatkin had ordered for the Third and First Manchurian Armies, in which General Rennenkampf's detachment was to be the first body of troops to be set in motion, was not the only measure taken by him to safeguard his position. On the Northern Front the situation had become extremely disquieting. During the day Japanese patrols had been making their presence felt north of Mukden; Cossacks carrying dispatches on the flying post route from that city to Ti-yu-min† had been fired on; and at 3.15

General Kuropatkin forms the Northern Detachment to safeguard the railway.

* The total of the casualties on this day on the Tu-pin-tai position was twelve officers and seven hundred and seventy-seven non-commissioned officers and men.

† About twenty-eight miles north-north-west of Mukden.

p.m. a hostile patrol had been driven off at that village by the Ussuri Cossacks. In the afternoon, also, a body of Chinese, which had been formed for service under the Director of Transport, dispersed north of Hu-shih-tai station a party of Japanese cavalry disguised as Chinamen, of whom one was captured. Later, reports kept arriving at General Head-Quarters describing a movement of hostile bodies from Hou-hsin-tun against Siding 97. General Kuropatkin therefore ordered Colonel Misevich's detachment to fill the gap between General Birger and Colonel Zapolski,* and detailed other units—some from the General Reserve—to proceed to the threatened area, directing General Kaulbars to form with these a Northern Detachment under General von der Launitz. Shortly after midnight on the 7th-8th this was done, and instructions were given by General Kaulbars to the commander of this new force to cover the northern approaches to Mukden, to safeguard the railway, and to assume the offensive should the enemy advance.†

By these measures at dawn upon the 8th there should be collected twenty-two battalions and from thirty to forty guns on the front Ta-hen-tun—Wan-kan-tun,‡ while in the General Reserve, under the command of Colonel Borisov, there would remain five and a half battalions from the 4th Siberian Corps and a battery of the 26th Artillery Brigade.§ These precautions were to some extent justified by a significant occurrence during the night. Just before a hospital train was due the railway was cut about four miles north of Hu-shih-tai station. Fortunately this was discovered in time and the train was stopped short of the break. Although the damage done was of trifling extent—for traffic was suspended only for an hour—the incident was sufficiently alarming.

* See p. 553. Colonel Misevich arrived at Ta-hen-tun at 9.15 a.m. on the 8th.

† The Northern Detachment consisted of the 1st Brigade of the 41st Division (less two battalions) with portion of the 45th Artillery Brigade (General Birger's detachment), the 53rd (Volhynia) Regiment with twelve guns; the 10th Rifle Regiment, Colonel Zapolski's detachment (six battalions). Colonel Misevich's detachment (four battalions and two batteries), Prince Orbeliani's cavalry, which had taken no part in the operations of this day, and two battalions, apparently of drafts or details.

‡ This village was attacked by a Japanese patrol about midnight and, a panic occurring among the troopers of General Pavlov's force holding the place, it was set on fire by the Japanese.

§ From the 54th Division of the 5th Siberian Corps.

The 7th March witnessed a great change in the aspect of the operations. All idea of a renewed offensive on the west from their then position had been given up by the Russians, and in that quarter of the field they had been almost entirely on the defensive. The Japanese Third Army, strengthened by three *Kobi* brigades, had continued its progress without being subjected to the attack which the Japanese seem to have expected, and to prevent which much of the pressure applied by their Third and Second Armies was directed. It had moved cautiously; but its left had arrived within a few miles of the line which linked the Russians to their base in Europe.

That evening marked the completion of the second phase of the battle. The First and Third Manchurian Armies were about to retire when darkness set in; and by the following morning the line of the Sha Ho, which had been held by the Russians for nearly six months, would be abandoned—as it proved—for ever. But the struggle was by no means over. If General Kuropatkin could succeed in withdrawing his centre and left armies unobserved, and could manage to build up a strong General Reserve without loss of time, it was not too late for him to deliver with it a counter-attack against the Japanese Third Army. Such an operation, if energetically carried out, would afford reasonable expectations of success, for General Nogi's force was now almost entirely north of the Hsin-min-tun road and was separated from the Japanese Second Army by a dangerous gap. Moreover, the latter had borne the brunt of the fighting for days past and had failed to make any real impression against that portion of the Second Manchurian Army's line held by General Topornin and General Tserpitski. On the other hand, if the Japanese Fourth, First and Ya-lu Armies could succeed by a rapid and relentless pursuit in harrying the Third and First Manchurian Armies in their retirement, the creation of a strong General Reserve by the Russians might be prevented, or at any rate deferred until General Nogi's troops had got astride the Harbin—Mukden railway and the Mandarin Road. In such case the battle might yet develop into what the Liao-yang had failed to be—a second Sedan.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

THE BATTLE OF MUKDEN—*continued*—THE RETIREMENT OF THE THIRD AND FIRST MANCHURIAN ARMIES TO THE HUN HO DURING THE NIGHT OF THE 7TH-8TH MARCH—OPERATIONS ON THE 8TH MARCH—THE JAPANESE THIRD ARMY ATTACKS THE NORTHERN FRONT OF MUKDEN—THE THIRD AND FIRST MANCHURIAN ARMIES TAKE UP THEIR NEW POSITIONS.

(Plans 67 and 68.)

As has been stated, the retirement of the two Russian armies was to begin with the withdrawal of General Rennenkampf's detachment, which consisted of the Kulikov Regiment on the right,* General Ekk's force on the Tu-pin-tai position, the troops under General Liubavin, General Danilov's force about Ku-chia-tzu, and the small detachment under General Maslov, now mostly on the right of the Hun. General Rennenkampf decided that the first of these to move was to be that of General Ekk, who was ordered to withdraw from the position at Tu-pin-tai at dusk, under cover of a rear guard of four battalions, three squadrons and eight machine guns, the infantry being ordered to commence the movement so soon as the artillery had descended into the valley. General Danilov was meanwhile to hold his ground until further orders, keeping touch with General Liubavin, who was also to wait for instructions. The Kulikov Regiment was to move to a position near Wang-mu-chan-la-tzu, where it was to get touch with the rear guard of General Ekk; and General Maslov's orders were to occupy a position at Ying-pan; whence he was to support as far as possible the cavalry under Prince Dolgorukov, operating to the east of General Danilov.

At midnight of the 7th-8th General Ekk's column passed through Ma-chun-tan, and two hours later the rear guard began to

* This regiment had been transferred from General Kharkevich to General Rennenkampf.

defile through the village, where it was joined by the Kulikov Regiment. So far operations had not been interfered with by the enemy; and it was not until after daybreak on the 8th that a couple of battalions from the Japanese 11th Division advanced against the Tu-pin-tai position and drove off some scout detachments which had been left behind by General Ekk's rear guard. Realizing that the Russians had definitely withdrawn, General Samejima then sent forward a pursuing detachment, which came up with their rear guard at Wang-mu-chan-la-tzu and began to press it; but when the rear guard eventually fell back at dark the Japanese made no further advance, and General Ekk, who had been meanwhile resting his main body at Chang-chia-tien-tzu, had by that time resumed his march. Late in the afternoon the main body crossed the Hun and took up a position on the right bank at Chang-ta, where it was joined, either during the night of the 8th or early next day, by the rear guard. The Kulikov Regiment, however, had left the road followed by General Ekk, in order to rejoin its own corps—the 3rd Siberian—and bivouacked for the night at Tan-yi-tun. The main body of the Japanese 11th Division occupied Ma-chun-tan, where it passed the 8th March, covered by outposts.

General Liubavin, so soon as the Japanese perceived that a retrograde movement was in progress, was attacked from 8 a.m. on the 8th on a position he had taken up north of Tun-hsi-ho-la, and since his right flank was completely exposed by the withdrawal of General Ekk, he decided to fall back and to make for Liu-chia-tien-tzu. Evacuating his position about three o'clock he deployed his force three hours later on its new front, where he passed the remainder of the day, apparently without having been pursued by any considerable force.

The initial movement which General Liubavin's force had made—to the high ground north of Tun-hsi-ho-la—had seriously inconvenienced General Danilov, for the Japanese had immediately occupied the original position of the former and had begun to threaten the right of General Danilov, who was compelled to reinforce that flank. The Japanese, however, pressed on, and to the west he was forced to evacuate the Tung Ling. Later in the day, when news came of General Liubavin's further progress to the heights north of Liu-chia-tien-tzu, General Danilov was obliged to withdraw his right still farther back; and he sent word to General Rennenkampf more than once that his position was

one of great difficulty. No replies having been received to his messages, a council of war was held about 11 p.m., when it was unanimously decided to proceed before dawn on the 9th to Tungssu-a. General Maslov's force occupied a position at Ying-pan as had been ordered. Thus, of General Rennenkampf's detachment only General Ekk and General Maslov were by the evening of the 8th across the Hun Ho.

The retirement of the 3rd Siberian Corps presented decided difficulties, for it was at this time swollen to a strength of forty-eight battalions, eleven squadrons and one hundred and thirty-four guns, which were distributed over a front of twenty miles, and in some places separated from the enemy by a few hundred yards only. The lines of retreat also led down two valleys both of which were comparatively open and in view of the high ground occupied by the Japanese. During the afternoon of the 7th three separate rear guards had been sent on ahead, with orders to take up positions through which the remainder of the corps would pass:—

The 3rd
Siberian Corps.

(a) To Wa-fang. 10th East Siberian Rifle Regiment and the Yeniseisk Regiment.

(b) To Hao-yu. 36th East Siberian Rifle Regiment with six mountain guns.

(c) To Hsiao-pu. One battalion, eight squadrons and two guns.

Hsi-hu-cheng was detailed as the point of assembly of all the units on the main position of the corps, the evacuation of which began between 10 p.m. and midnight; and before seven o'clock on the morning of the 8th the heads of the columns formed by the right and left wings of the corps reached the rendezvous. An hour or so later the last of General Baumgarten's troops which had been operating on the east of the position passed through Chia-hou. At 8 a.m. those in Hsi-hu-cheng started northwards, covered by a new rear guard under General Bachinski which was ordered to hold on to that village as long as possible; * but these orders presented no difficulty in execution, for, until late in the afternoon, from the enemy's side there appeared only small patrols or reconnoitring detachments from the 2nd Division, although later the Japanese deployed a more considerable force. The movement

* The rear guard consisted of the 36th East Siberian Rifle Regiment, the 6th (Yeniseisk) Siberian Infantry Regiment, one field and one mountain battery, and three squadrons of the 4th Siberian Cossack Regiment.

was therefore continued without much interference, and by nightfall of the 8th the corps was generally disposed as follows:—*

About Ka-pu-kai, fourteen battalions.

At Fu-shun and Ma-niu-chuang-tzu, nine and a quarter battalions.

Erh-tao-kou, two battalions.

About Hao-yu, or on the march, thirteen battalions.

At Hsi-hu-cheng, (rear guard), seven battalions.

During the afternoon, in accordance with instructions from the commander of the First Manchurian Army, measures were taken by General Ivanov to send off the number of battalions which had been called for by General Kuropatkin for his General Reserve.† At first it had been intended to return the 72nd Division complete,‡ but since the Kulikov Regiment had passed temporarily under the orders of General Rennenkampf this plan was not found feasible. Ultimately, the following arrangements were made: the Tsaritsin§ and Krasnoyarsk|| Regiments were detailed by order of General Linevich to join the Ist Corps, while the 72nd Division, less the Kulikov Regiment, with four batteries of the 10th Artillery Brigade, was to march at dawn on the 9th to Pu-ho, to join the General Reserve.¶ Having made these arrangements, General Ivanov about 9 p.m. issued his orders for the occupation of the position by his remaining units. The section from Ti-ta to the stream flowing from Ma-niu-chuang-tzu to Fu-shun was to be held by General Kashtalinski,** while Colonel Ivanov,†† the commander

* These figures, which are taken from the *Russian Official History*, amount to forty-five and a quarter battalions as against forty-eight which is given in the same source as the total number of battalions in the 3rd Siberian Corps on this day.

† See p. 559.

‡ This division, which belonged to the 6th Siberian Corps, had been sent from the General Reserve to the 3rd Siberian Corps early in the battle. See p. 316.

§ This regiment belonged to the Ist Corps, but had been in the General Reserve and was dispatched to the 3rd Siberian Corps early in the battle. See p. 316.

|| This regiment had been sent to the 3rd Siberian Corps from the 4th Siberian Corps. See p. 292.

¶ The 4th (Verkhne-Udinsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment was also, upon the 9th, to rejoin the 2nd Siberian Corps.

** The 10th, 11th and 12th East Siberian Rifle Regiments, three batteries of the 3rd East Siberian Artillery Brigade, the 11th Mountain Battery and a sapper company.

†† The 2nd East Siberian Rifle Regiment, the 6th (Yeniseisk) Siberian Infantry Regiment, one battalion of the 9th East Siberian Rifle Regiment, three mountain batteries and a sapper company.

of the 2nd East Siberian Rifle Regiment, was to carry on the line to Kao-san-tun. The reserve was to be in two groups,* and the reconnaissance of the front of the position was to be carried out by General Baumgarten with twelve squadrons and a scout detachment.

In the rayon of the 2nd Siberian Corps the whole of the artillery, with the exception of one battery, was withdrawn and dispatched to Po-hsin-tsai at dark on the 7th, followed later by the main body of the corps, which was covered by a rear guard under

The 2nd
Siberian Corps. General Alexeiev, consisting of the 17th and 18th East Siberian Rifle Regiments and a battery.

Two small flank guards protected the right and left of the column, but their services were not put to the test, for the troops of the Japanese Guard Division, ignorant of what was taking place, contented themselves with an insignificant exchange of shots during the evacuation. By eight o'clock on the morning of the 8th the main body of the corps had reached Ta-wa-kou-tzu on the Fu-shun branch railway, while the rear guard halted north of Tiu-chia-tun, with its rear detachment at that village. A long halt was necessitated by the fact that the 4th Siberian Corps had converged and struck in between the rear guard and main body of the 2nd Siberian Corps; and it was not until after 6 p.m. that the latter was able to continue its march to Hsiao-fan-hsin.† During the delay Japanese cavalry appeared in front of Tiu-chia-tun, and later some columns of hostile infantry were descried, but the Russian rear guard was able to draw off before they could come into action.

So far, in the account of the withdrawal of the Russian forces, there has been nothing indicative of an active pursuit on the part of the Japanese. Although the possibility of such a retirement had been foreseen for some time and although during the

afternoon of the 7th there were symptoms of its
Marshal Oyama's
orders for
the pursuit. imminence, yet when the Russians slipped away the Japanese were taken off their guard. Indeed,

when information of the movement of the enemy facing the Japanese Fourth Army reached Marshal Oyama

* Under General Bachinski one mile south of Ma-niu-chuang-tzu, two battalions of the 36th East Siberian Rifle Regiment and a mountain battery: under Colonel Larrentiev, at Tsun-huan-shen-tzu, the 288th (Kulikov) Regiment and a battery.

† The 2nd Siberian Corps did not finish crossing the river near Hsiao-fan-hsin until about 3 a.m. on the 9th.

at his head-quarters in Yen-tai between 9 and 10 p.m. on the 7th, he was engaged in the preparation of orders for a general attack along the whole line, to take place at dawn upon the 8th; but the news that the First and Third Manchurian Armies were already in motion caused the order for attack to be changed to one for pursuit. Some time before midnight the latter was issued, its contents being briefly as follows:—

(1) The enemy in front of the Fourth Army began retreating on the night of the 7th–8th March. No information has as yet been received regarding the enemy in front of the Ya-lu Army.

(2) The First Army will commence its pursuit at midnight 7th–8th March. The Fourth Army will commence its pursuit at 3 a.m. on the 8th, but when it reaches the line Su-chia-tun railway station—Ta-yen-erh-tun—Wan-chia-ling—Huan-lin-tzu, the commander will re-arrange his troops and be ready to press on still more rapidly.

(3) I intend to pursue with determination and to turn the enemy's retreat into a rout.

(4) The First Army will pursue to the Hun Ho near Hsing-lung-tien with its main force.

(5) The Fourth Army (less the 4th Division and the Tomioka Detachment) will pursue, and will re-arrange its troops on the line Ta-yen-erh-tun—Wan-chia-ling—Huan-lin-tzu, ready for further pursuit to Tieh-ling. From the time of receipt of this order, the 4th Division and the Tomioka Detachment will be under the commander of the Second Army.

(6) The Second Army will strike at the enemy near Mukden and then re-arrange its troops south-west of the city.

(7) The Third Army will attack the enemy near Mukden, and then concentrate its troops north of the city.

Then followed details as to the lines of pursuit for the different armies, and the last paragraph was to the effect that no troops were to remain in Mukden.

It will be noticed that the intelligence received of the Russian movement was confined to the troops in front of the Japanese Fourth Army. But it was apparently assumed by Marshal Oyama that the retrograde movement would automatically spread to the troops opposite General Kuroki. As regards the situation farther east, no

information had come in and no mention was made of any definite task for the Ya-lu Army. General Kuroki received these orders at 12.20 a.m. on the 8th, and within ten minutes his own were being issued, a circumstance which clearly shows that everything had been already arranged and that his orders had been written in anticipation of the moment when they could be sent out. They were as follows:—

HUA-KOU LING,

8th March,

12.30 a.m.

(1) The enemy in our front has begun to retreat.

(2) The army is to press the enemy to the utmost.

(3) The divisions will pursue with the following objectives:—2nd Division to advance on Hsing-lung-tien (seven miles west of Fu-shun) via Hai-lang-chai; 12th Division to advance on Ssu-fang-tai via Po-hsin-tsai; the Guards to advance on Wang-shih-lang-kou (two and a half miles north-east of Huan-lin-tzu), protecting the left flank.

(4) The Umezawa and Awibara [5th] *Kobi* Brigades will form the reserve of the army, and will concentrate near Hsiao-yang-tun, and follow the advance.

(5) I am at the Hua-kou Ling.

Of the three divisions in the Japanese First Army the 2nd Division on the right issued divisional orders at 3 a.m., but in the darkness it was not easy to get into disposition for an immediate start, and it was nearly noon on the 8th, before the main body began to cross the Kao-tai Ling. It then

The Japanese
First Army.
The 2nd
Division.

advanced in three columns, General Ohara being still on the right and the brigade under General Ishibashi retaining its place upon the left.* With the latter column proceeded divisional head-

quarters. In the centre were the 29th *Kobi* Regiment and a field battery, under Colonel Kani. With the long start gained by the 3rd Siberian Corps the pursuit was one but in name, and it does not appear that any portion of the division, with the exception of advanced patrols, came in contact with the enemy. Nothing indeed seems to have distinguished the day beyond the difficulties experienced owing to the badness of the roads. In the left column the

* Presumably after passing Hai-lang-chai, but the accounts of the march are vague on this point.

two field batteries had to be man-handled over a col just north of Hai-lang-chai, a whole battalion of infantry as well as a company of engineers being required to do this. By nightfall the right column reached Ying-shou-pu-tzu, where it went into bivouac; while the centre and left columns were at dusk far short of the Hun Ho. The exact places where the latter halted are not known; but the difficulties of the roads met with by these two columns had been greater than those encountered by the right column, and it is reasonable to suppose they had made less progress than had been effected by General Ohara.

When the orders for the pursuit reached the 12th Division that force had already started upon an attack. The positions lately occupied by the Russians were found to be empty, and about 2 a.m. on the 8th the brigades of Generals Imamura and Shimamura reached Kang-ta-jen-shan, where it was decided to halt until dawn. The divisional commander was meanwhile some miles back south of Pien-niu-lu-pu, from which place he issued his orders at 7 a.m. Prior to their publication the original composition of the brigades had been restored; and the advance was to take place in two wings and a divisional reserve, behind which was to follow the 5th *Kobi* Brigade, two troops of cavalry and one company of engineers, all under General Awibara.* Early in the morning the two brigades pressed on, covered by small cavalry patrols which soon came in sight of the rear guard of the 2nd Siberian Corps, but were of course quite unable to harass or delay it. About 4 p.m. the left wing came up with the retreating enemy and opened fire, in co-operation with artillery from the right wing and an attack made by the Guards from the west. But about seven o'clock the Russians moved back, and the action came to an end.† The left wing of the 12th Division halted for the night in and about the villages south of Ta-chang-wang-chai, while about three miles to the north-east was the other brigade. The divisional reserve halted behind

* In army reserve. See p. 577. The right wing was now as follows:—The 23rd Brigade (less one battalion of the 46th Regiment which joined the divisional reserve), one troop of cavalry, six machine guns, three mountain batteries, and one company of engineers. The left wing consisted of the 12th Brigade, one troop of cavalry, three batteries of field artillery, six machine guns, and one company of engineers.

† It is not clear whether these Russian troops were from the 2nd or 4th Siberian Corps.

the left wing.* Although the Russian retirement had not been unduly hurried the impression gained by the Japanese 12th Division was that it approached a *saufe qui peut*, for the positions along the Sha were found to bear traces of having been evacuated in great haste. Over a million rounds of small arm ammunition and four thousand rounds of field artillery ammunition were picked up by the Japanese.

In the 2nd Guard Brigade Colonel Iida, commanding the 4th Guard Regiment, had quite early in the night of the 7th-8th been so struck by the calm which reigned on the enemy's position that he had sent forward scouts. They found the front trenches deserted, and creeping forward, at 9.30 p.m. reached the crest of the ridge which had for so long been occupied by the 2nd Siberian Corps. By midnight the whole 4th Guard Regiment was occupying the trenches from which the Russians had been firing upon it for the past five days. The 3rd Guard Regiment and the 16th Regiment had advanced simultaneously, and arrived at the crest at the same hour. Shortly afterwards Marshal Oyama's orders reached General Kuroki, who, as has been said, lost not a moment in issuing his own; and acting upon these General Asada at 3 a.m. on the 8th ordered his Guard Division to reconnoitre to the front and directed units to send officers to divisional head-quarters for further orders.† These later instructions, which were not issued until 8.15 a.m., gave Wang-shih-lang-kou, a village several miles south of the Hun, as the objective of the Guards. That such a limited advance was assigned to them was apparently due to the fact that they had to protect the left of the advance of the First Army, while at the same time keeping touch with the Fourth Army to the west. The Russian dispositions in front of the latter were unknown when the orders were issued; but it was realized that its left had been heavily engaged during the 7th.

During the morning of the 8th it was discovered that the Russians had retired everywhere along the Sha Ho. General Kuroki thereupon amended his orders and sent instructions for each division to push on to the Hun as rapidly as possible; to disregard small detachments of the enemy; and at all costs to cut the communications between the Russian wings at Mukden and Fushun. This was to be carried out on the 8th, if possible, and

* The 5th *Kobi* Brigade and attached details had passed under the command of General Kuroki to join the army reserve.

† These orders were dated 8th March, 2.30 a.m.

the objective of the Guards was consequently changed to Kou-ken on the right bank of the Hun Ho, the orders for this reaching the commanders of the two wings in which the division was advancing about 11 a.m.* The right wing came up with a Russian rear guard—probably from the 4th Siberian Corps—about Wang-shih-lang-kou between five and six in the afternoon, and delayed by the resistance shown could get no farther that night. It went into bivouac near the village. The left wing had got ahead of the right, when cavalry patrols brought in news of the fighting going on between the latter and the Russians, and about this time the commander of the left wing met General Asada, who told him to hand over his cavalry and to push on rapidly to the Fu-shun railway. A village on that line was found to be occupied by the Russians in some force, so the left wing halted for the night south of the railway, having got well ahead of the right.

To return to the Russians: in accordance with the orders issued on the evening of the 7th the retirement of the 4th Siberian Corps was to be covered by a rear guard consisting of three and a half battalions and sixteen guns under the command of General Shileiko. Owing to the calls which had been made upon the effective strength of the corps its movement was to some extent simplified, for it now comprised only sixteen and a half battalions, two and a half squadrons and eighty guns, and this strength was to be still further diminished. As already mentioned, five and a half battalions and a battery had been detached and sent off to the General Reserve.† The rear guard under General Shileiko was sent on ahead to occupy a position in the vicinity of Huan-lin-tzu and Yi-pa-kou, where it was to get in touch with the rear guard of the 1st Corps to the west; and the main body, having sent its artillery ahead at 9 p.m., withdrew from its position shortly after midnight en route for Pei-tzu-tun, where it was to cross the Hun Ho. The movement was effected as ordered, without difficulty, but when the main body had passed Yi-pa-kou the rear guard was sent

The First Manchurian Army.
The 4th Siberian Corps.

* The 2nd Guard Brigade formed the right wing and the 1st Guard Brigade the left. Artillery was added to each brigade. The Umezawa Brigade was added to the Japanese First Army reserve. The 16th Regiment rejoined the 2nd Division.

† See foot-note (*), p. 534.

south-westwards to Huang-shan, in order to cover the magazines at Ku-chia-tzu, on the Fu-shun branch railway.

This new rôle of General Shileiko's rear guard involved it in some difficulty, for by 9 a.m. on the 8th, when it was occupying the high ground at Huang-shan, the Japanese 10th Division appeared, outflanking it from the west and forcing it to retire. The retreat was no easy matter; but, covered by the Mounted Scout detachments, the Russians managed to get away, and after a long halt at Hsi-chia-tzu reached the Hun Ho near Fu-ling at 7 p.m. on the 8th. Here General Shileiko crossed and formed up on the right bank, being joined by the Omsk Regiment. That regiment had strayed in the darkness from the main body, which by 11 a.m. had got to Ta-wa-kou-tzu, where it halted for three hours in order to allow the troops to rest and stragglers to close up. The retirement of the main body had by this time become somewhat disorderly, for the increasing warmth of the weather, the heavy loads carried by the soldiers—who marched in great-coats—and the dust and want of sleep told heavily on men who had passed an inactive existence for many weeks; but no interference was attempted by the Japanese and the column reached the Hun safely during the evening.* General Levestam was now in command of the whole corps, General Zarubaiev having been appointed commander of the new General Reserve which was now in process of being collected in the area Ta-wa—Pu-ho.

* The general position of the 4th Siberian Corps on the night of the 8th-9th March was:—Major-General Shileiko's force—in entrenchments on the right bank on the Hun Ho, with eleven companies of the 11th (Semipalatinsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment at the Fu-ling bridges and three companies of the 12th (Barnaul) Siberian Infantry Regiment to the north-west of Ti-chia-fang. The two and a half battalions of the 10th (Omsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment which had accidentally got to the Fu-ling bridges were to the west of Ti-chia-fang. On outpost duty on the left bank of the Hun Ho remained a battalion of the 11th (Semipalatinsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment. The troops of Major-General Levestam's column were:—Two and a half battalions of the 9th (Tobolsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment to the east of Ti-chia-fang, and three and three-quarter battalions of the 5th (Irkutsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment in the vicinity of Chiu-chan, where there arrived also at 12.30 a.m. one and three-quarter battalions of the 12th (Barnaul) Siberian Infantry Regiment with the 2nd Battery of the 1st Siberian Artillery Brigade. One company of the 12th (Barnaul) Siberian Infantry Regiment was left at Hsing-lung-tien as escort to the artillery which had been sent to cross near that place. The outposts on the right bank of the Hun Ho were sent out from the 12th (Barnaul) Siberian Infantry Regiment.

The withdrawal to the Hun of the 1st Corps was carried out practically without incident.* The rear guard† under General Polzikov occupied a position west of Huang-shan, and the remainder of the corps, having sent off its artillery at dark, began to withdraw about 12.30 a.m. The 1st Corps. on the 8th, covered by a demonstration of the scout detachments. By 3 p.m. the tail of the main body had reached Wang-tai-yen-tun and about two hours later commenced to cross the Hun Ho.‡ The remainder of the day passed without incident save for small skirmishes on the outpost line. About 11.30 p.m. an order was received to send twelve battalions and four batteries to the General Reserve at Ta-wa, where they were to report to General Zarubaiev.

The pursuit by the 10th and Okubo *Kobi* Divisions of the Japanese Fourth Army was extremely slow, and in the case of the former division the reason is not difficult to comprehend. Since the 1st March it had suffered over four thousand casualties. Moreover the first line had fought for about one hundred and fifty hours on end, continuously, without sleep, with only biscuit to eat, and ice and snow to quench the thirst, and this had naturally reduced the men's power of moving rapidly. Nevertheless the division, leaving about one thousand unburied dead at the foot of One Tree Hill and Liu-chiang-tun, made an attempt to follow up the Russians. But the fatigue of the infantry and the complete lack of cavalry

The Japanese
Fourth Army.
The 10th and
Okubo *Kobi*
Divisions.

* The strength of the corps was now twenty-four battalions, one squadron, eighty-six guns.

† Nine battalions, three batteries, one squadron, and two scout detachments.

‡ After crossing to the right bank, the 1st Corps was disposed as follows:—The 86th (Wilmanstrand) Regiment and the 2nd Brigade of the 22nd Division, with four batteries of the 7th Artillery Brigade, two batteries of the 43rd Artillery Brigade and one battery of the 2nd Siberian Artillery Division at Ma-kuan-chou and Yiu-shih-pu; the 148th (Caspian) Regiment with three batteries of the 43rd Artillery Brigade at San-chia-tzu and the hamlet east of Pa-li-pu; the 17th and 20th East Siberian Rifle Regiments in Pa-li-pu; the 1st Sapper Battalion, a squadron of the Verkhne-Udinsk Cossack Regiment and the 3rd Trans-Baikal Cossack Battery at Hou-ling and Chin-chia-tun; two battalions of the 145th (Novocherkask) Regiment with the Mounted Scouts took up an outpost line along the Fu-shun branch line.

enabled the Russian Ist Corps to get away unharmed, and the Japanese 10th Division bivouacked in the vicinity of Huang-shan for the night. On the left of the 10th Division the men of the Okubo *Kobi* Division had at dawn planted the Japanese flag upon Putilov Hill amid scenes of indescribable enthusiasm, though for some reason their further advance was not carried out with any vigour. A detachment of one regiment of infantry and two batteries of artillery was sent north about 3 p.m. on the 8th; but the bulk of the advanced troops of this force pushed on no farther than San-lin-tzu.

The retirement of the First Manchurian Army—which comprised the detachment under General Rennenkampf, the 3rd, 2nd and 4th Siberian Corps, and the Ist Corps—has now been dealt with in detail. Literally the army was able to withdraw absolutely undisturbed: a fact which, even when all allowances have been made for the Japanese, is difficult to explain. For some days the Japanese had reckoned upon the imminent retreat of the Third and First Manchurian Armies. And although it eventually came as a surprise, the withdrawal was discovered long before midnight on the 7th-8th. No delay seems to have been caused by the issue of general or army orders: indeed those which are extant are known to have been given out with such promptitude as to suggest that they had been drawn up previously, ready for issue at a moment's notice. Their lack of sufficient mounted men was, it is true, undoubtedly an enormous handicap; but, taking that factor into consideration, and allowing for the fatigue of some of their troops, it constitutes a somewhat remarkable feature of the battle that the pursuit was begun so late by some units and carried out with such noticeable lack of vigour by all.

Scarcely less successful than the withdrawal of General Linevich's troops was that of the Third Manchurian Army, which was begun by the 6th Siberian Corps. The same procedure was adopted as had been carried out by the corps of the

The retirement
of the Third
Manchurian
Army.

The 6th
Siberian Corps.

First Manchurian Army—the guns were sent away at dusk, and a rear guard was sent on to occupy a position through which the main body would pass with its two columns. Everything worked successfully and by 10 a.m. on the 8th the corps reached the Hun Ho and proceeded to take up a position on the right bank, from the Temple of the Sun

in Tien-tan, to the south of Mu-chang.* On occupying the position the troops at once set to work to construct additional trenches and to clear away the accumulations of sand which covered those already existing. No interference from the enemy was experienced, except that some scouts were driven in by the advanced patrols of the Okubo *Kobi* Division near the Fu-shun railway.

The 35th Division of the XVIIth Corps had been in touch with the 6th Siberian Corps all through the march of the latter, and at 7 a.m. on the 8th reached Hun-ho-pu undisturbed, while the 3rd Division, except for some fire from the Japanese 4th Division, was equally fortunate, arriving about the same hour at San-chia-hou. The Japanese 6th Division made no real attempt to pursue, although the burning of the Russian supply depots at Su-chia-tun and another village near by must have shown that some abnormal operation was in progress; and its main body went into bivouac on the evening of the 8th at Ta-yen-erh-tun, with some advanced troops in front. On arrival at the Hun Ho position, the XVIIth Corps occupied the eastern entrenchments of the bridge-head; the 3rd Division was disposed from Fort III to Lunette B, and echeloned behind the left of the 3rd was the 35th Division.† During the afternoon a Japanese battery unlimbered at Wan-shih-tun, and another opened fire on the burning supply depot at Ku-chia-tzu as well as on the position of the corps; but a few rounds from the Russians compelled them to retire.

The 54th Division of the 5th Siberian Corps, which now amounted to ten battalions and twenty-four guns, had been detailed

* *Right section.*—Colonel Ponomarev, with the 220th (Yepifan) Regiment, a division of the 6th Artillery Brigade, half a company of sappers, and a howitzer battery.

Left section.—Major-General Frankovski, with the 218th (Borisoglebsk) Regiment, two battalions of the 217th (Krom) Regiment, the 2nd Division of the 6th Artillery Brigade and half a company of sappers.

Corps reserve.—Consisting of the 219th (Yukhnov) Regiment, one and a half battalions of the 145th (Novocherkask) Regiment, one battalion of the 147th (Samara) Regiment, two and three-quarter squadrons of the 10th Orenburg Cossack Regiment, and two companies of sappers, was placed in rear of the centre.

Corps head-quarters was situated in a Chinese camp west of Mukden.

† The 35th Division appears to have supplied the garrison for Fort II. There was no corps reserve.

to join the General Reserve. Under cover of its outposts, and undisturbed by the enemy, this division under General Artamonov collected near Mukden about 3 a.m. on the 8th and ceased to form part of the Third Manchurian Army. By the 61st Division the evacuation of the position was to have begun at 1.45 a.m. on the 8th March, but at that hour an attack was being made on Hsiao-chi-shun-pu by the Japanese 4th Division, and it was after 3 a.m. when the withdrawal began, covered by Colonel Stakhovich's cavalry. Between 8 and 9 a.m. the 61st Division was in its allotted position on the bridge-head, holding the line from Redoubt G to Fort III inclusive. Here the remainder of the day passed quietly. After the 5th Siberian Corps had gone back, the reserve of the Third Manchurian Army also retired from Hsiao-ho-tun to the south-eastern edge of Mukden. In that army there now remained forty-eight battalions, nine squadrons and two hundred and two guns.* The reserve, however, did not long remain intact, for soon after nightfall seven battalions proceeded to Mukden railway station in accordance with an order given by the commander-in-chief direct to the commander of the reserve.† This considerable drain on the army reserve of the Third Manchurian Army caused General Bilderling to make an energetic protest by telephone to General Kuropatkin, who admitted the justice of his arguments and directed that five of the battalions should be returned.‡ This, however, was not the only source of anxiety for General Bilderling, for when the positions allotted to his force were

* These forces were divided amongst the various corps as follows:—

	Battalions.	Squadrons.	Guns.	Sapper Companies.
5th Siberian Corps ...	10	4	56	3
XVIIth Corps ...	14½	2	56	3
6th Siberian Corps ...	14	3	58	3
Army Reserve ...	9½	—	32	—

† The 242nd (Belebeev) Regiment, two battalions of the 11th (Pskov) Regiment, and one battalion of the 58th (Praga) Regiment.

‡ Two battalions of the 242nd (Belebeev) Regiment (to which was added a battery of the 35th Artillery Brigade) remained in the General Reserve; the other five battalions after a whole night spent in movement to and fro rejoined the reserve of the Third Manchurian Army during the morning of the 9th.

occupied, it was found that touch was insufficiently established between the 1st and 6th Siberian Corps, and that a gap of four miles lay between them. He accordingly requested the commander of the former corps to extend to his right; and thus the dangerous space was lessened.*

It has been mentioned that the retirement of the Russian 61st Division was delayed by an attack of the Japanese 4th Division against Hsiao-chi-shun-pu. The unsuccessful efforts against that village which had been made by the 4th Division upon the 7th

The Japanese
4th Division.

were renewed at 2 a.m. on the 8th, when the 9th Regiment of the 19th Brigade advanced to the assault. In the first line were two companies, but when these arrived within about thirty yards of the objective they were met with such a fierce fire from machine guns that the whole of the two companies except twenty was killed or wounded. The second and third lines met a similar fate, and it was apparently by taking advantage of the delay thus caused to the attackers that the garrison got away. When the Japanese 9th Regiment charged the village about 4 a.m. it was only to find it empty. General Tsukamoto then contented himself with sending forward a pursuing detachment, and concentrated the main body of his division at Lan-shan-pu, where he received orders during the day to be ready to move round behind the Japanese Second Army, to fill a gap between that army and the Third.

Thus the pursuit by the Japanese Fourth Army revealed a lack of vigour no less remarkable than that displayed by the troops of General Kuroki.

While the Third and First Manchurian Armies had been falling back to the Hun Ho and consolidating themselves upon their new positions General Kaulbars had issued orders to his Second Army for action of an almost entirely passive nature. All his

The Second
Manchurian
Army.

General
Kaulbars's
orders.

troops were directed merely to hold on to their positions, although General von der Launitz was to be prepared to attack the enemy should the railway appear to be in jeopardy. By the morning of the 8th the infantry of the Second Manchurian Army were posted on a long arc extending from Siding 97, on the railway, to Chin-chia-tun, upon the Hun Ho, the right sector being held by General von der Launitz,

* This gap existed apparently before the position of the 1st Corps, given in foot-note (†), p. 580, had been taken up.

on the Northern Front, while the line was then continued by Generals Gerngross, Topornin and Tserpitski, who were holding approximately the same positions as they had been upon the evening of the 7th. Ma-chia-pu, however, was no longer the extreme left of the Second Manchurian Army, for the force under General Gershelmann had been compelled to abandon all the ground it was holding on the left bank of the Hun, on account of the retirement of the Third Manchurian Army; and this necessitated the refusal of General Tserpitski's left flank.* To the north the cavalry of General Grekov was watching a line parallel to the Hsin-min-tun road and some twelve miles to the north of it, with his right over the Liao Ho, and his left some five miles from the railway, his main body being still north-east of La-nao-tun.

The Russian General Reserve on the morning of the 8th March consisted of five and a half battalions, a battery, and half a squadron, all from the 4th Siberian Corps, under the command of Colonel Borisov. About 10 a.m. this force was directed by

The Russian
General Reserve.

General Kuropatkin to move to Tzu-erh-tun, there to select and fortify a position facing west and north-west, and to hold Hsiao-hou-tzu as an

advanced post.†

On the Japanese side, during the night of the 7th-8th, General Nogi had issued orders to his three divisions to advance to the railway between Siding 97 and Mukden. Later, during the morning of the 8th, information was received of the retirement of

The Northern
Detachment of
General von
der Launitz.

the Third and First Manchurian Armies from the Sha Ho during the night, and since this was interpreted as foreshadowing a Russian retreat towards Tieh-ling, it became all the more imperative for

the Japanese Third Army to press forward and to head off the enemy. Instructions to this effect were apparently issued; and since General von der Launitz on the Russian side had been ordered to protect the railway at all costs, it would seem as if heavy fighting was bound to take place during the 8th March upon the

* The 3rd and 4th Rifle Regiments were handed over to General Tserpitski and the remainder of the detachment marched to Lan-tien-tun to form the army reserve. Later in the day these latter troops were sent to join a new detachment under General Muilov.

† Colonel Borisov arrived at his destination about 1.15 p.m. During the day the 54th Division joined the General Reserve. See pp. 582-3.

Northern Front. Actually the fighting which occurred was not of a severe character.

When General von der Launitz arrived at San-tai-tzu about 7.30 a.m. on the 8th he found that there were certain obstacles in the way of preparing his new command for an offensive.* For some time his staff encountered difficulty in getting into communication with the units detailed for the detachment, since some of them, as for instance Colonel Misevich's force and Prince Orbeliani's cavalry, had not arrived at their appointed places; and, besides this, the arrangements for ammunition supply and the medical services were extremely defective and had to be put on a proper footing. Further, Colonel Zapolski's force was extremely short of officers; and thirty-four, chiefly recent arrivals from Europe, had to be collected at Siding 97 and sent out to him. All these matters took time to adjust, so that it was not until after

* General von der Launitz had been ordered to attack if the Japanese advanced. See p. 567.

At this time on the Northern Front were situated:—

In Wan-kan-tun—the 3rd Battalion of the 217th (Krom) Regiment and three companies of the 11th Rifle Regiment with the 5th Battery of the 29th Artillery Brigade, behind which at Siding 97 were the escort company of the commander-in-chief, the Air Company, the 7th Company of the 58th (Praga) and the 13th Company of the 60th (Zamostye) Regiments. Half a mile south of the Siding, stood the 53rd (Volhynia) Regiment, a pontoon company and two batteries of the 29th Artillery Brigade. Of the latter, one battery occupied a position between Wan-kan-tun and Kun-chia-tun, and the other at Siding 97 itself. In Wan-kan-tun was the commander of the 1st Rifle Brigade, Major-General Dombrovski, who had received from the commander-in-chief an order “to precede the troops marching on Kun-chia-tun and Wan-tzu-yeh and to take command of the troops collected in Kun-chia-tun and Wan-kan-tun.”

At San-chia-tzu and Tsao-liu-tzu were six of Major-General Pavlov's squadrons and four squadrons of the Primorsk Dragoon Regiment.

In Kun-chia-tun were ten companies of the 162nd (Akhaltikh) Regiment, a company of details and the 1st Battery of the 3rd Rifle Artillery Division.

The village of San-tai-tzu was occupied by the 57th (Modlin) Regiment, and seven companies of the 161st (Alexandropol) Regiment with the 1st and 2nd Batteries (fourteen guns) of the 45th Artillery Brigade. Here too were Lieutenant-General Birger and Major-General Elliot (commander of the 1st Brigade of the 41st Division), of whom the first-named had also under his command the detachments in Kun-chia-tun and Wan-kan-tun.

The village of Ta-hen-tun was unoccupied either by Russians or Japanese, but about 9.30 a.m. there arrived the detachment of Colonel Misevich, consisting of the 5th and 10th Rifle Regiments, a Provisional Battalion from the 4th Siberian Corps, a battalion of the 138th (Bolkhov) Regiment, and the 6th and 7th Batteries of the 29th Artillery Brigade.

In Pa-chia-tzu was Colonel Zapolski's force, consisting of two battalions of drafts, a Provisional, and the 4th, Battalions of the 161st (Alexandropol) Regiment, a Provisional Battalion of the 162nd (Akhaltikh) Regiment, the 3rd Battery, and a section of the 2nd Battery, of the 45th Artillery Brigade.

midday that General von der Launitz was able to tell off his Northern Detachment into sections as follows:—

Right Section—General Dombrovski. The troops detailed for the defence of Siding 97, Wan-kan-tun, and Kun-chia-tun.

Centre Section—General Birger. The troops in San-tai-tzu.

Left Section—General Sollogub.* The troops of Colonels Zapolski, and Misevich.

Cavalry—The detachments of Prince Orbeliani, and General Pavlov. The former officer took over command of the two forces about 4 p.m.†

In all, the Northern Detachment had at this time a strength of twenty-six battalions, thirteen squadrons and seventy-two guns, made up of units detached from each of the three armies under General Kuropatkin. But before all the arrangements necessary for its consolidation could be effected the Japanese Third Army had assumed the offensive.

The attack began at dawn with the movement of the Japanese 1st and 9th Divisions against San-tai-tzu and Pa-chia-tzu respectively. Against the former village the 15th Regiment of the 1st Division moved forward, covered by long lines of skirmishers; but the

advance seems to have been made slowly. About

The Japanese
Third Army.
Advance of
the Japanese
1st and 9th
Divisions.

10 a.m. fourteen guns of the Russian 45th Artillery Brigade, in position a little to the south of San-tai-tzu, opened fire both on the approaching infantry and the guns of the Japanese 1st Division at Hei-ni-tun. Under this fire the

Japanese infantry came to a halt over half a mile from the village, all further attempts to move being checked. It is possible, however, that the operation against San-tai-tzu was of the nature of a feint made with the object of drawing the attention of the Russians away from the railway, for soon after the advance against the former had engaged the attention of the Russian artillery the Japanese 1st Division directed the fire of its guns upon Kun-chia-tun, and the infantry began to press on from Hei-ni-tun towards the railway line. But the fire from Kun-chia-tun was so heavy that the attackers got no nearer than five hundred

* Major-General Sollogub was the commander of the 3rd Rifle Brigade, and had been placed at the disposal of General von der Launitz.

† The union of these two forces under one commander was due chiefly to a protest received from General Mishchenko who, though lying wounded in Mukden, appears to have kept himself posted as to the want of general control over some of the lesser cavalry units.

paces from it. Simultaneously with the bombardment of Kun-chia-tun the Japanese opened a desultory artillery fire upon Wan-kan-tun and Siding 97, endeavouring to throw their shells upon the railway, along which a succession of trains was proceeding northwards, laden with wounded and supplies.* The two batteries of the Russian 29th Artillery Brigade, which had arrived with the Volhynia Regiment south of the siding, then replied and entered into an artillery duel with the Japanese pieces bombarding the line. About noon long hostile columns were observed by the Russians to be moving northwards out of Hei-ni-tun, apparently with the object of striking the railway north of the siding; but they were stopped—probably by the arrival of some units of the Russian General Reserve at Tzu-erh-tun. †

The fighting on this portion of the Northern Front is remarkable for having been the occasion for one of the few cavalry charges which occurred throughout the war. A Japanese battery, which was caught in the act of unlimbering about six hundred yards east of Hei-ni-tun by two guns of the 5th Battery of the 29th Artillery Brigade placed behind the railway embankment near San-chia-tzu, received such punishment that the pieces were silenced.‡ Hearing of this circumstance from his reconnoitring patrols General Pavlov, whose main body was at San-chia-tzu, ordered three squadrons of the 4th Ural Cossack Regiment to charge the guns. But the detachments and escort of the battery had only retired to the nearest cover, and on the approach of the Russian horsemen they rushed to the guns and drove off the assailants, who retired north-east with the loss of five horses. The Japanese were, however, unable either to serve or withdraw the battery,

* About this time the situation of the Japanese 1st Division was as follows :—

The 1st *Kobi* Brigade had been sent to the division by General Nogi, and the bulk of the division, thus reinforced, was in and about Hei-ni-tun. Facing San-tai-tzu was the 15th Regiment and some guns, and opposite Kun-chia-tun was the 2nd Regiment. About Hou-hsin tun was the divisional cavalry (1st Cavalry Regiment) augmented by the 4th Cavalry Regiment which had come up from its own division. At Pin-lo-pu was a battalion of the 1st *Kobi* Regiment and one of the 16th *Kobi* Regiment at Huan-mi-kan.

† See p. 597.

‡ The 53rd (Volhynia) Regiment and the batteries with it had been moved by General von der Launitz towards the Northern Tombs so as to form a reserve. In consequence, there were left to engage the Japanese guns only two guns of the 29th Artillery Brigade which had arrived with the 217th (Krom) Regiment.

for from Kun-chia-tun and Wan-kan-tun the Russians developed a fire of such intensity as to make the effort impossible.*

Meanwhile the Japanese 1st Division continued its bombardment of Kun-chia-tun and made more than one attempt to take it by storm so that, in spite of reinforcements sent by

The Japanese
1st Division
fails to take
Kun-chia-tun.

General von der Launitz, the position of the village became serious. General Kaulbars, however, who at about half-past three arrived at General von der Launitz's head-quarters on the northern edge of the copse surrounding the Northern Tombs, was

more anxious about the left, and fearing that the Northern Front might be pierced near Pa-chia-tzu asked the commander-in-chief to strengthen that flank, with the result that one battalion was placed temporarily at the disposal of General von der Launitz.† After General Kaulbars had departed the Japanese made another advance against Kun-chia-tun, but though they reached a point two hundred paces from the village they were met by such a fire that the attack had to be abandoned. They then retired, apparently in some disorder.‡ The spirit of the Russians in Kun-chia-tun and Wan-kan-tun ran high, and some sections of the firing line, in anticipation of an order to counter-attack, left their entrenchments and moved forward from both villages, but General Kaulbars stopped the movement and only gave permission for scout detachments to be sent out.§

With the approach of darkness the fighting then died away except for the bombardment of Siding 97 with high-explosive shell,

* About 4 p.m., Major-General Prince Orbeliani arrived at Hsiao-hou-tzu, and took over the command of the whole of the cavalry of the Northern Detachment which concentrated in the vicinity of Tzu-erh-tun—Wan-kan-tun. By nightfall there had collected on that line three squadrons of the 4th Ural Cossack Regiment, three squadrons of the 1st Verkhne-Udinsk Cossack Regiment, three squadrons of the 2nd Daghestan Cavalry Regiment, and one Trans-Baikal Cossack Battery. With regard to the four squadrons of the Primorsk Dragoon Regiment, also detailed to the mounted force of Prince Orbeliani, General Kaulbars, while riding along between 3 and 4 p.m. near Wan-kan-tun had passed the regiment, and altered this arrangement, ordering the squadrons to remain at his immediate disposal.

† The 2nd Battalion of the 214th (Mokshan) Regiment. This regiment was at the time resting at Lao-kou, and the 2nd Battalion was sent about 4.30 p.m. to the Northern Tombs.

‡ In the repulse of this attack great assistance to the infantry was afforded by the 4th and 5th Batteries of the 29th Artillery Brigade, situated one behind Wan-kan-tun, facing north-west, the other behind the railway line to the north of Siding No. 97, near San-chia-tzu.

§ General Kaulbars was at this time in Wan-kan-tun.

which went on with regularity but without effecting much damage. The outcome of the day's fighting was that the advance of the Japanese 1st Division against the railway was checked and their attempts to capture Kun-chia-tun were repulsed. But opposite that village their attacking lines had taken root only six hundred yards off, while in front of San-tai-tzu the Japanese 15th Regiment still held its ground, so that the probability of a night attack had to be reckoned with by the Russians.

On the left of the Northern Detachment the situation was less favourable to the Russians, for the troops in Pa-chia-tzu were far too weak to withstand the weight of the whole Japanese 9th Division. The attack which that division had commenced at dawn compelled Colonel Zapolski to call upon the neighbouring troops for assistance. In response Colonel Misevich sent a battalion from Ta-hen-tun, but the most that General Gerngross could do was to move his reserve across the Hsin-min-tun road, from Ma-chuang-tzu to Hou-hua.* Meanwhile the guns of the Japanese 9th Division were searching Pa-chia-tzu with a hail of shell, and under this fire the raw troops of Colonel Zapolski displayed some signs of wavering. Their leader, in order to encourage them, mounted his horse and rode along the line, and paid the penalty for this act of heroism with his life. His horse was killed under him, and he himself fell almost immediately afterwards, shot through the brain. Dismayed by the loss of their commander, the men of the detachment quickly fell into disorder; and the situation in which they were placed might have shaken the courage of veteran troops. The whole of the reserve artillery of the Japanese Third Army had been added to the 9th Division and against this weight of metal the pieces in Pa-chia-tzu could make no effective reply.† In one Russian battery most of the horses were killed, nearly all the detachments were out of action, and only one officer remained unhit. Captain Baumgarten of the General Staff took over command when Colonel Zapolski fell. Finding the situation almost desperate, owing to the loss of men, the intensity of the Japanese fire, and the shortage of ammunition, he felt that he had no option but to abandon Pa-chia-tzu, and shortly

* See foot-note (*), p. 547.

† The exact part played by the Japanese artillery is not known, but there is reason to believe that twenty-four of the mountain guns of the 9th Artillery Regiment and the whole seventy-two guns of the 2nd Field Artillery Brigade were in action against the vilalge.

after 2 p.m. began to withdraw to Hsia-kan-tzu, leaving eight ammunition wagons on the field. There he reformed his troops under cover of a battalion of the Bolkhov Regiment, which had been sent by the commander of the left section of the Northern Front—General Sollogub.* At first it was intended to make an effort to retake the village, but the project was not carried out, for between 4 and 5 p.m. a message was received from General Kuropatkin himself containing these words: "No attempt is to be made to retake Pa-chia-tzu." With the fall of Pa-chia-tzu the left of General von der Launitz's Northern Detachment was driven in.

In this effort made by the Japanese Third Army to reach the railway north of Mukden the Cavalry Division played practically no part, being neutralized, but only neutralized, by the Russian cavalry under General Grekov. On the Japanese side the 14th

Cavalry Regiment was brought across from La-la-

The Japanese
Cavalry Division
and General
Grekov's cavalry.

tun to join the 6th at Ta-hsin-tun, whither part or all of the mounted battery was also sent, and the 3rd Cavalry Regiment was posted at Hou-hsin-tai;

but except for these alterations the cavalry

was disposed very much as it had been upon the previous day. This concentration at Ta-hsin-tun had been reported to General Grekov by patrols, and the 5th Ural Cossack Regiment was ordered to assemble at Hai-lu-pu, from which place a reconnaissance was to be carried out.† By eleven o'clock information had been obtained to the effect that some five hundred Japanese infantry and cavalry and four guns were in Ta-hsin-tun, and not long afterwards the 5th Ural Cossack Regiment was ordered to retire.‡ It spent the night at Chia-chia-tzu having suffered no casualties during the day.§ The only other incident of note was the dispatch of two squadrons of the Nyejin Dragoons from the left of the line to Hsi-fu-hsi on the Liao Ho,|| on the way to which village—and consequently in rear of General Grekov's outposts—a Japanese patrol was found and pursued; after which

* General Sollogub had arrived between two and three o'clock at Ta-hen-tun, in which village was the detachment under General Misevich. Situated as it was opposite a gap between the Japanese 9th and 1st Divisions that detachment was not attacked during the day.

† One mile north-west of La-nao-tun.

‡ There was no infantry at this time with the Japanese Cavalry Division.

§ Chia-chia-tzu is about two miles north-north-west of La-nao-tun.

|| Ten miles north-west of La-nao-tun.

the Russian squadrons returned to their starting place. Except for this the Russian cavalry achieved nothing and, indeed, seems to have attempted nothing.

The troops of General Gerngross were on the morning of the 8th disposed upon the line Hsiao-hen-tun—Yi-tzu-tai—Niu-hsin-tun,* and were confronting the Japanese 7th Division—the bulk of which was north of the Hsin-min-tun road—and the 15th

General Gerngross's force and the 7th Division of the Japanese Third Army. *Kobi* Brigade, the whole of which was now south of that highway.† Placed in rear of these forces, at Ta-shih-chiao, was the Japanese Third Army reserve, which now consisted of the 13th and 14th *Kobi* Brigades (less one regiment)‡ under General Oki. In co-operation with the 9th

Division, which, as has been related, attacked and captured Pa-chia-tzu, the 7th Division directed its energies against Hsiao-hen-tun, but in spite of its great superiority in infantry, not only over the garrison of that village but even over the whole of Colonel Lesh's detachment, it failed and had to content itself with maintaining a heavy bombardment throughout the day against Hsiao-hen-tun.

* *Colonel Lesh's detachment*:—In Hsiao-hen-tun—two battalions of the 12th (Velikolutsk) Regiment, five companies of the 1st East Siberian Rifle Regiment with twenty-four guns (of the 1st and 9th East Siberian Artillery Brigades and of the 2nd Rifle Artillery Division); in Fan-hsi-tun three battalions of the 147th (Samara) Regiment; in the nameless village to the west of Fan-hsi-tun—two companies of the 1st East Siberian Rifle Regiment and two companies of the 4th East Siberian Rifle Regiment; in reserve behind Fan-hsi-tun—three companies of the 12th (Velikolutsk) Regiment.

Major-General de Vitt's detachment:—Three and a half battalions of the 140th (Zaraisk) Regiment and two companies of the 3rd East Siberian Rifle Regiment with eight guns of the 35th Artillery Brigade occupied Yi-tzu-tai and a nameless village to the west of Yi-tzu-tai.

Major-General Dobbor-Musnitski's detachment:—Five battalions of the 3rd and 4th East Siberian Rifle Regiments, with twenty-four guns of the 1st East Siberian Artillery Brigade, occupied Tung-chia-tun.

Major-General Krause's detachment:—33rd East Siberian Rifle Regiment, two battalions of the 34th East Siberian Rifle Regiment, and two battalions of the 35th East Siberian Rifle Regiment, with twenty-four guns of the 9th East Siberian Artillery Brigade, occupied Niu-hsin-tun and height 245.

The Reserve, placed at Ma-chuang-tzu, comprised three and a half battalions of the 138th (Bolkhov) Regiment with eight guns of the 35th Artillery Brigade. In addition two companies each from the 12th (Velikolutsk) and 138th (Bolkhov) Regiments occupied Redoubts 1 and 2.

† The 1st Battalion of the 27th Regiment, which properly belonged to the 7th Division, was, however, on the right of the 15th *Kobi* Brigade and attached to it.

‡ The 51st *Kobi* Regiment. This regiment was opposite Niu-hsin-tun, but was in the rayon of the 3rd Division.

Nor did any greater measure of success attend the offensive carried out by the 15th *Kobi* Brigade upon the right. Before dawn it commenced an attack against the nameless village immediately west of Yi-tzu-tai, which was occupied by the Zaraisk Regiment. But that unit, aided by the 3rd East Siberian Rifle Regiment from the edge of Tung-chia-tun, repulsed the Japanese towards nine o'clock, and later some of its scouts dislodged a party of them which had got behind some sandhills north of Yi-tzu-tai and was annoying the Russians with its fire. After this the hostilities on the positions of General de Vitt and General Dovbor-Musnitski were confined to an exchange of rifle and artillery fire. On General Krause's front only intermittent fire action was carried on throughout the day.*

When the fighting along the front of the various detachments of General Gerngross's force died away between four and five in the afternoon the Japanese 7th Division had made no progress whatever towards the goal assigned to it by General Nogi. The 9th Division had, it is true, taken Pa-chia-tzu from the left of the Northern Detachment; but the 1st Division farther to the north had been checked no less than the 7th. This rebuff, administered to the Japanese Third Army at the moment when the Russians after an undisturbed retirement were consolidating themselves upon a shorter line and building up a fresh General Reserve, possibly with the idea of dealing a counter-stroke, was distinctly unfortunate for the Japanese.

The only sector of the field within which the course of the action on the 8th March remains to be described is that bounded by Niu-hsin-tun, on the north, and Chin-chia-tun, on the right bank of

* At 6 p.m. General Kaulbars gave orders to reinforce General Gerngross. For this purpose two regiments were to be detached from General Tserpitski's reserve and sent to General Gerngross; and accordingly, about midnight, the 121st (Penza) and 122nd (Tambov) Regiments arrived at Hou-hua. General Gerngross, however, felt that one regiment would suffice and sent back the 122nd (Tambov) Regiment to Lan-tien-tun on the morning of the 9th. Thence it was sent to Lu-kun-tun where it joined the Second Manchurian Army reserve.

The reserve of General Tserpitski, mentioned above, was under General Ganenfeldt and on the morning of the 8th consisted of the 55th (Podolia) and 60th (Zamostye) Regiments. During the day as a result of the withdrawal of General Gershelmann (see p. 585) and of a redistribution of units, the 121st (Penza) and 122nd (Tambov) Regiments also joined General Tserpitski's reserve. With the departure of the Penza and Tambov Regiments General Tserpitski was left without a single infantry unit of his own—Xth—Corps.

the Hun Ho, upon the south. Along this front, on the one side, was the Japanese Second Army under General Oku, and on the other was the Russian entrenched line held by the forces of Generals Topornin and Tserpitski. During the night of the 7th-8th General Oku had issued orders by which the component parts of his army were to hold on to their positions, construct defensive works, and keep as large reserves as possible—a rôle which was redeemed from being entirely passive by the further instructions given to the 5th Division to occupy the enemy's attention, so that more troops might be sent to the left to keep touch with the Third Army. Before dawn, however, information was received from General Nogi notifying the line held by his army, and this led General Oku again to believe that the Russians would probably retreat and would in doing so bring great pressure to bear against the Third Army. He therefore ordered the guns of the 3rd and 8th Divisions to open heavily on the position in front of them. A possible source of danger was removed early in the day, when the gap existing between the Second and Third Armies was partly filled by the arrival of the 51st *Kobi* Regiment opposite Niu-hsin-tun.

Before noon a further reinforcement for the Japanese Second Army was announced, for an order was received from Marshal Oyama by which the 4th Division—including such of its troops as formed part of the Tomioka Detachment—was to come again under General Oku.* This welcome accession of strength gave the latter an opportunity of filling the gap between his army and the Third more completely than could be effected by the 51st *Kobi* Regiment alone; and he determined to pass the 4th Division in rear of his other divisions and to bring it to Hou-lin-tun. Orders were therefore sent for the division to be ready to move at the shortest notice, but when they reached General Tsukamoto he was not in a position to comply. Part of his division was following up the 61st Division of the 5th Siberian Corps;† and as regards the units which were to be withdrawn from Colonel Tomioka's detachment delay was also unavoidable. That detachment had been assisting the 6th Division in its attack since the previous day, and the most that could be done upon the 8th was to assemble it at

* Colonel Tomioka, who would then be left with his own, the 8th *Kobi* Brigade, was to occupy the line Erh-tai-tzu—Su-chia-tun.

† See p. 584.

Ssu-fan-tai and to start withdrawing the 4th Division units from it. General Tsukamoto, therefore, asked that a day might be given to him to make the necessary arrangements, a request which was granted, although with reluctance. One battalion, however, which was free to move, was sent forthwith to Ssu-fan-pu, where it joined the Second Army reserve.*

On the Russian side no change had occurred in the position of General Topornin's force, but the left of General Tserpitski's was now bent back as far as Chin-chia-tun. As already mentioned, this had been necessitated by the withdrawal of General Gershelmann, consequent upon the retirement of the Third Manchurian Army. Of General Gershelmann's troops the 3rd and 4th Rifle Regiments as well as the Tambov Regiment were handed over to General Tserpitski, while the remainder proceeded to Lantien-tun to form the Second Army reserve.

Except for the artillery fire brought to bear by the Japanese 3rd Division, which was for the most part concentrated upon Yu-huan-tun and only reached any intensity between 1 and 4 p.m., General Topornin's force passed a quiet day. Against General Tserpitski's front some troops from the Japanese 8th Division made an attack on Chi-kuan-tun before daylight, but they were repulsed, and with their effort the activity of the 8th Division ceased. It had been intended again to attempt to break through the Russian line, this time at Sha-ta-tzu; but it was eventually decided to give the troops another day's rest, and no further attacks were made. The artillery bombardment continued spasmodically on both sides for the remainder of the day.

In the Japanese 5th Division surprise was felt when no Russian artillery opened fire from the left bank of the river, and to clear up the situation the battalion of the 21st Regiment in Su-hu-chia-pu was ordered to push forward.† By 1.30 p.m. it had occupied Erh-tai-tzu, which was empty, and shortly afterwards it made its way into the southern part of Ma-chia-pu, greeted only by a few stray shots from a weak rear guard left behind by General Gershelmann.

The Japanese
5th Division.

* The 3rd Battalion of the 37th Regiment.

† On the morning of the 8th March the position of the Japanese 5th Division was as follows:—South of the river, one battalion of the 21st Regiment still lay at Su-hu-chia-pu, and opposite Sha-ta-tzu, entrenched along the sandhills, and about a mile from the embankment, were the 41st and the 11th Regiments, while the 42nd Regiment, and two battalions of the 21st were in reserve at Ta-yu-shu-pu.

Three hours later the 42nd Regiment was brought up from Ta-yu-shu-pu and ordered to occupy the northern portion, from which the Russians had retired, the southern part being now garrisoned by the 4th Cavalry Regiment. About five o'clock it was reported that the Russians were withdrawing their guns from Sha-ta-tzu and that their infantry was probably about to fall back also. General Kigoshi therefore determined to make another attack and for this ordered the heavy guns to move back to their former positions near Hsiao-yu-shu-pu, while the attack was carried out by the 42nd and 11th Regiments, the former from the northern part of Ma-chia-pu and the latter from the sand-hills. Just as it was getting dark the infantry advanced over the open fields, but when the village was approached it was found that the assumption as to its vacation had been quite unwarranted, for Sha-ta-tzu, as well as the line extending eastwards to Sha-tou-tzu, was obstinately defended by General Petrov's troops. Under a galling fire the Japanese had to give up the attack. But all through the night they returned to the task again and again, although they never actually got to grips with the enemy, and when morning came they were lying in the open, or behind what little cover they had scraped up from the frozen ground, within a hundred and fifty yards of the enemy's rifles.

All the fighting which took place on the right bank of the Hun Ho during the morning of the 8th March pointed conclusively to the fact that the Japanese Third Army was endeavouring to reach the railway north of Mukden and so cut off the Russians from the north. This of course

General Kuropatkin forms another detachment to safeguard the railway.

was no new development, for the intention of Marshal Oyama had been obvious to the Russian commander-in-chief for more than a week, but now, upon the 8th March, the progress of the movement induced the latter to form yet another force to meet the ever-growing threat. During the course of the morning he decided to constitute a strong detachment, independent of the commander of the Second Manchurian Army, and to post it in the triangle Ku-san-tun—Tzu-erh-tun—Mu-chia-tun, with orders to cover the railway at all costs. This detachment was to be formed from the troops of the Third and First Manchurian Armies which had been ordered to join the General Reserve. The command was offered to General Linevich and on his declining

it was given to General Muilov, the commander of the broken up VIIIth Corps.

At the time General Muilov, with his staff, was at Lan-tien-tun, and about noon he started for Tzu-erh-tun to take over his new command. He had no maps of the district in which he was to operate, no data as to the time of arrival of the units which were to compose his force, and no information about the enemy, so that his first task was to remedy these deficiencies as far as possible. Maps were obtained from General Head-Quarters at Mukden en route, while reconnaissances made by the escorting half-squadron showed that the road to Tzu-erh-tun was clear of the enemy and was still held by the force from the 4th Siberian Corps under Colonel Borisov, which had been forming the General Reserve. Just outside Mukden General Muilov came upon some troops proceeding to join his detachment. These were the Orovai Regiment and a battery of the 28th Artillery Brigade belonging to the 54th Division of the 5th Siberian Corps, which division had arrived at Mukden station during the forenoon to join the General Reserve.* He directed these units as well as two sapper companies, which he also met on his way, to proceed to Tzu-erh-tun, where, in accordance with instructions from the commander-in-chief, he took under his command the detachment under Colonel Borisov. In the evening the advanced guard of General Gershelmann's force came in;† but it was not until the next day that General Muilov's force was properly organized and complete.‡

General Kuropatkin's General Reserve was at this time in a more or less fluid state. In the morning, as has been said, it had consisted of Colonel Borisov's force which, however, had been sent off to Tzu-erh-tun, to join General Muilov.

It was then strengthened almost at once by the arrival of the 54th Division of the 5th Siberian Corps, amounting to ten battalions, twenty-four guns and one squadron, under General Artamonov.

* See pp. 582-3.

† See foot-note (*), p. 585. This force was hastily summoned about 2.30 p.m. from Lan-tien-tun by General Kuropatkin's orders, owing to the report sent down from a balloon of the advance of Japanese columns against the railway.

‡ By midday on the 9th his force was assembled and amounted to twenty-eight battalions, seventy-two guns, the Primorsk Dragoon Regiment, and two sapper companies.

From this force, about 3 p.m., General Kuropatkin sent the Orovai Regiment to Tzu-erh-tun to General Muilov, and an hour later dispatched a battalion of the Mokshan Regiment to the Northern Tombs to support General von der Launitz. Thus General Artamonov had left five battalions, twenty-four guns, and a squadron.* But some fifty battalions had been demanded from the Third and First Manchurian Armies to replenish the General Reserve, and when these should arrive upon the 9th it would be a far more solid force.

Nevertheless, the shortening of the Russian battle front and the increase which this contraction permitted General Kuropatkin to make to his reserve did not blind him to the possibility of having to retire to Tieh-ling in case the Japanese were not checked in their efforts to close round him. At 10 p.m., therefore, he caused a telegram to be sent to the army commanders to inform them that the position on the western front had changed for the worse, since the enemy had gained the Russian right flank and was displaying, not without success, a determination to push on towards the line of communications to the north; and that he was taking measures to collect as large a force as possible round Ta-wa and Pu-ho to hold off the enemy to the west and so obtain time for a retirement to Tieh-ling. The message concluded with the following:—

“But as the success of the retirement to be undertaken by the commander-in-chief will depend very largely on the manner in which the concentration of the troops dispatched by him into the area indicated is carried out, the commander-in-chief orders that every measure possible should be taken to facilitate the retreat of the armies to Tieh-ling, should the necessity arise. In view of this, and in view of the exceedingly disadvantageous position of Mukden as a point for the concentration of large quantities of every kind of impedimenta and transport the absolute necessity of clearing the neighbourhood of everything which it would be a disgrace to leave in the enemy's hands, or which might impede the movement of troops, such as transport, convoys, depots, etc., will be realized. Since, after the departure of the transport, we may have to march and fight for several days without being able to

* About 7 p.m. the squadron went off to Tan-hsin, where it arrived on the morning of the 9th.

replenish supplies, the commander-in-chief desires that men and horses should carry as much as possible—say for five or six days—at the expense of everything else except fighting equipment, weapons, ammunition and entrenching tools.”

On the 8th March the honours of the day rested with General Kuropatkin. He had set himself two tasks to perform—to withdraw his centre and left armies to the Hun Ho and at the same time to hold off the Japanese Third Army from the railway and Mandarin Road. Both of these tasks had been accomplished; and the former, which seemed fraught with immense difficulty, had been carried out with truly remarkable ease. The lack of vigour in pursuit displayed by the Japanese Fourth and First Armies has already been pointed out; and it must have been very largely due to the exhaustion of the troops, for even before a shot had been fired in the battle the attention of every commander had been directed to the necessity of prompt action the moment the enemy should give way.*

Everything now depended on what use the Russian commander-in-chief would make of the fresh General Reserve which he was building up. It is true that the First and Third Manchurian Armies were not inexhaustible stores of strength, and that there was a limit to the extent to which they could be depleted, for Generals Kuroki and Nodzu, after having once let these armies escape, would not be likely to spare their own troops if the Russians should again be encountered. But it was still possible that the great contraction of the Russian front might enable General Kuropatkin to mass a sufficient force to strike a blow by which he might snatch success, even at this stage of the battle.

* See p. 269.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

THE BATTLE OF MUKDEN—*continued*—OPERATIONS ON THE 9TH MARCH—GENERAL KUROPATKIN'S EFFORTS TO SAFEGUARD HIS COMMUNICATIONS—CONTINUATION OF THE ENVELOPING MOVEMENT BY THE JAPANESE THIRD ARMY—GENERAL KUROPATKIN ORDERS A RETREAT TO TIEH-LING—THE FRONT OF THE FIRST MANCHURIAN ARMY PENETRATED BY THE JAPANESE.

(Plate 55 and Plan 69.)

THURSDAY, the 9th March, dawned wild and stormy, and in striking contrast to the still and comparatively sunny weather which had prevailed for some days past. All day long a south-westerly gale swept over the battlefield, at times raising clouds of dust, which made it impossible to see a hundred yards; and there is no doubt that it had considerable effect upon the operations. In many parts of the field the wind blew directly in the faces of the Russians, who were thus placed at a disadvantage, and the difficulty of detecting the movements even of large bodies of troops, generally speaking, favoured the attacking side.

During the day the Japanese were able not only to carry out a further stage of the envelopment with considerable success, but, as will be seen, were able to break the Russian front higher up along the River Hun.

The tasks of the five Japanese armies upon this day were as follows:—on the south bank of the Hun Ho the Fourth, First and Ya-lu Armies were to carry on the pursuit of the First and Third Manchurian Armies, and on the other side of that river

The tasks of the five Japanese armies.	the constriction of the Third Army was to be still further pressed. For the latter force orders had been issued shortly after midnight, to the effect that the 9th Division was to withdraw from the centre, to pass in rear of the 1st Division and to assemble at Ta-wu chia-tun and thus prolong
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the Japanese left.* In the Japanese Second Army General Oku had two distinct duties to perform. In the first place he had to help the Third Army directly; and secondly he had to render indirect assistance to it by preventing the enemy actually before him from retiring, except with heavy loss. By these means General Nogi would be enabled to press on unhampered by the main strength of the Second Manchurian Army. To enable the first of these duties to be carried out a re-transfer of the 4th Division to the Second Army had been arranged, but it had been postponed for twenty-four hours at the request of the divisional commander. The situation, however, admitted of no delay, for troops had to be obtained from somewhere, and a prolonged discussion on the subject had taken place at Second Army head-quarters during the night, at which some of the staff were in favour of applying to Marshal Oyama for reinforcements, whilst others wished to carry out the task without assistance from outside, lest the General Reserve might be wanted elsewhere.†

The latter view finally prevailed; but exactly how it was to be carried into practice was not an easy matter to decide. To withdraw troops from the first line of the Second Army, then in the open within a few hundred yards of the enemy, would be both hazardous and difficult. Since no other more satisfactory solution offered, it was decided to send the 8th Division north instead of the 4th, and to amend the instructions already sent to the latter, which was to cross the Hun near Ma-chia-pu-whence, connecting with the 5th Division, it could move north-westwards if required. At 2 a.m. on the morning of the 9th the orders dealing with these moves were issued. As regards the other divisions of the Second Army, the 5th Division was to endeavour to drive back the enemy before it and then to advance to the line Lu-kun-tun—Redoubt No. 7, while the 3rd Division, maintaining connexion with the 5th, was to endeavour to occupy Yu-huan-tun and to assist the 8th Division in its transfer northwards.

On the Russian side General Kuropatkin's immediate object was to keep the Japanese Third Army off the railway at all costs, until he should be in a position to launch a counter-stroke or until

* This was a repetition of the manœuvre that had been carried out by the 9th Division on the night of the 5th-6th.

† See foot-note (+), p. 485.

he should make up his mind to retreat northwards towards Tieh-ling. He had therefore during the evening of the 8th sent General Muilov an order to occupy and place in a state of defence the villages of Tun-chan-tzu and Ku-san-tun, and to begin operations upon the 9th by an attack against Hei-ni-tun, in co-operation with the Northern

Detachment of General von der Launitz.* At the same time he had directed one battalion to be placed in Hsiao-hsin-tun in support of the villages named above. He attached great importance to the occupation of these three points, inasmuch as they would afford starting places for the attack against Hei-ni-tun, in which he hoped that as many as ninety battalions would be taking part upon the 9th March.†

The preliminary operation was successfully carried out by General Muilov during the night, and by dawn Tun-chan-tzu, Hsiao-hsin-tun and Ku-san-tun were in possession of his troops, opposition having been encountered in the last-named village only, from which a Japanese post had been driven out.‡

There then remained the greater task of attacking Hei-ni-tun in conjunction with the Northern Detachment. As early as 2.45 a.m. General Muilov wrote to General von der Launitz, requesting to be informed what arrangements the latter had made for this operation. No reply was received for over five

* It should be borne in mind that since the designation Northern Detachment had been given to the force under General von der Launitz, that under General Muilov—still farther north—had been created. The Northern Detachment was, therefore, not the most northerly as regards actual geographical situation.

† It is not stated in the *Russian Official History* how this total was to be made up.

‡ The occupation of these villages was carried out by the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 8th (Tomsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment and a battalion of the 9th (Tobolsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment—all under Colonel Manshtein—from the force under Colonel Borisov. The only other unit which had by midnight on the 8th-9th March joined General Muilov—the 213th (Orovai) Regiment—was in too exhausted a condition to do anything else but go into bivouac. At 2 a.m. on the 9th General Gershelmann arrived with the 33rd (Elets) Regiment and a battery of the 9th Artillery Brigade, while between 5 and 6 a.m. there came up one and a half battalions of the 216th (Insar) Regiment, three battalions of the 214th (Mokshan) Regiment, half a battalion of the 213th (Orovai) Regiment and two batteries of the 28th Artillery Brigade under General Artamanov. The above were all that reached General Muilov by dawn on the 9th. Other units joined him, however, during the day, see foot-note (*), p. 606.

hours, and when it came it was not of a reassuring nature. General von der Launitz stated that he was unable to advance, since the Japanese had been attacking San-tai-tzu and Ta-hen-tun all night long,* and he had only seven and a half companies in reserve;† that the most he could do would be to assist with artillery fire; and that in the attack on Hei-ni-tun General Muilov would have to reckon only upon his own forces. At 8.15 a.m. a note arrived from General Kuropatkin saying that he would come to Tzu-erh-tun during the day, and that General Muilov was not to delay action on that account, but to carry out the instructions already given to him, to the best of his judgment. The latter then decided to assail Hei-ni-tun from the north and east, and issued verbal orders for the attack to commence at noon, after a two hours' preparation by artillery.‡

But, as happened so often, the arrangements made by the Russians were upset by the seizure of the initiative by the Japanese. The left flank guard of the Japanese 1st Division§ had the previous evening received orders to make a night attack on Wan-kan-tun, and although at 3 a.m. on the 9th this operation was countermanded in view of the dangerous situation of the portion of the division opposite San-tai-tzu,|| the flank guard, nevertheless, advanced some hours later. About ten o'clock it moved from the direction of Hei-ni-tun towards the railway and

* As regards Ta-hen-tun this report was not quite accurate. See p. 608.

† The account of this attack will be found later on p. 608.

‡ The 213th (Orovai) Regiment was to move out from Tzu-erh-tun to Tun-chan-tzu and thence, with a battalion of the 9th (Tobolsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment in reserve behind it, to advance south, endeavouring to turn Hei-ni-tun from the west. At the same time, to attack Hei-ni-tun from the east, the 4th Battalion of the 8th (Tomsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment and one battalion of the 10th (Omsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment were to move from the railway line, while five companies of the 8th (Tomsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment in Ku-san-tun and three companies in Hsiao-hsin-tun were ordered to cover the advance. Three batteries were moved into position on the mound west of Tzu-erh-tun near the railway line, and two at Hsiao-hou-tzu.

The 33rd (Elets) Regiment was detailed to the reserve and was ordered to remain by the railway line, west of a wood south of Tzu-erh-tun, and one battalion of the 216th (Insar) Regiment was moved to Fan-chia-tun, to keep up communication with Major-General Dombrovski's force.

The artillery preparation was to commence at 10.15 a.m. and the attack itself at 12.15 p.m.

Besides the troops detailed for the attack there were three battalions of the 214th (Mokshan) Regiment and half a battalion of the 216th (Insar) Regiment with General Artamonov at Tan-hsin.

§ The 2nd Brigade.

|| See p. 608.

approached to within one mile of it when it was brought to a halt by General Muilov's guns. Simultaneously with this advance the Japanese artillery opened a heavy fire, under cover of which other units from the same division attempted to move forward against Wan-kan-tun, but the rifle fire of the Russians lining the railway caused the effort to fail.

The Japanese 1st Division had now penetrated into a re-entrant, three sides of which were held by Russians, and this circumstance appeared to the latter to indicate a favourable opportunity for a counter-attack, which if successful would greatly facilitate the seizure of Hei-ni-tun. Accordingly, about noon, General Muilov resolved to assume the offensive, and entrusted the conduct of the attack to Colonel Borisov. By this time General Kuropatkin had arrived at Tzu-erh-tun, and having heard General Muilov's report he placed the Primorsk Dragoons under his orders to secure the right flank. But he was disturbed to find that the attack was about to begin without co-operation from General von der Launitz's force, and indeed would have stopped the action altogether had not General Muilov assured him that his troops were already in motion and could not be halted. He then expressed considerable disapproval at the choice of a commander for the attack, maintaining that a general officer should have been detailed. Some argument appears to have taken place upon this point, the upshot of which was that General Martos—General Muilov's chief of staff—received the impression that the conduct of operations was entrusted to him, and galloped off to the Orovai Regiment.* But after he had given some orders to the infantry and the artillery the misunderstanding was cleared up, and he resumed his proper duties, General Gershelmann being ordered to take over command of the attacking force. Valuable time, however, had been lost by this intervention on the part of the commander-in-chief, which was certainly inconsistent with the tenor of the note he sent to General Muilov earlier in the day.

Shortly afterwards the two Russian battalions which were occupying the railway moved forward and drove the troops of the 1st *Kobi* Brigade from some trenches which they had

* The 213th (Orovai) Regiment, which had bivouacked at Tzu-erh-tun, had been ordered to move westwards and then to advance southwards against Hei-ni-tun.

succeeded in constructing on the bank of a small ravine. But the clouds of dust which sprang up with renewed intensity at this moment compelled Colonel Borisov to stop further advance for a time. Meanwhile General Gershelmann sent the Elets Regiment to prolong the left of the attacking line, and when it had been reformed it again moved forward, driving in the Japanese, who abandoned some machine guns, one of which the Russians managed to carry off.* The Omsk and Tomsk Regiments succeeded in pushing forward to within half a mile of Hei-ni-tun, but about 2 p.m. were compelled to give ground some six hundred yards.

This advance, however, was of the nature of a demonstration, for the main blow was to be struck by the Orovai Regiment from the direction of Ku-san-tun—Tun-chan-tzu. That regiment, which had reached Ku-san-tun at 12.45 p.m., deployed immediately on arrival and moved against Hei-ni-tun, leaving in the former village one battalion of the Tomsk Regiment. It had passed a restful night in bivouac, and refreshed by hours of sleep and sufficiency of rations the men marched briskly and cheerfully to the fight. Its main body passed abreast of Hou-hsin-tun without incident, but no sooner had the reserve got opposite that place than a furious rifle fire was opened upon its right flank and rear, with the result that in a few minutes the regimental commander, ten officers and six hundred rank and file were killed or wounded. One company wheeled round and opened fire against the village, and the companies of the Tomsk Regiment in Ku-san-tun moved up in support. But in spite of this the Orovai Regiment was compelled to suspend its advance. Changing front to the west, it lay down facing Ku-san-tun, and later fell back on Tun-chan-tzu. The Japanese force in Hou-hsin-tun consisted chiefly of dismounted cavalry from the 9th Division, which now for the first time made its presence felt in this portion of the field.†

* About this time the main body of the Japanese 1st Division was in Hei-ni-tun. The 15th Regiment was in part occupation of San-tai-tzu (see p. 608). In action against Ku-san-tun and the railway were the 2nd Brigade and the 1st *Kobi* Brigade. A detachment was holding Pao-tou-tun. The divisional cavalry regiment (1st Cavalry Regiment) was with the 9th Division.

† The Japanese 9th Division at this time was concentrated about Ta-wu-chia-tun. The 1st and 4th Cavalry Regiments, supported by a battalion of infantry, were in Hou-hsin-tun.

The expedient of withdrawing that division from the line, passing it behind the 1st Division, and letting it emerge again into the battle front, relieved the difficult situation in which the latter had found itself. And its presence came as a complete surprise to the Russians; for although it had been apparently noted by patrols from the Primorsk Dragoons and scout detachments no information of it had been conveyed to the Orovai Regiment. With the severe check administered to that regiment and to Colonel Borisov's force advancing from the railway, the Russian attack on Hei-ni-tun ended for the moment. At this time the storm was blowing with increasing fury; the movements of troops were rendered invisible; and reports kept arriving late, for the bearers continually went astray in its blinding dust-clouds. General Kuropatkin, however, realized that these conditions were no more unfavourable for offence than defence, and on hearing of the failure of the attack on Hei-ni-tun ordered it to be repeated.

This renewed attempt took place between 6 and 7 p.m., when General Gershelmann after some artillery preparation again advanced.* On the right were two battalions from the Omsk and Tomsk Regiments, followed by a battalion of the Elets Regiment; on the other flank were two battalions of the Elets Regiment and one in local reserve. In the second line was a battalion of the Insar Regiment. To co-operate in this offensive General Dombrovski, in accordance with orders from General Kuropatkin, detailed a detachment under Colonel Vorobiev.† The

Failure of
further ef-
forts against
Hei-ni-tun.

* General Muilov's detachment had been reinforced early in the afternoon by the 35th (Bryansk) and 59th (Liublin) Regiments, one battalion of the 36th (Orel) Regiment, one and a quarter battalions of the 58th (Praga) Regiment and five batteries from the 9th and 28th Artillery Brigades. The 35th (Bryansk) Regiment was sent to Ta-wa, the 59th (Liublin) Regiment to Tzu-erh-tun, and the units of the 58th (Praga) Regiment went to Fan-chia-tun. The other units probably remained at Tzu-erh-tun.

† Five companies of the 53rd (Vollhynia) Regiment and the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 242nd (Belebeev) Regiment. The latter two battalions were from the Third Manchurian Army (see p. 583) and were originally detailed to form part of the General Reserve, but were later sent to General Dombrovski. They left Mukden about 7 a.m. on the 9th and arrived at Wan-kan-tun about 5 p.m.

attack, however, ended in failure, although it was carried out with remarkable vigour. In that portion of the fight in which the 2nd Battalion of the Elets Regiment was engaged, the 7th Company under Second-Lieutenant Korolkov managed to get close up to a Japanese battery and some machine guns, which were in action within a wood. Charging upon the battery, the Russian company drove off the gunners and escort and captured two quick-firing and two machine guns, one of the latter, however, being retaken in a Japanese counter-attack. The lack of success met with by the Russians was due entirely to the absence of co-ordination which distinguished their operations, for which both the weather and the improvised organization of the troops were responsible. On the left the detachment under Colonel Vorobiev managed to get almost up to the walls of Hei-ni-tun, but being completely without communication with General Gershelmann it fell back to Kun-chia-tun.

Nevertheless, in spite of his failure to seize Hei-ni-tun, General Muilov had arrested the movement of the Japanese 1st Division and kept it off the railway and the Mandarin Road. But by now it was evident that beyond the Japanese at Hei-ni-tun another large force was closing in upon the line. This was the main body of the Japanese 9th Division.

That division was already giving an unfavourable turn to the Russian situation in Hsiao-hsin-tun and Ku-san-tun. It directed a heavy bombardment against both these villages at 6.15 p.m., and an hour later its infantry advanced against the former village from the direction of Ta-wu-chia-tun. The three companies of the Tomsk Regiment within the place under Colonel Troitski held their own with great difficulty; and when a new hostile force appeared from the south-west between 7 and 8 p.m. their position became serious. About this time a scout galloped up to Colonel Troitski, with instructions to retire to the line of railway, and very soon afterwards the Japanese were in Hsiao-hsin-tun.* The abandonment of that village led immediately to the evacuation of Ku-san-tun, the garrison† of which withdrew to Tun-chan-tzu.‡

* Colonel Troitski reached Hsiao-hou-tzu about midnight.

† Five companies of the 8th (Tomsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment.

‡ In a counter-attack made about midnight the companies of the Tomsk Regiment reoccupied the eastern half of Ku-san-tun, the western portion remaining in the hands of the Japanese.

It has been mentioned that General von der Launitz was unable to co-operate with General Muilov, owing to the fact that he had been assailed in San-tai-tzu during the night with such vigour that his reserve was reduced to less than two battalions.*

The Japanese
1st Division
attacks
San-tai-tzu.

The attack on that place began about 2 a.m., when the 15th Regiment of the Japanese 1st Division, driving the Russians from the trenches in front of the village, burst into it, occupied the courtyards of the nearest houses, and began to direct a rapid fire upon every portion of it. The repeated and gallant efforts made by the garrison to dislodge the intruders met with no success, and the Russians began to fear that the Japanese might pierce their line between San-tai-tzu and Ta-hen-tun. By morning all the reserve of the Northern Detachment, with the exception of a battalion of the Mokshan Regiment and the remnants of what had been Colonel Zapolski's force, were used up. It was in these circumstances that General von der Launitz found it impracticable to afford any active assistance to General Muilov in the attack upon Hei-ni-tun.

The left of the Northern Detachment, formed by the troops of General Sollogub at Ta-hen-tun, was not seriously engaged during the day, for the shifting of the Japanese 9th Division had necessitated an extension of the front of the 7th Division so as to fill the gap thus caused. In these circumstances a portion of the division was left at Tsuan-pan-che and Pa-chia-tzu, while the main body moved to Tsao-hou-tun and Wu-tai-tzu.† During the morning the Japanese guns in Pa-chia-tzu began to shell Ta-hen-tun, and two batteries of the Russian 29th Artillery Brigade, as well as the battery of the 35th Artillery Brigade, replied in the intervals of the dust storm. No movement, however, was made by the Japanese until about 4 p.m., when they began an advance from Pa-chia-tzu. But it was not pressed, and no real attempt was made to renew the offensive. In the afternoon the depleted reserve at General von der Launitz's disposal, at the Northern Tombs, was reinforced by three

* General von der Launitz's Northern Detachment, although nominally forming part of the Second Manchurian Army, operated on this day under special instructions from the commander-in-chief.

† The 15th *Kobi* Brigade, which had reinforced the division, remained south of the Hsin-min-tun road.

battalions of the Orel Regiment from the units which General Gershelmann had brought to General Muilov's detachment.

The orders for the Second Manchurian Army for the 9th March were merely to the effect that the positions on which the troops found themselves were to be stubbornly held. Although they were issued upon the evening of the 8th, they

The Second
Manchurian
Army.

General Grekov's
cavalry.

apparently did not reach General Grekov during the night, and on the morning of the 9th Lieutenant-Colonel Prince Engalitchev of the General Staff arrived at Second Manchurian

Army head-quarters to obtain instructions for the cavalry. It would seem that the commander-in-chief must have signified his wish to give orders to that force personally, for General Kaulbars directed the staff officer to report himself to General Kuropatkin at Tzu-erh-tun. The instructions issued were that General Grekov was to penetrate behind the enemy's left flank and to ascertain the strength and composition of any reserves which might be concentrated north of the Hsin-min-tun road.*

The commander-in-chief took advantage of the occasion to express to Prince Engalitchev his opinion of the previous performances of General Grekov's force in somewhat forcible terms. He pointed out that the information obtained by the cavalry within the last few days had been extremely indefinite, dealing as it did merely with the advanced troops and weak screens thrown out by the Japanese, and deprecated the fact that the Russian mounted troops never made the slightest effort to pierce these screens in order to discover what they might be concealing. Having received his instructions and this criticism Prince Engalitchev departed; but although the tenor of General Kuropatkin's remarks would appear to have suggested the desirability of speed, he did not reach his destination until 7 a.m. the following morning.

It was, however, perhaps fortunate that Prince Engalitchev made a belated arrival, for General Grekov was thus saved from having to decide between contradictory instructions. In spite of the fact that the staff officer had been sent to learn the wishes of the commander-in-chief, head-quarters of the Second Manchurian Army had given orders direct to General Grekov to

* The reserve of the Japanese Third Army, which was being formed by General Oki, was now reduced to the 52nd *Kobi* Regiment which had moved to Tsao-hou-tun. The 14th *Kobi* Brigade reinforced the 1st and 9th Divisions during the day. The 1st *Kobi* Brigade had joined the former division on the 8th, and the 51st *Kobi* Regiment was under General Oku.

carry out a different mission, namely, to reconnoitre the area lying west of the railway between Hu-shih-tai station and Tieh-ling.* At this time General Grekov's cavalry was mainly at a village some three miles north-east of La-nao-tun. In a report made on the morning of the 9th he gave the strength of the Japanese in front of him between Ta-hsin-tun and the Liao Ho at four battalions, eight squadrons and ten guns,† an estimate which, when allowance is made for the difficulty of distinguishing between infantry and dismounted cavalry, was far from inaccurate. During the day the Russian patrols came across only small bodies of the enemy, and General Grekov, concluding that the Japanese were about to retreat, made preparations to pursue. Towards evening his advanced line moved forward about six miles on the right and a couple of miles upon the left, and drove in some Japanese patrols and captured seven troopers, but the approach of evening stopped operations for the day. Touch, however, had been gained with patrols sent out from Prince Orbeliani's force.‡

* The hour of issue of these instructions is not specifically given in the *Russian Official History* but it is stated that they were issued at the same time as Prince Engalitchev was sent to Tzu-erh-tun. Probably the head-quarter staff of the Second Manchurian Army were unaware that General Kaulbars had sent Prince Engalitchev to the commander-in-chief.

† The Japanese Cavalry Division consisted of the following upon the 9th March :—

1st Cavalry Brigade	...	...	...	8 squadrons.
2nd Cavalry Brigade	...	...	...	8 squadrons.
3rd Cavalry Regiment	...	...	...	3 squadrons.
6th Cavalry Regiment	...	...	...	3 squadrons.
9th Cavalry Regiment	...	...	...	3 squadrons.
Guns	...	...	...	12.
Infantry	...	...	...	2 companies.

Total 25 squadrons, 12 guns, 2 companies.

Of these, however, the 9th Cavalry Regiment and the two companies of infantry were not with the Cavalry Division upon the 8th so that at the time when General Grekov wrote his dispatch the strength of the Japanese Cavalry Division was probably 22 squadrons, and 12 guns.

‡ The cavalry of General Grekov and Prince Orbeliani were disposed upon the evening of the 9th as follows :—

Main body of Major-General Grekov's force—in bivouac, as on the 8th, north-east of La-nao-tun with advanced troops on a line running north-westwards from Ya-tzu-chan to the Liao Ho.

In addition, on the right bank of the Liao Ho, were five squadrons of the Ussuri Cossack Regiment.

Major-General Prince Orbeliani's cavalry force bivouacked for the night at Siding No. 96, five miles north of Min-chia-tun.

This force on the evening of the 9th was placed under Major-General Grekov's command, who gave orders for it to move on the 10th and join the remainder of the cavalry.

The Japanese Cavalry Division made no material movement during the day, and doubtless General Akiyama considered that good work would be done if General Grekov could be kept from disturbing the Japanese 9th Division, whose left flank was now somewhat in the air. To all intents and purposes his mounted troops remained in the same positions as upon the 8th, except that the 9th Cavalry Regiment occupied La-la-tun, from which village a detachment had been removed the previous day.

The Japanese
Cavalry
Division.

Since General Gerngross had no other duty to perform than to hold on to his position, and since the Japanese 7th Division was covering too wide a front to permit of offensive operations, it followed that in this particular portion of the field the day was one of almost total quiet save for an exchange of artillery fire which went on until evening, by which time the position of General Gerngross's force was practically unchanged. A similar combination of circumstances prevailed where the troops under General Topornin confronted the Japanese 3rd Division, for the former had merely to occupy their defensive line, while on the Japanese side the 3rd Division, reduced in strength by the losses experienced by General Nambo's brigade, was quite unable to attack. Beyond a movement which appears to have been purely of the nature of a demonstration against Yu-huan-tun nothing of any importance took place along this portion of the front.

The Second
Manchurian
Army.
Inactivity
along the
greater portion
of the front.

Of the troops under General Tserpitski the detachments under General Churin and General Rusanov continued in the positions which they had been holding for several days; but that under General Petrov, as has been said, now faced south, being disposed along the line Sha-ta-tzu—Sha-tou-tzu—Chin-chia-tun, a line of some insecurity, for the evacuation of Ma-chia-pu and Erh-tai-tzu had exposed its right to enfilade fire and its front was inadequately fortified. To remedy this, every effort was made to construct entrenchments; but the soil a few inches below the surface was still like iron, and sand bags had to be requisitioned from Second Manchurian Army head-quarters. Of the Russian troops along the stretch of front from the Hsin-min-tun road to the Hun Ho, those under General Petrov alone had any real fighting during the 9th, the peace which reigned in the forces of General Gerngross and General Topornin being shared by those of Generals

Churnin and Rusanov. The action of General Petrov's detachment is described later.

The right and centre detachments of General Tserpitski also owed immunity from attack upon the 9th to the fact that strength was being massed on the left of the Japanese Third Army; for the 8th Division, as will be remembered, had orders to march northwards round the rear of the 3rd Division to the neighbourhood of Fun-tai.* Leaving two battalions† in Wu-lin-pu and one regiment‡ in Nin-kuan-tun the remainder of the division started early on the morning of the 9th. The troops marched in two columns, taking the route which led west of the embankment so that their movement might not be visible to the Russians—an unnecessary precaution as it turned out, for the dust storm, when it arose, hid everything from view. The first column§ left at 6 a.m., and marching through Chan-ssu-tun arrived at Ku-chia-tzu.|| The original intention had been for it to proceed to Fun-tai, but, inasmuch as the Russians had shown no intention of advancing, it remained at Ku-chia-tzu.

Meanwhile, the rest of the division,¶ starting an hour later, had taken a route slightly farther to the west and it deployed a little before midday on the line Fun-tai*—Tsuan-pan-che, relieving the 15th *Kobi* Brigade which was acting with the 7th Division. Four 5·9-inch howitzers, and six 5·9-inch old pattern pieces of the same nature, took up a position south-east of Ta-shih-chiao, while three batteries of field artillery were brought up to that village and six mountain batteries were placed slightly to the south.**

* This village cannot be exactly identified, but a comparison between Russian and Japanese maps shows it to be either identical with, or in the immediate vicinity of Hou-hun-tai.

† The 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 31st Regiment.

‡ The 17th Regiment.

§ The 3rd Battalion of the 31st Regiment, a *Kobi* battalion (probably from the 2nd *Kobi* Regiment), and a battalion of the 32nd Regiment.

|| South-south-west of Ta-shih-chiao.

¶ Less, apparently, two battalions of the 17th Regiment and one battalion of the 31st Regiment, which remained in Nin-kuan-tun and Wu-lin-pu respectively and came under the commander of the 5th Division.

** At 9 p.m. General Oku sent an order to the 8th Division defining more precisely the object with which it had been transferred farther north. Its terms were these :—

- (1) The main body of the 8th Division has been sent in the direction of Fun-tai in order to protect the right of the Third Army so that it

The defence of General Petrov's section had been organized as follows:—the right, which ran from the left of General Rusanov through Sha-ta-tzu and thence half-way to Sha-tou-tzu, was to be held by the commander of the 7th Rifle Regiment, who had under him five battalions and two batteries;* and the remainder of the front, which extended to Chin-chia-tun, was in charge of Colonel Michailov of the Zamostye Regiment, who disposed of five battalions and the large number of sixty-four guns.† In local reserve at Ta-a-pu was the 3rd Rifle Regiment. Of this position the southern front was, as has been said, in anything but a condition to resist assault, and when the attack made by the Japanese 5th Division during the night had died away efforts had been made by the Russians to strengthen the defences before morning. But work went on very slowly owing to the hardness of the ground and the extreme exhaustion of the men, many of whom dropped asleep and could not be roused.

In the Japanese 5th Division so firm was the belief that the Russians in front of them were about to retire that the infantry clung to the ground which it had gained, close up to the enemy's works, and the mountain guns, veiled in the clouds of dust, came forward on to the embankment within easy rifle range of the works and began to shell Sha-ta-tzu steadily. The main Russian redoubt at that village, however, was admirably concealed; for although it had a good command, stalks of *kao-liang* straw had been stuck into the superior slope of the parapet and

Continued from p. 612.]

can continue its movement without fear of the enemy breaking through between it and the Second Army.

- (2) Keeping the above object in view, the 8th Division will try to occupy a line extending from Fun-tai to a point two and a half miles east of Ta-shih-chiao, but no farther. This prolongation of the left wing of the division is intended to help the movement of the Third Army. Before occupying the above-mentioned line the commander of the 8th Division will consult with the commander of the Third Army so as to fall in with his views.*

* Lieutenant-General Tatsumi had anticipated this order and carried it out.

* The 7th and 8th Rifle Regiments, one battalion of the 60th (Zamostye) Regiment, and two batteries of the 3rd Rifle Artillery Division.

† Three battalions of the 60th (Zamostye) Regiment, the 1st Rifle Regiment, forty-eight guns of the 5th Rifle Artillery Division and sixteen guns of the 31st Artillery Brigade.

bent down into the ditch so that, even from a short distance, the work looked exactly like the surrounding fields. Moreover, it had been placed from one to two hundred yards in front of the village, with the result that the great majority of the Japanese projectiles aimed at Sha-ta-tzu passed harmlessly over it.*

The losses inflicted upon the Russians were severe, only three officers being left in each of the 7th and 8th Rifle Regiments and the reserve being almost completely exhausted. But the fire of the large number of guns in Colonel Michailov's section, as well as that of machine guns, caused the attempt to take the village to fail. The Japanese left wing, however, was now fifteen hundred yards, and the right only three hundred yards, from the entrenchments, and several unavailing charges were made. Part of the right wing brought to bear a flank fire on Sha-ta-tzu from the northern part of Ma-chia-pu and caused some of the defenders on its southern border to withdraw; but their place was quickly taken by reinforcements, and some artillery at Ta-a-pu helped by its fire to restore the situation. From 9 a.m. till noon the fire of the Russians was at its height, and the Japanese losses, which included many officers, grew so heavy that General Kigoshi ordered General Murayama, then in command of the first line, to cease assaulting and to hold the position gained to prevent the enemy retiring by day. To assist in this duty a battalion was sent forward from the divisional reserve.

At 9.30 a.m. part of the Japanese 4th Division came up, and taking post on the right of the 5th helped to contain the enemy. The main body of the 7th Brigade had by that hour reached the southern part of Ma-chia-pu (whence a battalion of infantry was sent a couple of miles eastwards to protect the advance of the 8th *Kobi* Brigade), and by the afternoon had crossed the river, the artillery, which had already arrived on the right bank, coming up to Ta-yu-shu-pu, whence it opened fire. The transfer to the 8th *Kobi* Brigade of the front held by the 4th Division was completed by noon, and at night that division was quartered

* Almost all the casualties inside the redoubt—at least forty-eight were killed—were due to rifle fire. Another factor which militated against the efficacy of the Japanese guns was the faulty action of the percussion fuses. After the engagement the neighbouring ground was strewn with unexploded projectiles, and from one spot an observer was able after the action to count twenty-three blind shells.

in the neighbourhood of the southern part of Ma-chia-pu and Erh-tai-tzu. To keep communication open with the Fourth Army the 5th Cavalry Regiment, with two companies of infantry under Lieutenant-Colonel Tanada, was sent across the railway to a village three miles east of Su-chia-tun.

The attack made by the Japanese 5th Division, although unsuccessful, was far from being without effect, for it aroused again in the mind of General Tserpitski the fears which had haunted him for several days past, and prompted him to appeal for help with scarcely less insistence than before. About 10 a.m., in reporting the situation of his force and the repulse of the attacks made upon it, he asked for two regiments to be added to his reserve, and made the remarkable statement that from the reports of prisoners more than two hundred and fifty guns and sixty machine guns were in action against the section held by General Rusanov and General Churin.* This and other statements of a similar nature from the same commander caused General Kaulbars an uneasiness which permeated to General Head-Quarters and led to an order from the commander-in-chief himself that the Third Manchurian Army should provide reinforcements. Two battalions of the 5th Siberian Corps were accordingly sent to Ta-a-pu.† From one o'clock all became quiet along General Tserpitski's front; but this led to no cessation in his demands for assistance, and about 3 p.m. he asked Second Manchurian Army head-quarters whether the army reserve‡ might be placed at his disposal. He repeated the request shortly afterwards and expressed his opinion that everything pointed to a heavy attack by night, and that the enemy was concentrating behind the railway embankment.§

* Up to this hour General Tserpitski had apparently only used two battalions of the 55th (Podolia) Regiment from his reserve at Ta-a-pu. These had been sent to General Petrov after which he still had in hand the 4th Rifle Regiment, two battalions of the 55th (Podolia) Regiment and two and a half battalions of the 241st (Orsk) Regiment.

† These were the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 244th (Borisov) Regiment which left the 5th Siberian Corps about 3 p.m. and arrived at Sha-tou-tzu during the evening.

‡ The Second Manchurian Army reserve consisted at this time of the 124th (Voronej) Regiment, the 122nd (Tambov) Regiment, and two battalions of the 123rd (Koslov) Regiment at Lu-kun-tun.

§ It should be stated, however, that, in commenting unfavourably upon these appeals by General Tserpitski, the *Russian Official History* makes mention only of portion of the 8th Division and the depleted 5th Division as opposing him. No mention is made of the 4th Division which arrived at Ma-chia-pu during the morning.

No further reinforcement, however, was given to General Tserpitski. Nevertheless, when evening came he was by no means *in extremis*, for he had still four and a half battalions intact in his own reserve.*

The net result of the operations west of the main line of railway upon the 9th March was that the Japanese Third Army made some progress and that, conversely, the measures instituted by the Russian commander-in-chief to check it had, at the best, but a negative result. It is true that General Nogi's army had become somewhat extended in the course of its movements and that General Kuropatkin was aware of this. But the fact that the line of the Pu Ho was reported to have been prepared for defence by the Japanese made it clear to him that the capture of Hei-ni-tun, even if it were achieved, could only be a preliminary to a much heavier task. And it was no less clear that unless General Nogi were unmistakably defeated the imminent danger to the Russian lines of communication would remain. Such defeat of the Japanese Third Army was not impossible; but to inflict it postulated two essential and mutually dependent conditions. In the first place an adequate General Reserve would have to be massed under General Kuropatkin's own hand—preferably in the neighbourhood of Tzu-erh-tun—by which a counter-stroke vigorous in conception and relentless in execution might be directed against General Nogi's troops. Secondly, General Kaulbars would have to be in a position to take the offensive against General Oku with sufficient energy to prevent him from moving a single man or gun to help General Nogi on his left when once the Russian counter-stroke was under way. Unless both these conditions were fulfilled the Japanese Third Army could not be crushed, and the position of the Russians would become extremely grave.

As a matter of fact, the first condition could not be fulfilled. The troops required for a counter-stroke upon the 9th March had not been collected, since of the force expected from the First Manchurian Army in the morning there had arrived only three regiments from the Ist, and about six battalions

* Two and a half battalions of the 241st (Orsk) Regiment and two battalions of the 55th (Podolia) Regiment.

The situation west of the railway reviewed. General Kuropatkin issues orders for a retirement to Tieh-ling.

from the 4th Siberian, Corps.* During the day General Kuropatkin apparently came to the conclusion that the reserve at his disposal during the morning and afternoon was not sufficient to warrant the expectation of victory over the Japanese Third Army from any further attempt at the offensive; that it was impossible for him to remain passively on the positions at Mukden, where his western front was parallel to his line of retreat—which the enemy had almost reached; and that there was no other solution but to retire, re-form and recuperate, and profiting by former experience, to try conclusions with the enemy at some future date.

Accordingly, at 6.45 p.m., he sent an officer to General Sakharov, with the following dispatch:—†

“The enemy’s strength on the Northern Front has increased and is still increasing. His advanced troops are moving north,

* From the 1st Corps the 86th (Wilmanstrand), 87th (Neishlot) and 88th (Petrov) Regiments and four batteries.

From the 4th Siberian Corps the 5th (Irkutsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment (three and three-quarters battalions), two battalions of the 9th (Tobolsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment and four batteries.

The *Russian Official History* when dealing with the organization of the General Reserve at this period of the battle contains certain figures and data which cannot be completely reconciled. A comparison of all the statements made upon this subject points to the following conclusions:—

On the morning of the 8th March (after the dispatch of Colonel Borisov to join General Muilov and of some of the battalions of the 54th Division of the 5th Siberian Corps to join that commander and General von der Launitz) the General Reserve apparently consisted of five battalions, twenty-four guns and a squadron under General Artamonov. See p. 598. To supplement this meagre force the following demands were made by General Kuropatkin and were responded to in the manner shown:—

Army.	Demanded by commander-in-chief.	Detailed by army and corps commanders.	Arrived.
Third Manchurian Army	7 battalions ...	7 battalions	Night of 8th-9th (five battalions sent back on protest by General Bilderling leaving two battalions of the 242nd (Belebев) Regiment with the commander-in-chief).
First Manchurian Army	44 battalions...	Ist Corps 12 4 4th Siberian Corps ... 5½ 4 2nd Siberian Corps... 10 2 3rd Siberian Corps ... 9½ 4 <hr/> 37 14	} During morning of the 9th (at Ta-wa). } Evening of the 9th (at Ta-wa). } Evening of the 9th (at Pu-ho); very exhausted.

† This dispatch was received by General Sakharov at 7.55 p.m.

parallel to the railway. The advanced guard of these troops, according to the report of Lieutenant-Colonel Prince Engalitchev of Major-General Grekov's force, amounts to a brigade of infantry. General von der Launitz (with General Dombrovski) has been heavily attacked. The enemy has been repulsed with difficulty, and I am not yet certain of the final result. The attack on Hei-ni-tun, made by General Muilov's order previous to my arrival, was unsuccessful, owing to the arrival of Japanese reinforcements; and the Japanese have now taken the offensive. That attack, however, has greatly relieved the pressure on General von der Launitz's line. To support General von der Launitz I have detailed from my strategic reserve* the Orel Regiment, one battalion of the Mokshan Regiment, and two of the Belebeev Regiment. The Japanese are tired out, like ourselves, and to-day one of their machine guns was taken by the Tomsk Regiment, and many prisoners have been captured. It has been discovered that another of their newly formed divisions is operating against us on this front. I consider the general situation extremely serious. Make arrangements this very night for a retreat to Tieh-ling to be commenced by all three armies. The First Army is to hold on to the Fu-shun line till the Second and Third Armies have passed. It is particularly important to send the artillery on ahead with advanced guards in front (although at half strength). I enjoin you, after consultation with Generals Kaulbars and Bilderling, to draw up the plan and order for the retreat.† To cover the retirement I will take the offensive to-morrow with the reserves. At present insufficient forces have assembled. The 72nd Division and the 2nd Siberian Corps have not arrived. My strength is insufficient for decisive operations, especially after the detachment of seven battalions to General von der Launitz's reserve."

This decision to retreat, it is almost certain, was based entirely upon the situation west of the railway. In regard to the remainder of the battlefield, so far as General Kuropatkin was aware, there was no cause for alarm. But, in point of fact, as will be seen, the state of affairs east of the railway had

* i.e., the General Reserve.

† Lieutenant-General Sakharov was unable to hold any preliminary communication with the commanders of the Second and Third Manchurian Armies.

been altered greatly to the disadvantage of the Russians some hours before by the penetration of the line of the First Manchurian Army by the Japanese. The necessity for retreat, therefore, and the difficulty of carrying it out were greater than General Kuropatkin knew.*

The night of the 8th–9th March had passed quietly for the Third Manchurian Army, and when day dawned the troops—as in the case of the Second Manchurian Army—had no other task but to maintain the positions which they were occupying, which formed

The Third Manchurian Army and the Japanese Fourth Army. a fortified bridge-head comprising semi-permanent forts, redoubts and miles of entrenchments. Since, also, it was no part of Marshal Oyama's plan to hurl his Fourth Army against this formidable position unless the Russians should

initiate a dangerous counter-stroke elsewhere and he should require to attract their attention to the direct avenue to Mukden, it happened that on the 9th March all activity along the portion of the front occupied by the 5th Siberian, and XVIIth, Corps was confined to insignificant fire action, the Russian guns finding their chief occupation in shelling the hostile columns which were seen moving eastwards during the day.

These were from the Japanese 6th and Okubo *Kobi* Divisions, both of which were edging towards the left of the Third Manchurian Army, avoiding the strong Russian works south of Mukden, and seeking a point of crossing over the Hun Ho where the opposition to be encountered would be probably less severe. The Japanese front on the left bank of the Hun south and south-west of Mukden was therefore almost denuded of troops, for, in addition to the eastward movement of the two divisions just mentioned, the 4th Division, on the left, had gone to Ma-chia-pu to assist the Second Army, leaving the 8th *Kobi* Brigade upon the line Su-chia-tun—Erh-tai-tzu. That brigade was moved during the day to

* General Sakharov had telegraphed the news that such a penetration on the left was likely before he received the commander-in-chief's order to retire; but from the wording of the latter it is obvious that General Kuropatkin knew nothing of what had happened on that flank, and that his order crossed the Chief of Staff's telegram.

This operation on the part of the Japanese, which was carried out by the Guard Division, will be described later in its proper place.

Tzu-ho-tsuan-tun, where it confronted the 61st Division of the 5th Siberian Corps;* but opposite the XVIIth Corps there were practically no troops of any kind. From the denudation of this portion of his front it is evident that Marshal Oyama must have felt that the best way to render unlikely any irruption of the Russians down the Mandarin Road was to persist in an uncompromising pressure against their communications. Secure in his knowledge of his opponents' sensitiveness he was not to be diverted from the goal he had so long had in view—the Mandarin Road and the railway north of Mukden.

The left corps of the Third Manchurian Army came in for more attention from General Nodzu's troops.† During the morning the Japanese 6th Division arrived at Chan-sa-ma-tun, and to that village shortly afterwards also came the Okubo *Kobi* Division, though this unintentional congestion was soon relieved by Major-General Okubo moving his force north-eastwards to Chang-hu-tun. In spite of the dust which much militated against accurate fire observation the whole of the line of the 6th Siberian Corps, with the exception of the section on the extreme right, was subjected to a sustained bombardment, which showed that the Japanese were well acquainted with the position of the Russian trenches and redoubts. The persistence with which they maintained the fire caused General Bilderling to become alarmed lest they should penetrate between the Third and First Manchurian Armies. But since he was without any army reserve and had also sent two battalions to reinforce General Tserpitski,‡ he was unable to reinforce this weak section until his reserve should be re-established by the return of some of the battalions taken by General Kuropatkin on the previous day.§ Uneasiness, however, was by no means confined to the Russian side. During the evening information was received by the commander of the Japanese 6th Division to the effect that the enemy had defeated portion of the Third Army and placed the latter in a position of some danger. He immediately decided to move the 6th

* The other division of the 5th Siberian Corps—the 54th—had joined the General Reserve. See pp. 582-3.

† The 6th Siberian Corps.

‡ See p. 615.

§ See p. 583.

Division across the Hun and so divert the attention of the Russians to this quarter of the field; and that division crossed the river at midnight. Previous to this, about 7 p.m., the advanced guard of the Okubo *Kobi* Division* had crossed the river and appeared on the right bank about two hundred yards from the Russian trenches. Having occupied some rifle pits the Japanese began to throw hand-grenades into Work No. 3, but they were driven off about 10.30 p.m. by a counter-attack.

By this time General Kuropatkin's orders had arrived and Third Manchurian Army head-quarters were hard at work, making arrangements for the retreat.

In that portion of the Russian line which followed the course of the Hun Ho from about Mu-chang to beyond Fu-shun and was held by the First Manchurian Army the event of outstanding interest was the penetration of the front about Chiu-chan.

The First
Manchurian
Army.

And a slight change in the geographical sequence of the narrative of the operations will facilitate the account of what happened. So far the occurrences of the day have been dealt with in order from the right towards the left of the Russian line, but for the portion of the battle about to be described the procedure will be reversed. The story of the day's fighting will therefore be transferred to the extreme east of the field, where General Rennenkampf's detachment was keeping the Ya-lu Army at bay.

General Rennenkampf's task was to cover the roads leading from Chang-ta and Ying-pan to Tieh-ling so as to safeguard the Russian left flank, and upon the morning of the 9th a portion of his force was upon the right bank of the

General
Rennenkampf's
detachment
and the
Ya-lu Army.

Hun Ho, engaged in taking up a position which would enable it to do this. Of the units still south of the river General Liubavin's force was retiring towards Chang-ta, while General Danilov's troops had put into effect the decision of the council of war held the previous evening† and were holding a line about Hsi-ssu-a. During the day no serious encounter took place with the Ya-lu Army, for the 1st

* The 34th *Kobi* Regiment of the 3rd *Kobi* Brigade.

† See p. 571.

Kobi Division, after occupying the positions abandoned by General Danilov during the night of the 8th-9th, made no attempt to push on. Indeed the Japanese were suffering so much from want of food and sleep that General Sasaki had come to the conclusion that effective pursuit was out of the question, and that the 9th should be a day of rest. The 11th Division, however, pushed on and at dusk arrived on the left bank of the Hun Ho, where the bridge immediately south of Fu-shun was found to be in flames. The fire was extinguished, and the division passed the night on the left bank opposite Fu-shun, unaware, owing to the difficulties imposed on reconnaissance by the dust storm, of the dispositions of the Russians upon the other bank.

During the night General Liubavin and General Danilov brought their forces across the river, and the whole of General Rennenkampf's detachment was then north of the river.

The withdrawal of this detachment across the Hun Ho is, perhaps, a suitable juncture for reviewing its operations since the beginning of the battle. Its commander had been charged with a definite mission, and his position on the flank of the Russian armies had required from him an independence of action and a display of initiative not demanded from any other officer of his rank, with the exception of General Grekov. Incidentally, too, the fact that Marshal Oyama's plan of battle had led to the first shots being fired in the south-east corner of the field had caused the Ching-ho-cheng Detachment, as it was then called, which was soon to come under the command of General Rennenkampf, to be engaged in more continuous fighting than any other fraction of the Russian forces.

The action of
General Rennen-
kampf's detach-
ment.

On the whole, General Rennenkampf's mission of holding back the Ya-lu Army on the Russian left had been admirably performed, and the reputation which its commander had gained in a former period of active service in the Far East had been creditably upheld. Nevertheless, the limitations of military phraseology may cause a false impression as to the merit of the work performed by it, for unless the respective Orders of Battle of the Russians and Japanese are continually referred to, a force known by the title of "Detachment" is likely to be assumed to be considerably inferior in strength to one described as an "Army." When, however, the sizes of the opposing bodies commanded

respectively by General Rennenkampf and General Kawamura are compared it will be seen that this was not the case.* And it must be remembered, also, that the rôle assigned to the Russian force was in all respects defensive—the kind of action which the nature of the country favoured.

Against this it may be pointed out that in the Ya-lu Army the men of the 11th Division had taken the field at the battle of Mukden raised to a high pitch of soldierly exaltation by the result of their work round Port Arthur—which had been witnessed by every private in the ranks; and that most of the rank and file of the 1st *Kobi* Division were veterans of the Sino-Japanese war, and looked upon by qualified authorities in Japan as being possibly superior in military worth to the average of the personnel actually serving with the colours. General Rennenkampf, on the other hand, was not so fortunate in the quality of his troops, for apart from the Siberian regular units of General Danilov, which had earned for themselves the title of the “Iron Brigade,” they were not, on the whole, of the highest class. The bulk of the infantry under his own hand consisted of the 71st Division of the 5th Siberian Corps, a force whose unfortunate record at Liao-yang had led to its temporary suppression as an army corps, while the four battalions under General Maslov were merely reserve units to Siberian regiments. In one direction, his superiority appears at first sight to have been striking, namely, in cavalry; but his mounted force was composed exclusively of Cossacks, whose record in the war has done little to add to their reputation.

Nevertheless, one fact was well illustrated by the course of the fighting from Ching-ho-cheng to Ma-chun-tan, and round the latter place, and that is the value of personality in a leader. It so happened that General Rennenkampf remained throughout the battle with one section of his force; and the contrast between the activity of the troops under his personal command at Ma-chun-tan and the efforts made by those under Generals Danilov and Liubavin was most marked. In fact it may be said that in the battle of Mukden no Russian general showed more

* General Rennenkampf's detachment (after the arrival of General Danilov) amounted to 28 battalions, 18 squadrons and 46 guns. The Ya-lu Army consisted of 31½ battalions, 5½ squadrons and 88 guns.

unmistakable fighting capacity than General Rennenkampf. And his detachment certainly bore its share of casualties: by the 9th March over nine thousand had been killed or wounded, and in the 283rd (Bugulmin) Regiment sixty-eight per cent. of the officers and seventy-three per cent. of the rank and file had fallen.*

Along the portion of the line held by the 3rd Siberian Corps, that is to say between Ti-ta and Kao-san-tun, there was practically no fighting during the day. South of the River Hun the rear guard of General Bachinski remained at Hsi-hu-cheng until about 11 a.m., when the advance of the Japanese 2nd Division compelled it to retire, but it was not pressed and was able to hold on to successive positions until all the transport of the corps had crossed the river. When this had been effected the rear guard fell back, arriving about six o'clock at Fu-shun, to which place the Kulikov Regiment had also found its way.

On the Japanese side the left column of the 2nd Division reached the vicinity of Ta-pei-wu-tun, just north of the Fu-shun railway, about 11.30 a.m. Some Russian vehicles were there observed, and two of the Japanese field batteries opened fire upon them, the range being somewhere between five and six thousand yards. Just then, however, the dust storm, which apparently set in later in this portion of the field than elsewhere, rendered all further action impossible. Nothing was attempted after this, but at 4.30 p.m. the column moved on to Ta-pei-wu-tun, in the neighbourhood of which village it bivouacked for the night. The right column under General Ohara had come up opposite Fu-shun, and the centre column had seized the bridge at Ka-pu-kai. During the night of the 9th-10th March, the 2nd Division confronted the Russians opposite the line Ti-ta—Ka-pu-kai—Fu-shun.

In the section of the front occupied by the 2nd Siberian Corps† the chief feature was the lateral movement from east to west of units on their way to build up the General Reserve and

* The Bugulmin Regiment in twelve days had expended a million and a half rounds of ammunition.

† Between Ta-yen-tun and Ti-ta.

to reinforce the right of the First Manchurian Army, some of which, however, failed to reach their destinations owing to the penetration of the Russian line which took place, as will be related, between the 4th and 2nd Siberian Corps. During the forenoon the three regiments of the 72nd Division en route for the General Reserve* from the 3rd Siberian Corps passed through Hsiao-fan-hsin in safety and turned north-west; but the first line transport came under fire while moving through the village from the leading units of the Japanese 12th Division which then appeared on the south bank of the river. The scout detachments of the Kirsanov and Taruss Regiments were sent across the river to Pei-tzu-tun, where they became engaged with a portion of the Japanese 23rd Brigade advancing from Liu-tun-hsi-tun. Some confusion ensued amongst the Russians, but eventually the column pushed on to the north-west, arriving during the evening at Pu-ho, where it passed under the control of the commander-in-chief as a belated portion of his new General Reserve.

Behind the 72nd Division had been following the Verkhne-Udinsk† and Tsaritsin‡ Regiments. When the former reached Hsing-lung-tien it set about taking up a position on the right of the 2nd Siberian Corps, by order of General Zasulich. The Tsaritsin Regiment, which was accompanied by a battery of the 43rd Artillery Brigade, had been detailed by General Ivanov to proceed to La-mi-wa-tzu to reinforce the Ist Corps, and had set out from Fu-shun at dawn. When it arrived at Hsiao-fan-hsin it came under fire from the left bank,§ and during the delay thus caused an officer was sent on to inform the commander of the Ist Corps of the occurrence. It was then discovered that the country between the Hun Ho and Hu-hsin-pu was in occupation of the enemy. The Tsaritsin Regiment, therefore, was compelled to remain at Hsiao-fan-hsin instead of joining the Ist Corps.

* See pp. 543 and 559.

† See foot-note (¶), p. 572.

‡ This regiment was detailed to join the Ist Corps from the 3rd Siberian Corps. See p. 572.

§ Probably from both the left of the Japanese 2nd Division and the right of the 12th Division.

The Krasnoyarsk Regiment,* also, failed to reach the Ist Corps. On the evening of the 8th it had lain in two widely separated groups on either side of the Hun Ho. The half regiment from the south reached Fu-shun about 1 p.m. on the 9th, but instead of proceeding direct to the Ist Corps it made a wide detour by the north in consequence of reports of the Japanese penetration, and got no farther than Lien-ta-wan, where it arrived about midnight. The remaining two battalions were diverted for the same reason and passed the night about one and a half miles south-east of that village.

When darkness succeeded to the obscurity caused by the storm which had raged during most of the day the commander of the 2nd Siberian Corps was definitely aware of the important and perturbing fact, that, though the road from Hu-hsin-pu to Tieh-ling was still open, he was cut off from the neighbouring corps—the 4th Siberian—on his right. This was due to the penetration of the Russian front by the 12th and Guard Divisions of the Japanese First Army, which operation will now be described.

To take the 12th Division first, the 23rd Brigade had arrived without incident at the Fu-shun railway, which it crossed near Liu-tun-hsi-tun about eleven o'clock in the forenoon. General Imanura then received orders from the divisional commander to push on and cross the river if possible. About this time the wind rose, and for the rest of the day dust considerably hampered operations of the brigade. Nevertheless, its cavalry patrols soon gained touch with the left of the 2nd Division to the east, and its advanced guard—consisting of the 46th Regiment—then pushed on to the river, where it came into contact with a small Russian force of horse and foot, against which the leading company at once opened fire. The Russian horsemen charged the company, which took refuge behind a wall and drove them off with a heavy fire. In this action the Japanese officers were puzzled by the indecision exhibited by the Russians, by their curious formation. Both points are explained by the fact that the attackers were not cavalry—as was imagined by the Japanese—but were the mounted men of the scout detach-

The penetration of the line of the First Manchurian Army. The Japanese 12th Division.

* See p. 572. The 1st and 4th Battalions were at Hao-yu; the 2nd and 3rd at Ma-niu-chuang-tzu, two and a half miles north of Fu-shun.

ments sent across the river by the 72nd Division.* The dust, which was worse in the river bed than elsewhere, now seriously interfered with all movement. A few Japanese got across the river; but they discovered little, and at 4 p.m. the 23rd Brigade received an order that it was not to cross the Hun Ho. General Imamura therefore halted his force between Liu-tun-hsi-tun and Pei-tzu-tun for the night.

On the left, the 12th Brigade was more fortunate. About 10 a.m. the advanced guard had reached Ssu-fang-tai and had sent on patrols to the river to locate the enemy as best they could in the prevailing obscurity. An exchange of artillery fire then took place but the dust so hampered aiming that artillery action was given up. Shortly afterwards two battalions of the 14th Regiment crossed the river on the ice, which had not entirely broken up, and reached the foot of the slopes trending down to the river about Ta-yen-tun practically without opposition. The hills were crowned by the advanced units at 2 p.m., but the latter had lost touch with the troops in rear and halted for a time. Word then came in that the Guards had occupied Chiu-chan, and the 14th Regiment pushed ahead to a village about two or three miles farther on, where it halted for the night, the remainder of the brigade bivouacking north of Ta-yen-tun.

Upon the 9th March it was the Japanese Guards who achieved the greatest success. During the morning both wings had continued the pursuit, the left wing having been engaged about Min-chia-tun with a Russian rear guard which was quickly driven in. No other incident occurred until midday, except that the head of the 10th Division interposed between the right and left columns of the Guards, an error in direction for which the dust and faulty maps were responsible. About midday General Asada decided to concentrate his division about San-tou-kuan-tun; and on arrival at that place he issued orders for the 2nd Guard Brigade to attack the enemy at Chiu-chan, while the 1st Guard Brigade was to follow close in rear, ready to take up the pursuit. These orders, however, were not actually carried out to the letter, for the 1st Brigade crossed the river ahead of the 2nd, an inversion which may have been due to bad staff work, the sand storm, or possibly to a natural spirit of emulation between the brigade commanders.

* See p. 625.

What took place was as follows:—The divisional cavalry crossed the Hun at midday, and disregarding the Russians reported to be on the hills west of Chiu-chan pushed on towards Hu-hsin-pu, while General Kimoura, commanding the 1st Guard Brigade, began to move forward to the river, which the leading units commenced to cross unopposed at 3 p.m. About four o'clock General Kimoura, who was still on the south bank, met an adjutant of the 12th Division who informed him that the 14th Regiment was already north of the river and had found a strong force of the enemy in position. He thereupon decided to attack Chiu-chan without waiting for the 2nd Brigade. The place was found to be unoccupied, though some trenches had been dug along the south side of the village, and after clearing away a series of barricades which had been thrown up across the road the brigade continued its advance. Its leading troops got as far as Tai-kou.

The absence of any Russians in Chiu-chan—which came as a surprise to the Japanese—was primarily due to the demands which General Kuropatkin had made upon the 4th Siberian Corps to furnish force for his General Reserve. In the morning, after the departure of the troops allotted, General Levestam had but eight companies of the Barnaul Regiment, two companies of the Tobolsk Regiment and a battery,* with which to defend the strip of river from Fu-ling to Ta-yen-tun. And his situation was rendered the more precarious by the fact that at first he had neither cavalry nor Mounted Scout detachments.† To add to the difficulties created by lack of numbers a serious congestion was caused within

* The remainder of the artillery left to him was at Hsing-lung-tien escorted by some companies of the 12th (Barnaul) Siberian Infantry Regiment. The meagre total of the infantry is due to two facts. In the first place, when the units detailed to join the General Reserve had left, General Levestam had not yet discovered the missing 10th (Omsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment. That regiment had lost the main body during the retreat and had joined the rear guard under General Shileiko (see p. 579). About 10.30 a.m. General Levestam received news that it was marching from Fu-ling to rejoin him, and somewhere about noon it was in position about Yen-tai. In the second place, communication between General Levestam and the rear guard under General Shileiko had broken down and was not restored until about noon.

† Later General Levestam stopped a squadron of the 7th Siberian Cossack Regiment which happened to pass and employed it on reconnaissance duty.

Chiu-chan by the traffic coming from the east. When the confusion was at its height and the restoration of order had already become wellnigh impossible the Irkutsk Regiment arrived, bound for Ta-wa. But since the main street was completely blocked the regiment marched round the northern outskirts of the village. Just at this time a rumour spread that the enemy was at hand, and at the first shots fired part of the transport broke through the north of the village, fell foul of the Irkutsk Regiment, and caused a panic. In these circumstances the commander of the Barnaul Regiment seems to have come to the conclusion that no good purpose would be served by keeping his companies in the village, and he ordered them to retire through the dust storm to Huan-chia-kou. At the same time two companies of the same regiment holding Ta-yen-tun, as well as the remaining batteries of the corps at Hsing-lung-tien, made off to Tieh-ling and took no further part in the fighting. The commander of the Omsk Regiment, which was in position about Yen-tai, then found that his left flank was uncovered through the retirement of the Barnaul companies, and fearing for his line of retreat and considering the position of his regiment critical began to withdraw his command about three o'clock.*

At that hour, therefore, the whole of General Levestam's troops were in full retreat. By 9 p.m. four and a half battalions from the Omsk and Barnaul Siberian Infantry Regiments were occupying a position west of Hu-hsin-pu.

To return to the 1st Brigade of the Japanese Guard Division, about 5.30 p.m., when the storm died down, it lost the advantage of the cover from view which it had been afforded. The advanced troops came under a hot fire from the left front and were forced to face that direction, while a battery came into action to assist them. General Kimoura then sent another battalion to reinforce the advanced guard. Before this fresh display of force the Russians withdrew the troops which had been opposing the brigade, consisting of about two battalions of the Verkhne-Udinsk Regiment, which had been directed to take up a position on the right of the 2nd Siberian Corps but had apparently got rather too far to the west.† As for the 2nd Guard

The whole of the Japanese Guard Division crosses the Hun Ho.

* See foot-note (*), p. 628.

† The regiment had probably been split into two parts by the Japanese penetration and the portion here referred to was the western fraction.

Brigade, it had had but little to do. It began to cross the river near Hei-chia-wan about 4 p.m., and since scouts reported that the Russians were in position in front it turned east and came to Chiu-chan, where it bivouacked.

At nightfall therefore the whole of the Japanese Guard Division was on the north side of the Hun at Chiu-chan and beyond that place, the leading troops (the divisional cavalry and a battalion of infantry) being at Hu-hsin-pu. On its right, touch was established with the 12th Brigade of the 12th Division, which had also crossed, and on the left communication was kept up with the 10th Division of the Fourth Army, the advanced guard of which had got over the Hun and successfully occupied Yen-tai at 9.40 p.m.* The reserve of the Japanese First Army had reached Ta-yeh-tai, and some four miles farther back were General Kuroki and his staff. But so severe had been the force of the wind during the day that all the telegraph poles had been blown down and communication with army head-quarters cut off, with the result that General Asada received no orders throughout the night.

Farther to the west the Russian Ist Corps was holding Works 5, 6, 7, and 8, with a reserve of five battalions, one squadron and a battery in rear of the centre. On its left was the late rear guard of the 4th Siberian Corps, under General Shileiko, about Fu-ling, with Mounted Scout detachments on the south bank.† These crossed the river during the morning, burning the bridges at Fu-ling as they fell back, and General Shileiko then proceeded to fill the gap between Work 8 and General Levestam's right. The subsequent retirement of the latter's troops placed him in a position of some danger, which was increased by the fact that he received no information of the movement; and he was forced during the afternoon to refuse his left flank, which was at this time in the air. Several times during the night it was attacked by the units of the Japanese 10th Division which had crossed the river at Yen-tai, but these attempts met with no success, and General Shileiko's force, which had been strengthened by some companies of the Novocherkask Regiment and a battalion of the 20th East Siberian

The Russian
Ist Corps.

* The 8th Brigade.

† The troops remaining in the 4th Siberian Corps were nominally placed under the commander of the Ist Corps, but the latter succeeded in bringing under his control only that portion of the 4th Siberian Corps which was under General Shileiko.

Rifle Regiment from the Ist Corps, was undisturbed after midnight. In that corps the two battalions of the Novocherkask Regiment, which were on outpost along the Fu-shun railway,* were forced to fall back before the approach of the Okubo *Kobi* Division, which, in addition to attacking Work No. 3 held by the 6th Siberian Corps,† delivered a series of assaults against Work No. 5. These were, however, repulsed.

When General Kuropatkin at 6.45 p.m., from Tzu-erh-tun, sent instructions to his Chief of Staff at Mukden to arrange for a general retreat to Tieh-ling during the night, he was, as has been said, unaware of, and uninfluenced by, this penetration which had been effected by the Japanese at Chiu-chan.†

General arrangements for the retreat to Tieh-ling. The Chief of Staff, however, obtained news of it from the commander of the Ist Corps at 8.15 p.m., within half an hour of receiving the commander-in-chief's message. He at once hastened the issue of the necessary orders which had been prepared and approved by the commander-in-chief on the previous evening; and they were got out at 8.30 p.m.

According to the plan arranged the movement was to be begun by the Third Army, protected by the right flank corps of the First Army. So far as the line Tzu-erh-tun—Pu-ho the Second and Third Armies were to be covered by their own rear guards, but beyond this the protection of their retreat was to devolve on the troops of General Muilov, whom the commander-in-chief intended to order on the morning of the 10th to advance to the west, with the object of drawing the enemy's attention off the retreating armies and increasing the area over which the latter might retire in safety. At the time of its publication, however, this plan was already impossible of execution in so far as it concerned the retirement of the left flank of the Third Army, the Ist Corps and the 4th Siberian Corps, which were to move by the Fu-ling—Hu-san—Ssu-lin-tzu road and immediately to the east and west of it, for that area was already within striking distance, and partly in possession, of the enemy.

At 8.50 p.m. General Sakharov telegraphed to General Headquarters at Tzu-erh-tun a verbatim copy of the dispatch he had received from the commander of the Ist Corps. This reached General Kuropatkin between 11 p.m. and midnight. But at

* See foot-note (‡), p. 580.

† See pp. 621, 627.

10.15 p.m., while he was still ignorant of the Japanese penetration in his centre, the commander-in-chief had after a conference with Generals Muilov and Zarubaiev issued orders for an offensive movement to cover the retreat of the Second Manchurian Army, to be carried out by the troops collected in the Tzu-erh-tun area.

During the 9th the situation altered very much for the worse for the Russians. In the west they were not able to mass sufficient strength to deliver the intended counter-stroke, which might have saved the situation, and barely checked the Japanese

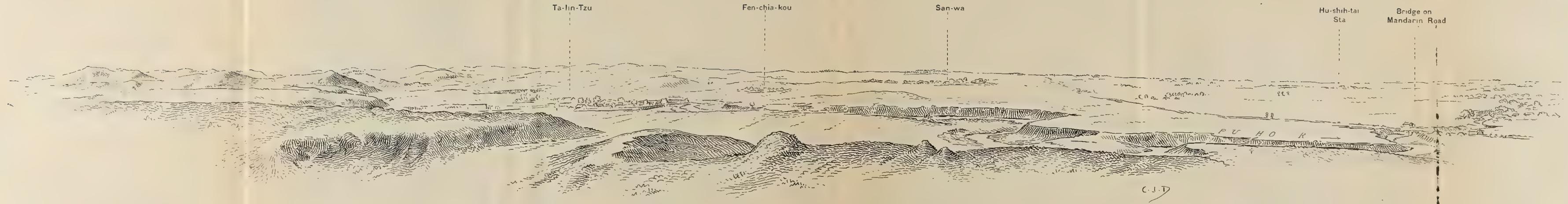
Summary of
the 9th March.

envelopment. Indeed, the aspect of affairs in this quarter alone had become sufficiently threatening to cause General Kuropatkin to give up the attempt to win the battle and issue orders for a retreat. But, as has been seen, the west was not the only direction in which danger threatened the Russians. Some of General Kuroki's troops were but half a day's march from the railway to the east, and General Rennenkampf's detachment, as well as portions of the 2nd and 3rd Siberian Corps, had been completely cut off from the remainder of the army by the penetration by the Japanese of the line held by the 4th Siberian Corps.

Though the Russian line of retreat was still open, the order issued by General Kuropatkin at 6.45 p.m. on the 9th was the admission of defeat.

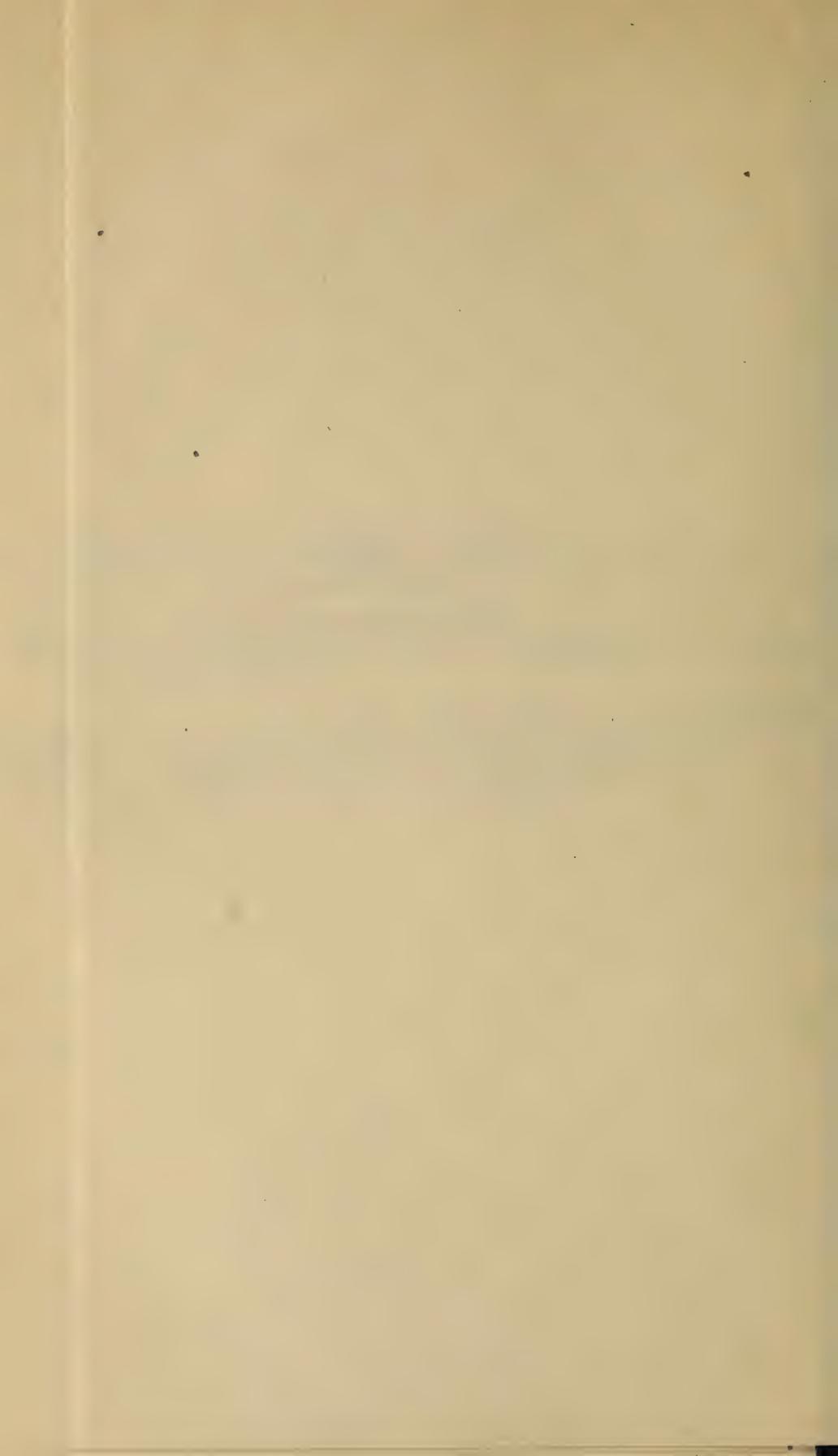
E.

W.



THE BATTLE OF MUKDEN.

View taken from a knoll south of Pu-ho, looking East, South and West.



CHAPTER LXXX.

THE BATTLE OF MUKDEN—*continued*—OPERATIONS ON THE 10TH MARCH—THE RETREAT OF THE RUSSIANS—NARRATIVE OF EVENTS UP TO 10 A.M.—NARRATIVE OF EVENTS AFTER 10 A.M.—THE JAPANESE ENDEAVOUR TO ENVELOP THE SECOND AND THIRD MANCHURIAN ARMIES—THE ATTEMPT FAILS.

(Plates 56 and 57 and Plans 70 and 71.)

OWING to his ignorance of what had been going on to the east of Mukden, when General Kuropatkin had issued orders for the troops round Tzu-erh-tun at 10.15 p.m. on the 9th his attention had been chiefly taken up by the necessity for dealing with the Japanese

Third Army, for which purpose he could count on having by the morning of the 10th in the neighbourhood of Tzu-erh-tun and Ta-wa upon sixty battalions and one hundred and ninety-two guns.* In these orders the situation was described as follows:—

General Kuropatkin's plans for the 10th.

“The enemy is occupying a position on the line Ta-wu-chia-tun—Hou-hsin-tun—Hei-ni-tun—Pao-tao-tun—Pa-chia-tzu—Tsu-an-pan-che—Hou-hun-tai—Li-wan-pu—Wu-lin-pu—Ma-chia-pu—Hsiao-ho-tun. On the southern front exact information as to the enemy's disposition has not been

*	Battalions.	Guns.
(1) With General Muilov	23	80
(2) From the 1st Corps	12	32*
(3) From the 4th Siberian Corps	5 $\frac{3}{4}$	32*
(4) From the 2nd Siberian Corps	10	16*
(5) From the 72nd Division 6th Siberian Corps (which had been attached to the 3rd Siberian Corps)	9 $\frac{1}{4}$	32*
Total	60	192

* See foot-note (*), p. 617.

received, but while the 4th Siberian Corps was moving along the valley of the Hun Ho artillery fire was opened on it. According to the reports of our cavalry hostile cavalry with strong infantry supports have been observed on the front La-nao-tun — Ta-hsin-tun. At the latter place there is approximately a brigade of infantry. Whether there are stronger bodies of infantry in rear of these forces could not be ascertained."

This information, issued so late as the night of the 9th, bears witness to the inadequacy of the communication service as well as to the poor reconnaissance work of the mounted troops. But it must be remembered that communication had been seriously affected by the storm. While the true nature of the situation east of the railway was unknown, for beyond the information that the 4th Siberian Corps had been fired upon no intelligence was given of that quarter of the field, the reports sent in by the cavalry north-west of Mukden led to an exaggerated estimate of the strength of the Japanese, the statement that a brigade of infantry was at Ta-hsin-tun being far wide of the mark.* The result was that the attention of the commander-in-chief, as has been said, was focussed almost entirely upon the danger looming west of the railway. The details of the orders for employing the troops which were concentrated between Tzu-erh-tun and Ta-wa, or operating from the former village, may be summarized as follows:—

General Muilov, with twenty-eight and a quarter battalions† and seventy guns, was (provided that Hei-ni-tun and Ku-san-tun were not taken during the night) to defend stubbornly the line Wan-kan-tun — Hei-ni-tun road — Tun-chan-tzu — Hsiao-hsin-tun, holding with particular determination on to the two last-named villages.

General Zarubaiev‡ was to march at 7.15 a.m. with twenty-three and a quarter battalions§ and sixty-four guns—almost all

* Only one company of infantry was in the village with the cavalry.

† 5¼ battalions from the 15th Division, VIIIth Corps.

9 battalions from the 9th Division, Xth Corps.

8 battalions from the 54th Division, 5th Siberian Corps.

6 battalions from the 3rd Siberian Infantry Division, 4th Siberian Corps.

‡ General Zarubaiev was in command of the General Reserve.

§ 12 battalions from the 1st Corps.

4¼ battalions from the 4th Siberian Corps.

5 battalions from Colonel Gromov's detachment.

2 battalions of the 11th Rifle Regiment.

from the General Reserve—and, deploying on the line Chan-hsi-tun—Ma-ku-chia-tzu, was to drive the enemy out of Ta-hsin-tun and Hou-hsin-tai.

Ten battalions and four batteries from the 2nd Siberian Corps were to be at Tzu-erh-tun, where they would form the reserve to this striking force.*

General Grekov was to sever his connexion with the Second Manchurian Army and was to operate with this new force. His duty was to clear up the situation in the vicinity of Ta-hsin-tun.†

After the issue of these orders until dawn of the 10th March great activity reigned in and round Mukden. The railway station was to be evacuated at 6 a.m., and the transport northward of the wounded was the first consideration. Many had been sent off during the 9th, the private trains of the senior general officers and even that of the commander-in-chief himself having been impressed for the service, but there was still an immense number to be disposed of. Shortly after 11 p.m. on the 9th a group of eight trains, following each other at intervals of eight minutes, had been dispatched; about 4 a.m. on the 10th a second group followed, and a third left just as dawn was breaking. All these trains were made up of more than 50 carriages or trucks. Three were loaded with ammunition, one with artillery *matériel*,‡

* This allocation of troops, practically speaking, accounts for all the sixty battalions mentioned on p. 633, with the exception of the units from the 72nd Division. These had not been expected by the commander-in-chief to arrive until the 10th and were therefore not included in these orders. For their subsequent allocation, see p. 639.

† In view of subsequent alterations of these orders it is important to note that the offensive was their governing factor. At the conference between Generals Kuropatkin, Muilov and Zarubaiev, held at Tzu-erh-tun on the night of the 9th-10th, "it was considered feasible with the troops collected in the Tzu-erh-tun area *to take the offensive against Nogi's army* so as to arrest its movement and thus widen the area over which the Second Manchurian Army could safely retire to Tieh-ling"—*General Kuropatkin's Account*, Vol. III, p. 473. The italics in the extract have been inserted.

This combined force was called the Northern Detachment, and General von der Launitz's force now lost that designation. Since, however, this new force never acted as an integral unit, and in order to avoid confusion with the hitherto existing Northern Detachment, that title is not employed in this history, the forces concerned being designated by the names of the generals commanding them.

‡ Five hundred and forty trucks filled with artillery *matériel* had already been dispatched on the 9th.

four with supplies and equipment, and one each with coal and engineer stores, the remainder being used exclusively for wounded. It was found impossible to remove about one hundred miles of the light railway, but the rolling stock was to a great extent destroyed. The depots in which immense quantities of supplies were still stored were set on fire during the night to prevent them falling into the hands of the Japanese, the roar of the conflagration being accentuated by the explosion of magazines. In spite of the repeated orders which had been issued since the 5th March for all superfluous transport to be sent back to Tieh-ling at once, midnight of the 9th-10th found the bulk of it with the troops, and outside the walls of the city an endless column of vehicles was making its way north. Extraordinary delay was to be caused by this neglect. Between seven and eight o'clock on the morning of the 10th the sound of an explosion to the southwest announced the demolition of the railway bridge which spanned the Hun Ho.*

The Russian retreat, concerned as it was with the movement of some two hundred and seventy thousand men, the bulk of whom had to force their way through a narrow "bottle-neck," is difficult of description unless the narrative for the day is subdivided. The account of the 10th March is therefore given in two portions, in each of which the operations occurring all along the front are dealt with separately. The events up to 10 a.m. will be described first.

Although the orders issued at 10.15 p.m. on the 9th prescribed for General Grekov the task of clearing up the situation about Ta-hsin-tun, that task was not carried out by him, for before those orders reached the cavalry Prince Engalitchev arrived with the verbal instructions issued personally by General Kuropatkin on the previous afternoon requiring General Grekov to carry out an extended reconnaissance in rear of the Japanese, towards the Hsin-min-tun road.† Accordingly,

Narrative of
events up to
10 a.m.
General Grekov's
cavalry.

* This was a lattice girder bridge carried over the river on twenty-two stone piers. The bridge was damaged in four places, the most complete destruction being between piers 6 and 7 (counting from the northern end) where the span had been cut in the centre.

† See p. 609.

about 8 a.m. on the 10th, General Grekov sent the 2nd Independent Cavalry Brigade under General Stepanov through La-la-tun in that direction and half a squadron of the Chita Cossacks along the left bank of the Liao Ho, while the commander of the Ussuri Cossack Regiment was directed at the same time to carry out a reconnaissance on the right bank of the river. After the departure of the two former bodies of troops General Grekov was left for the moment with but twelve squadrons at his disposal, but by ten o'clock he received a reinforcement of thirteen squadrons under Prince Orbeliani. To anticipate slightly, the operations of the day between the mounted forces of either side were purely negative, both Russians and Japanese contenting themselves with maintaining their positions.

General Zarubaiev's force—the bulk of which had spent the night at Ta-wa—moved out of its bivouacs at the appointed hour, by which time the instructions issued by the commander-in-chief at 10.15 p.m. on the 9th had been supplemented by an order from him that one and a half battalions of Colonel Gromov's force were to be detached to occupy Chang-ssu-tzu and Chui-huan-tun. By 10 a.m. the deployment of General Zarubaiev's troops was either in progress or had been completed. Exact information as to their situation at that hour is not available, but the point is immaterial for they were not destined to be seriously engaged.*

The rôle of General Muilov's force also underwent a modification about midnight of the 9th–10th March, for between the time of the issue of the orders for the day and the latter hour General Kuropatkin became aware of the Japanese penetration at Chiu-chan, and the danger of a junction of the Japanese First and Third Armies in rear of Mukden which now became apparent to him led him immediately to issue verbal instructions that General Muilov's troops were to form a general rear guard and to hold on to their positions until all the troops and transport of the Second and Third Manchurian Armies had got safely

* Their situation at 3 p.m. is known and is given in foot-note (+), p. 655. At 10 a.m. it was probably much the same.

away.* By this the projected offensive against the Japanese Third Army was abandoned, General Muilov's new rôle in this changed state of affairs being to remain on an arc cutting the Mandarin Road, instead of moving out to a position parallel to and west of it.

Between seven and eight o'clock on the morning of the 10th a further unpleasant surprise was in store for General Kuropatkin, for both he and General Muilov then first learnt of the evacuation of Hsiao-hsin-tun, and of the difficult situation in which the garrison of Ku-san-tun found itself. He accordingly ordered Colonel Gromov to hold Chang-ssu-tzu and Chui-huan-tun with the whole of his detachment, while General Muilov gave directions that the Bryansk Regiment should be moved forward from Mu-chia-tun to Hsiao-hou-tzu. Meanwhile, the units of the Tomsk, Mokshan,† and Tobolsk Regiments were very hard pressed, both Ku-san-tun and Tun-chan-tzu being under fire from three sides. From San-hsiao-tun, Hou-hsin-tun and Hei-ni-tun the Japanese 9th Division was closing in upon Ku-san-tun, with the result that between eight and nine o'clock the Tomsk and Mokshan Regiments were compelled to retire from that village on to Tun-chan-tzu, on which the enemy's artillery was then concentrated.‡

* General Muilov's troops were disposed as follows early on the morning of the 10th :—

Ku-san-tun. Five companies of the 8th (Tomsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment. These units, in an extreme state of exhaustion, were holding the eastern portion of the village, the remainder being in the hands of the Japanese. See foot-note (‡), p. 603.

Tun-chan-tzu. Four companies of the 9th (Tobolsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment. This battalion had practically ceased to exist for it had lost most of its officers and only a few small groups of men were left.

Assembling at Tzu-erh-tun and Hsiao-hou-tzu. The 213th (Orovai) Regiment and companies of the 8th (Tomsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment which had taken part in the attack on Hei-ni-tun. At the latter village were also the late garrison of Hsiao-hsin-tun (three companies of the 8th (Tomsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment).

South of Tun-chan-tzu. The 33rd (Elets) Regiment. Behind this regiment, in reserve along the railway, were one battalion of the 216th (Insar) Regiment and one battalion of the 36th (Orel) Regiment.

Tzu-erh-tun. The 59th (Liublin) Regiment.

Fan-chia-tun. One battalion of the 58th (Praga) Regiment.

Mu-chia-tun. The 35th (Bryansk) Regiment.

Chan-tsan-tun. Three battalions of the 214th (Mokshan) Regiment, and two companies of the 216th (Insar) Regiment.

† One battalion of the 214th (Mokshan) Regiment had by this time been sent to Ku-san-tun and one to Tun-chan-tzu.

‡ The Japanese Third Army had been ordered to make a special effort to push forward and join hands with the First and Fourth Armies.

Some of the Japanese infantry penetrated into the western edge of the latter place, but the fire brought to bear upon them was so severe that they drew off. Nevertheless, by 10 a.m., the position of the garrison of Tun-chan-tzu had indeed become critical. Two Japanese batteries were in action at a range of fifteen hundred yards, while lines of infantry from the direction of Hsiao-hsin-tun kept up a murderous fire from the flank and the rear. In this situation it will be convenient to leave General Muilov's troops, in order to describe the retreat of the Russian armies up to the same hour. But before doing so it should be stated that at 9.15 a.m. the commander-in-chief had amended General Muilov's orders so far as the units of the 2nd Siberian Corps were concerned and had directed them to be sent from Ta-wa to Chan-tsan-tun. The troops from the 72nd Division which had enjoyed a good rest after the exhausting march were to move from Pu-ho to Hu-shih-tai.*

It will be remembered that upon the 9th General von der Launitz had been compelled to adopt a defensive rôle by the Japanese attack upon San-tai-tzu, and had on that account been unable to render any assistance to General Muilov in the attempt to capture Hei-ni-tun. For the 10th, however, offensive action was explicitly ordered by the commander of the Second Manchurian Army, who wrote to General von der Launitz some time after midnight in the following terms:—

The Second
Manchurian
Army.

General von der
Launitz's force.

“ It has been decided to move the Xth Corps† (Lieutenant-General Tserpitski's corps). At 2.15 a.m., so soon as the head of that corps arrives at the Hsin-min-tun road, it will be available to reinforce your troops in case of necessity. Behind the Xth Corps will follow the XVIth and 1st Siberian Corps in the order named. In view of the great length of the columns we must reckon on fighting being continued all to-morrow. The fate of the army depends upon the successful

* See foot-note (*), p. 635.

† The bodies of troops referred to here as the Xth, XVIth, and 1st Siberian, Corps are those which have been designated in recent chapters as General Tserpitski's force, General Topornin's force, and General Gerngross's force, respectively. In view of the complete mixture of units, the reappearance of corps titles in the Second Manchurian Army is somewhat remarkable, particularly so in the case of the Xth Corps, so called. With the exception of two battalions of the 34th (Sjev) Regiment, General Tserpitski had not a single infantry unit of his Xth Corps under his command at this time.

operations of your force. To secure the retirement of the Second Manchurian Army, which is covering the retirement of the other armies, it is necessary by an energetic advance to drive back the enemy behind the line Pa-chia-tzu—Pao-tao-tun—Hou-hsin-tun; later, when the Second Manchurian Army has retired to the line Hu-shih-tai—Hsia-yen-liu-tzu, it will be necessary to cover the right flank from the direction of Ta-wu-chia-tun and Hou-hsin-tun.

Before, however, the words of this dispatch had even been penned General von der Launitz was involved in some difficulty, for long before daybreak heavy firing broke out in the southern portion of the wood surrounding the Northern Tombs. Here, forcing their way through the Russian line formed by a composite battalion of the Alexandropol Regiment, several battalions of the Japanese 7th Division rushed through the pine trees and succeeded in making themselves masters of a large stone temple.* Some isolated parties succeeded even in reaching the eastern edge of the wood, whence they opened fire on the Russians in Wan-tzu-yeh, while at the same time others commenced to fire upon Ta-hen-tun from the western edge. Further, some Japanese soldiers appeared within two hundred paces of a detached building on the northern edge of the wood, which served as General von der Launitz's headquarters and opened magazine fire against it. General von der Launitz's reserve was then hurriedly got together, and a confused fire fight ensued.

The situation of the Russians was critical, but as it was getting light the Tambov Regiment entered the wood from the south, and its commander, Colonel Muller, sent the 1st Battalion to hold the eastern edge and the 2nd and 4th Battalions to advance in extended order, while the 3rd Battalion was kept in reserve at the south-eastern edge.† Aided by several companies of the regiments already engaged the Tambov Regiment cleared the wood by 8 a.m., but in the temple itself the Japanese held their ground obstinately. Fearing to wound the susceptibilities of the Chinese, to whom the tombs were objects of extreme veneration, General von der Launitz prohibited offensive action against the temple, and Colonel Muller thereupon ordered a

* The 25th Regiment (less half of the 3rd Battalion) and one and a half battalions of the 26th Regiment.

† The 122nd (Tambov) Regiment had left Lan-tien-tun about 1.30 a.m. with orders to march to San-tai-tzu.

battalion of the Modlin Regiment to surround it.* This battalion was soon reinforced by the scouts of the Bolkhov Regiment, who at once volunteered to attack the temple. A meticulous regard for religious susceptibilities was now felt to be out of place, and permission was given to make the attempt.† The Japanese inside were, however, far too strong and the effort was a failure; and by 10 a.m. five battalions of Japanese were still in rear of the Russian line and literally besieged.

Meanwhile, in fulfilment of General Kaulbars's orders, General von der Launitz had given instructions about 9 a.m. for General Sollogub's detachment to withdraw from its position on the approach of General Gerngross's rear guard and to march through the wood surrounding the Tombs to San-kan-tzu, where it was to form the reserve to the troops holding San-tai-tzu.‡ Then, so soon as the prescribed energetic advance should begin, with an artillery preparation against Hei-ni-tun and Hou-hsin-tun, General Sollogub was to move forward to Kun-chia-tun. The troops at San-tai-tzu (under General Nekrasov) were to hold on to that village until further orders, while on the right, General Dombrovski's force was to come under the command of General Vasilev so soon as that officer should arrive, and the united bodies were then to advance to the attack of Hei-ni-tun and Hou-hsin-tun.§ The attack was to be supported by the troops of Generals Tserpitski, Topornin and Gerngross so soon as they should arrive in any force at Wan-

* Colonel Muller had been placed in command of all the Russian troops inside the wood.

† Some men of the 15th Company of the same regiment also volunteered and acted with the scouts.

‡ General von der Launitz's force was disposed as follows :—

Right (General Dombrovski) in Wan-kan-tun and Kun-chia-tun.

Centre (General Nekrasov, vice General Birger who had gone on the sick list) at San-tai-tzu.

Left (General Sollogub) at Ta-hen-tun.

Reserve at the Northern Tombs.

The Centre and Left had been reinforced by the remnants of Colonel Zapolski's detachment.

§ General Vasilev had been ordered to proceed with the whole of the reserve of the Second Manchurian Army and to join General von der Launitz's detachment (see p. 642). This reserve consisted of the 122nd (Tambov) Regiment, two battalions of the 123rd (Koslov) Regiment, the 124th (Voronej) Regiment, and two companies of the reserve battalion of the 11th (Semi-palatinsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment, in all ten and a half battalions. At about 9.15 a.m. this force, less the 122nd (Tambov) Regiment (for which, see p. 640), reached Lao-kou. After the arrival of this reinforcement General

[Continued on next page.]

tzu-yeh, and the moment for commencing operations was therefore left open.

While the forces of Generals Grekov, Zarubaiev, Muilov, and von der Launitz were thus endeavouring to hold off the Japanese Cavalry Division and General Nogi's Third Army from the railway and Mandarin Road, the Second Manchurian Army was making every effort to withdraw behind the screen thus formed, with the object of passing in rear of it and so reaching Tieh-ling in safety. The Second Manchurian Army, it will be remembered, had for some time consisted of four fractions, namely, the Right, under General Gerngross, the Centre, under General Topornin, the Left, under General Tserpitski, and the reserve, under General Vasilev.* By a Second Army order given about 10.30 p.m. on the 9th the last-named unit was directed to move northwards and reinforce General von der Launitz, while the retirement of the other fractions was to be carried out in echelon from the left. It will, however, be convenient to maintain the topographical sequence of the narrative and to give the details of the retreat, beginning with General Gerngross's force upon the right, and bringing the account in the first instance up to 10 a.m.

Shortly after 3 a.m. General Gerngross issued his orders for the retirement of his force, by which the 9th East Siberian Rifle Division on the left was to fall back first, being followed by the troops of the 1st East Siberian Rifle Division and General de

Continued from previous page.]

von der Launitz's force consisted of units from seven corps and ten divisions, as shown below :—

Regiment.	Number of battalions.	Brigade.	Division.	Corps.
53rd (Volhynia)	4	1st	14th	VIIIth
57th (Modlin)	4	1st	15th	VIIIth
58th (Praga)	$\frac{1}{4}$	1st	15th	VIIIth
60th (Zamostye)	$\frac{1}{4}$	2nd	15th	VIIIth
36th (Orel)	3	2nd	9th	Xth
121st (Penza)	3	1st	31st	Xth
122nd (Tambov)	4	1st	31st	Xth
124th (Voronej)	4	2nd	31st	Xth
97th (Lithuania)	1	1st	25th	XVIIth
98th (Yuriev)	1	1st	25th	XVIIth
161st (Alexandropol)	2	1st	41st	XVIIth
162nd (Akhalsikh)	2	1st	41st	XVIIth
138th (Bolkhov)	1	1st	35th	XVIIth
214th (Mokshan)	1	1st	54th	5th Siberian
242nd (Belebeev)	2	1st	61st	5th Siberian
217th (Krom)	1	1st	55th	6th Siberian
5th Rifle	2	2nd	—	Provisional Rifle
Unallotted and Composite Battalions.	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	—	—	—

* Exclusive of General von der Launitz's force which was for a time under the commander-in-chief.

Vitt's detachment, in the order named,* while Colonel Lesh, with eleven battalions, two batteries, two squadrons, and eight machine guns was to form the rear guard.† To each fraction of the force separate roads were allotted for the initial stages of the march; but they were to unite, in the case of the main body, at Tai-ping-tsou, while about Wan-tzu-yeh the rear guard was to use the same road as the rest of the force. By ten o'clock the situation was as follows:—The 9th East Siberian Rifle Division had arrived at Yu-kua-yu-yen and was waiting for the 25th Division of General Topornin's force to pass. The 1st East Siberian Rifle Division was still holding its position not interfered with by the enemy; General de Vitt was at Hou-hua, waiting for the transport of General Gerngross's force to pass through‡; while Colonel Lesh, who had two hours earlier sent six companies to Hou-hua to act as his reserve, now received an addition to his force in the shape of twelve and a half companies and a battery, collected from various redoubts in General Gerngross's line. So far everything had worked without a hitch.

But the Japanese 8th Division was rapidly being got into readiness to take up the pursuit, and early in the morning the main body of the division, consisting of the 5th Regiment, had assembled on the Hsin-min-tun road, while two pursuing columns had been detailed.§ That on the right advanced from Hou-hun-tai about 10 a.m., at which hour the left column was east of Tsuan-pan-che on the other side of the Hsin-min-tun road, connexion between the two being maintained by the 3rd Battalion of the 31st Regiment and six mountain batteries.

* The 9th and 1st East Siberian Rifle Divisions here referred to are the detachments of General Krause and General Dovbor-Musnitski respectively. See pp. 514-15 and Appendix 16. This revival of official designations is somewhat similar to that referred to in foot-note (†), p. 639.

† The 1st East Siberian Rifle Regiment, the 147th (Samara) Regiment, the 12th (Velikolutsk) Regiment, one battery of the 1st East Siberian Artillery Brigade, one battery of the 40th Artillery Brigade, two squadrons of Frontier Guards, and eight machine guns.

‡ So far as infantry was concerned General de Vitt had now only the 140th (Zaraisk) Regiment, the 138th (Bolkhov) Regiment having been split up chiefly to garrison the works on the western front.

§ *Right Column.*—Two battalions of *Kobi* infantry, and three batteries of field artillery.

Left Column.—The 32nd Regiment, one battalion of *Kobi* infantry and three batteries of field artillery.

During the morning the 51st *Kobi* Regiment from the 13th *Kobi* Brigade joined the 8th Division.

The retirement of General Topornin's force was to commence so soon as General Tserpitski's left column should pass Lu-kun-tun, but by an unfortunate arrangement the road which had been selected by General Gerngross—via Wan-tzu-yeh and Wan-kan-tun—was to be followed so soon as Lao-kou should be reached. The movement was to be carried out in the usual formation, of a main body followed by a rear guard, the latter consisting of nine battalions and some guns under Colonel Prince Gedroits. Shortly after 7 a.m. information was received to the effect that the last of General Tserpitski's troops had passed Lu-kun-tun, whereupon General Topornin's main body was set in motion, its leading units reaching the Hsin-min-tun road immediately north of Mukden station at 9.35 a.m. From there four battalions and two batteries were directed by General Kaulbars to proceed to Height 24.5*, to cover the retirement of General Tserpitski's troops, while two more battalions were sent by him to the Northern Tombs to act as a right flank guard. About this time the rear guard began to evacuate the position it had until then been holding on the line Niu-hsin-tun—Yu-huan-tun, a movement which caused the Japanese batteries in the direction of Li-wan-pu, to open fire. A typical long range rear guard engagement now took place, in which Prince Gedroits was wounded, his place being taken by Captain Smirnov. By 10 a.m. the position of General Topornin's force may be summarized as follows :—The main body was crossing the Hsin-min-tun road en route for Lao-kou, less the detachments on Height 24.5 and those on the way to the Northern Tombs ; and the rear guard was following the main body,

Since General Tserpitski's troops had the longest distance to traverse they were the first portion of the Second Manchurian Army to fall back. The retreat took place in three columns corresponding to the detachments of the right, centre, and left, covered by a general rear guard of nine battalions and portion of the 31st Artillery Brigade under General Ganenfeldt.† About 5 a.m. the three columns of the main body were set in motion, and undisturbed

* There are two eminences bearing this designation on Plan 70. It is probable that the height near the intersection of the railway and the Hsin-min-tun road is the one to which the detachment was sent.

† Ten battalions had been allocated to the rear guard but owing to some misunderstanding one battalion—the 1st Battalion of the 4th Rifle Regiment—retired independently.

by the enemy marched off towards the north.* The rate of progress, however, was very slow, for the transport was continually being checked, thus causing delay to the troops in rear. At 10 a.m., therefore, the columns had gained but little ground. That of General Petrov was still short of Mukden station; the head of General Rusanov's column was no farther than the railway crossing east of Lan-tien-tun; while General Churin's troops were still at Lu-kun-tun. The rear guard under General Ganenfeldt was almost on the heels of the main body.

The Japanese 5th Division made no immediate effort to follow up the retiring troops of General Tserpitski, and when the remnants of its 11th and 42nd Regiments occupied Sha-ta-tzu at 6.30 a.m., after its evacuation by the Russians, the battle of Mukden was at an end so far as the 5th Division was concerned. In the last attack, that is to say, from the evening of Wednesday, the 8th, to the early morning of Friday, the 10th March, twelve hundred men had fallen—which seems a remarkably small number when the narrowness of the space separating the combatants is taken into consideration; but during part of this time the dust storm had afforded an effective screen. The Japanese 4th Division had pushed forward in unison with the 5th and had occupied Sha-tou-tzu, where it remained for nearly four hours, so that at 10 a.m. the line Sha-ta-tzu—Sha-tou-tzu marked the front of the two right divisions of the Japanese Second Army.

In the Third Manchurian Army General Dembovski had given orders that his corps—the 5th Siberian—was to fall back at 1.15 a.m., but its start was delayed for nearly an hour, owing to the difficulty in clearing the road of transport. The corps was preceded by an advanced guard of two battalions, half a company of sappers, and some scouts. Then followed the main body, behind which was the rear guard of one battalion and some scouts, while in rear of all followed two squadrons of the 1st Argun Cossack Regiment and two Mounted Scout Detachments. The passage of the Hun Ho was effected at Wo-tao-tien-tzu,

* The left column (i.e., the troops under General Petrov occupying the left section of the position) was to make for the north-western corner of Mukden and thence northward by the Wan-tzu-yeh—Wan-kan-tun road. The centre column was to come in behind the left column near Mukden. The right column after passing Lan-tien-tun was to move along the railway.

and although the operation was a protracted one it was not interfered with. When once the force was over on the right bank the retreat was carried out without difficulty for the first mile or so; but then came frequent halts, for the transport of other corps began to debouch into the road and cut into the fighting troops of the 5th Siberian Corps, completely upsetting the order of march. Consequently it was seven o'clock before the corps reached the walls of Mukden. Marching along the western edge of the city, the head of the column reached the northern gates at 9.15 a.m., when the advanced guard battalions immediately struck along the Mandarin Road to protect the transport. By ten o'clock, so far as can be gathered, the 5th Siberian Corps was in a disordered column of route along that highway, with its rearmost units just clear of Mukden.

The Japanese 8th *Kobi* Brigade did not interfere with General Dembovski's retirement. It had been left to hold the front Erh-tai-tzu—Su-chia-tun* on the departure of the 4th Division westwards, and it merely moved forward to Tzu-ho-tsuan-tun, where it was at dawn on the 10th. Thence, moving west, it arrived at the old railway bridge at Ma-chia-pu in accordance with orders received to rejoin the 4th Division.

The Russian XVIIth Corps was to skirt Mukden on the east and on arrival at the northern gate was to allow the 5th Siberian Corps, moving along the other edge of the city, to pass ahead. The retreat began at about 3 a.m. and was entirely unhampered by the enemy, so that by 4.45 a.m. the rear guard of eight battalions, three batteries and a squadron under General Orlov was safely over the Hun Ho. The bridges used were then set on fire.† Arriving at the south-east corner of Mukden, the rear guard had to halt until nearly 7 a.m., since an unending line of transport blocked the road. At this moment firing broke out on the south, and a portion of the rear guard was instantly deployed. The enemy made strenuous efforts to envelop the XVIIth Corps from the east, and some of the Chinese inhabitants of Mukden took advantage of the moment to open fire on General Orlov's troops from the city wall. A few volleys sufficed to disperse these unexpected combatants, and then the rear guard, protected by the cover afforded by

* See foot-note (*), p. 594.

† Which these were is not known.

some Chinese graves, fell back and arrived about 10 a.m. on the Mandarin Road, on to which the main body had debouched an hour previously. The main highway to the north was by now in a seriously congested condition. Wagons were moving in slow, unending, parallel columns; every moment fresh vehicles belonging to the Second Manchurian Army approached from the west, and the space between the city and the line of railway was packed with a solid mass of transport awaiting its turn to move. The main body of the XVIIth Corps was now ordered to take up a position south of Erh-tai-tzu, while the rear guard was to deploy across the Mandarin Road and to delay the enemy's advance until the arrival of the 5th Siberian Corps.*

The Japanese troops which had been harrying General Orlov's rear guard were from the 6th Division, whose energetic action was due to a cause even more potent than the desire to pursue a retreating enemy. The anxiety aroused for the Japanese Third

Army which had induced the divisional commander to cross the Hun Ho during the night† still governed his actions, and had led him to press on at 3 a.m. to the high ground north of

Mao-chia-tun, where his leading units arrived just as dawn was breaking. From here the long columns of Russian transport accompanied by their escorts could be seen streaming northwards, and across the railway were descried movements of troops which seemed to confirm the divisional commander's fears of an attack against General Nogi's army. Influenced by this sight, he immediately caused his division to wheel to the left and attack the nearest Russian units at hand. The details of what occurred are somewhat vague, but the danger seemed so urgent to General Okubo that he placed himself at the head of some thirty officers and men and took part in the fighting himself. It is believed that this somewhat remarkable incident took place before 10 a.m.

Of the remaining fractions of the Japanese Fourth Army the action up till 10 a.m. was briefly as follows:—The Okubo *Kobi* Division renewed the attack against Work No. 3 at 6 a.m. and two hours later seized it. By ten o'clock the division appears to

* Apparently the rear guard of the XVIIth Corps had struck the Mandarin Road just before the 5th Siberian Corps gained that highway and at 10 a.m. was in front of it.

† See p. 621.

have been en route for Mao-chia-tun. The 10th Division was about Yen-tai, outflanking General Shileiko's force and driving it in.

Between the XVIIth Corps and the village of Chiu-chan, where the Russian line had been broken the previous afternoon, the front was held by the 6th Siberian Corps and the 1st Corps, to the latter of which were attached the troops of General Shileiko.* The 6th

The 6th
Siberian Corps ;
and the 1st
Corps of the
First Man-
churian Army.

Siberian Corps was ordered to fall back to Lien-hua-chi, and the 1st Corps to Hsin-tun, while the attached force of General Shileiko was to make its way to Tsui-hsiu-cheng, and thence either to Ma-tsuan-tzu or Mi-chia-tun, according to circumstances. The retirement of the 6th Siberian and 1st Corps was, practically speaking, to be carried out by one and the same road ; but the former corps was to precede, and arrangements had been made by the respective staffs, which it was hoped would eliminate any clashing of units.

At 3 a.m. the troops of the 6th Siberian Corps were to evacuate their positions and to assemble at Mu-chang, but the movement of the transport went on slowly, and in the dark some units failed to reach the rendezvous. Nevertheless, at dawn the corps reached Hou-ling—thus crossing the tracks of the Japanese 6th Division—having suffered no interference beyond some desultory firing from the left bank of the Hun. At Hou-ling it was evident that considerable delay was likely to ensue, for a great quantity of transport blocked all the approaches to the village. The difficulties caused by congestion were aggravated by a panic due to a rumour that Japanese cavalry was in the vicinity, when the bulk of the transport scattered wildly in different directions. The greater part made for the Mandarin Road where it was quickly engulfed in the ever-growing stream of vehicles already on that highway. The disorder spread, too, to the 3rd and 4th Batteries of the 6th Artillery Brigade, the guns of which fell into a ravine in the prevailing confusion. From this situation they were, however, retrieved.

At 10 a.m. the main body of the corps was holding a position, facing south, at Hou-ling, while the rear guard of two battalions was at Ma-kuan-chou. Some hours before this General Sobolev, the corps commander, had transferred his troops to the command of

* The troops of General Shileiko were from the 4th Siberian Corps. See foot-note (+), p. 630.

General Meiendorf, the commander of the Ist Corps, and had ridden off, escorted by two squadrons of Cossacks, to Ta-wa.*

Shortly before ten o'clock General Meiendorf determined to commence to withdraw his own corps. The rear guard of the 6th Siberian Corps (now under his orders) was to fall back at 10.15 a.m., the main body was then to follow, while General Shileiko was to hold the Fu-ling heights for a time and then to move through Hou-ling and Tsao-chia-kou to Fen-chia-kou and beyond, forming the common rear guard. On passing the first-named village he was to inform the commander of the 20th East Siberian Rifle Regiment at Tsui-hsiu-cheng of the fact, and the latter was then to move northwards to Ma-tsuan-tzu and Hu-san and take up a position. By this arrangement the line of retreat of the Ist Corps was transferred farther west than had been intended, the 20th East Siberian Rifle Regiment alone marching by the road originally allotted to it.†

In the Japanese Guard Division it had been decided during the night that the pursuit should be towards the north-east. For this purpose the 1st Guard Brigade was sent on to Shih-tai-tzu; and by 10 a.m. the battalion which had been acting as flank guard reached that place. Shortly after 9 a.m., however, orders reached General Asada that the division was to change direction, wheel to the west, and make for the Mandarin Road near San-wa. Orders were therefore sent to the 1st Guard Brigade to turn in that direction and to send two battalions to form a divisional reserve. The 2nd Guard Brigade had meanwhile reached Erh-tao-kou and was heading towards Ta-wa. The divisional cavalry, pushing north to guard the right

The Japanese
Guard Division.

* The reason for General Sobolev's action is not known, and his conduct is the subject of criticism by General Kuropatkin in his book, *The Russian Army and the Japanese War*.

† At 10 a.m. the situation of the Ist Corps was approximately as follows:— Two battalions of the 145th (Novocherkask) Regiment held a position east of Yin-chia-pu-tzu. General Shileiko's force was at Fu-ling. The 19th East Siberian Rifle Regiment (less two companies) was at Lin-kai. General Kokhanov with the 148th (Caspian) Regiment and one battalion of the 145th (Novocherkask) Regiment was retiring on Hou-ling from Ma-kuan-chou having been relieved at the latter village by the rear guard of the 6th Siberian Corps. Two battalions of the 20th East Siberian Rifle Regiment which had been engaged at Hsiao-hsiu-cheng were retiring northwards to Ku-yu-fen. In the same direction were moving two companies of the 19th East Siberian Rifle Regiment and ten companies of the 11th (Semipalatinsk), 145th (Novocherkask), and 20th East Siberian Rifle Regiments from the Fu-ling wood.

flank of the division, was at this hour in the vicinity of Pai-kuan-tun.* This change in the direction of march of the Guard Division had the effect of causing it to front towards a Russian force at Pu-ho, with which it was later to come into collision.† After the Russian front had been pierced at Chiu-chan the units from the Barnaul and Omsk Regiments had retreated from the Hun Ho and had taken up a position south-east of Pu-ho, on the hilly ridge between Ta-lin-tzu and Lien-hua-chi, under Colonel Dobrotin, the commander of the former regiment; and before 10 a.m. on the 10th he had been joined by a battery of old pattern field guns escorted by two companies of the Tobolsk Regiment.

To the east of the point where the Guard Division had fractured General Kuropatkin's line the Russian troops were completely cut off, except for a more or less irregular system of communication via Tieh-ling. And so late as 7.15 a.m. on the 10th General Linevich was telegraphing by that route to know if the Third Manchurian Army had commenced its retreat.§ Firing broke out at dawn in the outpost line of the 2nd Siberian Corps, and about 8 a.m. the Japanese 23rd Brigade of the 12th Division attacked in the vicinity of Kao-chia-wan, driving in some companies of the Verkhne-Udinsk Regiment. Simultaneously with this attack the Japanese concentrated a heavy artillery fire on the battalion of the Strietensk Regiment, which was occupying a hill west of Hsiao-fan-hsin, while the

The First Manchurian Army.‡
The 2nd Siberian Corps attacked by the Japanese 12th Division.

* Seven miles north-north-east of Hu-hsin-pu.

† A panic, apparently due to the fire of the guns of the Guard Division, occurred about 10 a.m., and is thus described by an eyewitness:—

“A mad flight over the plain begins. Not only along the Mandarin Road but wherever else one looks the fields are covered with fugitives. Field kitchens and ammunition wagons overturn, baggage wagons foul each other with their poles and bar the road through Pu-ho. Around them sweeps a mad flight. Horsemen leap over garden walls and gallop through the gardens alongside the road. Hard by us is a bridge some sixteen feet above the stream, constituting a defile where the unbridled flight must perforce slacken. . . . Men fire blindly at one another . . . The most dreadful sight is at the bridge. It is crowded by a convoy of ambulance wagons full of wounded. When the panic starts a battery without a leader charges at the bridge. The heavy guns sweep aside the first wagons and continue on their course and then hurl over the bridge such as bar their way . . .” Ullrich, *The Trial under Fire of the Russian Army*, p. 178.

‡ Less the 1st Corps which this day, owing to the fracture of the Russian line, acted with the Third Manchurian Army.

§ Even by the evening of the 10th March General Linevich knew little of the retreat of that army.

12th Brigade advanced against Hsiao-kou-chia-wan-tzu and the neighbouring heights. Such was the state of affairs on the Russian side in this quarter of the field at ten o'clock, by which hour General Linevich had received the commander-in-chief's order to retire, regulating his retreat by that of the Third Manchurian Army.

On the Japanese side it will be remembered that on the evening of the 9th the 12th Division was astride the Hun Ho, the 12th Brigade being on the north bank about Ta-yen-tun, and the 23rd on the other side.* The orders issued during the night were for a pursuit to be carried out on the 10th, the 12th Brigade acting as advanced guard of the division. By 10 a.m. the 47th Regiment was moving north-eastwards, forcing back the right of the 2nd Siberian Corps and occupying a ridge to the north and east of Kao-chia-wan. In the 23rd Brigade the 2nd Battalion of the 46th Regiment paraded at its quarters at 5 a.m. and then moved off in the heavy morning mist. Little could be seen, but the enemy could be heard breaking the ice. The orders to the 24th Regiment being to cross the river, push on and attack, it assembled before dawn and moved towards the river bank at a point west of Pei-tzu-tun, where the ice was favourable for crossing. Coming under a hot fire on arrival at the river bank, the leading battalion halted, took cover and awaited the remainder of the regiment. In the meantime the 2nd Battalion of the 46th Regiment had been ordered to cross first, supported, if required, by the 1st Battalion in Pei-tzu-tun; and by 6.30 a.m. one company had got across with a loss of thirty men. Some Russian guns opened fire from just north-west of Hsiao-fan-hsin. The Japanese mountain batteries replied, silencing the hostile pieces, and General Imamura then resolved to attack the portion of the Russian position from which they had been firing, from the west. By 8.10 a.m. the 24th Regiment had crossed the river south of Hsing-lung-tien and occupied that village, meeting no enemy, and the 3rd Battalion of the 46th Regiment, crossing lower down, was on the left, under cover of some willows west of the village. The 23rd Brigade was now practically in touch with the 12th, and by 10 a.m. the enemy on the hilly ground about Kao-chia-wan and Hsiao-kou-chia-wan-tzu showed signs of retreat under the shelling they were receiving from the guns of the former brigade.

In the Japanese 2nd Division the reconnaissance carried out

* See p. 627.

upon the 9th left something to be desired, for as a result of the information collected it was thought that only a weak Russian rear guard lay in front, and divisional orders were issued during

the night of the 9th-10th for a march rather than for an attack. As a matter of fact the whole of the 3rd Siberian Corps was on the right bank, occupying a strong line of defence works on a position which commanded the flat country south of the river and was ideal for defence.

The 3rd Siberian Corps attacked by the Japanese 2nd Division and the left of the Ya-lu Army.

Under this mistaken estimate of the situation General Ishibashi set his column in motion at 4.30 a.m. on the 10th towards a trestle bridge spanning the river south of Ka-pu-kai. From this direction some Russian infantry suddenly opened fire on the advanced party of the 16th Regiment.* The surprise caused by this unexpected show of resistance was increased tenfold when an orderly galloped up to divisional head-quarters and reported that about a brigade of Russian infantry was occupying the hills near Ka-pu-kai. General Ishibashi, however, was equal to the occasion, and at once deployed the nearest battalion of the 29th Regiment along the river-bed west of that village. About 7 a.m. the mist cleared a little, and Russians could be clearly made out all along the heights between Ka-pu-kai and Fu-shun. By this time the whole of the 16th Regiment was across the river, but no further advance was possible, and the Japanese mountain batteries east of the bridge opened fire, followed half an hour later by the field battery, their target being the enemy's infantry between Ka-pu-kai and Hsiao-fan-hsin. To this bombardment three Russian batteries replied, several of their shells bursting close to the 2nd Divisional staff. In action of this nature the morning passed till ten o'clock.

Meanwhile General Ohara had been engaged upon the right. At 5 a.m., preceded by the 30th Regiment as advanced guard, he had moved towards the bridge south of Fu-shun, which was reached by the main body of that regiment at 7.30 a.m. Word was now sent back that at least three hostile battalions and some guns were north of the town, but shortly afterwards the officer commanding the advanced guard received a note from a Chinese official in the place to the effect that the Russians had hurriedly evacuated Fu-shun and were evidently about to retreat. Covered

* See foot-note (*), p. 578.



THE BATTLE OF MUKDEN.

View of the Russian position along the heights on the north bank of the Hun Ho, from the position of the Japanese artillery of the 2nd Division, First Army, showing where that division crossed the river on the 10th March, 1905.

by the fire of a mountain battery, the 30th Regiment entered the place. The 3rd Battalion, which had been leading, came under a cross fire from three directions, and an exchange of fire took place between the north wall and the Russians entrenched round a monument a few hundred yards away. By 10 a.m. a stiff fight was in progress, one Japanese mountain battery firing at the monument and another being engaged with four Russian pieces to the north-west. The column under Colonel Kani had meanwhile arrived at 8 a.m. near the Fu-shun bridge, but by that hour the ice had been broken by the fire of the Russian guns, and the Japanese took cover in a ravine.*

During the morning the two squadrons of the Japanese divisional cavalry suffered considerable loss. As they suddenly emerged from some trees near the river south-east of Fu-shun, making for the shelter of the southern wall, they were at once detected by the Russians and fired on. A few scouts riding in front were hit, whereupon the main body, instead of making a dash for the wall, hesitated in the open, and then galloped to the place where the mountain battery horses were sheltered in a hollow of the ground. Meanwhile the Russian guns opened a rapid fire, killing or wounding many of the cavalymen and about two hundred horses. The choice of shelter selected by the cavalry was somewhat unfortunate for the mountain battery, eighty artillery horses of the latter being killed or wounded by the fire with which the Russians followed up the squadrons.

With this attempt of the 2nd Division to drive the 3rd Siberian Corps away from the vicinity of Fu-shun, the left division—the 11th—of the Ya-lu Army had been acting in co-operation. When the morning mist cleared away it was realized in the 11th Division, as in the 12th, that the ground on the farther bank was held in force, and about 9 a.m. the advanced guard, which was by then across the Hun Ho, came under artillery fire. Appreciating the necessity for supporting the 2nd Division on his left, General Samejima advanced, making use of the bridge to cross the Hun, for the ice had already begun to break up. This operation was attended with heavy loss, the casualties among the horses of the artillery and cavalry being especially severe. Although the Japanese records dealing with the passage of the river are in other respects extremely detailed, no

* The 29th *Kobi* Regiment and No. 5 Field Battery. See p. 575.

information is available as to the precise hour at which the crossing was carried out. But there is reason to believe it was in progress about 10 a.m.

Farther east ten o'clock found General Rennenkampf still occupying his positions eastwards from Chang-ta, undisturbed by the enemy. The 1st *Kobi* Division of the Ya-lu Army had some ground to make up after the previous day's rest and had been set in motion by dawn; but, so far as is known, only an advanced detachment, which had moved down the Hsi-ssu-a valley, was actually on the river at the hour to which the account of the operations along the whole front has now been brought.

To return to the extreme right of the Russian line and to describe the course of events in that quarter after 10 a.m., as regards the opposing cavalry forces—General Grekov's detachment and the Japanese Cavalry Division—they continued during the remainder of the day the policy of neutralization which had now almost become the normal routine. On the Russian side, however, during the day a change took place in the command of the cavalry. General Mishchenko, now cured of his wound, arrived at the front from Mukden and, presumably acting upon authority, directed General Grekov to restore to him his Ural Trans-Baikal Cossack Division. In accordance with this request the cavalry detachment was split up. General Mishchenko with fourteen squadrons of his old division and six horse artillery guns took over the immediate protection of the Russian right, disposing his forces along the line Ti-ya-hsien-tai*—La-nao-tun, while General Grekov, with eleven squadrons of Prince Orbeliani's Caucasian Cavalry Brigade and a battery of six guns, was to guard the roads leading to Tieh-ling via La-la-tun and Hsin-lun-tai.† To carry out this task the latter moved to the last-named village, relieving the Chita Cossack Regiment, which seems to have fallen back and joined General Mishchenko. The Ussuri Cossack Regiment was ordered to continue its observations on the right bank of the Liao Ho. General Stepanov's brigade was apparently

General
Rennenkampf's
detachment and
the right of the
Ya-lu Army.

Narrative of
Events after
10 a.m.
General Grekov's
cavalry and the
Japanese Cavalry
Division.

* Ti-ya-hsien-tai is about three miles north-north-east of La-nao-tun.

† Hsin-lun-tai is about five miles north-west of La-nao-tun.

not allotted to either of the two fractions into which the Russian cavalry was now divided.*

It so happened that during the 10th General Zarubaiev's force was kept outside the influence of the maelstrom into which tens of thousands of Russian troops were sucked. This immunity was really due to the threat exercised by the Japanese from the east, for when this was discovered the commander-in-chief decided to maintain General Zarubaiev's force concentrated so far as possible and sent him an order to take up a defensive position instead of attacking Ta-hsin-tun. Accordingly the force remained throughout the day on the line it had taken up.† Little occurred along its front; the batteries carried on a contest with the guns of the Japanese Cavalry Division; and an attempt to advance—which does not appear to have been distinguished by marked energy—made by some dismounted Japanese cavalry was easily repelled by Colonel Gromov.

The retirement of the Second Manchurian Army was an awkward manœuvre to carry out, for it practically amounted to a flank march across the front of an enemy within striking distance, and was, in addition, accompanied by all the difficulties incidental to a retreat. The more immediate duty of protecting the army from the west fell to the forces under General Muilov and General von der Launitz, whose operations

* It proceeded on this day almost as far as the Liao Ho and joined General Mishchenko on the 12th March. See p. 683.

During the afternoon the Japanese Cavalry Division was disposed as follows:—

La-la-tun	...	The 9th Cavalry Regiment.
San-chia-tzu and vicinity	and	The 2nd Cavalry Brigade, one company of the 3rd Regiment, and two guns.
Ta-hsin-tun	...	The 1st Cavalry Brigade, one company of the 3rd Regiment, and ten guns.
Hou-hsin-tai	...	The 3rd and 6th Cavalry Regiments.

† At 3 p.m. General Zarubaiev's force was disposed as follows:—

Ma-ku-chia-tzu	...	...	One battalion of the 87th (Neishlot) Regiment.
Chan-hsi-tun	...	...	One battalion of the 87th (Neishlot) Regiment.
Chui-huan-tun	...	}	Battalions of drafts under Colonel Gromov.
Chang-ssu-tzu	...		
Ma-niu-tun	...		
Ya-tzu-chan	...		
Hsia-yen-liu-tzu	...	...	One battalion of the 86th (Wilmanstrand) Regiment.
Ta-niu	...	...	The remaining troops, in reserve.

subsequent to 10 a.m. will first be described. It is important to bear in mind that although both these bodies of troops were working to a common end they were not acting strictly in co-operation and received their orders from different sources. General von der Launitz was again directly under General Kaulbars, while General Muilov had the commander-in-chief as his immediate superior.

To take the force under General Muilov: the situation in Tun-chan-tzu had been growing worse and worse.* The garrison of the village had suffered enormous losses and after having barely succeeded in repulsing an attack by portion of the Japanese 9th

Division between twelve and one o'clock, the remnants of the Mokshan, Tomsk and Tobolsk Regiments fell back on to Hsiao-hou-tzu, having

General Muilov's force.

lost their leader severely wounded. Here, when the roll was called, it was found that the survivors mustered no more than one hundred and forty all told, the battalion of the Tobolsk Regiment being represented by but three officers and a mere handful of men. The capture of Tun-chan-tzu by the Japanese placed the railway and the roads immediately east and west of it in serious danger, the more so since the head of the Second Manchurian Army had not yet appeared. Further, the loss of the village could not but affect General Gershelmann's detachment, which was holding a ravine trending southwards to Wan-kan-tun. And against these troops the Japanese now brought a galling enfilade fire to bear.

When Tun-chan-tzu fell the Bryansk Regiment, sent by General Muilov to support General Artamonov, arrived at Hsiao-hou-tzu. The Japanese were at this time pressing forward from Hsiao-hsin-tun towards the railway, and in order to counteract this movement by a threat against the enemy's left, General Artamonov sent off General Lisovski, with three battalions of that regiment and two batteries, to Chang-ssu-tzu.

Not long afterwards, while the commander-in-chief was taking measures to secure Ta-wa, General Artamonov made an attempt to recapture Tun-chan-tzu and Hsiao-hsin-tun. With this object he ordered Colonel Troitski to collect the remnant of the Tomsk Regiment and reoccupy the former village, while General Lisovski was to attack Hsiao-hsin-tun from the direction of Chang-ssu-tzu. Supported by a battalion of the Bryansk Regiment, the

* See p. 639.

units of the Tomsk Regiment got to within six hundred yards of their objective and then, being unable to get forward, lay down behind some Chinese graves and devoted their efforts to preventing the Japanese issuing from the village. Meanwhile, upon the right flank, General Lisovski had begun his attack upon Hsiao-hsin-tun, but was met by a deadly fire from machine guns and was compelled to halt some eight hundred paces from the place. Nevertheless, his advance afforded some relief to the Tomsk Regiment and saved that unit from an envelopment from Hsiao-hsin-tun. Assistance was forthcoming, too, from another quarter, for at 1.45 p.m. the commander-in-chief had decided to support General Artamonov with the troops which had joined the General Reserve from the 2nd Siberian Corps and 72nd Division, and had placed them under the command of General Morozov.* The orders to that officer were to occupy Tun-chan-tzu and Hsiao-hsin-tun, and to gain touch with General Zarubaiev on the right. In fulfilment of these instructions General Morozov detailed the Nerchinsk Regiment to attack the former village, and the units of the 72nd Division under General Radkhevich to take Hsiao-hsin-tun, six other battalions being kept in reserve.† At 4.35 p.m. the batteries opened fire on Tun-chan-tzu, the Nerchinsk Regiment reached Hsiao-hou-tzu, and the reserve moved up the line of railway. This last-named portion of the force was now being shelled from the rear, possibly by the Japanese guns east of the railway. By this time it was drawing on to six o'clock, and the retiring troops of the Second Manchurian Army, as well as unorganized groups of men, were beginning to arrive at Hsiao-hou-tzu.

In regard to the situation of General von der Launitz, by 10 a.m. the state of affairs along the line held by him had become sufficiently disquieting. The enemy had not only obtained a supporting point in the actual line—the buildings in San-tai-tzu—

but were also in possession of what was practically a stone fort inside the Northern Tombs wood. Further, in some of the Russian units ammunition was beginning to run short. Reinforcements had, however, arrived in the shape of the Second Manchurian Army reserve under General Vasilev; and

* General Morozov was the commander of the troops sent from the 2nd Siberian Corps to the General Reserve.

† Later, General Kuropatkin ordered General Radkhevich to join in the attack on Tun-chan-tzu.

General von der Launitz now took measures for the attack on Hei-ni-tun, which was to be the first step in the task entrusted to him, namely, to drive back the enemy behind the line Pa-chia-tzu—Pao-tao-tun—Hou-hsin-tun. At 11.15 a.m. the artillery preparations began, the batteries of the 4th Artillery Brigade opening a heavy fire on the guns of the Japanese 1st and 7th Divisions in Hei-ni-tun and Pao-tao-tun respectively, while two batteries of the 45th Artillery Brigade shelled the buildings in San-tai-tzu, in which portions of the 1st and 15th Regiments and of the 15th *Kobi* Regiment of the Japanese 1st Division were still holding out. The action, however, never got beyond the artillery stage. At 1.30 p.m. General Kaulbars, who had spent the morning on an elevation close to where the railway crosses the Hsin-min-tun road, arrived at the northern edge of the Northern Tombs wood. Here he proceeded to confer rewards upon those men who had earned them. This ceremony had hardly been completed, when firing was heard towards Tzu-erh-tun. Soon afterwards an officer rode up and reported the loss of Tun-chan-tzu and Hsiao-hsin-tun, and a rumour spread that the rear guards of the Third Manchurian Army had not reached Mukden by midday.

General Kaulbars now came to the conclusion that the time had passed for any offensive movement by General von der Launitz to be of much service, and personally issued an order countermanding the attack on Hei-ni-tun. This was followed by a written order to the effect that General von der Launitz was to concentrate his force during the night at Hsiao-hou-tzu, and to occupy Tun-chan-tzu and, if possible, Hsiao-hsin-tun. Accordingly the preparations being made by that commander for the attack were suspended, and about 4 p.m. he telephoned to his centre detachment under General Nekrasov to retreat, while General Sollogub on the left was instructed to retire at once to Hsikan-tzu, where he was to join General Nekrasov. The order to retire was also sent to Colonel Muller of the Tambov Regiment who, as already mentioned, had been placed in charge of the troops of the Northern Tombs wood. General Dombrowski, commanding the right section, and General Vasilev were not told to retire, for General von der Launitz decided to hold the line Kun-chia-tun—Tsao-lin-tzu, astride the railway.

It goes without saying that while these operations were in progress the Second Manchurian Army had been making every

effort to arrive under cover of the protective screen of troops put out by Generals Zarubaiev, Muilov and von der Launitz, and to escape to Tieh-ling. The main body of General Gerngross's force passed through the danger zone without much difficulty. The 9th East Siberian Rifle Division continued its march from Yu-kua-yu-yen, while the units of the 1st East Siberian Rifle Division began to fall back about 11 a.m., reaching Wan-tzu-yeh without incident. The Zaraisk Regiment, which waited at Hou-hua for the transport to pass, was blocked for a time at Wan-tzu-yeh, but on the whole General Gerngross's main body enjoyed good fortune. To anticipate events slightly, its position when darkness set in was as follows:—The 1st East Siberian Rifle Division was at Hu-shih-tai and the 9th East Siberian Rifle Division at Hsia-yen-liu-tzu. The same good fortune did not, however, attend the rear guard under Colonel Lesh. About noon he occupied a position at Lin-pu-tzu and an hour later ordered a retirement to Wan-tzu-yeh. But here his troops were caught in the stream of retreating units, columns of transport, artillery parks, and Red Cross wagons.

Meanwhile, General Oku had decided to pursue with the Japanese Second Army without delay and issued his orders at 11.30 a.m.:—

(1) The enemy in front is retiring from all points towards the north and north-east. The army will at once pursue.

The Japanese
Second Army.
Issue of orders
for pursuit at
11.30 a.m.

(2) The 4th Division, from the neighbourhood of Ta-a-pu and Lu-kun-tun will pursue to Hsi-li-ma-kou. One brigade—less two battalions—must be kept ready to come under

the direct orders of the army commander.

(3) The 5th Division, connecting with the 4th, will pursue from Lu-kun-tun and Chang-shih-chang* in the direction of Ssu-ton.†

(4) The 3rd Division, connecting with the 5th, will advance to Ta-ping-tsou.

(5) The 8th Division, connecting with the Third Army will repulse the enemy before it and advance to Hou-ton.‡

* This village was in the immediate vicinity of Redoubt No. 6.

† This village seems to be identical with Wa-fang.

‡ This village is apparently Hou-hua.

By midday the situation of the Russians was becoming grave. Apart from the pressure from the west, news had come in that the Japanese were threatening Ta-wa, on the Mandarin Road, in force; and General Kuropatkin was confronted with the task of extracting his Second and Third Armies through what, in the military sense, was practically a defile but eight miles wide.

It so happened that the orders which had been issued to three of the constituent portions of the Second Manchurian Army implied a converging movement upon Wan-tzu-yeh; and consequently the chaos which reigned round that village towards the close of the afternoon of the 10th March as the dis-

The bulk of the Second Manchurian Army converges on Wan-tzu-yeh. Confusion in that village.

organized fractions of the retreating army poured through almost defies description. About half-past two shrapnel began to burst over the village, and shortly afterwards the Japanese infantry occupied the railway embankment, while a small force took up a position at right angles to the embankment north of Wan-tzu-yeh.* The main

body of General Topornin's force managed to push its way through the mass of transport and entered the place between two and three o'clock, where it came under a cross fire of artillery which compelled it to move to the eastern side of the railway, along which it marched to Tsao-lin-tzu. During this operation vehicles of every description and bodies of wandering soldiers impinged upon the marching column; all order was lost and many men broke the ranks, attracted by the cover of a large ravine near the village and on its eastern side. In this hollow, according to the testimony of eyewitnesses, was a scene of terrible confusion, for at one time at least ten thousand soldiers, without leaders and without formation were there herded together, mixed with wagons of various kinds.†

The crowd in the village itself was now fed by four tributary streams. Colonel Lesh's rear guard joined the torrent; General Tserpitski's troops added their quota; and the left detachment of General von der Launitz's force swelled its numbers. The commander of the last, General Sollogub, had reached the village ahead

* What units there were is not known, but they were doubtless advanced troops from the 6th and Okubo *Kobi* Divisions which closed in on the Mandarin Road and railway during the afternoon.

† From Russian reports it appears that this congested mass of fugitives was under the artillery and rifle fire of the Japanese.

of his troops, and moving north with a body of stragglers had been made prisoner, while the detachment itself in its withdrawal from Ta-hen-tun had lost heavily from the flanking fire of the isolated battalions of the Japanese 7th Division which had held out in the temple of the Northern Tombs. Besides these troops came part of General Nekrasov's detachment from San-tai-tzu, broken by a cross fire from the further side of the railway.*

The fighting which now took place round Wan-tzu-yeh was of the most confused character. When General Tserpitski arrived he made strenuous efforts to cope with the situation. He collected the weak companies of the 7th Rifle Regiment which happened to be at hand and ordered them to open magazine fire against the enemy advancing from the east and south, in which action the 8th Rifle Regiment was to co-operate. At the same time from the units in the village he endeavoured to form a screen facing west, and directed the 19th Rifle Regiment to occupy the railway line facing east. While issuing orders for the above he was wounded in the leg and went off north, but on arriving at Wan-kan-tun about 5.45 p.m. he proceeded to organize the defence of that place. Some companies of the Koslov and Voronej Regiments of General Vasilev's force, which he found there, he sent to line the western edge of the village and directed two batteries which came up to unlimber. A passing squadron of Frontier Guards was also impressed for reconnaissance, with the result that one of the patrols brought word that the road to the north was still open, though under heavy machine gun and artillery fire. General Tserpitski's troops had now rejoined him, and he accordingly moved northwards with his force, having handed over the defence of Wan-kan-tun to Generals Vasilev and Dombrovski, who arrived at this moment.†

General Vasilev's share in the day's operations was as follows: when he arrived, with the reserve of the Second Manchurian Army, to join General von der Launitz, he was sent

* The 161st (Alexandropol), 53rd (Volhynia), 214th (Mokshan) and 122nd (Tambov) Regiments as well as the Provisional Battalion from the 4th Siberian Corps made for Wan-kan-tun; the remainder of the detachment continued their march to Wan-tzu-yeh. The former, although soon intermingled with other units, got away more or less successfully.

† For these services the 3rd Class of the Order of St. George was conferred upon General Tserpitski.

by that commander to the right, and as senior officer present superseded General Dombrovski and took over command of the section Wan-kan-tun—Kun-chia-tun. About 1.30 p.m. some Japanese approached the Mandarin Road from the east, and their shells soon commenced to fall on Siding 97 from the south of Mukden. Very shortly General Vasilev's command was facing north, north-west, south and south-east at one and the same time, forming a protective ring through which the transport and advanced troops of the Second Manchurian Army retired. Up to this time the attack on Hei-ni-tun was the problem before General von der Launitz's force, but about one o'clock a staff officer arrived from General Kaulbars, countermanding the attempt and ordering a retreat northwards to Tieh-ling. It was impossible to comply with this order until 6 p.m., at which hour General Vasilev ordered a retirement to Hsiao-hou-tzu. General Tserpitski was then in Wan-kan-tun, giving orders to General Vasilev's troops, apparently without consultation with the latter.* General Vasilev was therefore at this time acting under a combination of instructions from General Tserpitski, General Kaulbars and his own immediate superior, General von der Launitz,† and appears to have solved the difficulty by continuing the retirement he had begun. Meanwhile General von der Launitz arrived at Wan-kan-tun, and detaching the Tambov Regiment and the 4th Trans-Baikal Cossack Battery ordered them to hold on to a hill near the village. By 10.30 p.m. these troops had abandoned that place and reached Hu-shih-tai station.

Late at night General Topornin's troops reached Hu-shih-tai—a mob of formed units, detachments, men marching singly, and transport of various corps. Here the stream was out of the zone of hostile fire; but the rush northward continued all through the night. At about 9 p.m. General Tserpitski arrived wounded at the commander-in-chief's head-quarters at Hsiao-hou-tzu and reported that all his troops had successfully traversed the danger zone. General Churin's column was in fact by this time collected at Tzu-erh-tun,‡ and the remainder

The bulk of the forces of Generals Topornin and Tserpitski break through.

* See p. 661.

† General von der Launitz had designedly sent no orders to General Vasilev at 4.15 p.m. (see p. 658), but the latter was of course still bound by General von der Launitz's earlier instructions.

‡ By order of General Kaulbars this force and the Zaraisk Regiment took up a position at Chan-tsan-tun in support of General Muilov's force. About midnight these units fell back in conjunction with General Muilov.

of the main body was at Hsiao-hou-tzu; but General Tserpitski was at fault concerning his rear guard. About 3 p.m. that force had resumed its march, moving between the railway and the city of Mukden, where it came under a cross fire from the Japanese and lost communication with the main body. Still ignorant of the Japanese penetration at Chiu-chan of the previous day, General Ganenfeldt decided to march through Mukden, and passing out of the north-eastern gate to continue his march to Tieh-ling. The narrow streets of the city were crowded with isolated Russian soldiers and transport, and it was not until five o'clock that an exit on the eastern side was gained. Here the column was met by the fire of some infantry of the Japanese 6th Division who barred the way. The Russians deployed, and in the fight which ensued General Ganenfeldt was wounded, his place being taken by Colonel Vasilev of the Podolia Regiment. The Japanese strove obstinately to drive back the Russian rear guard, and the fighting became severe. Colonel Vasilev was killed, the commander of the Orsk Regiment and the majority of the officers were wounded, and fifty per cent of the rank and file were missing. Ammunition was practically exhausted, for the carts had been already abandoned. By nine o'clock the men of various units left behind in Mukden broke into the firing line, and caused much confusion. In this wise the force moved on some way; but under the rifle and machine gun fire of the Japanese it soon began to crumble to pieces, although it continued to exist until the following morning.*

The command of General Sollogub's detachment had devolved on Colonel Maximovski of the General Staff, and when that officer saw the confusion raging in and all round Wan-tzu-yeh he decided to make for Tieh-ling along the eastern side of the railway. Shortly after 6 p.m. his force commenced to cross the line, and found the same scene of disorder as elsewhere. Wagons, field kitchens, two-wheeled carts, and crowds of men blocked the road to such an extent that it was dark before the column made any appreciable progress. On issuing from the village Colonel Maximovski found infantry upon both sides of the road, which proved to be the remnants of some companies of the 19th Rifle Regiment.† He therefore added

General
Sollogub's
detachment of
General von der
Launitz's force.

* See p. 682.

† The 19th Rifle Regiment had been dispatched by General Tserpitski to the railway, with orders to drive away a small party of the enemy which was occupying a hill near Wan-kan-tun. See p. 661.

these units to his own column, but as hundreds of stragglers from other regiments kept joining it order was soon lost. About 10 p.m., near Tsao-lin-tzu, the column broke into two portions, each of which continued its march independently, that under Colonel Maximovski arriving about eleven o'clock at Ta-wa where it was greeted by an outburst of rifle and machine gun fire. Here it may be left pending its final dissolution on the following day.*

The troops of General Nekrasov's detachment had succeeded in escaping from the impasse at Wan-tzu-yeh, but at enormous cost. Of three battalions of the Orel Regiment only a handful of men, with the regimental colours, reached Tzu-erh-tun; of a battalion of the Yuriev Regiment only one officer and one hundred and fifty-six men eventually broke through to the north; and the Lithuania Regiment lost nearly fifty per cent of its strength. In the Modlin Regiment the command had descended to a company officer—Captain Ivanov. Collecting his men and those from other units in the ravine near the village he had placed himself at their head. Then, taking a cross from his breast and reminding the men of their oath, he gave the order to charge. A deafening fusillade greeted the advance, but Captain Ivanov fought his way through, and in spite of heavy losses reached Hu-shih-tai station with a considerable body of men and the regimental colours.

No less severe were the casualties in the rear guard under Colonel Lesh. On the morning of the 11th not more than four officers and one hundred men of the Bolkhov Regiment were at Hsin-tai-tzu station to gather round the colours. A remnant of the Samara Regiment, with the colours, succeeded in getting through. The Velikolutsk Regiment had practically ceased to exist. Of the 1st East Siberian Rifle Regiment only five officers and one hundred and eighty-four men were to reach Tieh-ling with their leader.

At 6.30 p.m. on the 10th the commander-in-chief, ignorant of how the Third Manchurian Army was faring, dispatched the following order to General Kaulbars:—

“The enemy has broken the line of the First Army

* See p. 681. The troops still following Colonel Maximovski were five and a half companies of the 19th Rifle Regiment and three companies of the 138th (Bolkhov) Regiment.

and has advanced to the Mandarin Road in the direction of Ta-wa and Pu-ho. In the latter direction as many as six regiments have been observed. General Bilderling, who apparently is at Pu-ho in person, should have seven regiments of infantry with him, but these are probably extremely exhausted.

"In the interests of all three armies I request you, with your troops to assist in the rescue of the Third Army, if it is in difficulties; but if it has evacuated Pu-ho in face of the enemy, you must be prepared to meet an attack on your flank from the Japanese forces at Pu-ho. Take all measures of precaution and report to me the measures taken.

"I shall be on the artillery position west of Hu-shih-tai station till dark, and shall then move to Hsin-tai-tzu station.

"I have left in my strategic reserve* the brigade of the 1st Siberian Division which arrived this morning. I have detailed the 72nd Division temporarily to Lieutenant-General Muilov's force.

"The troops from the First and Third Armies, which formed my strategic reserve and are engaged at present, facing west, are to join the Second Army. These troops are:—12 battalions of the 1st Corps, 10 battalions of the 54th Division, 6 battalions of the 4th Siberian Corps. Orders for to-night and for to-morrow have been issued to these troops, namely, to march to Tieh-ling, protecting the right flank of the Second Army.

"After the necessary rest continue your march to Hsin-tai-tzu station. General Muilov's rear guard is to halt on a position at Hsin-chen-pu."

It would appear that the difficulties in which the Russians were placed in the village of Wan-tzu-yeh were not realized by the Japanese, and none of their records available conveys the impression of a serious engagement having occurred at that

place. So far as the Japanese Second Army was concerned it is not possible to state definitely what units of that army were concerned.

To take the 8th Division first, the artillery of the left column, together with two of the mountain batteries, had maintained a fire from near Tai-ping-tsou until about 2.30 p.m., when the right wing arrived at that village. Here the troops halted, and the 5th Regiment with

* i.e. the General Reserve.

Advance by
the Japanese
Second Army.

the 3rd Battalion of the 31st Regiment, under General Yoda, took up the pursuit, following up as far as the railway line between the north gate of the city and the Northern Tombs. The 3rd Battalion of the 5th Regiment passed through the railway station—which was occupied at 4.20 p.m. by the right wing—and entered Mukden by the western gate.* Emerging by the northern exit, it halted near Lao-kou. The left wing advanced to the ground between the railway and the city, just north of the Hsin-min-tun road, where it remained. To Lao-kou about 7 p.m. also came the 3rd Division, and two hours later the main body went into bivouac south-west of Yu-kua-yu-yen. The 4th and 5th Divisions reached the west of Mukden at 7 p.m., part of their troops taking possession of the city, at which portion of the 8th Division had already entered at half-past four, while the 8th *Kobi* Brigade halted about a mile south of the demolished railway bridge over the Hun Ho. At 5 p.m. Second Army head-quarters arrived at the neighbourhood of Redoubt No. 7 on the western front, whence orders were sent directing each division to hold the ground then occupied. In the records from which these itineraries are taken, although the routes followed by each division are given in some detail, no engagement in the vicinity of Wan-tzu-yeh is described; nor is the name of that village mentioned.

It seems certain, however, that the right of the Japanese Third Army must have been able to bring a disconcerting volume of fire upon that village from the west and north-west during the afternoon, for when the left and centre detachments of General von de Launitz's force fell back from Ta-hen-tun and San-tai-tzu, respectively, portions of the Japanese 7th and 1st Divisions pressed forward and were doubtless joined by the battalions of the former division which had been besieged in the temple of the Northern Tombs.† On the east, units from the 6th Division and Okubo *Kobi* Division seem to have pushed on to the railway on

* The 51st *Kobi* Regiment had been added to the 8th Division during the morning. It had moved parallel to that division and arrived at the railway station at 2.20 p.m. Some small bodies of Japanese troops, probably cavalry patrols, from the Second and Fourth Armies appear to have entered Mukden during the forenoon.

† The position of the Japanese Third Army at 2 p.m. was as follows :—

The 9th Division had its left about a mile east of Hsiao-hsin-tun, its centre in Tun-chan-tzu, and its right in Hou-hsin-tun. The bulk of the

the retirement of the 5th Siberian and XVIIth Corps to the north. On the whole, it seems that the state of affairs in Wan-tzu-yeh during the afternoon of the 10th was more due to indifferent staff arrangements on the part of the Russians and to demoralization amongst the rank and file than to any peculiarly energetic attack on the part of the Japanese. Towards the demoralization of the Russian soldiers there is no doubt that drunkenness contributed its share.*

By a quarter-past seven firing had almost entirely ceased. The movement of troops past Siding 97 had practically ended, and only small groups and men marching singly continued to pass. It was thought by the Russians that practically all the Second Manchurian Army had got safely through, but this opinion was not based upon an accurate knowledge of the situation, for the extent of the loss at Wan-tzu-yeh was not realized. Nevertheless, it was clear that as regards the Second Manchurian Army the crisis had passed, and in these circumstances the renewal of the attack by General Muilov against Tun-chan-tzu and Hsiao-hsin-tun was no longer advisable.

At 7.15 p.m., therefore, General Kuropatkin, who had by then proceeded to Hsin-tai-tzu station, cancelled that attack, and ordered General Muilov to form a rear guard on the front Chang-ssu-tzu—Mu-chia-tun, and thence to fall back along both sides of the railway to a position at Hsin-chen-pu.†

Continued from previous page.]

1st Division was about Hei-ni-tun; five battalions were in San-tai-tzu; head-quarters and one battalion were behind at Wu-tai-tzu.

The 7th Division was generally on the line opposite Ta-hen-tun—San-tai-tzu (exclusive); four battalions were in the temple of the Northern Tombs; the artillery was in front of Pao-tao-tun; the 7th Cavalry Regiment was about Fang-tzu-hu; one battalion was in Pa-chia-tzu; one battalion in Tsuan-pan-che. The bulk of the 15th *Kobi* Brigade was between Tsao-hou-tun and Kao-li-tun.

* *Conférences sur la Guerre Russo-Japonaise faites à l'Académie d'état-major Nicolas*, French translation, Fascicule 8, p. 433; Ullrich, *The Trial under Fire of the Russian Army in the War of 1904-05*, p. 142; von Tettau, *Eighteen Months with the Russian Army in Manchuria*, Vol. II, p. 370; Barzini, *The Battle of Mukden*, p. 285.

† The troops under General Morozov were to return to the General Reserve, and at 6.45 p.m. arrangements were made to send them immediately to Hsin-tai-tzu station. The battalions of the 72nd Division were placed under General Muilov.

General Zarubaiev was at the same time to form a right flank guard retiring west of and parallel to the railway.* When night fell the positions held by the troops of General Muilov, to whose steadfast gallantry throughout the 10th the salvation of the Second Manchurian Army was largely due, were approximately as follows:—

At Tzu-erh-tun: General Gershelmann's detachment. (The 33rd (Elets) Regiment, two battalions of the 216th (Insar) Regiment, and one battalion of the 36th (Orel) Regiment.)

Between Tzu-erh-tun and Chan-tsan-tun: (The 59th (Liublin) Regiment and one battalion of the 58th (Praga) Regiment.)

At Hsiao-hou-tzu: General Artamonov. (The 3rd (Nerchinsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment, part of the 35th (Bryansk), and remnants of the 214th (Mokshan), 213th (Orovai), 8th (Tomsk) Siberian Infantry, and 216th (Insar) Regiments.)

About eleven o'clock General Muilov sent out patrols. They ascertained that only a few stragglers from various regiments were still to the south, and accordingly the rear guard retired about midnight of the 10th–11th March.

To pass now to the Third Manchurian Army and its operations subsequent to 10 a.m. Pushing along the Mandarin Road the advanced guard and transport of the 5th Siberian Corps came under fire from the east, and making towards

The Third Manchurian Army.
The 5th Siberian Corps.

Tieh-ling with all haste became separated from the remainder of the corps. As for the main body several units were unable to get on the road and were temporarily lost, leaving in the corps some six battalions and two batteries, moving slowly forward a little to the west of the main highway to the north, which, as has been described, was crowded to its utmost capacity. On reaching Erh-tai-tzu these troops were met by General Bilderling, who ordered them to fill a gap existing between the portions of the XVIIIth Corps, which had been forced to deploy, so as to check the Japanese. At this moment the 5th Siberian Corps was without its commander, for General Dembovski had ridden on ahead, arriving at Ta-wa about 1 p.m. Here General Bobrinski was engaged in regulating the movement of the trans-

* General Zarubaiev's force retired in two columns.

port, but so soon as it became known that General Dembovski was in the village the commander-in-chief ordered him to take over the actual defence of Ta-wa and authorized him to detain all passing troops for the purpose.

The main body of the XVIIth Corps proceeded to occupy a position about Erh-tai-tzu, while General Orlov deployed the rear guard about Min-tan, facing east and south-east. Some skirmishing lines of the Japanese advanced against this position,

supported by a battery at a range of about three thousand five hundred yards; and half an hour later the Russian main body about Erh-tai-tzu was

attacked, apparently by the 10th *Kobi* Brigade.* Both portions of the corps held their own without much difficulty, though by some error the two batteries with General Orlov withdrew northwards, and the rear guard—or, as it now was, the right wing—was left without artillery. This had naturally an adverse influence on affairs, especially as it was realized that the congestion along the Mandarin Road was growing worse. From east, south and west vehicles poured into the highway; control of the traffic had long been lost, and frequent halts were now necessary. To add to the gravity of the situation the roar of guns was heard to the east, showing that the 6th Siberian and 1st Corps were engaged, while all measures taken to establish communication with those corps had been unsuccessful. General Bilderling now determined to get into touch with the 6th Siberian Corps, and for this purpose ordered the main body of the XVIIth Corps to take up a position between Lin-chia-feng and Hsi-chia-kou. With this scheme the commander of the latter could not comply, since the situation at Erh-tai-tzu did not permit of the movement being carried out. It was now nearly one o'clock. The bursts of shrapnel could be observed four miles to the north, and along the crest of the ridge running from Hou-ling to Ta-wa a movement of large bodies of Japanese could be made out with field glasses. The commander of the corps came to the decision that it was time to move and sent word to General Orlov to withdraw, while he himself with the main body covered his retirement.

It was at this juncture that the 5th Siberian Corps—or what was left of it—was placed between the separated fractions of the

* Of the Okubo *Kobi* Division.

XVIIth,* and General Orlov had to wait until nearly 2 p.m. before the last of the wagons of the former corps had passed and he could begin to fall back to Erh-tai-tzu. His task was a difficult one—to withdraw troops from close touch with the enemy and without the assistance of artillery. Nevertheless the retirement, though under a heavy fire, was at first carried out in good order, and General Orlov fortunately came across two batteries of the 5th Siberian Corps, of which he immediately made use. But the shell fire from the enemy increased in vigour, and the Russian troops, exhausted by fatigue and decimated by losses, broke and fled towards the north-west. Nothing could stay the flight, and by evening regiments mustering less than two hundred men assembled at Hu-shih-tai station as the remnants of the erstwhile rear guard of the Russian XVIIth Corps. The main body of the corps succeeded in passing through Ta-wa, and reached Min-chia-tun, where it spent the night. The corps commander, General Selivanov, had been met in the former village by an order from General Kuropatkin, directing him to proceed to Pu-ho and to take over the command of the troops in that village.†

It will be remembered that the commander-in-chief had entrusted General Dembovski with the defence of Ta-wa, and in order to keep the Mandarin Road open at that point had empowered him to stop all troops passing through the village and to occupy a position along the line Ta-wa—Tsao-chia-kou with them. East of that road the situation at this time was roughly as follows. The 6th Siberian‡ and Ist Corps—as will be related later—had come in upon the highway above Ta-wa in a disorganized mob, and were retiring along it, while their transport had been sent streaming westward in disorder by the fire of the Japanese artillery. The weak units of the XVIIth and 5th Siberian Corps were disposed along the road, and General Shileiko, with five companies, was approaching San-wa. Pu-ho was covered by a force under Colonel Dobrotin. In action against these

* See p. 668.

† The exact position of the 5th Siberian Corps at evening is not known. This corps during this morning consisted of one division—the 61st—less the Orsk Regiment and some other battalions. By the afternoon it seems to have been represented by only four battalions.

‡ The 6th Siberian Corps had throughout the battle consisted of but one division—the 55th.

Russian troops were the 6th, Okubo *Kobi*, 10th and Guard Divisions of the Japanese Fourth and First Armies.

To carry out the duty entrusted to him General Dembovski by 2 p.m. was able to dispose of twenty-four companies and sixteen guns.* The troops were in a state of extreme exhaustion, short of ammunition and without medical officers or ambulances. Ammu-

nition, however, was secured from parks which happened to pass; a volunteer surgeon was found and detained; while medical requisites were secured from some of General Orlov's hospital carts. Meanwhile all round Ta-wa, much as at Wan-tzu-yeh, disorder was rampant. A mass of transport had accumulated, upon which a battery of the Japanese 10th Division commenced to fire from Tsao-chia-kou, and the shells, falling into the thick of the wagons, caused a panic. North of Tsao-chia-kou a movement of Japanese infantry could be clearly observed, and to nip any enveloping movement from that quarter in the bud General Dembovski decided to hold on with his right and advance to the attack with his left, and to this end deployed his improvised force along the ridge Kuan-chia-kou—Tsao-chia-kou. The Japanese, notwithstanding, came on in such strength, and so obviously threatened to work round the Russian rear, that the idea of attack was dropped.

About 3 p.m. two messages reached General Dembovski from the commander-in-chief, the first, to the effect that General Selivanov, with the XVIIth Corps, was placed under his command, and the second directing him to protect the Mandarin Road on both sides by occupying a position astride of it. This latter order was, however, impossible of execution until the troops of the XVIIth Corps should actually come under General Dembovski's control. About a quarter to five, two batteries of the four with him having fired away all their ammunition received permission to retire; one, moving westwards, reached the railway line in safety, but the other, proceeding along the Mandarin Road, could get no farther than San-wa, being stopped by rifle and

* Nine companies of the 11th (Semipalatinsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment which had become separated from General Shileiko's force, five companies of the 8th (Tomsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment sent from Tzu-erh-tun by order of the commander-in-chief, five companies of the 220th (Yepifan) Regiment of the 6th Siberian Corps, five companies of the 11th (Pskov) Regiment from the XVIIth Corps.

machine gun fire from the vicinity of Pu-ho, and it was compelled to turn west.*

Meanwhile, part of the main body of the XVIIth Corps had arrived at Ta-wa, but General Dembovski, considering that no good purpose would be served in remaining, now that the enemy was barring the road at Pu-ho, decided to evacuate his position, and all his troops except the Pskov Regiment retired to Ku-cheng-tzu. That regiment marched along the Mandarin Road, and being met by fire from the direction of Pu-ho was also forced to turn west. It subsequently took part in the operations round that village which have now to be described.

General Selivanov had been directed by the commander-in-chief to organize the defence of Pu-ho ; but on arriving within view of the place between 6 and 7 p.m. realized that he was too late, for by that time it was in the hands of the Japanese, having been evacuated by the Russians three hours earlier.

Situation in Pu-ho. To describe what had happened it will be necessary
The Japanese Guard Division. to resume the narrative of the fighting in this portion of the field from 10 a.m. About noon the guns of the Japanese Guard Division began to shell the position occupied by Colonel Dobrotin, and soon a force of some two battalions from the 1st Guard Brigade attacked the left flank of the Russians near Lien-hua-chi, while the 2nd Guard Brigade advanced against Fen-chia-kou. By half-past three the Umezawa Brigade was in occupation of Hsin-tun, and Japanese shells began to fall about Pu-ho and the Mandarin Road. The Russian transport, which up till now had been marching in fair order, fell into confusion and hurriedly withdrew towards Hu-shih-tai station, many wagons being abandoned ; Colonel Dobrotin was severely wounded ; and some portions of his force began to fall back from the position. In these circumstances the commander of the Omsk Regiment, who had assumed charge, decided that it was impossible to hold on any longer, and gave orders to the troops to retire slowly to Hsin-chia-tzu. Thus Pu-ho was evacuated between 3 and 4 p.m. The last units to pass through the village were some companies of the Semipalatinsk Regiment under General Shileiko, who took over command on overtaking the retiring force. After capturing Pu-ho the Japanese infantry evinced a tendency to continue westwards towards the railway ; but General Selivanov, with portion of

* This fire was from the Japanese Guard Division.

the Pskov Regiment, checked this movement from a position west of the village. When it was completely dark these units fell back to the railway.*

It has been mentioned that troops of the 6th Siberian and 1st Corps had struck the Mandarin Road in considerable disorder during the afternoon. They were under the command of General Meiendorf, whose force upon this day comprised :—

- | | |
|--|--|
| The 1st Corps
and other troops
under General
Meiendorf. | (1) The remainder of the 1st Corps after the battalions to fill up the General Reserve had been detached ; |
| | (2) The so-called 6th Siberian Corps, which was really the 55th Division, for the 72nd had all through the battle been detached from the corps, and head-quarters had ridden off with General Laiming in the morning ; and |

(3) General Shileiko's force from the 4th Siberian Corps.

The movements of the various fractions of this improvised body upon this day are not easy to follow, but it may be said that by 11 a.m. it was split up into several separate detachments of varying strength, all in full retreat. Under the enemy's fire the troops gravitated north-west towards the Mandarin Road. One battalion impinged upon the XVIIth Corps and acted with it, while other companies were sucked into Pu-ho and operated with General Dembovski. As regards the main body—so far as a main body could be said to exist at all—the retreat was carried out with little order. The extreme

* The Japanese Guard Division made scarcely any attempt to pursue either westward or northwards, and passed the night as follows :—

1st Guard Brigade—

Ma-chia-pu-tzu ...	2nd Battalion 1st Guard Regiment.
Liu-hou-tien-tzu	{ 2nd Battalion 2nd Guard Regiment. 3rd Battalion 2nd Guard Regiment.
Lien-hua-chi ...	{ 1st Battalion 1st Guard Regiment. 3rd Battalion 1st Guard Regiment.
North of Ta-lin-tzu	1st Battalion 2nd Guard Regiment.

2nd Guard Brigade—

Pu-ho ...	3rd Guard Regiment.
Pan-chai-tai ...	4th Guard Regiment.

Umezawa Brigade ... Hsin-tun.

Divisional head-quarters ... Chin-kuan-tun.

The divisional cavalry was on the right flank, north-east of Pu-ho.

The Guard Division was not in touch with the 10th Division on the left nor the 12th Division on the right, but it was in signalling communication with the 9th Division of the Third Army across the railway.

exhaustion of the men and the heaviness of their equipment which was the source of great discomfort in the comparatively mild weather on the 10th, caused much straggling, which became worse the farther the troops retired. At Hsi-chia-kou the column came under artillery fire, whereupon the transport became unmanageable, turned west and streamed off towards the Mandarin Road; and shortly afterwards it was held up in a hollow which was completely blocked by Chinese carts, dead horses, broken wagons and overturned loads. It had been intended to retire via Fenchia-kou, but besides being under fire the road was so littered with overturned vehicles—belonging to a column of artillery and transport sent ahead overnight—as to be an unpromising route. At this time a small hostile force of all arms was marching parallel to the Russians and annoying them by long range fire, and General Meiendorf determined to make for the Mandarin Road, covered by General Shileiko, whom he ordered to take up a position near Hsi-chia-kou.*

Shortly after one o'clock the main body of his force reached that road between Ta-wa and San-wa in complete disorder. In spite of the efforts of the commander and his staff only a few hundred men could be got together in any formation, and the remainder became engulfed in the general current of troops and transport slowly moving northwards in a state of absolute chaos. There were carts in matchwood, wagons with their wheels in the air—some with axles, others with poles, smashed to atoms—while valises, haversacks, saddles, cooking pots, bread, forage and every kind of baggage lay crushed by horses' hoofs or by the wheels of vehicles which had passed over them. Some time was now lost in discussing a proposal to occupy a ridge near Lien-hua-chi. This proved abortive owing to the advance of the Japanese Guard Division; and it was then determined to push on through Pu-ho. When that village came under a cross fire from the enemy further confusion ensued, during which General

* General Shileiko took up a position between Hsi-chia-kou and Tsao-chia-kou with five companies of the 11th (Semipalatinsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment and the 3rd Trans-Baikal Cossack Battery in the front line and nine companies of the 11th (Semipalatinsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment in reserve, remaining here until 1.15 p.m. In his retirement the nine companies of the 11th (Semipalatinsk) Siberian Infantry Regiment came out at Ta-wa where they were taken by General Dembovski (see p. 671). The remaining companies with General Shileiko overtook the remains of Colonel Dobrotin's force (see p. 672). The battery became separated from General Shileiko and withdrew to the railway.

Meiendorf was thrown from his horse, breaking his collar-bone. The command then passed to the next senior officer. Under the Japanese fire the men could not be rallied, and the retreat was continued to Yi-lu, where the exhausted troops eventually halted for the night.* The artillery and transport had been moving ahead and had made an ineffectual attempt to proceed via Fenchia-kou, but being driven on to the Mandarin Road had only been able to regain their proper route after Pu-ho. They reached Ku-chia-tzu.

East of a line drawn north and south through Chiu-chan, where the Japanese First Army had pierced the Russian line, the battle on the 10th differed in character from the operations subsequent to 10 a.m. already described. So far the narrative has been concerned with an envelopment on an immense scale—in which the Japanese by the close of the day were grouped in the form of a colossal U—and with the efforts of the Second and Third Manchurian Armies to force their way northward, clear of the encircling arms, to Tieh-ling. In the portion of the battle, however, of which the events remain to be described, the operations comprised merely the retreat of the 2nd and 3rd Siberian Corps and General Rennenkampf's detachment before the 12th and 2nd Divisions and the Ya-lu Army.

At 10 a.m. the Japanese 12th Division was in action near Kao-chia-wan against the right of the 2nd Siberian Corps, whose retirement was momentarily expected. This expectation, however, was not immediately realized, for it was half-past one before the

The 2nd Siberian Corps and the Japanese 12th Division. Russians began to give way after having offered a stout resistance.† The movement of the 2nd Siberian Corps was seriously hampered by the transport of other units, for on the road were met vehicles not only of the neighbouring 3rd and 4th Siberian Corps but also of the 6th Siberian, the 1st and even the XVIIth Corps. Nevertheless, its retreat was not interfered with by the Japanese, and the corps continued its march all through the night to Feng-shui-ling. The 12th Brigade of the Japanese 12th Division bivouacked about Hu-shin-pu, and the

* Yi-lu is on the Mandarin Road, about eleven miles north of Pu-ho.

† The 12th Division had about five hundred casualties. The 1st Battalion of the 47th Regiment, with a strength of seven hundred and fifty rifles, fired sixty-four thousand eight hundred and twenty-two rounds. See p. 651.

23rd Brigade presumably spent the night on or near the ground which it had won. Divisional head-quarters went into camp in Tai-kou and an adjoining village.

From ten o'clock till well on in the afternoon fighting went on between the Japanese 2nd Division and the 3rd Siberian Corps. Towards one o'clock a local counter-attack was made by the Russians, a force of some two hundred under two officers advancing across the saddle towards the rocky point east of Ka-pu-kai, held by a company of the Japanese 16th Regiment. The latter apparently was unaware of the approach of the Russians, owing possibly to the rocks and scrub.

Colonel Taniyama, however, having observed the movement from the village, sent to warn the company, and dispatched two more companies as reinforcements. The Russians advanced quickly and with great determination, and succeeded in pushing back the left flank of the Japanese company before the reinforcements arrived; but they were then driven back, leaving one hundred and thirty dead, including the two officers, on the field. The rest of the Japanese 16th Regiment suffered severely during the morning. It still could not advance from Ka-pu-kai, and in fact was in much the same position as the 30th Regiment in Fu-shun. The 4th Regiment was south of the bridge at Ka-pu-kai, unable to cross on account of the concentrated fire of the Russian artillery to the north-east. The 39th *Kobi* Regiment was also south of the river.

The situation of the Japanese was relieved by the action of the 29th Regiment on the left. About 1 p.m. its commander received orders to attack, and selecting the high ground to the west of Ka-pu-kai as his objective, moved forward. After crossing the small river in front of the Russian position, the 3rd Battalion—which had been following in reserve—joined the firing line, the men running across the open in twos and threes. The whole regiment, suffering very heavily, now advanced to the Fu-shun road. At that point its losses became even more severe, for it was only some three hundred yards from part of the Russian position. To remain on the road, where there was no cover, meant annihilation, so the colonel ordered his men to throw away everything except rifles and ammunition and to make a rush for the foot of the hills. Here better protection was secured, and the commander waited for an hour pending

the arrival of the reinforcements for which he had sent back an urgent request. About 3.30 p.m., when it was seen that the Russians were about to retire, the assault was at once launched; but the heights were steep and slippery and the men were tired, so that the trenches were not gained until after the Russians had got away. Though it was now seen that the 3rd Siberian Corps was in full retreat everywhere along the line, no attempt at pursuit was made. The 39th *Kobi* Regiment, which had been inactive all day on the south bank, crossed the river and occupied the trenches captured by the 29th Regiment, while General Ohara seized those north of Fu-shun.* The 3rd Siberian Corps fell back towards San-chan-tzu, which it reached on the morning of the 11th.

In the extreme eastern portion of the battlefield fighting died away during the afternoon. About 2 p.m. a Japanese battery came into action and opened a desultory fire on General Rennenkampf's troops, and small parties of the Japanese appeared on the left bank of the Hun Ho; but they made no attempt to advance. At 3 p.m., upon instructions received from General Linevich, via Tieh-ling, General Rennenkampf issued orders for retreat to a position south-east of Feng-shui-ling. It was to be carried out on the approach of darkness in three columns, and General Liubavin's cavalry was to keep touch with the 3rd Siberian Corps. At the appointed time the force set off and continued its march throughout the night undisturbed.†

In the Ya-lu Army the 11th Division had co-operated with General Ohara and the 2nd Division, and at nightfall was on the right of that force. The 1st *Kobi* Division reached the river during the day, but was unable to cross it owing to the fire from General Rennenkampf's guns.

In spite of the confusion which attended the course of the action of the 10th March, especially on the side of the Russians,

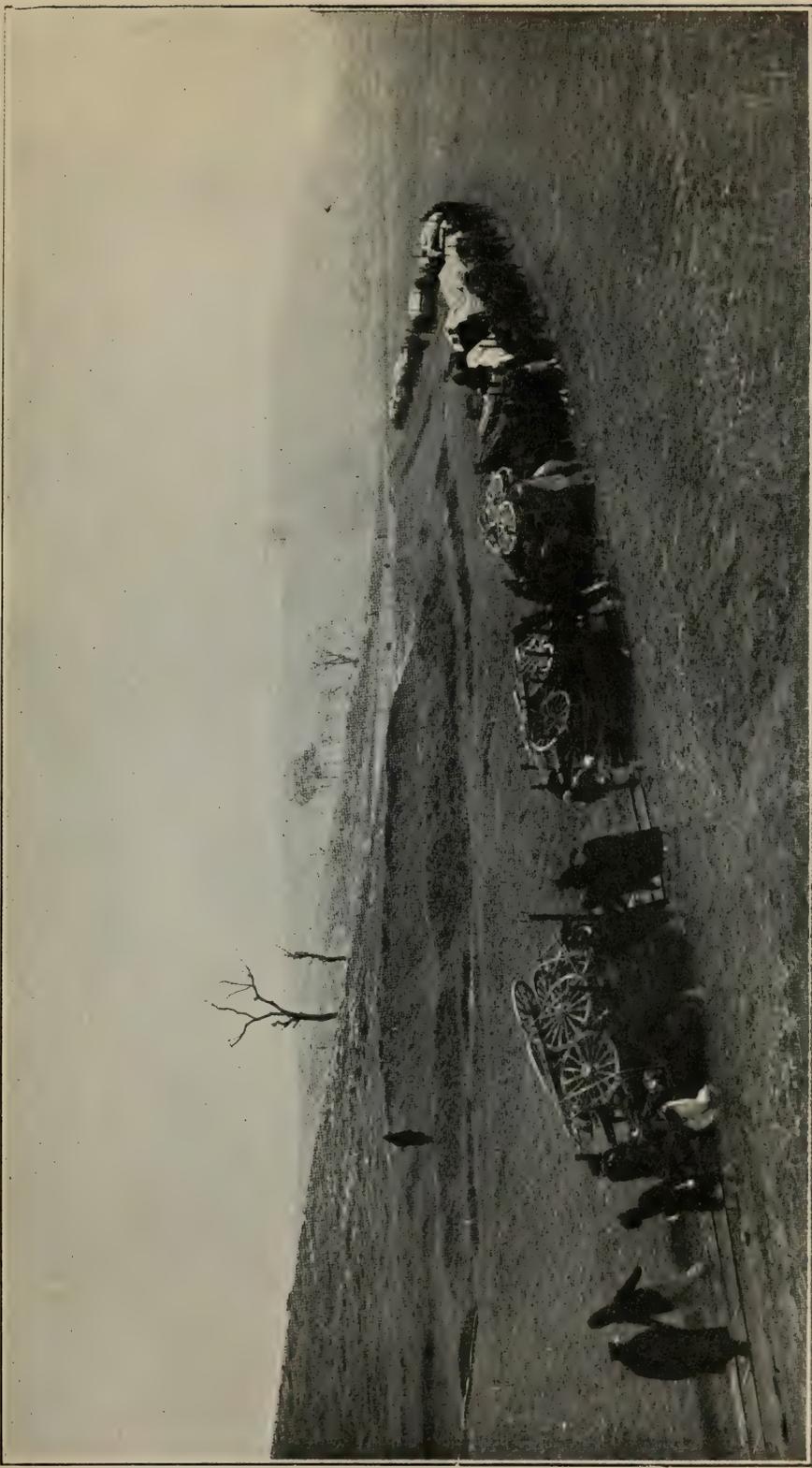
* The casualties of this day were :—

Japanese 2nd Division	...	...	about two thousand.
3rd Siberian Corps	...	...	about three hundred.

† <i>Right Column</i>	...	...	...	General Ekk.
<i>Centre Column</i>	...	...	...	General Danilov.
<i>Left Column</i>	...	...	...	General Maslov.

the real issue stands out clear and unmistakable. Marshal Oyama endeavoured to effect a junction of his First and Third Armies about the Mandarin Road north of Mukden, in order to force the Russians either to surrender or to fight their way through the barrier thus created. In this he failed. General Kuropatkin's object was to withdraw his Second and Third Manchurian Armies before he was so hemmed in. This he effected. In spite of defeat, therefore, and in spite of the disorganization into which his army had been thrown and the demoralization of his troops the Russian commander-in-chief may be said to have succeeded tactically.

There is little doubt that a more vigorous pursuit and an increased application of pressure on this day might have brought about a complete disintegration of General Kuropatkin's armies and have led to a decisive victory for those of Marshal Oyama. But the Japanese could do no more. The prolonged strain and their lack of numbers were beginning to tell, and they were at the end of their powers. In spite of all efforts they were forced to remain content with a success that fell short of their hopes.



THE RUSSIAN LIGHT RAILWAY BETWEEN FU-SHUN AND SAN-LUNG-YU.

[Being made use of by the Japanese.]

(To face p. 678.)

CHAPTER LXXXI.

THE BATTLE OF MUKDEN—*continued*—OPERATIONS FROM THE 11TH TO THE 23RD MARCH—THE RUSSIAN RETREAT—FAILURE OF THE JAPANESE PURSUIT—THE RUSSIANS REACH HSI-PING-KAI—GENERAL KUROPATKIN IS RELIEVED OF HIS COMMAND.

(Plate 58, Plans 53 and 71 and Strategical Map 6.)

ALL through the night of the 10th—11th March the retreat of the Russians continued; and on the routes of the Second and Third Manchurian Armies the railway and the roads were blocked by the endless columns of men and wagons slowly moving northwards. Great disorder reigned, for the losses among the officers had been so severe that control was maintained with difficulty, and checks were of frequent occurrence, especially at the Pu Ho, where there was no bridge except that which carried the railway. On occasions, also, the cry of "Japanese cavalry!" was raised, but fortunately for the Russians the panic caused was in each case quickly allayed.

The retreat of the Russians.

On the morning of the 11th these two armies were still completely disorganized; many units indeed were absolutely incapable of resisting a serious attack; and not a few of the senior commanders were in ignorance as to where some of their regiments were to be found. It is therefore impossible to fix with any accuracy the positions of their constituent units during the day. The most that can be said definitely is that when morning broke, exclusive of the large number of fugitives which had already streamed northwards through Tieh-ling, an immense heterogeneous mass of men, guns and wagons had coagulated round Hsin-tai-tzu station. Two rear guards—under Generals Artamonov and Gershelmann—were following along the railway, and one under General Shileiko was marching along the Mandarin Road. Separated from these two armies by a gap of some eight miles

was the First Manchurian Army, now consisting only of the 2nd and 3rd Siberian Corps and General Rennenkampf's detachment. It had retired in good order, and during the morning lay on a position running some thirteen miles south-east from Feng-shui-ling.

General Kuropatkin had left Hu-shih-tai station shortly after 7 p.m. on the 10th and had made his way along the line to Hsin-tai-tzu station, which he had reached about 1 a.m. His first object was to endeavour to restore order and to that end he issued the following order:—

General Kuro-
patkin's orders
for the 11th March.

“This day, the 11th March, the armies will continue the retreat, with a view to occupying a position south of Tieh-ling, along the river* running through Su-chia-tun—Hsin-tai-tzu†—Feng-ho-san—Ta-fang-ho, and, detaching strong rear guards, will check the enemy as long as possible and give the troops time to disengage themselves. The Third Army will, with this object, occupy a frontage from Feng-ho-san to Su-chia-tun, inclusive, and the pass to the east. The Second Army will carry on the line west of the Third Army as far as the Liao Ho, leaving rear guards on the roads on both sides of the railway and on the hills south-west of Ta-fang-ho, and sending out cavalry to watch Fa-ku-men.”‡

As has been said, the fatigue produced by the protracted struggle and the absence of a really large cavalry force rendered the Japanese unable to press the pursuit. In regard to their movements immediately subsequent to the battle, the Second

Army took over the duty of garrisoning Mukden.

The 11th March. The bulk of the Fourth Army assembled astride
Movements of the the Mandarin Road in the vicinity of Ta-wa. The
Japanese.

1st *Kobi* Division of the Ya-lu Army sent a mixed detachment to occupy Ying-pan, while the main body pushed on northwards till late at night; and the 11th Division remained just west of Fu-shun.¶ Of the First Army the advanced guard of the 2nd Division moved north as far as Pai-kuan-tun during the after-

* The Fan Ho.

† This village cannot be exactly identified, but it apparently lay between Su-chia-tun and Feng-ho-san.

‡ Twenty-five miles north-west of Tieh-ling.

¶ Since the beginning of the battle the Ya-lu Army had nearly 4,000 of all ranks killed. During the same period 2,200 rifles, 10,000 shells, 440,000 rounds of small arm ammunition, 6 machine guns and a large quantity of light railway material and rolling stock had been taken from the Russians.

noon and deployed against some Russians who showed up in front. The latter then retired, and the Japanese eventually halted some two miles south of Feng-shui-ling. About 3 p.m. the 12th Division reached the Mandarin Road and then struck north, coming up with some of the retreating enemy at Yi-lu, where the division halted for the night. The Guard Division was ordered to hold its ground, but although the day began uneventfully it turned out to be full of incident. Shortly after 6 a.m. a Russian force was observed marching against Ta-lien-pu-tzu, and a sharp fight ensued. The Russians, however, soon began to feel the pressure of the 4th Guard Regiment advancing from San-wa, and not long afterwards, having lost their commander and a number of other officers, put up the white flag, two thousand five hundred men laying down their arms. The nucleus of the force which thus surrendered was apparently the remnant of General Sollogub's command, now under Colonel Maximovski.* That commander had collected his officers and proposed, as a last resort, that an attack with the bayonet should be delivered, but the soldiers were too dispirited and exhausted to carry out this project. After the last cartridge had been fired the colours of the 19th Rifle Regiment were burned, with the exception of the cross and monogram of the Emperor Alexander IIIrd, which were hidden, and all the documents and maps were destroyed. When the force surrendered, there were not more than one hundred and fifty unwounded men, and of twenty-three officers seventeen were out of action. Many more prisoners were taken by the Japanese Guards during the day, which for them proved to be the last day's serious fighting in the war.

The Japanese Fourth Army, as has been said, took no immediate part in the pursuit. The 10th Division, with the exception of the 20th Regiment which was detailed to advance northwards and to co-operate with the Cavalry Division, halted to arrange its ranks. The 20th *Kobi* Regiment of the Okubo *Kobi* Division held up a mass of retreating Russians about three and a half miles north-east of Mukden, with the result that six thousand prisoners, one regimental colour, sixteen guns and one hundred and fifty horses were taken.† The 6th Division settled down round Mu-chang during the day, but not until

* See p. 664.

† For this very successful piece of work Marshal Oyama conferred a *kanjo* on the regiment.

it had captured some thousands of the enemy. Included in the total of prisoners made by the Fourth Army on this day was the rear guard of General Tserpitski's force under Colonel Ganenfeldt.*

The Japanese Third Army took but little part in the pursuit. The advanced guard of the 9th Division, however, about 3 p.m. came upon a crowd of Russians endeavouring to board a north-bound train, and captured one thousand prisoners and a large number of vehicles. The 7th Division appears to have suffered so severely during the previous two days that it required a rest; and the 1st Division, doubtless for a similar reason, seems merely to have held its ground. The Cavalry Division arrived at Chuchu-shan, where the 2nd Brigade was detached to join the Third Army, leaving the 1st Brigade as an independent cavalry force.

On the morning of the 12th March the Second and Third Manchurian Armies were assembled partly on the Fan Ho and partly at Tieh-ling, while the First Manchurian Army was drawn up wholly along the river. Many of the units had by now regained some semblance of order, but the fatigue and strain of the previous fortnight had left their mark. Rest was essential before further hostilities could be undertaken, and time was also urgently required, in order to allow the transport to pass through the Tieh-ling defile. Bearing all these circumstances in mind General Kuropatkin decided to withdraw one of his armies to Chang-tu-fu where it would form a reserve. The Third Manchurian Army was selected for this purpose; and the Second and First Armies were instructed to cover its withdrawal by stubbornly disputing the advance of the enemy with strong rear guards, and to fall back upon the fortified position which had been prepared round Tieh-ling if hard pressed.

The Russian Head-Quarter Staff were hard at work upon plans for future operations, and on the evening of the 12th the Chief of Staff handed General Kuropatkin a memorandum containing the following paragraph:—

“As apparently the further resistance of our armies cannot promise us success, it is necessary now to think out a plan for our future operations in order to prepare them in good time. It appears to me essential to prepare to move the armies

* See p. 663.

northwards in order to cover Harbin, and on the other side to support Vladivostok, where the Japanese are probably going, if only God grants that we succeed in avoiding further disasters."

General Sakharov's communication closed with certain details and proposals, the gist of which was to the effect that the First Army should be sent to the Vladivostok district, while the Second and Third Armies should fall back slowly, fighting only rear guard actions. The commander-in-chief, however, was not in complete agreement with his Chief of Staff, for he considered that success was still possible and indeed probable; but he gave his sanction to the preparation of certain lines of communication recommended by the latter.

On the Japanese side the detachment from the Ya-lu Army—known as the Hishijima Detachment—continued to guard the right of the pursuing forces. In the First Army the commander of the 2nd Division had proposed to rest his troops, but he received orders to continue his march. Little progress, however, was made and when night fell General Ishibashi, whose column was leading, was only at Li-chien-hu-tun. The 12th Division, too, made no advance, although a column of three battalions and two squadrons was sent out to reconnoitre and made good some ground. The Umezawa Brigade during the day pushed north-west and arrived at Hsin-tai-tzu station, where it was on the right of the Japanese Third Army, whose outer flank was near Shih-fou-ssu. In front, but still on the left bank of the Liao, was the 1st Cavalry Brigade under General Akiyama.

The day passed almost entirely without incident, and the Russians profited by the respite afforded them by the inactivity of the Japanese to consolidate themselves along the Fan Ho.

On the following day General Kuropatkin's First and Second Armies lay astride the railway, their general line following the course of the River Fan. On the right bank of the Liao Ho was General Mishchenko's cavalry, supported by a detachment of all arms under General Morozov—the bulk of which was formed by ten battalions—and joined during the day by the Independent Cavalry Brigade of General Stepanov.* The disposition of the troops can be best understood from an inspection

of the plan illustrating the situation of the 13th March, and it is

* See pp. 654-5.

only necessary to add some explanatory details. The troops under General Zarubaiev, amounting to eighteen and three-quarter battalions and fifty-four guns, which had been protecting the front of the Xth Corps, were relieved by a brigade from that corps about noon, and marching through Ta-fang-ho proceeded to Liu-hai-tun on the Mandarin Road. In the XVIth Corps the 25th Division was by no means complete, many of the rank and file having drifted to Tieh-ling, a state of affairs shared by the Provisional Rifle Corps whose ranks were, however, filled by regiments from other corps. The Third Army, it will be remembered, had been told off for the General Reserve and it spent the 13th in re-organizing at Tieh-ling and in dispatching such units as were fit to march to Kai-yuan. The Zaraisk, Pskov, Kirsanov and Taruss Regiments, however, had become wedged in the front line and had to be left in their positions until a more suitable opportunity for their extrication might arise.

As might have been expected, the recent battle had exacted a heavy toll from the Russian ranks. The Second Manchurian Army, consisting of five corps with one hundred and ten and a half battalions, only mustered some forty-six thousand bayonets and three hundred and forty-nine quick-firing guns. In the First Manchurian Army the number of bayonets did not reach sixty-six thousand. But the maximum wastage was reached in the Third Manchurian Army, for fifty battalions could only show twenty-one thousand one hundred and forty-eight bayonets. Some of its regiments were practically annihilated, the Orsk Regiment, for example, being reduced to the equivalent of but two companies.

In spite of the fact that several days' supplies were still available at Tieh-ling and that large depots were in existence at railway stations north of that town, the Russian troops were suffering from insufficiency of food. This was due to the fact that the regimental and other transport which had not been lost or destroyed was in such inextricable confusion that distribution had become very difficult. A halt at Tieh-ling for some days was therefore an absolute necessity; and since the pursuit by the Japanese was not of an energetic nature there was no tactical objection to a temporary stay. Rumour was now busy in the Russian armies, and the native population gave currency to a report that fifty thousand Japanese were advancing against their left, while another twelve thousand were alleged to be moving along the Mongolian frontier on the west. Fifteen thousand Hun-hu-tzu were said to

have joined Marshal Oyama, and it was even stated that the Japanese had been reinforced by ten thousand British troops.

After some hesitation General Kuropatkin came to the conclusion that the rest and food received by his troops justified him on deciding to await battle where he was. He accordingly gave orders that the First and Second Manchurian Armies were not to regard their positions on the Fan Ho merely as those of rear guards, but as positions on which they could force the enemy to deploy the whole of his force and stop him, as had been done on the advanced positions of Liao-yang. Should they be unable to hold on to the line of the Fan Ho a retirement was to be made to the entrenched line at Tieh-ling which, the commander-in-chief pointed out, compared favourably with those on the Sha Ho and at Mukden, especially as the First and Second Armies were to be concentrated and supported by the Third Army in reserve.

The 13th March, like the 12th, was distinguished by no incident of special tactical importance. On the right the brigade of the Xth Corps, which had relieved General Zarubaiev, was threatened by infantry and cavalry, probably from the Japanese Third Army, and fell back at night; and in the centre General Shileiko received reports all through the afternoon of a hostile advance from the south. By order of General Zasulich he took over command of the section Feng-ho-san—Su-chia-tun, and shortly after 4 p.m. rode off to inspect the position allotted to him. He soon made up his mind to direct operations from Liu-hai-tun as a convenient centre, and in a dispatch to General Zasulich he happened to allude to this decision. But the impression that his message conveyed was that his detachment was in full retreat, and he received the following reply:—

“You are committing treason! I warn you that if you do not halt and entrench forthwith, you need look for no clemency. The commander-in-chief has ordered me to remind you of your duty which consists in offering a stubborn resistance at all hazards.”

The Japanese, however, were unable to put the stubborn resistance of General Shileiko to the test. The 2nd Division was indeed ordered to reconnoitre and attack the Russian position on the Fan Ho to its front. Nothing was achieved during the day except that the 30th Regiment drove in the Russians who were holding the high ground on the left bank of the Fan Ho south of Su-chia-

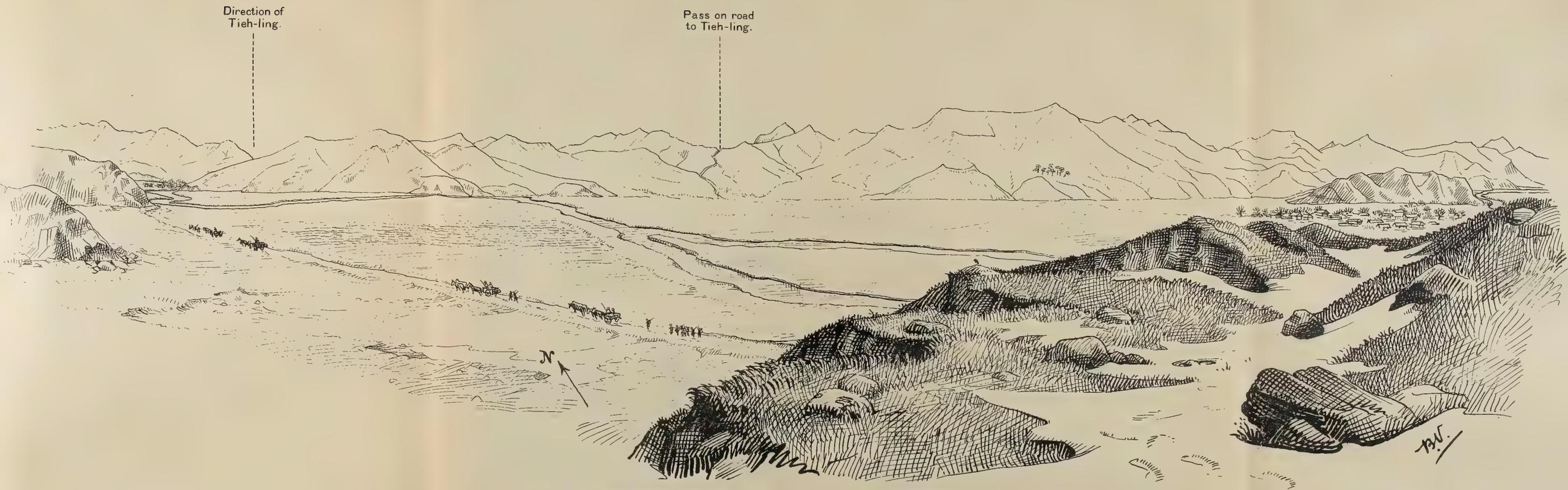
tun. The 12th Division made a short advance, though it did not come into actual contact with the enemy. The Umezawa Brigade came up on the right of the 12th Division and passed the night near Fan-chia-tun on the Mandarin Road but was not engaged. A detachment of the Fourth Army reached Hsin-tai-tzu station.

The report as to General Shileiko's retirement led to the issue of numerous and hasty orders on the Russian side, and even when the situation was cleared up it was some time before General Kuropatkin was completely reassured. When he was finally satisfied that it was but a false alarm he conceived the idea of making a counter-attack all along the line, and with a curious avoidance of responsibility concluded a dispatch upon the subject to General Kaulbars with these words—"If you can come to an agreement with General Linevich on this matter, you can assume that I have gladly assented to the attack. As you know, I cannot reinforce you with fresh troops."* General Kaulbars was quite in sympathy with the principle of assuming the offensive; but before any discussion with General Linevich was possible the Japanese themselves had advanced.

The Russian troops concentrated on the morning of the 14th March along the sector Feng-ho-san—Su-chia-tun—Yao-tun-kou amounted to sixty-six and a half battalions (about thirty thousand bayonets), with one hundred and thirty-three guns and some eight or nine squadrons. This position, about ten miles in length, ran along the steep and precipitous ridge on the right bank of the Fan Ho and was divided into two sub-sections—General Fleisher being in charge of the right and General Alexeiev of the left. The command of the whole position was entrusted to General Zasulich. About 7 a.m. the guns of the Japanese 2nd Division opened from the heights south of Su-chia-tun, and some two hours later the infantry advanced to the attack. Shortly after nine o'clock an assault was carried out against the high ground west of Su-chia-tun. Having crossed the Fan Ho, the attackers clambered up the almost vertical face of the bluff on the right bank, only to come under a devastating fire from the defenders. The assault was repulsed, and the Japanese fell back across the river. It appears that through some error hand-

Attack by the
Japanese 2nd
Division.

* The dispatch was sent off about 4 a.m. on the 14th March.



THE PURSUIT AFTER THE BATTLE OF MUKDEN.

View of the Russian position on the north bank of the Fan Ho captured by the 2nd Division, Japanese First Army, on the 14th March, 1905.

grenades were not carried by them; and they suffered severely from those thrown by the Russians, as well as from showers of large stones which were hurled from the top of the cliff.

The attack, however, had compelled five Russian battalions to relinquish their position, and they found it impossible to regain the ground abandoned in the face of the cross fire which the Japanese 2nd Division brought to bear upon it. Later it was occupied by the Japanese 30th Regiment, and after that quiet reigned along the sector under General Zsulich. The rest of the First Manchurian Army passed the day undisturbed except for some half-hearted attacks which were made by the Hishijima Detachment against General Rennenkampf's rear guard. In the Second Manchurian Army no fighting took place other than an exchange of fire between the rear guard of the 1st Siberian Corps, which fell back to the main position of the corps, and General Akiyama's cavalry. The Japanese 12th Division and the Umezawa Brigade made no advance whatever.

To Russian General Head-Quarters reports kept coming in during the day to the effect that a hostile turning movement on a large scale was in course of preparation against the right. The accumulated effect of these rumours, which as a matter of fact were without foundation, predisposed General Kuropatkin to retirement farther north; and other circumstances induced him to decide definitely on this course. The higher staffs were still in ignorance of the composition and strength not only of detachments but even of the larger units. Straggling bodies of soldiers had already made their way through Tieh-ling and were scattered along the railway for miles. The transport was still deficient and there was a shortage both of ammunition and supplies. The position of the hostile armies and the information received seemed to show that the Japanese contemplated a further advance with their whole force both against the Russian front and round both flanks, with the object either of surrounding the Russians or of following parallel to them during their retreat; and the bad state of the roads and thawing of the ice on the Sungari convinced General Kuropatkin that he must withdraw soon if he wished to avoid coming into serious conflict with the enemy. In these circumstances he made up his mind to relinquish the Tieh-ling position without a struggle and to retreat farther north. Hsi-ping-kai was selected as the goal and during the afternoon of

the 14th he issued orders of which the main points were as follows:—

The Third Manchurian Army was at once to continue its retreat to Kai-yuan, where it was to hold a position to assist the Second and First Armies retreating towards it, and to allow them to pass through. After this it was to form the general rear guard.*

The First and Second Manchurian Armies were to withdraw to the main position at Tieh-ling, leaving strong rear guards on the Fan Ho positions. The position at Tieh-ling was to be occupied as follows: the First Army west of Tieh-ling on the heights on the right bank of the Tsai Ho, and the Second Army on the hills west of the railway (on the right bank of the Liao Ho), and on the fortified position south of the town, on the left banks of the Tsai Ho and Liao Ho. The First and Second Armies were to remain on the positions indicated during the 15th March, and were then to withdraw according to a detailed itinerary which was given in the orders.

The ten days' march which now confronted the Russian army had to be carried out on a broad front through almost unknown country. The maps on a scale of two versts to an inch did not extend to the country north of Tieh-ling, and reliance had to be

The 14th–24th March. The Russians reach Hsi-ping-kai without interference by the Japanese.

placed mainly on a map of twenty versts to an inch prepared in 1901 from road sketches. Staff officers had, therefore, to be sent on ahead to reconnoitre and to submit road reports. But by this time the Japanese had shot their bolt. They scarcely interfered with the retreat of the Russians,

and it was only during the first days that they sometimes pressed the rear guards, when the opposing artillery exchanged a few shots. On the 16th March the Japanese 2nd Division entered Tieh-ling, and the 12th Division advancing past that town continued northwards towards Chung-ku, which it reached on the same day.† Here the pursuit finally flickered out. The Japanese First Army received orders to take up a line on the left bank of the Fan Ho and to hand over Tieh-ling to the Fourth Army. The Ya-lu Army extended its right to Hsing-ching. Of the Third Army the 9th Division pushed on to Fa-ku-men, while the 1st Cavalry Brigade

* Kai-yuan is thirteen miles north-east of Tieh-ling.

† Chung-ku is twenty-three miles north-east of Tieh-ling.

reached Chang-tu-fu. On the Russian side, by the morning of Wednesday, the 22nd March, three corps of the First Manchurian Army had already reached their destination on the Hsi-ping-kai position; the remainder of the First and Second Armies came up on the following day; while the Third Army, which had been forming the general rear guard, took up a position five and a half miles south of Hsi-ping-kai station on the 24th March.

By now the Russians were no longer under the leader who had striven for so long to withstand the tide of ill-success which had swept them northwards. On the 16th March there had arrived an order from the Emperor directing the commander-in-chief to transfer the supreme control of the Russian forces in Manchuria to the commander of the First Army, and to return to Irkutsk. The following day, having handed over command of all the Russian forces in the field to General Linevich, General Kuropatkin left for Harbin, whence he telegraphed to Russia asking permission to remain at the front, even if in a subordinate capacity. In reply he was directed to take over the post of commander of the First Manchurian Army, vacated by his successor; and on the next day he returned to Hsi-ping-kai, where he was accorded a reception of remarkable enthusiasm by the troops.

The battle of Mukden cost the Japanese seventy thousand casualties,* while the Russians suffered twenty thousand more.† Two points in connexion with the losses are worthy of note. One-third of the Russian casualties was made up of men "missing"; while in killed the Japanese lost almost twice as many as that of their opponents. An immense number of trophies fell into the victors' hands—two colours, over sixty guns, sixty thousand rifles, and a thousand wagons forming part of the spoil.

* For detail see Appendix 22.

† For detail see Appendix 23.

CHAPTER LXXXII.

COMMENTS ON THE BATTLE OF MUKDEN.

FOR the Russians the great battle of Mukden was in intention an offensive action. It amounted on their part to a belated renewal of the attack prematurely abandoned in the previous month, and was a continuation of the policy inaugurated—equally unfortunately—in October, 1904. It will first be reviewed, therefore, from their side.

The first point to be considered is whether the Russians were strategically correct in standing to fight round Mukden in February, 1905; and to arrive at a conclusion it is necessary to investigate the situation existing when they settled upon this course. Though a final decision as to the actual nature of the offensive to be adopted was not reached until some three weeks later, it was at the end of January that General Kuropatkin made up his mind not to retire altogether. It will be remembered that in discussing the situation in the beginning and middle of that month leading up to the battle of San-de-pu the opinion was expressed that the Russians were then politically, morally, and strategically right in not retreating.* At the end of January, except that they had suffered a severe repulse and both sides had lost heavily, the situation—including the naval factor—was in fact unchanged, and must have appeared unchanged to General Kuropatkin, who by then had apparently realized that the Japanese Third Army had not reached the field of battle. He was, therefore, it is thought, right in his decision not to retreat. But as time passed the conditions, as they presented themselves to him, quickly altered, and early in February he was led to believe that General Nogi's army had arrived. And he was again correct, it is thought, in persisting in his resolve not to abandon his position and withdraw northwards, even when he had reason to suppose that he would have that army operating

* See Chapter LXV.

against him. In fact, with the numerical superiority that he possessed, his only excuse for retiring without a struggle would have been that his troops would not face the enemy—in which case the obvious policy of the Russians would have been to sue for peace at once.

The next point to be investigated is whether, having resolved to stand and fight on the Sha Ho, the Russians should have awaited the Japanese onslaught, or whether they should have assumed the offensive. The course to be followed after it became certain that Marshal Oyama had been reinforced by General Nogi was not so obvious, for the numerical superiority of the Russians would be much diminished. Yet, since their preponderance would still be large, it is thought that they should have adhered to the offensive. It seems, therefore, that after the battle of San-de-pu General Kuropatkin decided correctly between attack and defence.

But he was wrong, as he had been before that battle, in not realizing the importance of the time factor, and in wasting some three weeks in discussion and preparation. And he was also wrong in so little appreciating the underlying causes of his recent failure that he decided to repeat his offensive on the same lines.

In regard to the point of time, since there were at first considerable doubts as to whether the Japanese Third Army had come up, it should have been obvious that any fresh attack should be launched at the earliest possible moment. And the impression which soon gained ground that General Nogi's army had arrived on the field was no reason for delaying action, though it might have been a reason for cancelling it. If the Russian plan, such as it was, had been put into operation not later than half-way through February General Kuropatkin would have started with the initiative, fighting would have been in progress for some days before either the Ya-lu Army or the Japanese Third Army could have intervened effectively, and Marshal Oyama's carefully arranged scheme of envelopment of the Japanese would most probably have been thrown out of gear. By their procrastination the Russians not only allowed their numerical advantage to be discounted by the arrival of the Japanese Third and Ya-lu Armies, but permitted the enemy to act first and to snatch the initiative.

The inherent faults and limitations of the original plan have already been enumerated; and there is no necessity to do more here than to point out that its contemplated repetition a month

later only differed in that it was to have been better prepared and supported by artillery action and that the striking force was to be under another commander. Since the mere capture of Sande-pu itself was tactically no more necessary than it had been, it is difficult to see what reasons induced General Kuropatkin to undertake it again. It is possible that by the seizure of the place which had so successfully defied his troops he thought to re-establish their *moral*, or hoped to prove that the initial failure had been due to General Grippenberg and not to himself. Nevertheless, unsuitable as was the projected scheme, and though there are no grounds for supposing that it would have been more successful in February than it had been a month earlier, to have carried it out would have been more to the advantage of the Russians than the inactive course they followed.

Of more interest than discussion of an unsuitable offensive which was never carried out, however, is the suggestion of an alternative. In making this, three points have to be considered: at what time the attack should have been launched, and in which direction and in what force the main blow should have been made. In point of time, which is placed first because it was the governing factor, the Russians, as has been stated, should have acted so soon as the troops had recovered after their recent repulse. As regards direction, since the result of the battle of the Sha Ho may have made it evident that they did not possess the power of carrying out such an ambitious operation as envelopment of the enemy on both flanks, they should have enveloped one flank and at the same time applied pressure against the Japanese front. The comparative merits of operating either on the east or west of the battlefield have been discussed;* and for the reasons already put forward, though action on the west early in February, 1905, would have been deprived of any element of surprise, it is thought that the main blow should have been aimed against the Japanese left. But for a stroke in this direction the distribution of the Russian forces was unsuited, consisting as it did of a disposition in length without depth, for of their twelve corps ten lay almost

* See Vol. II, Chapter XLVIII, and Chapter LXV. As regards direction, General Kuropatkin himself has since expressed the opinion that his best plan would have been to attack the Japanese centre; but he referred to a period when the Japanese were definitely committed to an envelopment on a very wide front.

shoulder to shoulder along a line of some fifty miles in length with the General Reserve in the centre.

For the execution of an attack of the nature under discussion it would have been better if half of the 6th Siberian Corps—which was with the Third Manchurian Army—and the 4th Siberian Corps—which was with the First Manchurian Army—had been added to the Second Manchurian Army on the right, if the reserve of that army had been brought forward some five miles to San-chia-tzu. Possibly the General Reserve might have been moved from the rear of the centre at Hsiao-ho-tun, to some point near Ta-wang-kuan-pu, though the advisability of this transfer is open to question, for at the latter place the reserve would not have been near the junctions with the main line of the railways running east and west. Including the Second Manchurian Army and the General Reserve, the force for the main attack would then have been equivalent to about seven corps; and, as the battle proved, the remainder of the line could well have stood this drain on its strength. Every available squadron of cavalry should have been massed on the west, and this body of mounted troops should have been employed well forward on the right of the line under an energetic commander of proved capability. Finally, the attack on San-de-pu itself should have been relegated to its place as an item only of the whole advance, and, what was absolutely essential, the active co-operation of the whole of the Third and First Manchurian Armies should have been expressly arranged. The scheme thus sketched out really amounts to a continuation of the battle of San-de-pu carried out on sounder lines.

To turn to the battle as fought, General Kuropatkin's original scheme was one which implied no activity until the advance of the Second Manchurian Army, and then only on the part of that army. For two days after the Japanese had really commenced operations, until the 20th February, the Russians were still discussing their plan. It was then settled that no action was to be carried out until five days later; and none took place—except local defence in the east. During the greater part of that time they were preparing for their own partial offensive, apparently unperturbed by what was going on near Ching-ho-cheng, General Kuropatkin himself being considerably preoccupied in arranging for the protection of his communications and reinforcement of the Ussuri District, in which directions the raids of the Japanese

cavalry, coupled with rumour, had already had a distracting influence similar to that about to be exerted by the Ya-lu Army in the east. However, this period of preparation and apparent apathy was to end abruptly. On the 24th the news of General Alexeiev's retirement to Ching-ho-cheng and of the threat against the left of the 3rd Siberian Corps, rendered more serious by the fact that the First Manchurian Army had no reserve,* brought about the complete surrender of the offensive on the eve of its execution.

This was really a crucial point in the development of the battle, because it was the moment when Marshal Oyama's great feint began to produce a more than local reaction—one which, though negative in nature and probably unknown to the Japanese commander, was just as important to the success of his scheme as the more positive effect produced next day in the movement of Russian reserves eastwards. For, as has been remarked, if the Russians had carried out their projected offensive, unsuitable though it was in conception, even so late as on the 25th February, or even later, it would probably have upset the Japanese scheme of envelopment. It is not quite clear who was responsible for this renunciation on their part. General Kuropatkin himself states that the abandonment of the attack of the Second Manchurian Army by General Kaulbars was one of the reasons which led him to move portions of his General Reserve eastwards.† According to the narrative given in the text, however, which is from official sources, General Kaulbars gave up the intended operation because he was refused the assistance of the General Reserve. The point is immaterial, except that either explanation shows a devolution of responsibility on the part of the commander-in-chief which almost amounted to a surrender of control. Possibly such acquiescence on his part was due to a desire not to hamper his subordinate and to allow him a freer hand than his predecessor had enjoyed. But even so, it seems that the discretion left to the commander of the Second Manchurian Army should have been limited to the method of executing the mission

* This was an example of the extent to which the attention of the Russian commander-in-chief was either designedly or fortuitously distracted from the decisive point. The reserve of the First Manchurian Army had been transferred to the Second Manchurian Army to replace the Mixed Brigade, which had been dispatched to Nikolsk Ussuriski, owing to the reports of Japanese activity in that direction.

† *The Russian Army and the Japanese War*, Vol. II, p. 273.

entrusted to him, and should not have extended to a decision affecting the whole Russian plan of battle. If General Kaulbars, upon whom the onus of settling this important point thus appears to have devolved, was refused any help from the General Reserve, he can hardly be blamed for his decision not to attack. For, with the example of the recent battle of San-de-pu, in which the Second Manchurian Army had been left to bear the brunt of the fighting unaided, before him, it is not surprising that he did not feel much confidence in a further attempt made on similar lines.

There is no doubt that the weight of the advance of the Japanese in the east was only appreciated by the Russian commander-in-chief towards the evening of the 24th February, when it seems from its result to have come as a revelation of a possibility not previously contemplated, or, if contemplated, not prepared for. It should not have been a surprise, however, for Japanese activity in that quarter had been going on for some days; and there are grounds for believing that General Kuropatkin had all along been apprehensive of a turning movement on his left. But, as has been said, until this day he appears to have been too absorbed in other ways to realize that Marshal Oyama might, on his side, be developing a plan of attack. One reason why the discovery that this was the case induced him to throw his own plan to the winds was that he exaggerated the importance of the movement, for the reported presence of the Japanese 11th Division in the east gave birth to a fear that other portions of General Nogi's army might be acting on that flank. And this theory fitted in with the intelligence—though it was already ten days old—gleaned by General Rennenkampf, that that army was not in the area west of Liao-yang. The consequent reversal of the Russian policy was of great significance. It rendered nugatory a large part of the preparations of the past weeks, upset the arrangements for one-third of the army, and destroyed whatever measures had been taken to build up an organization towards a definite operation. After that there was no coherent scheme of action for some time, and no co-ordinated offensive operation was carried out until the counter-attack on the west on the 5th March. How great a handicap this change of plan was to the Russians is to be observed all through the subsequent course of the battle, which indeed furnishes a striking illustration of the immense difficulty of fighting an unprepared and improvised offensive-defensive action when the enemy has gained the initiative and is determined to keep it.

On the night of the 24th February General Kuropatkin's outlook on the battle changed, and his policy veered from that of delivering a definite attack on the west to that of reinforcing his left flank, combined with a somewhat vague intention of assuming the offensive in that quarter. This motive continued to inspire his operations for nearly four days; and it was not affected by the development of the battle during the 25th, 26th, 27th February, nor on the 28th, until the moment when the Japanese action produced its next great reaction upon him, and forced him to a realization of the importance of the threat in the west and of the fact that the Japanese Third Army was probably operating in that direction and not in the quarter towards which he had sent so many reserves during the past four days. In considering the battle—which was at this period still in a stage of development—from the side of the Russians, it is perhaps more important to keep in mind the result on them of the actions of the enemy than it is to trace the exact course of the latter. And for this reason the Russian operations from the night of the 24th February to the afternoon of the 28th, which were all executed with the same motive, can be reviewed as a whole, irrespective of the fact that the Japanese meanwhile started a tactical movement which eventually had far-reaching effects. On the whole it seems that during those four days the Russians lost an opportunity in not undertaking any active operation on a large scale which might have interfered with the orderly development of the enemy's plans.

With the mass of troops collected in the east it would have been possible for them either on the 27th or 28th to have effected a good deal. A vigorous attack made by the 1st Siberian Corps against the left of the Ya-lu Army, in co-operation with an advance on the part of General Rennenkampf—whose left had by then been rendered secure by General Danilov's detachment—and by the 3rd, 2nd and 4th Siberian Corps might have had great results. If it had not resulted in the cutting off of the isolated Ya-lu Army, it might at least have placed that army in such a difficult position that its danger would have reacted on the Japanese enveloping movement in the west then only just initiated. General Kuropatkin did apparently intend some such operation on a large scale; and a counter-stroke by the 1st Siberian Corps on those days was also contemplated; but neither was carried out. The only offensive action taken during this time was the isolated attempt in the centre against the Sha Ho railway bridge on the night of the 27th–28th

February, initiated in order to attract attention from the left. Though it failed in its object, its motive was sound; and it may possibly have had a useful result in influencing Marshal Oyama to keep his General Reserve intact to guard his centre. The net result of the actual measures taken up to the 28th February was that on the east the advance of the Japanese Ya-lu Army and the right of the Japanese First Army had been checked. But nothing had been attempted of an active nature to interfere with the Japanese operations, which had progressed as arranged. Meanwhile on the west very little had been done to hinder the new development which had been disclosed on the 27th and 28th.

When he discovered more of the true nature of the situation on the 28th February his position was one of great difficulty. But, even now the real significance of the danger to General Kuropatkin's right flank, which had been threatening for some time, and of which he should have known earlier,* does not seem to have appealed at once to him as it should. For, in spite of the knowledge of where the Japanese Third Army was acting, on the evening of the 28th with a depleted General Reserve and a weakened right, he was still so perturbed about his extreme east and centre that he dispatched another regiment to Fu-shun and arranged for the reinforcement of the Ist Corps. But it was not long before the movement of General Nogi's army exerted its full influence, and on the 1st March the motive underlying the actions of the Russians once again changed absolutely.

Their active operations, as apart from passive defence, from the 1st to the 9th March, may be said to have consisted of a protracted series of efforts to ward off envelopment on the west by direct action in that quarter alone. But before the course of this confused and confusing struggle is reviewed in any detail reference must be made to its relation to the battle as a whole, the development of which during this period can be appreciated from the gradual change which took place on the Russian front. During the first seven days the portion on the line lying on the west of the railway was by degrees forced back at right angles to its former direction, whilst the portion east of the railway remained practically unchanged. After the 7th March the former collapsed to a horse-shoe curve round the south, west, and north-west of Mukden, and the latter was carried back to the right bank of the Hun Ho to an alignment generally parallel to its original position

* The bad reconnoissance of the Russian cavalry is dealt with later.

along the Sha. While the distortion on the west was brought about by the actual pressure of the Japanese Third Army, and the threat implied in that pressure, the withdrawal of the rest of the Russian line was almost entirely due to the same cause, and not to the activity of the Japanese east of the railway.

Whilst the Japanese were making their main effort round the Russian right they were, until the 9th, unable to force back the First and Third Manchurian Armies. On the other hand, they were able by the pressure applied against these armies not only to prevent the dispatch of large forces from them to the critical quarter until towards the end of the battle, but to prevent any offensive action on their part. The result was that the Russian efforts to beat back General Nogi suffered in the same way as their operations had on previous occasions—from the fact that they were isolated and partial; and no attempt was made by General Kuropatkin to relieve the situation in that direction by the counter-offensive or even a demonstration elsewhere. So much was this the case that Marshal Oyama was able on the 4th March to throw the whole of his General Reserve, which had been massed behind his centre, into his enveloping operation. Though this result was produced on the Russians, it is not thought to have been justified. The Third Manchurian Army was holding a strong defensive position in great numerical strength, and it seems that a counter-attack carried out by it would have had some chance of success and a great chance of relieving the pressure on the west, while a general attack by that army and the First Manchurian Army might similarly have had a considerable effect. As has been pointed out, the Russian commander-in-chief has since stated that his best plan would have been to break through the Japanese centre.

It is true that one or two counter-strokes on this front were contemplated. For instance, it was intended to execute on the 1st March the attack by the 1st Siberian Corps, which had not taken place on the 27th and 28th February, against the left of the Ya-lu Army, but it was not carried out, owing, apparently, to General Kuropatkin's fear for his extreme east flank. The corps was then recalled to act west of Mukden. Later, on the 3rd March, General Danilov did attempt a local counter-attack. It is open to question whether some active operation in this quarter of the field by the large forces that had been collected there would not after the 1st March, as before, have been more useful than the

inactivity displayed. The 1st Siberian Corps was dispatched eastwards on the 25th February and was sent back towards Mukden on the 2nd March without having been employed. By this time and effort were wasted and for seven days the services of this splendid corps were not utilized.

General Kuropatkin's plan for protecting his right was to throw out a screen across the assumed direction of advance of the Japanese in order to check them while he gathered together a striking force with which to drive them back. At first the intention was that the screen should extend on a line running slightly north of west from Mukden, towards Kao-li-tun, and that the force composing it should consist of one brigade from the General Reserve under General Birger. This brigade was dispatched on the 28th February, and reached Kao-li-tun on the 1st March. Next day, owing to doubts as to the destination of the Japanese, the strength of the screen was increased and its scope was altered, two divisions were to go to Kao-li-tun, in addition to the brigade there already, making, in all, forty battalions round that place; and two divisions, comprising thirty-two battalions, were to be sent to Shalin-pu. Of these forces the General Reserve was to furnish one division at Kao-li-tun, and the Second Manchurian Army was to provide the other division at that place and both divisions at Shalin-pu. General Kaulbars was to command the whole force acting on the western front. What is believed to have been the intention of the commander-in-chief has been described again briefly because there is some risk of its being lost to sight, owing to the fact that it was never carried out.

There is no doubt that if the forces thus detailed could have been disposed as intended General Kuropatkin's plan would not have been an unsuitable one for the purpose. For if General Nogi had pressed on to the north he would have had a body of forty battalions facing him on his left front, and another of thirty-two battalions on his right flank. If he had turned eastwards he would have found the forty battalions on his left and the thirty-two in his front. In either case to have been engaged simultaneously by these two forces, which together exceeded the Japanese Third Army by thirty battalions, would have been a serious matter for the Japanese. But to have been possible this disposition of force should have been arranged earlier. As it was, if the division of the Second Manchurian Army allotted to Kao-li-tun on the 1st March had proceeded

thither it would probably have encountered the Japanese 1st and 7th Divisions on the way. This meeting might have had some effect in checking the Japanese, but it would not have placed the Russians in the advantageous position contemplated. Moreover, apart from the question of time, there was great difficulty in finding the required number of troops. The Second Manchurian Army, which had already on the 25th February been deprived of thirty battalions, was now suddenly to find forty-eight more, in spite of the fact that it formed the flank of the Russian line, and was almost certain to be subjected to attack from the Japanese Second Army, on its front, and from part of General Nogi's force on its right. It seems that, in place of denuding this army, it would have been better, since no counter-stroke was intended in the centre, to have brought up from the centre, which was strong both as to numbers and position, the bulk of whatever force was required beyond that available on the spot. Meanwhile the three brigades then in the General Reserve, together with General Grekov's force, which should have been used actively, could have been placed athwart the Japanese path towards Kao-li-tun. By the time they were engaged the reinforcements from the centre could have assailed the Japanese right flank as they came up. If some such scheme had been put into operation on the night of the 28th it would have had a great chance of success. Otherwise it would have been better not to have attempted to throw out only one brigade to Kao-li-tun. It is not clear whether General Kuropatkin meant the forty battalions round that place to be the screen, and the thirty-two battalions at Sha-lin-pu to be the striking force, or whether the whole seventy-two battalions were to form the screen behind which he was collecting another separate striking force.

In the circumstances, the scheme contemplated to meet the threat on the west was impossible of execution, whatever might have been the case had the General Reserve and the reserve of the Second Manchurian Army been at full strength. The effort to carry it out, also, weakened the right flank of his original line, so that it was forced to give way, thereby considerably simplifying the co-operation of the Japanese Second and Third Armies. Apart from any shortcomings and faults in conception General Kuropatkin's project broke down entirely in execution. It was not understood by those executing it. This, together with the disorganization caused by the hasty collection of improvised forces and continued ignorance about the enemy, was largely responsible

for the confused and ill-co-ordinated action which ensued, and for the fact that the Russians never made full use of the strength they did manage to collect to repel General Nogi. On the 2nd March the plan was essentially altered; both the 25th Division from the General Reserve and General Vasilev's division were directed to Sha-lin-pu instead of to Kao-li-tun. But General Birger's brigade was isolated and had to be recalled from Kao-li-tun; and the only result of its expedition was that its assistance was lost to the army for over three days. Actually, though they were not in the places specified, the forces arranged for were, with the exception of twenty battalions, collected by the 2nd March. But the Second Manchurian Army had been much broken up in the operation.

On the 2nd March the Japanese Third Army received a decided check; Marshal Oyama was constrained to draw upon his General Reserve; and the methodical process of the Japanese plan of battle was hindered. But the unfortunate decision of General Kaulbars to withdraw the 25th Division and General Vasilev's force from the old railway embankment on the 3rd March was a heavy blow to the Russian prospects. His action in the circumstances has already been discussed in the narrative of the battle,* and it is clear that he completely failed to grasp the importance of the engagement which was being fought by General Topornin. His decision to retreat from the Dembovski Position exercised a particularly unfortunate influence, since, without any particular reason it caused the Russians to lose time, to abandon terrain to the enemy and to postpone the passage to the offensive. Further, it enabled General Nogi to draw nearer the Russian communications without having to fight for the advantage. The difficulties in which General Kuropatkin found himself involved during that afternoon were, apart from the withdrawal of the forces under General Topornin, also largely due to the lack of assistance rendered him by his subordinates. General Grekov left him in complete ignorance of what was taking place in his quarter of the field, and Su-hu-chia-pu, the retention of which place was an important factor in his scheme of operations, was abandoned unnecessarily by General Ivanov.

But though the commander-in-chief did not waver in his policy of offence, his directive to General Kaulbars was couched in terms of unnecessary procrastination. The phrase "provided we ourselves

* See p. 414.

are not attacked to-day we must to-morrow, or the next day, assume an energetic offensive against the Japanese who are turning our right flank" left out of consideration the value of time and could scarcely have failed to convey the idea that action was to be subordinated to that of the enemy. The confusion, amounting to chaos, which reigned south of the Hun, was doubtless mainly due to the commander-in-chief's original faulty disposition, his incorrect appreciation, and his unsuitable plan of action. But the spirit of determination to retrieve a situation, admittedly unfavourable, the energy and self-sacrifice which a commander looks for in his subordinates in the hour of stress, although by no means altogether absent, were far from being universal on the Russian side. His ignorance of the situation made it impossible for General Kuropatkin to profit by the day which was the most critical for the Japanese—the day on which one division of their Third Army had dropped behind, and when Marshal Oyama was still hesitating to stake every man on cutting off the Russians in the north.

Whether General Kuropatkin was well advised in assenting to the proposal to defer the counter-attack until the 5th March, is a point of interest. Such action would indeed have been undertaken under unfavourable conditions on the 4th, for it is morally certain that in the existing confusion many units could not have received orders in time to participate in it. On the other hand, there was much to be said for the importance of denying to the Japanese twenty-four hours respite to adjust their enveloping movement. The orders issued by the commander-in-chief for it are also open to criticism. The underlying motive does not appear to have been the annihilation of the enemy, but to prevent the Japanese threatening General Kaulbars's rear. Moreover, it is doubtful whether the plan of the counter-attack could have had any really decisive result. At the most it could only have succeeded in driving back General Nogi's left wing and centre on to their communications. An attack launched from General Kaulbars's left, on the other hand, might have given the Russians a chance of cutting off the Japanese Third Army. The plan was more difficult of execution than that actually formulated, though it is a question whether the fuller result held out would not have justified the extra risk involved. But for success it would have necessitated the co-operation of the whole Russian army in a demonstration, if nothing more, along its front. General Kaulbars's orders were also ambiguous and

incomplete. In the actual conduct of the operation there were factors which conduced to failure. The lethargy of the commander of the right column; the want of confidence displayed by the commander on the left; and the surrender of all offensive intention by General Kaulbars himself could lead to but one result.

By the evening of the 5th March the chances for the Russians of gaining even a partial victory were more than doubtful. The moral effect of the orders and counter-orders, and the lack of any substantial success, had exercised a malign influence on the whole right wing. Nevertheless, an energetic offensive might still have exercised a marked effect on the result of the battle. But General Kuropatkin again still failed to employ his centre and left armies in co-operation. And General Kaulbars's instructions were again quite unsuited to the crisis which had by then been reached. His whole plan was based upon an incorrect appreciation, and his orders were marked by a rigidity which was bound to shackle initiative and trespassed on the domain of subordinate commanders. Finally, from General Kuropatkin's neglect to ensure the co-operation of the Third and First Manchurian Armies in what may be called the last Russian offensive of the war, its failure was in great part due to General Kuropatkin himself. For though he knew that the plan of General Kaulbars was a thoroughly bad one, he allowed it to be attempted without himself intervening.

On the whole, the main causes of the lack of success of the counter-offensive on the western flank both on the 5th and 6th March may be said to have been the lack of resolution on the part of the commander-in-chief; his neglect to fight a battle along his whole line instead of in one corner of the field; and the complete collapse of the normal organization of corps and divisions. The subordinate generals in their turn displayed no sense of co-operation; each seemed to look upon his own sector of the fight as the only one that mattered. This was particularly the case with General Tserpitski. To this incoherence in action General Kaulbars's system of attack contributed. His orders were essentially for a progressive action in which the advance of the bulk of his forces was to be contingent upon the unaided success of one particular fraction. The vital factor of time was ignored—by General Kaulbars in his graduated system of tactics, and by his lieutenants in the slowness with which they acted. The regimental officers and the rank and file do not appear to have

been in any way to blame. To every call upon them, whether for attack or for defence, they responded with the stubbornness and devotion which was such a marked characteristic of the Russian soldier throughout the war. The fault was with the higher leaders, and not least with the cavalry commander whose complete failure to furnish information imposed a severe handicap upon his side.

The withdrawal of the First and Third Manchurian Armies to the Hun Ho on the night of the 7th-8th March was due to the result of the counter-attacks on the 5th and 6th, the steady approach of the left of the Japanese Third Army to the railway north of Mukden, and the pressure being applied all along the Russian front between the Hsin-min-tun road down to the Hun Ho. It was also due to the fact that General Kuropatkin considered it impossible to renew his counter-stroke in the west without massing more force in that quarter, and that he could obtain the necessary troops only by contracting the front of his centre and left armies. Since the commander-in-chief felt that it was the only course that enabled him to assume the offensive once more to drive back General Nogi, he was undoubtedly justified in adopting it. The alternative—of holding off the Ya-lu Army with the troops facing it and launching the First and Third Armies in a great effort to break through the Japanese centre was, at this stage, impracticable, since no arrangements had been made for it. The result of success in such an attempt, made so late, would have been problematical, for even if the Russians had driven the Japanese Second and Third Armies off their communications the latter army would probably have done the same to the Russians.

Though the fact did not affect the time of the movement to the rear of General Bilderling's and General Linevich's forces, which, having been first decided on only on the evening of the 6th, could not, in any case, have been carried out till dark on the night of the 7th, General Kuropatkin showed considerable hesitation in making up his mind to give the final orders, which were not issued till the afternoon of the 7th. And his hesitation is not difficult to understand. He must have felt that the beginning of the end had come and have realized from past experience that the retirement of these two armies was as likely to be the forerunner of a general retreat as the means of providing him with force to carry out an offensive operation of the nature that was required on the west. Nevertheless, the indecision must have been harmful to the Russian cause.

His resolve to retreat to Tieh-ling was characterized by similar delay, which was in its consequences more detrimental, for unless he could take action he had nothing to gain and a great deal to lose by every hour longer he remained in his cramped position. His own opinion, since expressed, is that he should have fallen back a day sooner than he did. It is indicative of the general situation that his final decision was based entirely on the state of affairs round Mukden, without reference to the fact that his line had been broken elsewhere—of which he apparently had no knowledge at the time.

A point of great interest is the employment of the Russian General Reserve. Owing to the loss of the initiative and to his subsequent tactics, the Russian commander failed to exercise restraint and to maintain his reserve in order to give weight to a blow in a decisive direction, but was from an early stage in the battle induced to dissipate it in different directions, mostly for defensive purposes. A feature of his conduct of operations, indeed, was the great pains to which he was continually being put to collect troops to replenish the depleted force under his own hand. When the first shots of the battle were fired, his reserve amounted—so far as infantry was concerned—to forty-four battalions, or seventeen battalions more than that of Marshal Oyama. As a result of the measures taken to reinforce the First Manchurian Army and then to build up the screen in the west, however, on the morning of the 5th March, when the great counter-stroke against the Japanese Third Army was to be launched, General Kuropatkin had not one battalion left, and was therefore impotent to influence the result of the fight. By the morning of the 6th, he had again amassed twenty-two battalions; but though the action went against the Russians, only eight of these battalions were thrown into the fight, and then for defensive purposes. It was on this day, whilst this considerable force lay inactive, that some eight miles away the Japanese carried out their dangerous transfer of strength across the direction of the Russian counter-stroke. On the morning of the 7th March, the reserve was reduced to fourteen battalions, and General Kuropatkin, in the hopes of collecting sufficient force to make a final bid for victory on the 9th, called by telegram for the return from the former army of the 72nd Division, which had been sent to it on the 25th and 26th February, and contemplated withdrawing his First and Third Manchurian Armies across the Hun.

The reinforcement of General Topornin on the 7th March, and the creation of the Northern Detachment and that under General Muilov on the following day, notwithstanding that he received fifteen and a half battalions from the 5th Siberian Corps, left him on the evening of the 8th with only five battalions at his disposal. On the morning of the 9th, of the fifty-one battalions he had hoped to collect from different quarters for his final effort to stave off defeat, but eighteen had arrived. In the matter of the return of the 72nd Division, the commander-in-chief appears to have been rather badly served. He had telegraphed to General Linevich at 9 a.m. on the 7th to dispatch it at once, but though the First Manchurian Army was not then being pressed, the division was not sent westwards till the morning of the 9th, after having accompanied the 3rd Siberian Corps back across the Hun on the night of the 7th-8th. Instead of arriving at the Northern Tombs during the 9th, therefore, only a portion of it reached Pu-ho that evening, after the general retreat had been ordered.

At Mukden the Russian cavalry may be said to have failed. It was more than twice as numerous as that of the Japanese, and consisted of some sixteen thousand sabres, as against the seven thousand three hundred opposing it. In the first place its disposition was not in accordance with the requirements of the situation, for shortly before the battle the proportion of cavalry allotted to the western flank—by far the better suited to the action of mounted troops, and the quarter in which the Russians themselves intended to attack—only amounted to fifty-one squadrons or one-third of the total number available, and almost on the eve of the Japanese advance the number was reduced to thirty-three squadrons by the detachment of troops northward to guard the railway. It certainly seems that a larger force should have been massed west of Mukden, where, either for the action contemplated by the Russians, or for the actual battle that took place, cavalry would have been of greater value than elsewhere. Nevertheless, the detachment of thirty-three squadrons which operated under General V. Grekov on the Russian right during the whole of the battle was stronger than the two Japanese brigades to which it was at first opposed and to the reinforced division which was formed later. The first direction in which the Russian mounted troops failed was that they did not discover the presence of the Japanese Third Army lying between Liao-yang and Hsiao-peï-ho from the 20th to the 27th February. It is true that

General Rennenkampf had ascertained that that area was unoccupied by the enemy on the 14th February; but that fact should not have precluded any serious effort to reconnoitre that quarter for the next two weeks, more especially when it was realized that the Japanese were showing activity at the other extremity of the Russian line. In spite of all that the Japanese could have done to prevent it, there is small doubt that a mass of some fifty or less squadrons led with determination could have swept right round their left, penetrated their screen, and have gained sufficient information before the 24th February to have prevented the transfer of Russian reserves to the east which commenced next day. One patrol boldly handled might have solved the mystery of the position of the Japanese Third Army. Apart from any temperamental or other causes which may have predisposed the commander-in-chief towards a defensive policy, it was his ignorance on the 24th, 25th and 26th February of the real situation of the Japanese Third Army that caused him to surrender the initiative and dissipate strength in the wrong direction. From the effects of this first mistake he was unable to recover.

For eventually detecting in the flat country between the Liao and Hun the advance of General Nogi's troops so soon as they were set in motion on the 27th but little credit is due to General Grekov's force. And with that performance its effective work during the battle ceased. By the 2nd March, without having definitely ascertained by contact and capture the identity of the Japanese force advancing, it had lost all unity of action and had split up into two distinct groups. Contact with the enemy on the right bank of the Liao was so perfunctorily maintained indeed that the Japanese 2nd Cavalry Brigade acting on the outer flank of General Nogi's troops was actually not engaged until the 3rd March. On that date it was in action, not with General Grekov's force, however, but with General Birger's detachment retiring from Kao-li-tun. The absence of General Grekov's cavalry from this action was typical of its inactivity throughout the battle and may have had far-reaching results. For it is quite possible that if he had co-operated with General Birger, as requested, with his own ten squadrons and the 5th Ural Cossack Regiment, instead of remaining all day north of Kao-li-tun, that General Birger might have forced the Japanese cavalry opposing him towards Mukden and uncovered General Nogi's left, which was then somewhat in

the air, held up at the old railway embankment. And it seems that an enterprising cavalry leader would have seized upon this opportunity of co-operating with a brigade of infantry in an endeavour to hamper a hostile movement which was obviously very threatening. But at no time does General Grekov seem to have understood the true rôle of cavalry or to have realized the necessity of seeking a tactical success whenever the opportunity offered. It was unfortunate for the Russians that their mounted force in what was the critical quarter of the battle was not under a cavalry leader who could show some dash and energy.

Apart from that of the Cavalry Detachment on the west the performance of the mounted troops does not call for much comment. The squadrons under General Baumgarten on the left of the 3rd Siberian Corps fought stubbornly, but their action was almost entirely defensive, while the seventeen squadrons under General Rennenkampf round Tu-pin-tai were operating in country which precluded any advantage being derived from their mobility.

There is no doubt that General Kuropatkin was more than severely handicapped by the bad reconnaissance of his mounted troops, from whom he received little assistance or information, and the entire absence of the true cavalry spirit amongst them. On the whole, it does not seem too much to say that it was very largely to their cavalry that the Russians owed their defeat.

In a measure the Russians were well served by the railways which crossed the battlefield in both directions. Not only did the main line run almost due north and south through their position, but lateral communication was to some extent facilitated by the branch running west from Su-chia-tun to Ta-wang-kuan-pu and that running east from Hsiao-ho-tun to Fu-shun Junction. The supply of their scattered forces was also much assisted by the field railways connecting Su-chia-tun with Hsiao-hou-tai-tzu and Ta-wang-kuan-pu, Su-chia-tun with the right bank of the Sha Ho opposite Putilov Hill, and Fu-shun Junction with San-lung-yu. During the first stages of the battle the railway was employed to convey troops from west to east, especially during the period when force was being moved to reinforce the left flank, the largest unit to be so transported being General Danilov's brigade. The Russians were during the latter part of the battle acting on interior lines, and may appear at first sight to have enjoyed a great additional advantage in their lateral rail communication ;

but this was not really the case, because the line was so far behind the positions held on the left flank.

An interesting contrast between the tactical methods of the rival commanders is afforded by the action taken by them at the battles of the Sha Ho and Mukden respectively to meet a sudden threat against one flank. At the former, when his right flank in rough country was pressed, Marshal Oyama practically ignored this threat, leaving the forces on the spot to deal with it, and concentrated his energies on wresting the initiative from his adversary by meeting his frontal attack by counter-attack with all the remainder of his forces. At Mukden, where on the 24th February the Russian left was threatened—in similar country—General Kuropatkin's action was the antithesis of this. On the other hand, it is true that at San-de-pu the Japanese commander at once replied directly to the Russian blow against his left, and supported the threatened flank with all available force, but the case was not on a par with that of Mukden. At San-de-pu the Russian onslaught was made against the dangerous flank of the Japanese, and Marshal Oyama was not at all ready to advance against the Russians, and had every reason for not doing so.

In regard to the Japanese, there is no doubt that in February, 1905, they were correct in attempting to consummate their offensive strategy which had failed at Liao-yang, and the further prosecution of which was at last rendered possible by the great accretion of strength to their forces in the field brought about by the fall of Port Arthur. So soon as the two armies for whose formation they had been waiting since October, 1904, were in place there was nothing to be gained and much to be lost by any delay in the resumption of activity. To have postponed the advance for any considerable time would have allowed the recent increase in strength of the Japanese to be discounted. And short of such lengthy postponement it was essential to act at once, before the March thaw melted the ice on the rivers and converted the plains into seas of mud. In a word, time was still working for the Russians, as it had all along worked—except at Port Arthur—and the Japanese had a better chance of gaining a victory towards the end of February than they were ever likely to enjoy again. Regarding the strategic situation in its broader aspect also, and taking into consideration the fact that the Russian Second Pacific Squadron was then approaching the scene where it might be met by the Japanese fleet, there was no reason for Marshal

Oyama to procrastinate. Nothing that he could do could affect the result of the probably imminent naval action, and, whatever the issue at sea, the course to be followed on land was that most likely to give the Japanese a decisive victory. This, as has been said, was to attack at once. Marshal Oyama was evidently of this opinion, for his orders for the advance were issued the day after the five Japanese armies were in their allotted places.

From the fact that in these orders the object of the coming battle was defined as being "to decide the issue of the war," from the nature of the rôles assigned to the two flank armies and from the subsequent conduct of operations by the Japanese, it would appear that the ultimate aim was an envelopment of the Russians on both flanks. From certain pronouncements made after the battle by General Baron Kodama, Marshal Oyama's Chief of Staff, it seems, however, that the primary object was not so ambitious in its scope. To H.S.H. Prince Karl Anton of Hohenzollern he made the following statement:—*

"I had resolved to attack the Russians by enveloping them apparently in the east, so that they might dispatch their main strength thither, while our main attack was to be directed against the Sha-ho—Mukden—Tieh-ling section of railway, enveloping it from the west. Our centre was not to make a frontal attack on the strong entrenchments of the Russian Sha Ho position, but was to leave a screen there and to envelop and take in rear the Russian position on both flanks with the object of forcing the Russians to leave their semi-permanent works and to fight in the open. So soon as the first line should be taken by us or evacuated by the Russians the First and Fourth Armies were to advance northwards at once, to the east of Mukden."

In another conversation General Kodama is reported to have said:—

"It was thought that the engagement would resolve itself into two battles fought side by side and simultaneously. These would take place on either side of the railway, and while in one of them the Russians would assume the offensive, they would preserve a defensive attitude in the other. However, by the 6th March it was clear that the Russians on both sides of the railway would remain on the defensive, a fact which greatly

* *German Official History*, Heft 48, p. 71.

simplified matters for us and made the result of the battle far greater than had been anticipated It was never thought possible by us that we could surround the Russians and bring about a second Sedan."

A comparison of these two expositions of the Japanese intentions with Marshal Oyama's operation orders of the 20th February leaves the matter somewhat obscure; but if, as stated by General Kodama, the result actually attained was in reality greater than that which had been anticipated, it is not clear how the commander-in-chief could have expected the battle to have decided the issue of the war. It is fairly obvious, both from the orders to the Ya-lu Army and from the proportion of force allotted to it, that its action was not to be confined to such pressure as might merely mislead the enemy. If its task had been thus limited, indeed, it seems that General Kawamura's force was unnecessarily strong, and that the 1st *Kobi* Division alone, deployed on as broad a front as possible, might have sufficed to bring about the desired result. This would have left the 11th Division for the main blow on the west of the Hun Ho. As has been pointed out by some critics, however, it is possible that the 11th Division was allotted to the eastern force with the express object of revealing its presence, so as to mislead General Kuropatkin as to the destination of the Third Army. On the whole, the probability is that the delivery of the main blow on the west was the accepted feature of the Japanese operations, whilst envelopment on both flanks was a possible consummation to be hoped for. That the Ya-lu Army did not make further progress was because it was unable to do so.

Apart from the point of the precise degree to which envelopment was contemplated, the main idea underlying Marshal Oyama's tactical plan has been brought out clearly in the narrative of the battle, is re-stated in the first of the two explanations by General Kodama just quoted, and hardly requires further emphasis at this point.

It was a bold and ambitious project to have undertaken, especially with numerically inferior forces. It is true that in threatening the Russian communications the Japanese commander by raids had taken preliminary measures—and with considerable success—to reduce the numbers that would be available to his opponent on the field of battle, and that his scheme tended to draw a proportion of the Russian forces into a quarter from which they could not act so quickly as from elsewhere; but his plan of

operations implied an extension entailing great risk. Nevertheless, it was perhaps the only one which offered the Japanese a possibility of obtaining the decision which was so essential to them. General Kuroki's detached movement across the Tai-tzu Ho during the battle of Liao-yang has been described as the taking of a tactical liberty; and the major tactics at the battle of Mukden may be similarly characterized. It cannot be said that they were completely justified by the result, for it was indecisive; but they were so far vindicated by the fact that the attackers did not suffer the reverse to which they actually laid themselves open. While the failure of the Japanese to attain the full success desired was in the main due to lack of numbers and exhaustion of their powers, their escape from defeat is largely attributable to the nature of their plan in its bearing upon the character of the opponents facing them. There is no doubt that if it had been employed against a force better organized than the Russian armies were, under more enterprising, more determined, and less impressionable leadership, the chance of the attackers suffering a crushing defeat would have been very great. And not the least praiseworthy side of Marshal Oyama's action at Mukden, therefore, was that he once again formulated and executed a scheme based on the character of his opponent, upon which he played. Its very audacity, indeed, obviated the dangers inherent in it. By seizing the initiative and bewildering the Russian commander, Marshal Oyama not only forced him to give up the offensive, but rendered it difficult for him to take the chances for reprisal that were offered to him. As has been stated, after the night of the 24th February he really controlled the battle, though he was unable to maintain and exploit this mastery to the end or to its logical conclusion.

But there are indications that he was considerably influenced, possibly somewhat to the detriment of his plan, by a sense of the danger to which his line was exposed. With his thin line and the smallness of his General Reserve, what he had most to fear was that the battle should not take the course intended by him, and that the Russians, breaking away from their usual tactics, should reply indirectly to the pressure being exerted against their flanks with an endeavour to burst through the centre. It is possible that the Russian attack on the Sha Ho railway bridge on the night of the 27th-28th February, isolated action as it was, may have given point to a general apprehension. The most important effect of

this influence was manifested in the position and employment of the force under his own hand. The General Reserve, consisting originally of three *Kobi* brigades, strengthened on the 25th February by the bulk of the 3rd Division withdrawn from the front line of the Second Army, was not placed behind the left flank, but was near Ta-tung-shan-pu more behind the centre of the Second and First Armies. It was not until the 3rd March, or on the fifth day after General Nogi's enveloping operation had started, that Marshal Oyama parted with any of his troops to strengthen the force carrying out his main blow. The reinforced 5th Brigade, which was about one-fourth of the total force under his hand, then started north-west. At that time the bulk of General Nogi's troops were on the old railway embankment due west of Mukden, and only some nine miles from the main line of railway. By the 4th March, after the Second Manchurian Army had been forced back across the Hun Ho, Marshal Oyama evidently came to the conclusion that he could safely denude the centre of all of his reserve; and next day his three *Kobi* brigades marched north-west to reinforce the Japanese striking force.

The fact that General Kuropatkin had parted with almost all of his General Reserve five clear days before Marshal Oyama moved any of the troops under his own hand throws an interesting light on the different frame of mind in which each commander must have been able to regard the progress of events.

Another action which illustrated the tendency of the Japanese up to a certain period in the battle to protect their centre was the transfer on the 4th March of a considerable force from the Second Army on the left to the Fourth Army in the centre—then making but slight progress against Putilov and One Tree Hills.* This movement, it is true, emanated from General Oku, who doubtless weighed the advantages of sending his 4th Division northwards or eastwards; but the fact that he issued the order for it before receiving the commander-in-chief's formal assent shows how confident he was of the latter's acquiescence. Actually at this time, as has been seen, the Japanese Third Army was making good progress, and the moment, it seems, had arrived for every man that could be spared to be thrown into the scale with it, at what was the decisive point.

* The 4th Division, Colonel Tomioka's detachment, and the 34th Regiment. This was practically one-half of the strength of the Second Army at that time.

Of this caution in guarding the centre General Kodama is reported to have given the following explanation:—

“As regards the question why we guarded our line of communication along the railway with such care, it must be remembered that since it was anticipated that the battle would be fought in two sections, the weakest point was the dividing line of those sections and this was the railway line.”

On the whole it seems that Marshal Oyama, exercised by the attenuation of his line to some extent, faltered in the execution of his scheme and compromised between protecting his centre indirectly—by strengthening the main attack—or, directly by local defence. But by the 3rd March his plan had already succeeded better than he knew; and it appears now that if the bulk of his reserve had been thrown into the fighting line on the west in time to co-operate in a strenuous attack by the Second and Third Armies on the 3rd March the results might have been very great. In the light of after-knowledge there is no doubt that as the battle did develop the Japanese did not gain the full value which might have been obtained from the intervention of their General Reserve.

However, if up to a certain time undue restraint seems to have been exercised by the commander-in-chief in the matter of throwing his reserve of force into the fight at the point where he was seeking a decision, after the moment on the 4th March, when he finally came to the conclusion that the time had arrived to stake everything on the prosecution of his plan, there was no sign of timidity or vacillation in the execution of the method adopted to extend his strengthened left flank, hazardous though it was. No sooner had the three *Kobi* brigades marched off to General Nogi's assistance than the remarkable scheme of enabling the Third Army to gain ground to the north by a transfer of its units was at once put into force on the night of the 5th–6th March. The details of this operation, which was one of the most striking tactical features of the battle, have been described in full, and reference has been made to its obvious dangers. And that it should have succeeded bears out the conclusion reached regarding the detachment of General Kuroki during the battle of Liao-yang—that against an adversary who is either unwilling or unable to strike back, a determined and bold commander may take almost any liberty. In March, 1905, the Russians were by no means unwilling to strike; but the nature of their operations on the 5th

proved their inability to do so effectively. In venturing to undertake this transfer of strength in front of an enemy in position, Marshal Oyama was probably once more acting on his knowledge of the enemy, and trusting that activity on his own part might prevent it on the part of his opponent. Nevertheless, it is to his credit that he should, in pursuance of his main object, have faced the obvious risks entailed in such action. And the disquieting incident experienced near Ta-shih-chiao on the 6th March did not deter him from adopting a similar system of extension in two different quarters on the 9th March. On that day both the 9th Division of the Third Army and the 8th Division of the Second Army were moved towards the left. But there was not then the same danger in such an operation as there had been previously.

For the Japanese the 7th March was the critical day, the day which was to decide whether they were to inflict a crushing defeat on the Russians. By the early afternoon, in spite of the risks of their extension and in spite of the Russian counter-attacks on the 5th and 6th, they had attained a position of overwhelming strength on the Russian right. On General Nogi's left his 1st Division was within four miles of the railway north of Mukden, unopposed by any considerable force; and the rest of his army was practically up in line on the right of the 1st Division, with the three *Kobi* brigades from the General Reserve close up in rear. On the Russian side the First and Third Manchurian Armies were still in position along the Sha, and the Second Manchurian Army had been forced to give up its attempts at the offensive. After immense exertions the Japanese Third Army had indeed reached an admirable position from which to deliver the *coup de grâce* to the Russian right wing. Nevertheless, as has been seen, the action of the Japanese on the 7th was not particularly vigorous, the commander-in-chief deciding to undertake a general attack along the whole line on the 8th. By not pushing on they lost what seems to have been a chance of bringing about that complete defeat of the enemy at which they had aimed. When they did attack next day the Russian Northern Detachment was in position, and the Russians were generally better prepared. The reason assigned for this lack of vigour in pressing on to reap the result of all their efforts is that it was expected that by dawn of the 7th the Russians would have withdrawn from the west of Mukden, and that General Nogi's left would consequently be placed in a position of great danger. That the belief in the retirement of

that army was strongly held by the Japanese is borne out by General Nambo's desperate attacks on Three Houses. On the other hand, it must be pointed out that the morning of the 7th showed the First and Third Manchurian Armies still in position, and that it must have been brought home to Marshal Oyama long before the close of the day that the Russians west of Mukden were not in retreat; and their very inactivity in that quarter makes his reluctance to push forward his left wing the more remarkable.

Upon the morning of the 8th March he was to find that he was not entirely dominating the battle, and that his plan for a general attack had been forestalled and broken up by the retirement of the Third and First Manchurian Armies on the previous night. But, just as General Kuropatkin had been surprised by the onset of the Ya-lu Army in the east—although he had all along feared that pressure might be applied in that quarter—so Marshal Oyama seems to have been taken off his guard by this occurrence, upon which he had been anticipating for days and to deal with which draft orders had been drawn up in advance in at least one of his armies. Nevertheless, the ease with which the Russians after so many days' fighting, and with their main line of communication almost cut, were able to withdraw from the Sha Ho to the Hun, was one of the most remarkable features of the battle.

To account for the slowness of the pursuit carried out by the Japanese during the night of the 7th-8th March, an extreme state of exhaustion on their part has been alleged. But in the commander-in-chief's orders, issued about midnight, there is no indication of his having held the view that his troops would be unable to follow up the enemy with vigour. And the prominent part played in the fighting of the 9th and 10th March by the Fourth and First Armies does not tend to show that it was the case. Their failure to pursue on the evening of the 10th and afterwards, however, may be far more justly attributed to exhaustion, for the fighting of the 8th, 9th, and 10th had been of an arduous nature. Nevertheless, it is a question whether either on the evening of the 10th March or later any of the units on the Japanese side could have been so thoroughly exhausted as were many of the Russian regiments. And it is certain, whatever the cause of their inability or neglect to press on on this occasion, that the Japanese lost a great opportunity in not following up their retreating and demoralized enemy.

From a survey of the whole campaign, however, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the Japanese armies were not at their best in driving home a victory. Amongst the numerous occasions before the battle of Mukden on which they had forced the Russians to withdraw after an action there is not one in which the retreat of the beaten side was turned into a rout. The instances which occurred during that battle before the two just dealt with are numerous. On the 3rd March General Birger was not harried in his escape from the Japanese Cavalry Division, and on the same day General Topornin's disorderly retreat was not interfered with by the Japanese 1st and 7th Divisions, except by long range artillery fire. On that day, also, an opportunity seems to have been missed by the Japanese Second Army in allowing General von der Launitz to withdraw his disorganized force across the Hun Ho without great loss. Their lack of mounted troops, their inferiority in numbers generally and exhaustion were in many cases, no doubt, largely responsible for the fact that the Japanese were unable to complete their victories; but on the whole pursuit does not seem to have been pushed by them to its possible limits. Marshal Oyama was under no delusions as to the limitations of his armies in this direction. In his order of the 20th February he drew attention to the fact that in all the previous battles pursuit had been very slow.

The absence of decisive results achieved in the land operations of the war, indeed, can to a great extent be attributed to the fact that an army which was at its worst in pursuit was fighting an army which was at its best in rear guard actions.

In regard to the advance of the Japanese Third Army some exception has been taken to the slowness of its movement round the Russian right in the earlier stages of the envelopment. But such strictures do not appear to be entirely justified. Owing to its initial position of concealment behind, and not on, the Japanese flank, the Third Army had to carry out a wheel, the rate of which depended on the progress of the outer wing. Any criticism of the speed achieved therefore in reality applies to the marching of the 1st Division. That division covered approximately the following distances—measured in a straight line—before it was engaged with the enemy:—On the first day eleven miles, on the 28th February about the same number, on the 1st March seventeen miles, and on the 2nd March ten miles before it encountered the Russians in Sha-lin-pu. This was not quick marching; but when

it is remembered that the difficulties of supply were increasing with the distance from the railway, and that, though severe opposition was not actually met with, it was expected and had to be prepared for, the performance cannot be said to have been bad.

As before, the work of the numerically inferior Japanese cavalry was almost entirely of a protective nature, the collection of information being to a great extent carried out by the secret service; and its disposition was suited to the duty it was called upon to perform. The two brigades of cavalry were employed in guarding the outer flank of General Nogi's Third Army during its enveloping movement, and shortly after the commencement of the battle were reinforced and massed in a division. The cavalry succeeded in covering that operation; but this was more due to the inertia of the Russian mounted forces than to any activity of its own, though it was quite prepared to accept risk when occasion demanded, as was shown by its action on the 3rd March, when General Birger's detachment was imagined to be threatening General Nogi's left. That General Birger's force seems to have been mistaken for a much larger body of General Grekov's cavalry is possibly the explanation of General Akiyama's abstention from following up the Russians on that occasion. In the general pursuit the Cavalry Division did not take any important part, in spite of the fact that the assistance of a body of mounted troops would have been of the greatest value to the Japanese on the afternoon and evening of the 10th March. This may have been due to the presence of General Grekov's squadrons or to a suspicion that their persistent retirement was a ruse. But, whatever the cause, a lack of opportunism on the part of the Japanese seems to have been here revealed. The occasion was one to demand self-sacrifice, and an active policy might have secured results out of all proportion to the risks run, for, as has been seen, the mere rumour of the presence of hostile cavalry was sufficient to cause more than one panic amongst the disorganized ranks of the fleeing troops. And the extraordinary recuperative power of the Russians, which enabled General Kuropatkin to draw up his armies along the Fan Ho on the 12th March, shows how essential it was for the Japanese to have made the most of the temporary period of demoralization of their opponents on the 10th. The operations of the squadrons of divisional cavalry call for little comment. In the pursuit during the 7th-8th March they were too weak to be of any real service

and were generally handicapped by the superior number of the mounted troops acting against them. The action of the cavalry generally may be said to have approximated to that of mounted infantry, since there was practically no shock action.

As before, the spirit of mutual co-operation to one end was universal amongst the attacking forces, and it was well revealed on those occasions when information of the progress of the Japanese Third Army reached the other army commanders. When the news was favourable, attack was at once resorted to in order that any success of General Nogi's might be increased. And when disquieting rumours were abroad the offensive was again the panacea by which pressure on the Third Army might be relieved indirectly. Instances of such action were frequent, and have been noted in the narrative. One special case occurred in the Second Army on the 9th March, when General Oku refrained from asking for troops to take the place of the 4th Division, which could not be moved northwards when required. As has been pointed out, this restraint on his part was inspired by a fear lest the forces at the disposal of the commander-in-chief might be more urgently required elsewhere. It was owing to the existence in his army of a spirit of this nature that Marshal Oyama enjoyed a wealth of assistance which was denied to his opponent.

A noticeable point in the development of the Japanese plan was the synchronization of their operations at the beginning of the battle and the care with which the time of the first application of pressure along the front was adjusted so as, by a gradual revelation of strength, to create the required impression. Thus, in order to arouse the anxiety of the Russians as to their left all activity was confined to that quarter, where the Ya-lu Army alone pressed, from the night of the 18th-19th February until the 24th. On that day the First Army began to advance. Three days later, after the desired reaction had been produced amongst the Russians, the Fourth, Second and Third Armies made their presence felt, the last to reveal itself naturally being the striking force right out on the west. Otherwise, except for the method of extension on their left, to which reference has been made, the tactics of the Japanese generally do not call for much comment. The course of the attack by the First Army during the earlier stage of the battle, when the 12th Division was retained on the left bank of the Sha Ho until the 2nd Division should gain the Kao-tai Ling, however, has points of resemblance to the contingent nature of the Russian

efforts on San-de-pu in January, and their counter-attack on the 5th and 6th March. And the inactivity thus forced on the former division reacted on the Guards to its left. The reason for this procedure seems to have been that the advance of the right of the First Army was essentially a wheeling movement, pivoted on the 12th Division, to bring it up into line with that division, which required support on its right in attacking the strongly entrenched position of the First Manchurian Army in front of it. As a result, however, of the delay in the action of the Japanese 12th Division, caused by the insuccess of the 2nd Division, the Russians were enabled to reinforce the 3rd Siberian Corps—facing the Japanese 2nd Division—from the 4th and 2nd Siberian Corps, and the Japanese plan failed. The 2nd Division did not gain possession of the Kao-tai Ling until noon on the 8th March, when the Second and Third Manchurian Armies were in process of retirement across the Hun, and after the 12th and Guard Divisions had been sent across the Sha Ho, even then, more to relieve the situation elsewhere than to assist the 2nd Division. Tactically speaking, the 2nd Division failed to a great extent because its task was too formidable for it to carry out unaided. One of its columns was practically neutralized by having to bridge the gap between the Ya-lu and First Armies while the other, under General Ishibashi, was too weak to succeed alone. It is open to question if the Japanese could not have done better locally to inaugurate an attack by the Guard and 12th Divisions to synchronize with that of the 2nd Division on the Kao-tai Ling. Beyond all praise was the determination with which the Guard Division maintained the precarious position it gained on the night of the 2nd–3rd March on the north bank of the Sha Ho until it was at last able to break through the Russian line on the afternoon of the 7th.

At Mukden the Russians suffered far more than on any former occasion from their ignorance of the dispositions, and therefore of the purpose, of their opponents; and it is not difficult to estimate on broad lines in what direction they would most have gained by the possession of such accurate information as might have been obtained by aerial reconnaissance. Without entering upon the operations anterior to the opening of the battle, the whole of Marshal Oyama's scheme may be said to have depended on his ability to keep secret the situation of an army of some forty thousand men and nearly two hundred guns. And actually he did succeed in concealing its presence from the 19th to the

27th February, although it was lying in flat, open country, within fifteen miles of the hostile cavalry outposts. But by the 25th February, when the movement of Russian troops towards the east had fairly started, this mass of men, the ignorance about whose position was mostly instrumental in causing the Russian transfer of force, had for over five days been exposed to detection from the air; and it is hardly conceivable that the Russians would not have discovered its presence during that time if they had been in enjoyment of an air service. Had they done so General Kuropatkin would probably not have denuded his right wing, the envelopment carried out by General Nogi might have been brought to a standstill at an early stage, and the subsequent course of the action might have been entirely changed. What the result would have been it is impossible to say; but it is more than probable that the Japanese would have had to rest content with a lesser meed of success than they actually gained. In another direction also the Russians would probably have benefited greatly from the possession of an air service. They might have discovered that the Japanese cavalry raids made against the railway during February were isolated efforts carried out by small forces, in which case General Kuropatkin would hardly have been led into weakening his armies by the detachment northward of considerable bodies of troops. The precise benefits that the Japanese might have derived from aerial reconnaissance are not so obvious. Nevertheless, if Marshal Oyama had had generally better information of the distribution of strength behind the Russian line, he might not have retained the mass of his General Reserve under his own hand until six days after he had launched the Third Army; he might have taken greater advantage than he did of the disorderly retirement of the Second Manchurian Army on the 3rd March; and on the 7th March he might have thrown caution to the winds and have made a great effort with the Second and Third Armies and his General Reserve to crush the Russian right wing.

To have attacked and forced a numerically superior army from one strongly entrenched position, to have driven it in disorder from a second, and to have compelled it to retreat for some hundred miles was truly a great achievement and one of which the Japanese might well have been proud. To this result the characteristics which both of the opposing forces had displayed throughout the previous course of the war again contributed. On

one side there was a plan audacious in conception, but definite and well co-ordinated, to seize the initiative; and it was prosecuted on the whole relentlessly and with intimate mutual co-operation to one end by all fractions and all ranks, who were imbued with the offensive spirit. On the other side there was also a plan—likewise to seize the initiative. It was a bad plan conceived in hesitation and doubt; but what is most important is that it was not followed and was not replaced by any practical co-ordinated scheme of action. Consequently, apart from the large numbers engaged, the immense extent of ground covered by the operations, the length of time that fighting lasted, the endurance displayed, and the tactics employed, one outstanding feature of the struggle is the striking contrast between the conduct of it by the two sides. The operations of the Japanese exhibited a comparatively simple, orderly and progressive development, whilst those of the Russians from the 25th February, which day was for them really the beginning of the battle, at once degenerated into a series of hasty improvisations preluded by frantic efforts to collect force at the points required. This caused frequent changes of plan, leading to confusion, waste of time, dissipation of energy, and incoherence of effort, which almost doomed the endeavours of the Russians to failure beforehand.

The last great land action of the war was essentially a contest of generalship; and it was won and lost before it was half over—if not before it commenced. An undoubted triumph, and a triumph for the offensive, it was neither the victory for which the Japanese hoped, the victory which seems actually to have been within their grasp on the 7th March, nor the victory which the situation demanded. Strategically it was negative in effect, for owing to its indecisive result and the relative strength of the rival nations, it did not do much to further the cause on land of the victors. When the Russians succeeded in withdrawing to Hsi-ping-kai the war entered a new phase. But the situation on land remained essentially unchanged.

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

NAVAL OPERATIONS FROM JANUARY TO MAY—THE JAPANESE PREPARATIONS TO MEET THE RUSSIAN SECOND PACIFIC SQUADRON—THE VOYAGE OF THAT SQUADRON UP TO THE EVE OF THE BATTLE OF THE SEA OF JAPAN.

(Charts XIV and XV.)

WHILE the great events which have been described in the last few chapters were taking place on land there was no actual change in the strategic situation at sea, for the Japanese still retained their command of local waters—which indeed had alone enabled them to prosecute their land campaign up to this point. By the end of the battle of Mukden, however, the situation had developed to some extent, and developed quite independently of the progress of the land campaign. It continued to do so; and it is possible to follow the narrative of events at sea from the point to which it has been brought right up to the battle of the Sea of Japan, when the naval power of Russia was destroyed. The account of the operations in local waters has been carried up to the end of January, 1905, whilst that of the progress of the Second Pacific Squadron has not been taken beyond the last days of 1904.

As has been seen, during the latter part of January nothing active was attempted by the Japanese. Early in February the *Yakumo*, *Matsushima* and *Hong Kong Maru* joined Admiral Shimamura's flag. The vessels under him had been in the first place distributed in the Tsugaru, La Pérouse and Kunashiri Straits, but owing to the fact that navigation in La Pérouse Strait was rendered dangerous by floating ice that strait was now left unguarded and a strict watch was kept on the approaches to the Tsugaru, Kunashiri and Yetorup Straits. On the 22nd February Admiral Shimamura transferred his flag to the *Iwate*, which had come

up from Kure, and the *Adzuma* returned to Yokosuka. Next day the *Nippon Maru* joined his squadron, while on the 12th March the *Takachiho* and *Akitsuishima* also joined and the *Yakumo* returned to Kure. On the 27th of that month the *Kumano Maru* arrived and proceeded with the *Hong Kong Maru* and *Nippon Maru* to the Kurile Islands, leaving the remaining vessels to keep guard in the Tsugaru Strait.

On the 6th February a squadron of three armoured cruisers, one protected cruiser, two destroyers and a transport was sent under Admiral Kamimura to Gensan, with material for fortifying that place. Later in the same month a more powerful force escorted some transports to the north-east coast of Korea and landed a body of troops at Song-chin.*

Since the presence at Madagascar of the squadrons under Admirals Rozhestvenski and von Felkerzam rendered the position somewhat uncertain, in February a special Southern Squadron consisting of the *Kasagi* (flag), *Chitose*, *America Maru*,

Admiral Dewa's
cruise.

Yavata Maru, and *Hikosan Maru* was formed in order to give warning of any sudden appearance of the Russians in Far Eastern waters. These five vessels left Sasebo on the 27th under the command of Vice-Admiral Dewa and reached Makung in the Pescadores on the 1st March, remaining there four days. They next proceeded to the southward past Hainan, and along the coast of Cochin China. After calling at Van Fong and Kamranh Bays they steamed towards the coast of Siam. They passed Saigon on the 9th and two days later anchored off Obi Island, where they took in coal and water from the *Hikosan Maru*. That vessel was then sent back to Makung, and Admiral Dewa, with the four remaining ships, proceeded down the west of the China Sea as far as Singapore for the special purpose of making sure that no colliers or other store-ships were being assembled in any unfrequented spot. On the 16th, the day following his arrival at Singapore, he heard of the departure of the Russian fleet from Nossi Bé, presumably for the Far East, and at once started on his return journey to Japan. After putting in at Labuan in Borneo and at Makung the squadron rejoined the fleet in Sylvia Basin on the 1st April.

* See p. 839. This squadron consisted of the battleship *Fuji*, the armoured cruisers *Idzumo* and *Kasuga*, the 3rd Class cruisers *Otowa*, *Akitsuishima*, *Chiyoda*, *Suma*, the dispatch vessel *Chihaya* and two flotillas of destroyers.

A few days later the Japanese dockyards were empty and the fleet was ready to put to sea. All its units were in a high state of efficiency, but there had not been sufficient time to attempt the salvage of any of the sunken Russian vessels, and the only additions to its fighting strength were the three newly built destroyers, *Fubuki*, *Ariake*, and *Arare*, the captured *Ryeshitelni*, which had been refitted and renamed the *Akatsuki*, and one new torpedo boat, the *Kiji*. Thus, in spite of very nearly a year of active service during which the destroyers had been subjected to continuous work and a very severe test, Japan was still able to place twenty-one of these vessels in the fighting line, having started the war with nineteen. The fleet was now exercised, and target practice at long ranges was carried out.*

When the news that the Second Pacific Squadron had passed Singapore on the 8th April reached Japan Admiral Shimamura was ordered to leave one auxiliary cruiser in the Yetorup Strait and to concentrate all the other vessels under his command in

order to oppose the Russian cruisers in Vladivostok, should they attempt to break through to the southward, and Admiral Kamimura was dispatched to mine the approaches to that port.†

The Japanese
lay mines outside
Vladivostok,
15th April.

The latter operation was conducted with great secrecy, and on the 15th April seven hundred and fifteen mines were laid across the entrance of Peter the Great Bay on a line between Askold and Korsakovsk Islands, a distance of more than thirty-five miles.‡ After this had been done Admiral Shimamura was ordered to rejoin the fleet and to leave only two auxiliary cruisers with the *Musashi* and the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla to guard the Tsugaru Strait. Since the beginning of the year the Japanese warships employed on patrol duty had seized fourteen neutral vessels carrying contraband for Vladivostok in the northern waters and eight in the Korean Strait.

Some five weeks after it had been carried out the Japanese precaution in mining the waters outside Vladivostok met with

* Admiral Togo had returned to Sylvia Basin from Tokio on the 21st February.

† Admiral Kamimura's expedition consisted of the cruisers *Idzumo*, *Tokiwa*, *Kasuga*, *Chihaya*, *Kasagi*, *Chitose*, *Otowa*, and *Niitaka*, with two flotillas of destroyers and four mining vessels.

‡ Assuming that these mines were laid at regular intervals, the number dropped would allow one for about every hundred yards, and the chances in favour of a ship of sixty feet beam passing through the line in safety would have been only four to one.

its reward. On the 21st May a Russian surveying vessel sighted a mine adrift off Korsakovsk Island and towed it ashore, and in consequence of this discovery an order was issued that any vessel leaving port was to be accompanied by a sweeping flotilla for a distance of not less than thirty-five miles. Two days later, however, when the *Gromoboi* went out to test her wireless installation, Admiral Iessen relaxed this rule and dismissed the sweeping vessels when only twelve miles from port. The result was disastrous, for some five miles farther south the cruiser struck a mine. It exploded abreast of a coal bunker, tearing a hole which is reported to have been more than thirty-three feet long and sixteen feet high, shattering the door leading to the stokehold and wounding five men in that compartment. Fortunately the damage done to the bulkheads was not great, and it was found possible to keep the vessel afloat on the return passage and for the two days which elapsed before a dock could be prepared for her. As a deterrent to a sally from Vladivostok, the Japanese mine-field was efficacious; but it cannot be said to have prevented a junction of the Russian forces, for there is no evidence to show that a junction was contemplated.

On the 18th April Admiral Kamimura, having completed his mine-laying work outside Vladivostok, rejoined the main fleet which was by that time concentrating to meet the enemy gradually approaching from the southward. Admiral Togo, as he had done in the early days of the war, now divided his force into three squadrons. The first he commanded in person: the second and third were again commanded by Vice-Admirals Kamimura and Kataoka respectively.* The whole fleet was further subdivided as follows:—

First Squadron—Admiral Togo.†

1st Division	}	<i>Mikasa</i> (Flag of Admiral Togo).
		<i>Shikishima</i> .
		<i>Fuji</i> .
		<i>Asahi</i> .
		<i>Kasuga</i> .
		<i>Nisshin</i> (Flag of Vice-Admiral Misu).

* Admiral Kataoka had returned from Port Arthur in February.

† Promoted in 1904.

3rd Division { *Kasagi* (Flag of Vice-Admiral Dewa).
Chitose.
Otowa.
Niitaka.

(Dispatch Vessel—*Tatsuta*).

Destroyers.

1st Flotilla.*	2nd Flotilla.	3rd Flotilla.
<i>Harusame</i> .	<i>Oboro</i> .	<i>Shinonome</i> .
<i>Ariake</i> .	<i>Ikadzuchi</i> .	<i>Usugumo</i> .
<i>Fubuki</i> .	<i>Inadzuma</i> .	<i>Sazanami</i> .
<i>Arare</i> .	<i>Akebono</i> .	<i>Kasumi</i> .
<i>Akatsuki</i> .		

Torpedo Boats.

14th Flotilla.

Chidori.
Hayabusa.
Manadzuru.
Kasasagi.

Second Squadron—Vice-Admiral Kamimura.

2nd Division { *Idzumo* (Flag of Vice-Admiral Kamimura).
Adzuma.
Asama.
Tokiwa.
Yakumo.
Iwate (Flag of Rear-Admiral Shimamura).

4th Division { *Naniwa* (Flag of Vice-Admiral Uriu).
Takachiho.
Akashi.
Tsushima.

(Dispatch Vessel—*Chihaya*.)

Destroyers.

4th Flotilla.	5th Flotilla.
<i>Asagiri</i> .	<i>Shiranui</i> .
<i>Murasame</i> .	<i>Murakumo</i> .
<i>Asashiwo</i> .	<i>Yugiri</i> .
<i>Shirakumo</i> .	<i>Kagero</i> .

* According to modern nomenclature the tactical unit is called a division ; but in referring to the torpedo craft the term flotilla is employed in order to avoid confusion with the divisions of battleships and cruisers.

Torpedo Boats.

9th Flotilla.	19th Flotilla.
<i>Aotaka.</i>	<i>Kamome.</i>
<i>Kari.</i>	<i>Otori.</i>
<i>Hato.</i>	<i>Kiji.</i>
<i>Tsubame.</i>	

Third Squadron—Vice-Admiral Kataoka.

5th Division	{	<i>Itsukushima</i> (Flag of Vice-Admiral Kataoka).
		<i>Chinyen.</i>
		<i>Matsushima.</i>
		<i>Hashidate</i> (Flag of Rear-Admiral Takedomi).
6th Division	{	<i>Suma</i> (Flag of Rear-Admiral Togo).
		<i>Chiyoda.</i>
		<i>Idzumi.</i>
		<i>Akitsushima.</i>
7th Division	{	<i>Fuso</i> (Flag of Rear-Admiral Yamada).
		<i>Tsukushi.</i>
		<i>Takao.</i>
		<i>Maya.</i>
		<i>Chokai.</i>
		<i>Uji.</i>

(Dispatch Vessel—*Yaeyama.*)

Torpedo Boats.

15th Flotilla	{	<i>Hibari.</i>
		<i>Sagi.</i>
		<i>Uzura.</i>
		<i>Hashitaka.</i>

1st Flotilla Nos. : 69, 67, 68 and 70.

10th Flotilla Nos. : 43, 39, 40 and 41.

11th Flotilla Nos. : 73, 72, 74 and 75.

20th Flotilla Nos. : 65, 62, 63 and 64.

Auxiliaries to Fleet.

Parent Ships to Torpedo Craft.

Kasuga Maru.
Kumano Maru.
Nikko Maru.

Armed Merchant Cruisers.*

<i>Taichu Maru</i> (Flag of Rear-Admiral Ogura).	<i>Yawata Maru.</i>
<i>America Maru.</i>	<i>Sado Maru.</i>
<i>Manshu Maru.</i>	<i>Shinano Maru.</i>
<i>Tainan Maru.</i>	

Armed Merchant Gunboats—11 in number.

Repair Ships—*Kanto Maru, Miike Maru.*

Hospital Ships—*Kobe Maru, Saikyo Maru.*

In addition to the vessels enumerated above, the following four flotillas of torpedo boats were in the Strait of Korea:—

5th Flotilla: *Fukurya*, Nos. 25, 26 and 27.

16th Flotilla: *Shirataka* and No. 66.

17th Flotilla: Nos. 34, 31, 32 and 33.

18th Flotilla: Nos. 36, 35, 60 and 61.

With the Port Arthur Fleet no longer in existence and the Vladivostok Squadron confined to harbour the problem before Admiral Togo was comparatively simple. The only course open to Admiral Rozhstvenski was to make for Vladivostok, since

ne could at no other point obtain supplies with which to carry on operations; and to Vladivostok there were three approaches—the Strait of

Korea, the Tsugaru Channel and the Strait of La Pérouse. The first-named, with Tsushima Island lying in its centre, is the broadest and most direct of these channels, and to guard it the Japanese commander-in-chief established a strategical base for his First and Second Squadrons on the south-eastern coast of Korea, in the extensive and easily accessible sheet of water known as Sylvia Basin, which provides ample accommodation for a large fleet and protection from all winds. At the head of the inlet which leads into this basin lies the town of Masampo. The Third Squadron was based on the naval station at Takeshiki in the Island of Tsushima, which is within easy distance of Masampo and connected with it by cable. Of the torpedo boats a number were stationed under the port admirals at different Japanese ports for guard duties. With this exception the whole force was under the direction of Admiral Togo and was so distributed that a meeting with the enemy was as certain as human foresight could

* The *Hong Kong Maru* and *Nippon Maru* remained on guard in the Tsugaru Strait.

make it. For if Admiral Rozhestvenski should try to pass through the Korean Strait an encounter was practically inevitable. If, on the other hand, he should elect to make for either of the northern channels, his passage round Japan could hardly fail to be detected in time for the Japanese, who would be acting on interior lines with a great advantage in speed, to intercept him. In order to ensure a result that should be final as well as successful all subsidiary considerations were put on one side, the defence of the coasts—even of the capital—was left to torpedo craft, and the entire available naval strength was concentrated at the decisive point under the man who had already shown such brilliant abilities.

To turn to the action of the Russians. From February to May they remained powerless to do anything locally. During the last days of 1904, beyond which time the narrative of the approach of the Second Pacific Squadron has not been carried, its two leading sections had arrived at Madagascar. The Russians. Admiral Rozhestvenski's division being at St. Mary Island and that of Admiral von Felkerzam, which had passed through the Suez Canal, at Nossi Bé. The third portion, or reinforcing squadron, on its way to catch up the main fleet, was still at Suda Bay.*

It will be convenient to carry on the account of the progress of the reinforcing squadron before that of the voyage of the two main divisions is resumed. On the 8th January, 1905, after some repairs had been effected, Captain Dobrotvorski left Suda Bay.

Voyage of the reinforcing squadron from Suda Bay to Madagascar. After calling at Port Said and Suez and carrying out some target practice he arrived on the 18th at Jibuti and found a number of chartered colliers already assembled. Here another halt, lasting a fortnight, was made, during which the *Ryevzi* was recalled to the Mediterranean.† This delay may have been due to the change in the situation consequent upon the fall of Port Arthur. Indeed, nothing could have been more natural than that the Russian Government should have wished to reconsider their future naval policy after a disaster of such magnitude; for, from the moment when General Stessel surrendered to the Japanese Third Army it became clear beyond all doubt that the Japanese

* See p. 32.

† The *Prozorlivi* and *Pronzitelni* had previously received orders not to proceed beyond Suda Bay.

fleet would be free in full strength to meet the new Russian naval force. For a time there seems to have been some suggestion that the great venture should be entirely abandoned. But if this was the case any such idea was quickly dismissed, and on the 2nd February the Russian vessels left the hospitable French port. After a seven days' passage they reached Dar es Salaam. Their proceedings here were rendered somewhat less deliberate than usual by the action of the German Authorities, who ordered Captain Dobrotvorski to take his ships to sea after a stay of thirty-six hours, when coaling operations were still unfinished. Sailing from Dar es Salaam on the morning of the 11th, the Russians sighted Madagascar on the 14th February, and joined Admiral Rozhestvenski while he was exercising his squadron outside Nossi Bé.

As regards the two main divisions of the squadron at Madagascar, on the 4th January Admiral Rozhestvenski was forced by bad weather to move from St. Mary Island to a more sheltered anchorage, where, since there was a recrudescence of the old

Junction of the two main divisions of the squadron at Nossi Bé.

fears that Japanese vessels were not far off, torpedo nets were got out each night and all lights extinguished. Some anxiety, also, was felt as to the safety both of the colliers dispatched to Diego Suarez and of the *Rus* which had again set out for Tamatave and had not returned; and as a precaution Admiral Enkvist's cruisers were sent to Diego Suarez to cover the passage of the colliers and then to join Admiral von Felkerzam in Nossi Bé. Soon after their departure doubts were relieved by the arrival of a collier from Diego Suarez bringing a letter from Admiral von Felkerzam to the effect that his vessels were carrying out the repairs of which they stood so greatly in need. A little later the *Rus* returned from Tamatave with the report that Port Arthur had fallen. This disaster appears by this time to have been regarded as inevitable, and the news of it was received by the fleet generally with something like indifference. On the following morning Admiral Rozhestvenski's division got under weigh and shaped a course for Nossi Bé, where it arrived on the 9th and joined that of Admiral von Felkerzam.

The next fortnight was spent in coaling and carrying out various repairs, and afterwards Admiral Rozhestvenski inaugurated a more or less systematic course of training with a view to rendering the

heterogeneous collection of units under his command somewhat more fit to encounter the tried fleet of Japan. The destroyers, supplemented by the picket boats, were sent out to manœuvre, but the frequent break-downs of the former vessels made really serious work almost impossible. The fleet also went out for target practice. The results did not meet with the approval of the commander-in-chief, who criticized the way in which the ships were handled, severely censured some of the captains and characterized the whole performance as a useless waste of ammunition. This practice was then given up, chiefly, it appears, owing to lack of spare ammunition, with which the fleet was insufficiently supplied, in spite of the large number of transports by which it was accompanied. Tactical training, however, was continued, both before and after the arrival of the reinforcing squadron.

In the early part of March the whole fleet filled up with stores and coal—the battleships completing to about 2,400 tons each—for its passage across the Indian Ocean, to be started on the 16th of the month. During the stay at Madagascar the force had been reinforced by the *Ural*, *Terek* and *Kuban*, which had arrived in January. These three fast merchant vessels had been bought from German firms and converted into auxiliary cruisers, and the first-named was fitted with a powerful wireless telegraphy installation. The *Irtwish*, another armed transport which was not capable of steaming more than ten knots, joined the Flag just before the fleet sailed, while the *Malaiya*, which had given trouble on the voyage out, was sent back.*

In Europe the reason for Admiral Rozhstvenski's long stay in the waters of Madagascar gave rise to much speculation. It was generally supposed that he was awaiting the arrival from Russia of yet another force—the Third Pacific Squadron—which it had been decided to send out when the capture of 203 Metre Hill became known; and some surprise was felt when he left Madagascar on the 16th March without waiting for this squadron, which had then reached Suda Bay.† The cause of delay, however, was in reality quite unconnected with the question of waiting for reinforcements, and lay in the old difficulty of coaling.

* The *Irtwish* was believed to be bringing ammunition, but hopes in this direction were disappointed.

† The Japanese seem at this time to have shared the view that this force was being awaited.

The commander-in-chief was fully alive to the importance of pushing on, even without the Third Pacific Squadron, so as to arrive upon the scene before the Japanese should have time to overhaul and repair their ships; but his foreign colliers declined to supply him except in neutral ports and would not accompany his fleet to sea, and the whole of the coaling arrangements were therefore suddenly upset.* Fresh contracts had to be made, for the transports accompanying the fleet had to take the place of the colliers during the voyage across the Indian Ocean, and some weeks elapsed before these arrangements were complete.† And so it happened that while the Japanese were working against time to prepare themselves for the coming conflict Admiral Rozhestvenski remained tied to Madagascar.

Many eyewitnesses have commented upon the lack of martial ardour and enthusiasm at this time observable in his fleet; and there is no doubt that this period of inaction was not without effect upon the officers and men, the majority of whom were unaware of the trouble which had arisen to cause delay. An opinion that the whole undertaking was doomed to failure had been growing steadily and now began to find open expression, chiefly among the crews of the transports on board of which there were signs of insubordination; this, however, was quickly suppressed. The news of the defeat at Mukden reached Admiral Rozhestvenski before he left Madagascar; but it was not generally believed in the fleet, and the order to sail must have infused a better spirit in all ranks, for the passage of forty-five vessels, among which were seven destroyers, across the Indian Ocean without touching at any port was a really fine achievement. Most of the destroyers were towed by the transports, and many delays were caused by the breaking of tow ropes, while every few days, as weather permitted, the whole fleet stopped to coal, which proved

* Upon arriving at Madagascar and learning of the destruction of the Port Arthur Squadron he had telegraphed to St. Petersburg requesting to be allowed to proceed on his voyage to the Far East without waiting even for the reinforcing squadron; and to a telegram from Admiral Skrudlov requesting him to appoint a rendezvous at which the Vladivostok cruisers might effect a junction with the Second Pacific Squadron Admiral Rozhestvenski had replied: "2nd February. Sunda Archipelago." On the 7th January he received definite orders to await the arrival of Captain Dobrotvorski.

† The original contract provided that the foreign colliers should supply the fleet as far as the Chinese coast; beyond that point the Russian transports were to be employed for this purpose.

a slow operation when carried out by boat. Nevertheless some ships managed to take in over a thousand tons between Nossi Bé and the Strait of Malacca; and one of the battleships still had more than sixteen hundred tons on board after steaming three thousand miles.

For the first fortnight of this remarkable voyage not a single vessel was sighted by the squadron which was far from any regular trade route. On the 3rd April it was announced that the next stopping place would be Kamranh Bay in French Cochin China, but that the admiral expected to encounter the Japanese before this, either in the Strait of Malacca or just beyond. On the 5th April, after twenty days at sea, the squadron entered the strait, and three days later it was off Singapore, where the admiral learned from dispatches brought out that Japanese vessels had already paid a visit to those waters, though only their cruisers had been seen, and that the Third Pacific Squadron under Admiral Nebogatov had reached Jibuti. Any satisfaction which might have been gleaned from the latter information, however, was more than counterbalanced by the confirmation of the news of the great defeat at Mukden.

Still stopping to coal every few days the force slowly made its way northward. After passing Singapore it was right in the track of vessels going to and from Chinese ports and was constantly sighted by ships of all nations. On the 11th the hospital ship *Orel* was ordered to proceed to Saigon to fetch provisions for the sick; and on the morning of the 14th, after a continuous passage of 4,500 miles, anchor was dropped in Kamranh Bay, where the ships started to coal from the hired colliers. Next day the French cruiser *Descartes*, flying an admiral's flag, arrived and exchanged compliments with the Russian flagship. To guard against surprise at this place a cruiser was sent out to scout by day; and at night patrol boats watched for hostile torpedo craft, while the boats belonging to the transports were formed into an obstruction across the narrow eastern entrance to the anchorage. In view of the possibility of an encounter at any moment and of the necessity for keeping guns and ammunition passages clear for action, it was considered no longer advisable to carry large quantities of coal elsewhere than in the bunkers, though it was still stacked in some of the living space allotted to officers and crews.

The Second
Pacific Squad-
ron arrives at
Kamranh Bay,
14th April.

Information of the presence of the squadron on the coast of Indo-China was naturally not long in reaching Tokio, and public opinion in Japan soon became indignant at the attitude of France in permitting the free use of her harbours. Representations were made to Paris, with the result that the Japanese protest against violation of neutrality. *Descartes*, which had left Kamranh on the 16th returned on the 21st with definite instructions for the Russians to leave territorial waters within twenty-four hours. The battleships, cruisers, and destroyers went to sea on the following day; but the transports remained in harbour, together with the *Almaz*, which was not considered a fighting ship.*

After passing four days outside Kamranh Bay, either steaming slowly backwards and forwards or not moving, the squadron was joined by the transports and proceeded on its voyage; but only for a few miles, for at 2 p.m. on the 26th it came to anchor in Van Fong Bay. Having doubtless been directed to remain in Indo-Chinese waters until the arrival of the Third Pacific Squadron under Admiral Nebogatov, Admiral Rozhestvenski must have found himself in a difficult position. Nevertheless his action in again seeking an anchorage in French waters after having been requested to leave was an abuse of hospitality; and serious complications must have arisen if the Japanese had thought fit to attack him. The responsibility for this conduct, however, rested rather with St. Petersburg than with the admiral. The Russians were left undisturbed in Van Fong Bay until the 3rd May, when the French cruiser *Guichen* was sent to request them once more to put to sea. Warning of her intentions appears to have reached the Russians however, and before she arrived the squadron was in the offing. Being unable to fulfil her mission she departed, and on the following day the Russians returned to their anchorage. A few days later, information was received that Admiral Nebogatov had passed Singapore on the 5th; and when the *Guichen* returned on the 9th, Admiral Rozhestvenski again put to sea at 8 a.m. At midday, the two admirals were in communication, and at 1 p.m. the long looked-for junction took place outside Van Fong Bay.

* The *Kitai*, *Knyaz Gorchakov*, *Yupiter*, and *Kiev* had been sent to Saigon on the 19th, being no longer required.

It is here necessary to turn to the Third Pacific Squadron, which had thus reached Admiral Rozhstvenski after a voyage of nearly three months.* Admiral Rozhstvenski had originally rejected the units of which it was composed as being more likely to hamper his movements than be of any value in battle, but a great agitation in the Russian Press led by Captain Klado, and the loss of 203 Metre Hill induced the Government to dispatch them. After about two months spent in preparation the squadron left Libau on the 15th February, and after passing through the Great Belt on the 20th anchored early on the morning of the 21st off the Skaw, where the ships coaled. In the evening of the following day Admiral Nebogatov took his force to sea, and it was next heard of at Cherbourg, outside which port it coaled from its own colliers on the 27th. Bad weather was experienced on the passage to the Mediterranean, but the coast defence vessels proved better sea boats than had been expected, in spite of their low freeboard, and the next anchorage was reached in safety on the 5th March. This was at the Zafarin Islands, belonging to Spain, off the north coast of Morocco. On the 13th Suda Bay was reached, where the destroyers left behind by the *Oleg* Detachment were still lying. However, it was not intended that Admiral Nebogatov should be hampered by these craft, and they remained behind when the squadron sailed on the 21st, after picking up the hospital ship *Kostroma*, the transport *Hermann Lerche*, and the tank vessel *Graf Strogonov*. It arrived at Port Said at daylight on the 24th, and on the following day passed through the canal to Suez, where only a short stay was made. The next six days, two of which were spent in tube cannon practice at towed targets, were occupied in the passage down the Red Sea, anchor being cast about six miles off Jibuti early on the

* The official designation of this force was "The First Independent Squadron of Ships of the Pacific Ocean," from which it may be assumed that it was not originally intended that Admiral Rozhstvenski should await its arrival before proceeding into Japanese waters. It consisted of the second-class battleship *Imperator Nikolai I*, the armoured coast defence vessels *General Admiral Apraxin*, *Admiral Ushakov*, *Admiral Senyavin*, and the armoured cruiser *Vladimir Monomakh*, and was accompanied by the following auxiliaries flying the merchant flag:—*Kuronio* (coal), *Livonia* (coal), *Svir* (ocean tug), *Xenia* (repair and ammunition ship). Rear-Admiral Nebogatov was in command with his flag in the *Imperator Nikolai I*. The *Slava*, *Pamyat Azova*, and *Imperator Alexandr II* could not be got ready in time, but were to be included in "The Second Independent Squadron of Ships of the Pacific Ocean," which, however, never left Russia.

morning of the 2nd April. Coaling from hired German colliers, overhauling of machinery and provisioning occupied five days, and on the 7th April, Admiral Nebogatov resumed his journey. Before sailing he telegraphed to St. Petersburg for instructions and received the reply: "You are to join up with Rozhestvenski whose route is unknown to us. He has left Madagascar. We are sending transports for him to Batavia." It was then decided at a conference of commanding officers to make for the Strait of Malacca.

Two days after leaving port, target practice was carried out at long range by all the ships.* On the same day the transport *Kuronio* was detached in order to meet at a previously arranged rendezvous a steamship which was expected to bring instructions from St. Petersburg. To give time for the transport to carry out her mission the squadron put into Mir Bat Bay on the 12th April.† The other transports which had followed the squadron from Jibuti now closed up, and all the fighting ships took in large deck cargoes of coal in addition to the full stowage of their bunkers. Mir Bat was left on the evening of the 13th. The difficulties of coaling on the long passage across the Indian Ocean proved to be less formidable than those which had opposed Admiral Rozhestvenski, for the weather was exceptionally favourable, and it was found on several occasions possible to bring the transports alongside the other vessels. In this way the very heavy labour of transshipping coal by boat was avoided, and much time was saved. Another feared complication disappeared when the coast defence vessels, whose small bunker capacity might have been a handicap, proved themselves to be far more economical steamers than had been anticipated. Except for a certain amount of long-range target practice, the voyage was continued without interruption until the 27th April, when the squadron stopped about one hundred and fifty miles to the westward of Acheen Head in Sumatra. Here, taking advantage of an absolute calm, the transports went alongside the fighting ships, and full supplies of coal and ammunition

* In order to judge better of the results, Admiral Nebogatov embarked his staff in the *Svir*, from on board which they observed the practice. The ranging was found to be very defective at the longer distances, and on arrival at Mir Bat, on the southern coast of Arabia, corrections were made to the range-finders. Subsequently the shooting improved.

† The *Kuronio* rejoined the squadron a few days later, but brought no news of Admiral Rozhestvenski.

were taken on board in forty-eight hours. Admiral Nebogatov, however, made no move for the next two days, probably because a meeting had been arranged for a certain date with the *Kostroma*, which had been sent on to Batavia to obtain news of the Second Squadron. On the 2nd May his force entered the Strait of Malacca, and on the 5th passed Singapore, where dispatches were received from the Russian Consul giving an account of Admiral Rozhestvenski's movements and appointing a rendezvous. Nothing more was needed, and on the 9th May, as already related, Admiral Nebogatov fell in with the Second Squadron off Van Fong Bay.

This junction immediately raised the spirits of the officers and men of the squadrons. It was greeted with jubilation by the Press in Russia, where the possibility of its being effected had by many been looked upon with great misgiving from the first, and where, after the experiences of the Second Pacific Squadron, few had ventured to hope that Admiral Nebogatov would reach the China Sea before midsummer at the earliest. These gloomy prophecies had now been falsified, and although the future was full of danger, it was something for Russia to know that she had assembled her full naval strength in Far Eastern waters, and that her seamen had triumphed over difficulties which to some at least had appeared almost insurmountable. Nevertheless, by far the most formidable part of Admiral Rozhestvenski's task still lay before him, for in front lay an enemy whose courage and skill had already excited the admiration of the civilized world, and whose veteran crews his own half-trained men were ill-fitted to meet. The path of duty was clear, but it must have been with an anxious heart that he penned the following order to the fleet:—

The moral effect of the junction of the two squadrons.

“To-day, the 9th May, at 2 p.m. Rear-Admiral Nebogatov's squadron, which left Libau on the 15th February, four months after my own, has joined the fleet. While giving due honour to the brave men who have so brilliantly carried out this difficult voyage, deprived of the use of friendly ports, and compelled to undergo hardships which are known to all of us, I do not wish to belittle the performances of the other squadrons which have had to await their comrades in circumstances such as to render the enforced halt as arduous as the passage itself. With the junction of this squadron our strength not only equals that of the enemy, but in ships of the

line to some extent exceeds it. The Japanese possess far speedier vessels than ours, but we do not propose to run away from them, and we shall succeed in our object if our worthy engine-room crews perform their duties in action as calmly, staunchly, and conscientiously as they have carried them out hitherto. The Japanese have the numerical superiority in torpedo craft; they have submarine boats; they have floating mines which can be dropped overboard. But these material advantages can be met by the exercise of caution and vigilance. We must not be caught asleep by torpedo attacks; we must never fail to detect floating bodies or periscopes projecting above the water; we must not become excited when working our searchlights; and we must shoot calmly and carefully. The Japanese possess great advantages in their long experience of active service and in the practice they have had in firing under battle conditions. This should be remembered, and we must not be induced to waste our ammunition by the fact that they can fire rapidly, but must correct each shot according to observed results. In no other way can we count upon success, and this must be realized by all officers and men.

“The loyalty of the Japanese to throne and country is unbounded. They do not suffer dishonour and they die like heroes.

“But we also have sworn before the Most High Throne. God has inspired us with courage. He has assisted us to overcome the unprecedented trials of our voyage. God will strengthen our right hand. He will bestow upon us His blessing so that we may carry out the will of our Sovereign and wash away the bitter shame of our country with our blood.”

On the 10th May the Third Pacific Squadron went into Kua Bé, close to Van Fong Bay, to coal, and on the 11th the Second Pacific Squadron entered the latter bay for the same purpose, the weather being too rough to permit of the work being carried on outside. Next day Admiral Rozhestvenski steamed out, and waited outside the bay until he was joined by Admiral Nebogatov on the 14th. Then, in the presence of the French cruiser *Guichen*, the whole unwieldy mass of fifty ships of all classes, now reorganized into three divisions of battle-ships and two of cruisers, started on its voyage to Vladivostok

The concentrated
Russian fleet
sails from
Van Fong Bay.

under the personal direction of the commander-in-chief. The fleet was subdivided as follows:—

Battleship Divisions.

- | | | |
|--------------|---|---|
| 1st Division | } | <i>Knyaz Suworov</i> (Flag of Vice-Admiral Rozhstvenski). |
| | | <i>Imperator Alexandr III.</i> |
| | | <i>Borodino.</i> |
| | | <i>Orel.</i> |
| 2nd Division | } | <i>Oslabya</i> (Flag of Rear-Admiral von Felkerzam). |
| | | <i>Sisoi Veliki.</i> |
| | | <i>Navarin.</i> |
| | | <i>Admiral Nakhimov.</i> |
| 3rd Division | } | <i>Imperator Nikolai I.</i> (Flag of Rear-Admiral Nebogatov). |
| | | <i>General-Admiral Apraxin.</i> |
| | | <i>Admiral Senyavin.</i> |
| | | <i>Admiral Ushakov.</i> |

Cruiser Division.

- Oleg* (Flag of Rear-Admiral Enkvist).
Avrora.
Dmitri Donskoi.
Vladimir Monomakh.
Rion.
Dnyepri.

Scouting Division.

- Svyetlana* (Broad Pennant of Captain Shein).
Kuban.
Terek.
Ural.

Destroyers.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1st Flotilla. | 2nd Flotilla. |
| <i>Zhemchug</i> } Cruisers. | <i>Blestyashchi.</i> |
| <i>Izumrud</i> } | <i>Bezuprechni.</i> |
| <i>Byedovi.</i> | <i>Bodri.</i> |
| <i>Buini.</i> | <i>Gromki.</i> |
| <i>Bravi.</i> | <i>Grozni.</i> |
| <i>Buistri.</i> | |

Division of Transports,

Almaz (Cruiser, Broad Pennant of Captain Radlov).

Kamchatka (Repair ship. Armed).

Irtuish (Armed).

Anaduir (Armed).

Merkuri.

Tambov.

Voronezh.

Yaroslavl.

Vladimir.

Livonia.

Kuronia.

Meteor (Tank vessel).

Koreya.

Rus (Ocean tug).

Svir (Ocean tug).

Hospital Ships.

Orel

Kostroma.

All other auxiliaries were sent back.

The 2nd Division of cruisers led the way, either in two columns in line ahead or disposed as a scouting screen. The 1st and 2nd Divisions of battleships and the 1st Division of cruisers followed, also in two columns in line ahead, with the *Zhemchug* and *Izumrud* placed on the outer flank of each column in order to act as repeating ships for the admiral's signals. During the daytime the transport division, in two columns, led by the *Almaz*, was stationed astern of the main columns and at night it closed up between them. The 3rd Division of battleships, in line abreast, brought up the rear. The fighting formation to be adopted was one line of battleships and another of cruisers; and Admiral Enkvist, who commanded the cruisers, was directed, in the absence of a special signal from the commander-in-chief, to use his own discretion as to whether to support the battleships or to detach himself for the purpose of operating against the hostile cruisers and protecting the Russian transports. In action the speed of the battleships was to be limited to eleven knots, so as to enable the older ships, whose highest speed was thirteen knots, to keep their places in the line.

Even more important than the formation of the fleet was the selection of the route to be followed. Admiral Rozhestvenski was thoroughly alive to the fact that he must fight an action sooner or later, and he felt that it was his duty to court one, always with the hope that he would be able to reach his goal after inflicting some material damage upon the enemy. His final words on the subject are:

Alternative
courses.

"There could be no other solution."* Taking this as his guiding principle, he dismissed any attempt to make the long passage via the Kurile Group and the La Pérouse Strait as being too risky owing to the fogs likely to be encountered and the difficulties of coaling. He could not hope to conceal his movements from his vigilant enemy, and it was more than probable that he would be forced to fight under conditions which would be altogether to his disadvantage. The same arguments applied, although somewhat less forcibly, to the route by the Tsugaru Channel, and that alternative was also discarded. There remained only the Korean Strait, in the broad eastern channel of which the chances of battle appeared to be least unfavourable.

With the view of following this route course was first shaped east-north-east, speed being set at eight knots. Slow but steady progress was made until 5 a.m. on the 18th, when the fleet stopped to coal at sea about a hundred and twenty-five miles west-south-west of the Batan Islands. When the voyage was resumed at 5 p.m. the transports *Mercuri* and *Tambov* were sent to Saigon. During the night the speed of the fleet had to be reduced owing to some injury to the engines of the *Apraxin*, and further delay was caused by the capture of the British S.S. *Oldhamia*; and it was not until 8 a.m. on the 20th that the fleet passed into the open waters of the Pacific Ocean.†

As he was at last approaching the scene of probable action Admiral Rozhestvenski devised a somewhat ineffective plan in

* A considerable amount of light is thrown upon this point by some lectures which were delivered in 1906 before the Russian Technical Society. Admiral Rozhestvenski's official reports are quoted, and the considerations which influenced him are given at some length. It is particularly interesting to note that he fully realized that merely to reach Vladivostok would in itself be of little service to his country.

† Since the *Oldhamia's* papers were not considered to be satisfactory, a prize crew was put on board, her own crew was transferred to the transports, and she was finally sent off to Vladivostok by way of La Pérouse Strait. She did not, however, reach that port, since she ran on a rock off the Island of Yetorup where she was burnt by her prize crew. The ship and cargo were both condemned by the prize court, and an appeal was dismissed.

order to induce Admiral Togo to divide his forces. The armed merchant vessels *Kuban* and *Terek* were to show themselves on the eastern coast of Kiu Siu and Hondo; a number of transports were to appear off the Saddle Islands—near the mouth of the Yang-tse River—two days before the fleet was timed to enter the Korean Strait; and the *Dnyepri* and *Rion*, after leaving the vicinity of the Saddle Islands, were to proceed into the Yellow Sea as if making for Port Arthur. The first vessels to leave were the *Kuban* and *Terek*, which parted company with the main body on the 22nd, just before it entered the channel through the Lu-chu Group, to the eastward of the Island of Miyako. The passage through the channel was made in thick and somewhat boisterous weather, which delayed the final coaling although it favoured secrecy. By 5 a.m. on the 23rd the wind and sea had gone down, and each ship was ordered to take in a sufficient quantity of fuel to enable her to have her bunkers at full normal stowage on the morning of the 26th May, with a view to fighting an action and proceeding to Vladivostok. While coaling was in progress Captain Radlov, who commanded the transports, went on board the *Yaroslavl*; his former ship, the *Almaz*, being transferred to the 2nd Cruiser Division in the place of the *Kuban* and *Terek*. By 4 p.m. the fighting ships had taken on board their last hundredweight of coal, and the fleet proceeded on a north-westerly course towards the mouth of the Yang-tse. The same evening the order to expect an action any hour was issued. Though since leaving Annam the commander-in-chief had been careful to avoid the usual trade routes he now took his whole fleet so far to the westward that it cut right into the track of vessels passing up and down the Chinese coast.

During the night the fleet suffered a great loss in the death of Admiral von Felkerzam. He had been in bad health for a long time and his death was not unexpected; but it was thought best to keep the news of it from the fleet, and it was known only on board the *Oslyabya* and *Suvorov*. Even Admiral Nebogatov was not informed of it, and the deceased officer's flag was kept flying. Next morning a change was made in the order of sailing, which may either have been necessitated by the death of the second-in-command or have been due to purely tactical considerations. The fleet moved in four columns, the two

Plan to induce a division of the Japanese fleet.

Death of Admiral von Felkerzam on the 23rd May.

outer of warships, the two inner of auxiliaries. The starboard column comprised the battleships of the 1st and 2nd Divisions; the port column was formed by the 3rd Division of battleships and the 1st Division of cruisers. The three cruisers of the 2nd Division were disposed ahead—the *Svyetlana* being in the centre with the *Almaz* and *Ural* on either quarter. The *Zhemchug* and *Izumrud* were placed on either beam of the column leaders, and the destroyers, which had hitherto been in tow of transports, now cast off and took their place between the columns. At night top lights were extinguished, but navigation lights were still carried, and eyewitnesses state that the fleet could be seen from a great distance.

On the morning of the 25th May, in misty weather and with the range of visibility limited to about five miles, the fleet arrived at a point about twenty-five miles from the Saddle Islands, whence the six transports *Voronezh*, *Yaroslavl*, *Vladimir*, *Meteor*, *Kuronio*, and *Livonia* were dispatched to show themselves off the islands and then to proceed to Shanghai. Thursday, the 25th May. The *Ricin* and *Dnyepr* also left on their mission; but the tugs *Rus* and *Svir* as well as the *Anaduir*, *Irtuisk*, *Kamchatka*, and *Koreya* still remained with the fleet. The presence of these vessels was bound to be a source of anxiety, since their protection would be an additional responsibility, and they were probably retained because their services would be urgently required at Vladivostok. It was now possible to forecast the future with some degree of accuracy. The hour of battle was at hand; and in all human probability the enemy would be encountered in the Korean Strait. The Russian commander was never for a moment deceived as to the severity of the task which lay before him, and after weighing all the chances now came to the conclusion that his wisest plan would be to reach the middle of the eastern channel at mid-day on the 27th. By doing so he would minimize the risks of attacks by the Japanese torpedo craft before the general action, since on the night of the 26th–27th—the most dangerous period—his distance from the probable bases from which such attacks could be made would be considerable.

In accordance with this plan course was shaped so as to pass twenty-five miles to the southward of Quelpart Island, and with a fresh south wind blowing and in a fairly heavy sea the fleet proceeded at a speed of five knots, occasionally increased to eight knots. For some time no definite news had been received of the Japanese, for an impenetrable veil still shrouded all their move-

ments. As the best means of dealing with this mysterious foe, Admiral Rozhestvenski took every precaution to preserve the secret of his own movements; he threw out no scouts; and forbade the dispatch of wireless messages. Towards evening on the 25th the receivers on board the Russian ships began to give the first indications that such messages were passing between Japanese ships, and the *Ural*, which carried a powerful wireless installation, asked leave to interfere, which was refused. The night passed quietly, and by the following morning, in spite of the slow speed at which the fleet had been steaming, so much progress had been made that some time was devoted to manœuvring, the ships being practised in assuming battle formation both during the forenoon and afternoon. At the conclusion of the exercises the following signals were made:—"Prepare for action," and "To-morrow at the hoisting of the colours battle flags are to be sent up."

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

THE BATTLE OF THE SEA OF JAPAN.*

(Plates 59 and 60 and Plans 72, 73, 74, 75, 76 and 77.)

By sunset on Friday, the 26th May, 1905, it was only a matter of a few hours before the encounter which had been awaited in breathless expectation by the whole civilized world must begin. And yet, though every movement of the Baltic Fleet and its various reinforcements had been watched with Japanese absorbing interest for months past, and though ignorance of the position of the Russian fleet. the news of each stage in its progress had been flashed to every quarter of the globe, now, when its success or failure was likely to be decided before the close of another day, that fleet had disappeared not only from the view of the spectators, but from that of the man whose name will for ever be associated with the greatest sea battle that had been fought for a century. The last news—already a week old—had placed the Russians between Luzon and Formosa. If, therefore, their commander intended to attempt the passage of the Korean Strait it was high time that his force should appear. If, on the other hand, he should have elected to pass round the eastern shore of Japan and make for one of the more northerly channels, he might already be approaching it and might slip through before he could be brought to action. Admiral Togo had long since decided that Admiral Rozhstvenski's wisest course would be to attempt a passage through from the south, and had for some weeks been patiently waiting at Masampo for the news of his arrival in the Korean Strait. But at the same time he did not dare delay too long at his own base in Korea, and was actually on the point of making for the northern passages when the hostile vessels were sighted by his scouts. It is true that the

* All times in this account are expressed in mean time of place, which is about twenty minutes earlier than that kept by the Japanese. Courses and bearings are magnetic unless otherwise stated, the compass variation being 4° W.

doubts of the Japanese commander-in-chief were soon dispelled; but while his conduct of the whole campaign claims admiration and the completeness of his final triumph compels something akin to wonder, it is easy to underrate the less obtrusive side of his action—the strategical insight, the determination and the restraint which gave him strength to wait at Masampo until the very moment of his enemy's appearance in the Korean Strait.

The hours of tension which immediately preceded the last great act of the war afford an opportunity for a comparison of the forces ranged on either side. The four battleships of the Russian 1st Division may be considered as equal to the four possessed

by the Japanese, for though they were of less displacement and carried two fewer 6-inch guns than the *Mikasa*, *Asahi* and *Shikishima*, each was more powerful than the *Fuji*. In broadside power the Russians opposed sixteen 12-inch and twenty-four 6-inch to an equal number of 12-inch and twenty-six 6-inch guns; the Japanese 6-inch guns, however, were of forty calibres only, those of the Russians being of forty-five. In design there was no great disparity in the protection given to the hulls, but the actual draught of the Russian ships greatly exceeded that designed, and a large part of their armour was consequently below the water-line. It has been asserted that this excess of draught was due to the exceptional amount of coal carried; but on the morning of the battle the fuel supply was not above the normal, and the defect must be ascribed to other causes. To compare the eight Japanese armoured cruisers with the eight remaining Russian armoured vessels is somewhat difficult, owing to the variety of types among the latter. In heavy guns the advantage lay with the Russian's who on the broadside opposed ten 12-inch, fifteen 10-inch, two 9-inch, and six 8-inch guns to one 10-inch and thirty 8-inch guns of the Japanese. As regards secondary armament the Japanese broadside of fifty-four 6-inch guns was met by only twenty 6-inch and six 4·7-inch. In armour protection there was no great difference, but as was the case with the larger vessels the armoured belts of some of the Russian ships were completely submerged. In speed, however, the Japanese vessels with their clean bottoms surpassed their opponents by several knots. In protected cruisers and torpedo craft the superiority of the Japanese was very great. Nevertheless, it was upon her armoured ships that Japan had to rely for the defeat of the

armada which had been dispatched so many thousand miles in a last effort to dispute the command of the sea.

But no comparison of fighting value would be complete without some consideration of the human factor. On the one side were crews of veterans who had already shown magnificent fighting qualities, who had been handling the huge mass of material in their charge for over a year under war conditions, who were under the command of an admiral in whom they reposed the utmost confidence. On the other side were collections of men hastily assembled, who were deficient in gunnery training and hardly accustomed to their ships even at the close of a long voyage, who, although capable of devoted heroism in the discharge of their duties, were lacking in that confidence in victory which should inspire those to whom the fate of a nation is entrusted. The manner in which the Russian commander had succeeded despite heavy difficulties in bringing his fleet to the scene of the conflict shows him to have been a man of strong character; but he had yet to prove his power of commanding a fleet in action and his fitness to meet an opponent whose ability had already won universal respect. Had the battle of the Sea of Japan been fought as a tactical exercise at a naval school the academic result might possibly have been in doubt. In actual warfare, where moral qualities exert their full influence, there could be but one issue, for the Russian crews were half beaten before a shot was fired.

At midnight on the 26th-27th May, the Russian fleet, whose near approach was still hidden from the Japanese, was some sixty miles to the westward of the Goto Islands, steaming at from nine to ten knots speed on a course N. 64° E. for the middle of the channel between Tsushima and Ikishima. The night was cold, overcast and very dark; and even after the moon rose about midnight the range of visibility was greatly restricted by a mist which overhung the water. In spite of the possibility of a torpedo attack, Admiral Rozhdestvenski had given orders for his ships to burn those lights which showed towards his flagship. The night passed without alarm, although it brought but little rest to the crews, and when daylight came the Russian fleet was still undiscovered by its enemy.

At daylight on the 27th the Japanese fleet was disposed as follows: the 1st, 2nd, and 4th Divisions were in Douglas Inlet at the entrance to Sylvia Basin; the 5th Division, 6th Division (less the *Akitsushima* and *Idzumi*), and the 7th Division (less the *Fuso*

which was on guard to the southward of Kozaki) were in Osaki Bay near Takeshiki, and the destroyers and torpedo boats were distributed between Douglas Inlet and Osaki Bay. The guard line to the north-westward of Shiro-se in the Goto Islands was being patrolled by the 3rd Division, the flanks of this line being watched by the *Akitsushima* on the north and *Idzumi* on the south, while the armed merchant cruisers *America Maru*, *Sado Maru*, *Shinano Maru*, and *Manshu Maru* formed an outer line of scouts farther to seaward.

About 2.30 a.m., the *Shinano Maru*, which was forty miles W. $\frac{1}{2}$ N. from Shiro-se, sighted a vessel steaming to the eastward and proceeded to keep in touch with her, but it was not until 4.10 that this vessel was recognized as a Russian hospital ship, and in a quarter of an hour afterwards the Russian fleet was descried through the mist.

The long expected news was transmitted promptly by wireless telegraphy to the Japanese cruisers in the immediate vicinity, to Admiral Kataoka at Takeshiki and to Admiral Togo at Masampo.

The Japanese 3rd Division (*Kasagi*, *Chitose*, *Nitaka*, and *Otowa*), which was to the northward of the Russian line of advance, at once endeavoured to get into touch with the enemy and steamed to the south-eastward. At 5.30 it sighted a Russian hospital ship, but Admiral Dewa, instead of altering towards her, steamed farther to the southward until 6.40, when he learned from a wireless message sent by the *Idzumi* that the Russians were over twenty-five miles to the north-eastward of him. He had missed them entirely. He now proceeded at full speed in that direction in order to overtake them. Meanwhile the Russian ships had not sighted the Japanese cruisers, but the fact that he had been discovered was known to Admiral Rozhstvenski by the number of wireless messages passing, which were taken up and repeated by ships farther and farther away, and although in cipher proclaimed themselves of an entirely different character from any previously received. No attempt was made to interfere with these messages by means of the *Ural's* powerful wireless installation; but soon after the first of them began, Admiral Rozhstvenski recalled his 2nd Division of cruisers (*Almaz*, *Svyetlana*, and *Ural*) from its position ahead of the fleet, and stationed it astern to guard the transports. Between 6 a.m. and 7 a.m. the weather became somewhat more clear, and at 6.45 the

Russian leaders caught their first view of a Japanese cruiser, which appeared out of the mist a little abaft the starboard beam of the *Suvorov* and kept on a parallel course at a distance of from four to five miles. She was soon recognized as the *Idzumi*. She remained for some hours in the same position relative to the Russian fleet, regularly reporting its movements, and no serious effort was made to drive her off, because the Russian admiral was unwilling to detach one of his few cruisers lest she might be cut off by a superior force.

At 9 a.m., when nearly abreast of the southern extremity of Tsushima, Admiral Rozhestvenski informed the fleet by signal that the course would be altered at noon to N. 23° E. (true).* Three quarters of an hour later more Japanese vessels made their appear-

The Russian
dispositions.
Plan 72.

ance abaft the port beam, and as they approached were observed to be the old cruisers *Itsukushima*, *Matsushima*, *Hashidate* and the battleship *Chin-yen*.

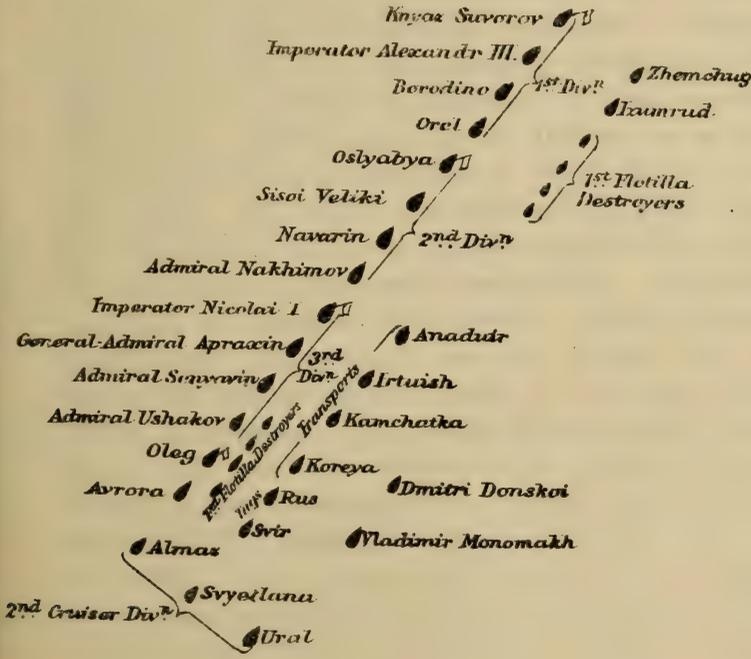
These were Admiral Kataoka's 5th Division, which had left Takeshiki in the early morning and had steamed round the southern end of Tsushima. Standing on until he had obtained a good view of the Russians, Admiral Kataoka turned to port at 10 a.m., but continued to keep his enemy in sight. Meanwhile, Admiral Rozhestvenski, apprehensive of an attack from the port side, was altering his formation into battle order by increasing the speed of the 1st and 2nd Battleship Divisions to eleven knots and placing them ahead of the port column—an evolution which took a considerable time to complete since the 3rd Division, which headed the port column, remained at a speed of nine knots. The *Dmitri Donskoi* and *Vladimir Monomakh* were ordered to protect the transports to starboard, and the *Izumrud*, which had hitherto been on the port beam of the *Nikolai*, steamed round the head of the fleet, and with the destroyers of the 1st Flotilla took station astern of the *Zhemchug*. The fleet was then in order for an attack from the port side.†

The expected armoured vessels did not appear, but at 11 a.m. the Japanese 3rd Division, which had sighted the Russians for the first time half an hour earlier, began to close in from the port quarter of the latter to a range of eight or nine thousand yards. The Russian guns were at once trained on these ships, and at 11.20 a.m., when the *Orel* fired the first shot—without

* i.e. N. 27° E. (mag.).

† See Plate 59.

THE FORMATION OF THE RUSSIAN FLEET
AT 11 A.M. 27TH MAY, 1905.



orders—a number of vessels at the rear of the line followed her example. The Japanese cruisers turned away and replied with a few shots, but they were soon out of range. Almost simultaneously Admiral Rozhstvenski made the signal “Do not waste ammunition,” and the firing ceased after about thirty rounds had been expended. It was now evident that the Japanese were gathering in on him. Some of their 6th Division could be seen in the distance to the northward, while the low hulls of torpedo craft were occasionally also visible. At 11.30 a.m. the crews were sent to dinner; at noon course was altered to N. 23° E. (true) for Vladivostok.

The Japanese cruisers had by this time drawn so far ahead that they were no longer in sight; and concluding that they had gone to report his formation to their commander, who might at any moment appear from the northward with the Japanese main force, Admiral Rozhstvenski determined to change into line abreast. His 1st and 2nd Battleship Divisions were to turn eight points to starboard in succession and then to resume the original course together, while the 3rd Division was to form line abreast independently, a manœuvre in which the fleet had had some practice. The signal was made and the *Suvorov* began to turn to starboard; but before she had completed the eight point turn the Japanese cruisers again came in sight. Being unwilling to disclose his intention to the enemy, Admiral Rozhstvenski countermanded his order to the 2nd Division and himself resumed the original course, followed by the ships of his own division in succession. The result of this unfortunate manœuvre was to place the 1st Division in a separate column some distance to the starboard of the 2nd and 3rd Divisions, thus entailing another change of formation into battle order at the last moment.* By 1.15 p.m. the new course had brought the Russian fleet about thirteen miles to the westward of the Island of Okinoshima. Here it will be left in order to follow the movements of the Japanese who were coming forward to the encounter.

At 4.45 a.m. Admiral Togo's long period of suspense had been brought to a close by the receipt of the wireless message from the *Shinano Maru* that she had sighted the Russians. The day

* In a report the Russian admiral stated that he considered that he was then in a good formation from which to assume either single line ahead or single line abreast as circumstances might demand

had arrived—the day for which the precious battleships had been preserved through more than a year of war, for which the dockyards had laboured night and day, and to which the people of Japan had looked forward with the utmost anxiety. Nothing which could tend towards the efficiency of the fleet had been left undone, for it had been realized that the fate of the nation depended upon its success or failure in the supreme test to which it was to be put. If it should succeed, the war might be brought to a triumphant conclusion or, at least, the Japanese army in Manchuria relieved of its greatest cause for anxiety. If it should fail, new hope would be instilled into the hearts of the enemy, Marshal Oyama's victories would be robbed of almost all their value, and the whole aspect of the campaign would be changed.

Undismayed by the weight of his responsibilities and confident in the fighting qualities of his fleet, Admiral Togo prepared for the final trial of strength. Fires were brought forward in all boilers and at 6.15 a.m., led by the *Mikasa*, the fleet steamed out to sea.

Following Admiral Togo's flagship came the *Shikishima*, *Fuji*, *Asahi*, *Kasuga*, and *Nisshin* of the 1st Division, with Vice-Admiral Misu's flag in the last ship. Then came the 2nd Division, headed by Vice-Admiral Kamimura's flagship the *Idzumo*, followed by the *Adzuma*, *Tokiwa*, *Yakumo* and *Iwate* (Rear-Admiral Shimamura). The rear was brought up by the 4th Division, the *Naniwa* (Vice-Admiral Uriu), *Takachiho*, *Akashi*, and *Tsushima*. The *Asama* was detached from the Second Squadron and followed behind the battlefleet, accompanied by a special flotilla of destroyers and torpedo boats. This flotilla appears to have been formed with a view to making a sudden descent upon the enemy's vessels in the midst of the general action and thereby throwing them into confusion. But when open water was reached it was found that there was too much sea running for the efficient working of light craft, and the plan was abandoned. The *Asama* therefore took her station at the rear of her own division and the torpedo vessels rejoined their proper commands.

After clearing the coast of Korea Admiral Togo took an easterly course so as to pass about ten miles to the northward of Tsushima, his scouts having informed him that the enemy was

The Japanese.
Plan 72.

The main fleet
leaves its base.
Plan 72.

making for the eastern channel, and ordered Rear-Admiral Yamada with the 7th Division, which was composed of the older ships and gunboats, to patrol the western channel in case any of the hostile vessels should attempt that passage. At 8 a.m. the ships were cleared for action and speed was set for fourteen knots. A very stiff breeze from the south-west was blowing through the strait, and there was a considerable sea which threw heavy spray on board the large ships whenever the course brought the wind before the beam, and made it so difficult for the smaller craft to keep up that about 9 a.m. the torpedo boats were sent to take shelter in Miura Bay, with orders to rejoin so soon as the weather moderated. Shortly after he had passed the northern end of Tsushima the information as to the position, numbers, and disposition of the Russians which came in by wireless from the cruisers led Admiral Togo to alter course to S. 40° E. with a view to cutting the enemy off to the northward of the eastern channel; but about this time some anxiety was aroused by the fact that the range of vision was not more than five to seven miles. The disposition of the Russians reported to Admiral Togo appears to have been that in which they had been originally sighted, that is, in two columns with the more powerful ships to starboard,* and it was upon this information that he resolved to attack the head of their port column. Preparations being complete, the crews were sent to dinner about 10.30 a.m. At noon the Japanese had reached a position about fifteen miles to the northward of Okinoshima; and at 12.30 p.m., no enemy having been sighted, course was altered to west in accordance with the resolution to attack from the port side. About half an hour later smoke was seen on the port bow. This was at first taken to indicate the approach of the Russian scouts, but was soon seen to proceed from the friendly 3rd Division, which reported the enemy to be some five miles astern. Shortly after the receipt of this intelligence Admiral Togo turned to a south-south-westerly course, and at 1.19 p.m. the leading vessels of the Russian fleet became visible through the haze, a little on the starboard bow of the Japanese flagship.

The situation called for immediate action, for the fleets were barely seven miles apart and were approaching at a rate of about twenty-five miles an hour. Without hesitation Admiral Togo

* It is doubtful whether the changes of the Russians into single line and again into two columns were observed by the Japanese scouts.

turned sharply to starboard at 1.20 p.m., and in accordance with his decision to attack their port column stood across the bows of the Russians on a north-westerly course, followed by his own and the 2nd Divisions. The 4th Division did not conform to this movement, but altered course to port and circling round through east and north followed the 3rd Division to the north-west. As the Japanese armoured divisions swung round after the *Mikasa* and the Russian fleet came into full view ships' companies went to their stations for action and battle flags were hoisted. A few minutes later Admiral Togo's final exhortation to his fleet flew from the *Mikasa's* masthead :

The fleets
in contact.
Plan 73.*

“On this battle depends the rise or fall of our Empire; do your utmost.”†

The Russians do not appear to have made out the Japanese fleet until it had begun to cross their path to the port side, which was a minute or two after they had themselves been observed. But then Admiral Rozhestvenski at once began to get his fleet into single line. The 1st Division, headed by the flagship, turned slightly to port and increased speed to eleven knots so as to take its place ahead of the port column; and the transports and their escort were ordered to move away to starboard. Meanwhile, the Japanese, still out of range, having crossed ahead of the Russians, turned to the westward at 1.35 p.m. and five minutes later changed to a south-westerly course nearly opposite to that of their opponents. The rival fleets were approaching rapidly when, at 1.45 p.m., the *Mikasa* suddenly swung round to port sixteen points, and was followed in succession by the Japanese 1st and 2nd Divisions. Theoretically speaking this was a most hazardous

* Plan 73 illustrates the course of the main action from beginning to end, and should be referred to in addition to the figures illustrating the situations at certain times.

† In this narrative of the action an endeavour has been made to reconcile various accounts which are extremely conflicting, and in Plan 73 an attempt has been made to show the movements of the two main fleets throughout the day. The loss of the leading Russian ships with but few survivors is answerable for a large gap in the records of that fleet, while the constant changes of course make an absolutely accurate representation of the tracks of the vessels an impossibility. Moreover, even before a gun was fired, the hazy atmosphere limited the range of vision to five or six miles; and later in the day, when smoke from funnels, bursting shells, and burning ships hung over the water in dense clouds, it was still more difficult for those present to distinguish the movements of individual vessels.

movement, for it exposed the flagship and her immediate followers without support to a concentrated fire from the greater part of the Russian fleet; and had the Russians been well trained to pick up the range rapidly an initial advantage might have been gained by them. But this was not Admiral Togo's first action with the Russians, and he was prepared to take a considerable risk in order to achieve a definite object. That this object was to place his fleet on the bow of his antagonist and to concentrate his whole fire on the leading ships is quite clear. On the 10th August, when placed very much as he now found himself, he had turned too late and had in consequence been forced to steam for several hours before he had been able to regain the desired point of vantage. On this occasion he was evidently not disposed to repeat that error. There was, of course, the alternative of turning together instead of in succession, but that movement would have brought the *Mikasa* to the rear instead of to the head of the Japanese line; and in place of the most powerful ships being opposed to the Russian van, comparatively weak cruisers would have occupied that important position.

At 1.48 p.m. the *Suvorov*, which had by this time taken her place at the head of the line and had reduced her speed to ten knots, fired the first shot at a range of 6,400 yards at the *Mikasa* just as that ship had reached her new course. Though some of

The first phase of the battle. Plan 74, Fig. 1.

the ships of the 1st Division were still out of station, and the *Orel* was apparently masked by the *Oslabya*, the firing was quickly taken up by the Russian line and was principally directed upon the turning point of the Japanese ships as they followed the *Mikasa* on to the new course; but although they dropped sufficiently close to throw spray over the Japanese vessels, few of the Russian shells actually found their target, and these only from the 6-inch guns. On the Japanese side each ship opened fire as she came into line after running the gauntlet at the turning point; the shooting, however, was very deliberate and apparently at first somewhat ineffective. This state of affairs did not last long, for so soon as the Japanese had found the range their rate of fire became more rapid and the shooting increased in accuracy. About 1.55 p.m. both sides were fully engaged at ranges varying from 5,000 to 6,000 yards. The efforts of the Japanese were mainly directed against the first five Russian ships, the *Oslabya* receiving a large share of the attention of the 2nd Division; the

Russians, on the other hand, concentrated chiefly upon the *Mikasa*. The Japanese had increased their speed to fifteen knots, while that of the Russians remained about ten, with the result that the former drew ahead rapidly and the five leading Russian battleships came in for a tremendous battering from the whole hostile fleet.

So severe was the punishment received that at 2 p.m. Admiral Rozhstvenski turned slightly to port in order to alter the range; but finding, as might have been foreseen, that this only increased the concentration upon the two leading ships, he five minutes later turned four points to starboard and brought the *Mikasa* to a bearing nearer the beam.*

By this time the *Suvorov* and *Osl'yabya* were showing the effects of the enemy's fire, which was every moment becoming more and more centred upon them, and both vessels were ablaze. A large piece of the shield over the after turret of the *Suvorov* had been torn away, but in spite of this her guns remained in action. Many of the men who attempted to cope with the flames were killed or wounded, while the guns' crews were disabled and the mechanism of the guns was jammed by the fragments of shell which had found their way into the turrets through the gun ports. In the *Osl'yabya* the fore turret was out of action, and the decks were covered with killed and wounded men. Nevertheless the first vessel of either fleet to leave the line appears to have been the *Asama* which, it will be remembered, had taken station at the rear of the Japanese 2nd Division. She was struck aft near the water-line by three shells which disabled her steering gear and caused her to leak so badly that she hauled out of line to port for temporary repairs; these, however, were carried out so quickly that she was soon able to follow her division, although it was not until 4.45 p.m., after she had been engaged with various Russian vessels, that she resumed her station.

When the Russians turned to starboard the Japanese conformed to the movement, and the greater speed of the latter soon placed them once more on the bow of their enemy. The range now varied from 4,000 to 6,000 yards and was increasing between the leading ships. At 2.18 p.m. the *Mikasa* accordingly altered course to starboard across the head of the Russian line so as to "cross the T." For some minutes Admiral Rozhstvenski held on his course, but at 2.25 p.m. the situation could no longer

Loss of the
Osl'yabya.
Plan 74,
Figs. 3, 4, 5, 6.

* It is doubtful whether the slight turn to port actually took place. There is only one authority for the statement and no corroboration.

be endured and the *Suvorov* once more edged away to starboard. Very soon afterwards she refused to answer her helm owing to damage done to her steering gear, and being unable to steady herself on the new course swung round more and more to starboard. By this time the admiral and most of the senior officers had been wounded, several men in the conning tower had been killed, range-finders had been destroyed, and although she was gallantly keeping up a steady fire, the whole ship was in a state of much confusion. The *Osllyabya* was in an even worse plight. All her guns on the port side were disabled, and abreast of the fore turret was a large hole through which the water poured, causing her to take a heavy list to port and to settle down rapidly by the head. About 2.30 p.m. she left the line and stopped her engines. All efforts to prevent the inflow of water proved unavailing, and in a few minutes it became apparent that she was doomed. To the Russian ships at the rear of the line which passed within a few hundred yards of her she presented a terrible spectacle. She was turning over to port, with numbers of her crew clinging to her side and bilge keel, while Japanese shells were falling thickly all round her. About 2.45 p.m. she disappeared. The destroyers *Buini*, *Buistri*, *Bravi* and *Blestyashchi* at once dashed forward, and amidst the still falling shells succeeded in saving fourteen officers and three hundred and seventy-one men out of a complement of forty-eight officers and eight hundred and fifty-two men.

The accident to the *Suvorov* had evidently caused considerable confusion in the Russian line. The 2nd Division dropped astern of station, the 3rd Division put on full steam to fill the gap, and the 1st Division, led at first by the *Alexandr*, then by the *Borodino*, and then again by the *Alexandr*, turned to the south-eastward but eventually came round to a northerly course in the hope of crossing astern of the enemy.* Fires had broken out in both these ships, as well as in the *Sisoï Veliki*, and had compelled each of them to haul out of line for a few minutes. The departure of the *Suvorov* from the line and the loss of the *Osllyabya* mark the end of the first phase of the battle.

Meanwhile the Japanese had altered course to the south-eastward at 2.30 p.m., when they saw the *Suvorov* turn away, and were standing across the original course of their enemy, firing

* This is in accordance with the evidence given by Admiral Nebogatov at his trial by court martial and the accounts of other Russian officers.

into the confused mass of ships. When they reached a position to leeward of the Russians they found their view much obscured by the smoke which drifted towards them. They were thus unaware of the catastrophe which had befallen the *Oslabya*, and unable to make out clearly the movements of the other vessels. But at 2.40 p.m., on observing that the Russian leaders were heading towards the north, Admiral Togo signalled to his 1st Division to turn eight points to port together, and five minutes later by a similar turn brought them round to the north-westward in inverted order. The 2nd Division did not at once conform to this movement; it held on to the south-eastward, pouring a heavy fire into the leading Russian ships at a range of little more than 3,000 yards. Even the little *Chihaya*, which was attached to Admiral Kamimura's division, joined in, having gallantly taken station in line at the rear of the armoured cruisers, where her captain is said to have found greater safety than on the unexposed side of the fleet. After passing the enemy Admiral Kamimura's vessels turned in succession to port and followed the 1st Division, which at 2.50 p.m. had reopened fire with its port guns upon the Russian leaders at a range of 4,500 yards. The *Nisshin* led the Japanese battleships across the enemy's line of advance, and their concentrated fire forced the leading Russian vessel, which was now ablaze round the mainmast, to turn away to starboard;* but the range had been reduced to less than 3,000 yards before the Japanese had passed, and the vessels which followed the *Alexandr* suffered greatly. The Russian fleet then began to increase its distance from the Japanese 1st Division, which continued on its westward course, making a slight turn to port at 3 p.m., and almost immediately came under fire from the Japanese 2nd Division. Whether the leading Russian vessel was unwilling to face this ordeal or whether she wished to rejoin the *Suvorov*, which could be seen to the northward, will never be known, but at 3.8 p.m. she turned away to starboard followed by the rest of the line of the fleet. By this time the Japanese 1st Division was almost out of sight, and after making this last turn the head of the Russian line enjoyed a brief respite which may be said to have brought to a close the second phase of the action.

* One account states that some of the Russians turned to port through west and south.

Admiral Rozhestvenski's flagship, the *Suworov*, was now standing to the northward, almost hidden by the volumes of thick grey smoke which rose above her masthead. After leaving her station, she appears to have gradually completed a circle to starboard round the rear ships of her own line and then to have attempted to follow them. With only one mast left standing and a heavy list to port, she steamed slowly to the northward, and while in this helpless condition encountered the Japanese 2nd Division shortly after it had passed the main body of the Russian fleet. Turning first to starboard Admiral Kamimura circled to port round the Russian flagship, with every ship in his division concentrating its fire upon her at a range of about 3,000 yards until—in the words of an eyewitness—she was an inferno of bursting shell. Only one turret on board the Russian ship made reply, firing slowly. For some minutes did the *Suworov* endure this terrible punishment, only to find herself the object of a torpedo attack by the *Chihaya* and the 5th Flotilla of destroyers so soon as the firing ceased.

From this point onwards it is impossible to trace the movements of the Russian ships with any degree of accuracy: certainly no single observer with either fleet can have formed any clear conception as to the details of the action in its later stages. The accounts from the Russian side are so conflicting as to the turns made, the times of recorded incidents, and the order of ships that no coherent narrative of events can be evolved. Even for the Japanese, who were in perfect order, it was impossible to obtain more than a very rough impression of the enemy's movements. From time to time a Russian ship would be seen to emerge from amidst the clouds of haze and smoke and then disappear; and the similarity of those of the *Suworov* class increased the difficulty of identifying any individual vessel. Though by now the Baltic Fleet was a beaten force, the Japanese did not appreciate the extent of its injuries, and the obscurity which shrouded its movements rendered the task of converting defeat into annihilation far from simple. Throughout the remainder of the day the underlying principle of Admiral Togo's tactics was to prevent the enemy from escaping to the north.

It seems to be clearly established that soon after 3 p.m. the main body of the Russian fleet turned northwards and began to approach the *Suworov*. And apparently its guns were of some

The third phase.
Torpedo attack
on the *Knyaz*
Suworov.
Plan 75, Fig. 10.

assistance in driving off the torpedo attack on the unfortunate flagship made by the *Chihaya* and the destroyers. At 3.12 p.m. the Japanese 1st Division turned in succession to the south-westward. Though a few Russian projectiles were still falling near, little could be seen of the Russian ships, and a few minutes later Admiral Togo turned his division eight points to port together. Then after steaming in line abreast for less than ten minutes he made another turn to port into line ahead, with his own flagship once more leading. The Japanese armoured cruisers which had circled round the *Suvorov* until they headed to the south-westward were now nearly ahead of their own battleships, and on seeing his commander-in-chief's last manœuvre Admiral Kamimura led his division round to starboard until it also was on a north-easterly course. During these turns the Japanese had ceased firing, although their 1st Division was still the target of a desultory fire from the enemy's rear vessels.

About 3.40 p.m. the Russian line again became visible, and was seen to be steering to the northward and closing the *Suvorov*. After a few minutes the Japanese reopened fire, the 1st Division directing its attack partly upon the *Suvorov* and partly on the other ships which appeared to be making an attempt to cover her, while the 2nd Division, neglecting the Russian flagship, concentrated against the rest of the hostile fleet. The attempt, if such it really was, to relieve the *Suvorov* was almost immediately abandoned, and the Russian main force turned away to starboard, thus obtaining protection from the unfortunate *Suvorov* rather than rendering any to her. It appears that the *Alexandr* was so severely damaged about this time that she left the line and reduced speed, and that the remaining ships followed the *Borodino*; but all semblance of order had been lost and there is no evidence that any recognizable formation was kept. The Japanese 1st Division passed one of the *Suvorov* class at a range of little more than 1,000 yards, and each ship in turn poured in her broadside at that destructive range, but, in spite of a heavy list and raging fires, the indomitable Russian vessel replied steadily with such guns as were available. The credit for this grand example of devoted heroism has generally been given to the *Suvorov*, but an examination of the available evidence suggests that it may really be due to the *Alexandr* whose terrible end later in the day has left her actions unrecorded.

Steering a course nearly parallel to their opponents the Japanese soon began to overhaul them, and by 3.55 p.m. the two fleets were hotly engaged at ranges between 4,000 to 5,000 yards, the larger Russian battleships again bearing the brunt of the

Japanese attack. Although the Russian admiral's Plan 75, Fig. 12. flagship held her course for a little longer the Plan 76, Fig. 13. main body of his fleet turned away to the eastward, and at 4 p.m. the Japanese 2nd Division, whose range had increased to over 6,500 yards, altered in succession to an east-south-easterly course. Almost simultaneously the 1st Division turned to the eastward so as to keep in touch with the Russians, who were forced away to starboard until at 4.10 p.m. they were heading to the south-east. The ill-fated *Suworov*, in her exposed position between the fleets, again became the target for the heaviest of the fire from battleships and armoured cruisers; but, although no more than 3,000 yards from the most formidable of her opponents, she continued with unconquerable spirit to make a slow and steady reply from a few small guns. At this juncture Admiral Kamimura's division turned slightly to port, and five minutes later Admiral Togo turned the 1st Division eight points to port together, thereby bringing the enemy astern. Firing ceased for a time on the Japanese side, and this break may be said to have ended the third phase of the battle. What the motive in the mind of the Japanese commander may have been when he turned away to the northward is not clear, but the movements of the Russians were far from easy to distinguish, and it is possible that their turn to starboard may have been mistaken for one to port.*

For about eight minutes the Japanese 1st Division stood northward in line abreast; at 4.23 p.m. an eight point turn to starboard brought the ships into their former order; and at 4.30 p.m. Admiral Togo altered course to south to regain touch with his adversaries. When the 1st Division had made its turn to the north Admiral Kamimura had taken a south-easterly course, and was now circling round to the westward in search of the enemy who had disappeared from view. It was soon apparent that with the exception of the *Suworov* the Russian fleet had gone to the southward, and since

The fourth phase.
Second torpedo
attack on the
Knyaz Suworov.
Plan 76, Fig. 14.

* In the *Japanese Official History* it is stated that the Japanese 1st Division turned to port in order to forestall an attempt on the part of the Russians to pass under its stern and escape to the northward; but this reason is not convincing.

Admiral Togo could be seen approaching on a southerly course Admiral Kamimura turned in succession to starboard and took station on the port bow of the battleships. By this time the Russian flagship had apparently lost all motive power and, except for one 12-pounder gun, all power of offence. An attempt was made to render a second gun serviceable by replacing damaged parts of the mounting from other pieces, and the crew seem to have accomplished this in time to assist in repelling a torpedo attack by the 4th Destroyer Flotilla, carried out immediately after the withdrawal of the Japanese battleships, in which one destroyer, the *Asagiri*, was damaged.*

About 4.45 p.m. the Japanese 1st Division again sighted the rear ships of the Russian main body, which opened fire, the Japanese replying a minute or two later. The head of the Russian line had turned to the westward, and was circling round

Loss of the *Ural*.
Plan 76,
Figs. 14, 15.

to starboard, probably with a view to resuming a northerly course. Possibly, also, the appearance out of the mist of the lighter Japanese cruisers, which had been operating against the Russian cruisers and transports to the southward of the field of action of the main fleets, may have influenced the Russians in making this turn. Their older battleships and some of the cruisers and auxiliary vessels which had joined them were following in disorder in the track of their leaders, and were receiving the fire of the Japanese 1st and 2nd Divisions at a range of about 6,000 yards. By 5 p.m. the larger Russian ships were steering to the north-west, masked from the Japanese fire by the smaller vessels. Five minutes later the Japanese 1st Division turned to the same course as the 2nd and almost immediately afterwards swung round to starboard in succession and steered a course a little to the west of north in order to overtake the enemy's more important ships and prevent their escape to the north. Admiral Kamimura held on for a little longer, and then came round gradually to the north-west, keeping its starboard guns bearing. From this point onwards the two divisions acted independently. Admiral Togo's division took a more northerly course than the Russian battleships, and consequently did not get into touch with them for some time, but about 5.30 p.m. it passed the *Ural*, disabled and abandoned, and after bringing a very heavy fire to bear on her finally sank her

* The Japanese claim that one torpedo struck the *Suvorov* in this attack, but the statement is denied by the survivors from that vessel.



KNYAZ SUVOROV.

BUINI.

VICE-ADMIRAL ROZHESTVENSKI BEING TRANSFERRED TO A DESTROYER.

(To face p. 752.)

with a torpedo. Soon afterwards its course brought it once more in sight of the *Suvorov* which was lying helpless at some distance away. Her condition, however, was so manifestly hopeless that she was left as a prey to less important vessels.

The destroyers attached to the Russian battleships had received orders to hold themselves in readiness to transfer flag officers to other vessels in the event of their flagships becoming disabled; and Admiral Rozhestvenski, who was now barely conscious and

The Russian
commander-in-
chief transferred
to the *Buini*.

quite incapable of taking further part in the action, was taken on board the *Buini* with some of his staff. Owing to the heavy sea and the condition of the admiral much difficulty was found

in carrying out the transhipment. His skull was fractured, blood was streaming from his wounds, and in reply to inquiries from his staff he was only able to mutter a few incoherent words:—"Nebogatov . . . Course North 23° East . . . Vladivostok." At 5.30 p.m. the *Buini* left the *Suvorov* in order to find some vessel in which to deposit the wounded commander-in-chief.

The fleet action was now about to enter upon its last phase. At 5.35 p.m., on turning slightly to the westward, the *Mikasa* discovered one of the *Suvorov* class ahead. This vessel was probably the *Alexandr*, which is said to have rejoined her

The last phase.
Loss of the
Imperator
Alexandr III.
Plan 76, Figs.
16, 17, 18.

consorts soon after 5 p.m., when their course brought them back towards the spot at which she had been left. A few moments after she had been sighted other Russian ships were seen steering to the eastward of north, a course to which they had gradually come round in the hope of being able to make for Vladivostok. The

Mikasa turned to the same course and at 5.42 p.m. reopened fire at a range of about 7,000 yards. The Russians turned to north-north-west almost immediately, and Admiral Togo promptly conformed to their change of direction, his guns being trained upon the three larger Russian battleships, which could just be distinguished. The Russian fleet appears about this time to have separated into two lines or groups steering parallel courses, with the cruisers and transports to port. Although the sun was setting behind the Russian ships, thus hampering the Japanese gunlayers, and the range was long compared with those at which the fighting had taken place during the earlier part of the day, the

Alexandr, *Borodino* and *Orel* suffered considerably. About 6 p.m. the first-named vessel was again compelled to leave the line, with a fierce fire raging on her boat deck, her stern distorted, and a hole estimated at twenty feet in diameter on her port side forward. However, she righted herself sufficiently to re-enter the line astern of the *Senyavin* and to continue the engagement. By 6.10 p.m. the Russians and the Japanese 1st Division were once more engaged in a broadside to broadside struggle; the range had changed but little, for although the Japanese were steaming faster than their opponents, the courses were slightly divergent and for twenty minutes the battle continued with unabated vigour. About 6.30 p.m., the thickening mists occasioned a lull, during which the *Alexandr*, again listing heavily to port, hoisted the signal: "Am in distress," and moved out of the line to port. She capsized in a few minutes; and so sudden was the catastrophe that almost the whole ship's company was covered by the hull. Of sixteen men who managed to climb on to the keel four only were saved, forty-one officers and seven hundred and ninety-five men perishing with the ship.

The *Borodino* was still leading the Russian line, followed by the *Orel*, *Nikolai*, *Apraxin*, *Senyavin*, *Ushakov*, *Navarin*, *Sisoi* and *Nakhimov*; and while the *Alexandr* was sinking Admiral Nebogatov, deciding in the absence of superior control to assume command of all the Russian vessels in sight, made the signals:—"Follow me," and "Course N. 23° E." Almost immediately afterwards the destroyer *Bezuprechni* overtook the squadron and passed close to the *Nikolai*, informing Admiral Nebogatov that the command was transferred to him and that Admiral Rozhstvenski had been moved to a destroyer. Though an attempt seems then to have been made by the battered Russian fleet to edge gradually to starboard so as to gain the right course, the pressure from the enemy was too great, and it had no choice but to keep on to the north-westward. For another half-hour the running fight continued, with the fleets on parallel courses; but the long range—8,000 yards—and the fact that the Japanese gunners had the setting sun in their eyes made their practice far less accurate than it had been before. In proportion as the Japanese battleships drew in line with, and forged ahead of, their opponents their fire was more and more concentrated upon the *Borodino*, while the armoured cruisers—whose movements after

Loss of the
Borodino.
Plan 76, Fig. 19.

leaving the 1st Division have yet to be narrated—were bringing their guns to bear upon the rearmost ships. Some minutes before the sun set at 7 p.m., it disappeared behind a bank of mist which veiled the horizon, and the improvement in the light was at once reflected in the greater accuracy of the Japanese fire, which was to have a dramatic result before darkness closed down upon the scene of conflict. Shortly after seven o'clock the *Borodino* burst into flames, which quickly gained possession of the whole ship. Since the light was now waning fast, Admiral Togo decided to leave the final destruction of the foe to the torpedo craft, which were rapidly closing in like jackals gathering round a carcase, and had just altered his course to the northward, when the last shot fired by the *Fuji* as she reached the turning point struck the *Borodino*. Its impact was followed by an uprush of smoke near the foremost 6-inch turret and two dull explosions. Keeping up the fire from her 6-inch guns to the last, the *Borodino* left the line, suddenly heeled over to starboard and capsized keel upwards. About a dozen men clambered on to the bottom of the vessel, which remained afloat for a few minutes. But there was hardly a boat in the whole fleet in fit state to take the water, and the approach of the Japanese prevented any attempt at rescue. And so, with the exception of one man who managed to keep afloat on some wreckage and was picked up three hours later by a Japanese torpedo boat, the entire crew perished. With this crushing blow to the Russians the battleship divisions which had been engaged for more than five hours at last parted company, leaving an open sea to the torpedo boats and destroyers.

To revert to the armoured cruisers which had separated from the Japanese 1st Division when the *Mikasa* turned to the northward about 5.10 p.m. About a quarter of an hour later Admiral Kamimura reopened fire upon two ships which had fallen behind the remainder of the Russian main body and were following in rear of the line. For twenty minutes he held his north-westerly course, and his division received a considerable amount of fire from the tail of the Russian line, although most of the shell flew high. About 5.45 p.m. the *Idzumo* turned to port and then, circling round, steamed to the eastward. A few minutes later she again turned northward, and steering to pass within short range of the *Suvorov* and *Kamchatka*, which were lying motionless and disabled two or three miles to the westward of

The Japanese
armoured
cruisers.
Plan 76,
Figs. 15, 16, 17.

the spot where the former had beaten off the last torpedo attack, opened a deliberate fire upon both ships at a range of about 1,400 yards. Every shot at the latter vessel appeared to hit her and she was soon on fire. The Japanese 6th Division was now also closing in to the attack, and since the two Russian ships were almost defenceless the Japanese 2nd Division passed on to seek some more formidable foe. Soon after 6 p.m. Admiral Kamimura, seeing some Russian vessels on his port bow, altered course to north-west; at 6.20, however, the flashes of the guns of the 1st Division were seen on the starboard bow through the fog; he turned towards them and at the same time engaged the rear of the Russian main body to the northward. The retreating Russians were the first to open fire, at about 7,000 yards' range, but before long the Japanese armoured cruisers stood across their track and engaged from the rear, while the 1st Division attacked their head with the result which has already been described. At 6.45 p.m. Admiral Kamimura turned his division four points to port together, bringing his vessels into quarter-line, so as not to lose touch with the enemy. He turned back into line ahead six minutes later and at 6.55 p.m. altered course to north-north-west in succession. The haze was still thick enough to obscure the view and night was now falling fast, but the Japanese managed to distinguish the *Zhemchug* accompanied by two destroyers, and while the light lasted directed a slow fire upon her at a range of about 8,000 yards. To this she replied with her 4.7-inch guns, and in spite of the distance dropped a number of shell all round the Japanese ships, without, however, touching them. When last seen, smoke was rising from the *Zhemchug*, and her fate was still uncertain when darkness descended and firing ceased.

The operations of the main fleets having now been traced from the moment at which the first shot was fired until their share of fighting came to an end with the fall of night, it remains to give some account of the part played by the cruisers of either side. When

Action of
the cruisers.

Admiral Rozhstvenski first sighted the Japanese battleships he ordered his transports and the cruisers which were detailed to protect them to move away to the disengaged side of his line. Admiral Enkvist in the cruiser *Oleg* thereupon took command of these vessels. Altering course to N.E. by E., he left the line of the main fleet and, followed by the *Aurora*, formed up with the transports on his

starboard quarter. The *Donskoi* and *Monomakh* took station on either side of the line of transports, and the *Svyetlana*, *Almaz*, and *Ural* brought up the rear. This movement had been completed before the action opened, and Admiral Enkvist remained sufficiently far away to avoid being struck by ricochets or badly aimed shell. A few shots were exchanged between the Russian cruisers and the *Idzumi*, which had rendered invaluable service to the Japanese by keeping on the starboard side of the Russian fleet all the morning and reporting its movements. At this moment, however, being isolated from the remaining Japanese ships, she wisely retired to a distance until her consorts of the 6th Division came to her assistance. In pursuance of orders previously given by Admiral Togo these vessels, with the cruisers of the 3rd, 4th and 5th Divisions, were already on their way to attack the Russian cruisers and transports; but being compelled to pass round in rear of both fleets and at the same time to keep out of range of the guns of the Russian battleships some time elapsed before they could achieve their object. Meanwhile the Russian cruisers were passive spectators of the contest between the main fleets, and were able to observe the disastrous effect of the fire concentrated upon the *Oslyabya* and *Suvorov*. Soon after 2.30 p.m., when those two ships left the line and the Russian fleet commenced to turn to the southward, Admiral Enkvist altered course in a like direction; but the Japanese 3rd and 4th Divisions were then seen to the southwest approaching on an easterly course, and the *Oleg* and *Aurora* turned to the westward in order to interpose themselves between this new enemy and the defenceless transports. The *Vladimir Monomakh* followed, and the three vessels were soon engaged at long range.

There is not sufficient information forthcoming for a detailed account to be given of the movements of the cruisers, but it appears that after passing the Japanese on opposite courses the Russian cruisers turned to the northward in the hope of obtaining protection for the transports from their battlefleet. As they did so the Japanese 5th and 6th Divisions engaged them on their port side, while their previous antagonists—the 3rd and 4th Divisions—turned back and resumed the attack. The necessity for protecting the transports from more than one direction seems to have thrown Admiral Enkvist's force into confusion, and about 3.55 p.m. he made a signal for his cruisers to follow in the wake of the battleships. As the result of this order, when the main

Russian fleet circled round to the southward between 4 and 5 p.m., the cruisers and transports became involved in its movements and, keeping always on an inner circle, found that there was not sufficient room to manœuvre. The confusion increased, and the Russian cruisers were then placed in considerable danger from the fire of the Japanese armoured ships in addition to that of their lighter cruisers acting from the southward. The *Ural* was pierced below the waterline about 3.55 p.m., and when she signalled that she was unable to deal with the damage herself the tugs *Rus* and *Svir* went to her assistance. The *Rus* was sunk while attempting to take the *Ural* in tow; but her crew was saved by the *Svir*. The *Svir*, with the aid of the *Anaduir*, also managed to rescue the crew of the *Ural* before the latter met the fate which has already been described.*

About 4.30 p.m., while on their southerly course, some of the Russian battleships came into contact at medium range with the light cruisers of the enemy, and all four Japanese cruiser divisions became engaged on unequal terms with their vastly more powerful foe. During this period of the action the Japanese suffered some damage, Admiral Dewa's flagship the *Kasagi* being obliged to withdraw on account of a hole below the waterline. Accompanied by the *Chitose*, she proceeded to Aburatani Bay, on the coast of Japan, some forty miles to the eastward of the scene of battle. On arrival there Admiral Dewa, who had sent the two remaining ships of his command, the *Niitaka* and *Otawa*, to join the 4th Division, transferred his flag to the *Chitose* and sailed the same evening to rejoin the fleet. Admiral Uriu's flagship, the *Naniwa*, was also obliged to leave the line for a time owing to a hit below the waterline, but she did not find it necessary to seek smoother water in order to effect repairs.

When the Russian battleships resumed their northerly course about 4.50 p.m. they were followed by their own cruisers and transports, which took station on their port side. The lighter vessels were thus again on the disengaged side of the fleet when the battleship action entered upon its last phase about 5.45 p.m. The repair ship *Kamchatka*, however, being unable to keep her place, remained with the *Suvorov*.

When the Japanese 4th, 5th and 6th Divisions were following the main fleets to the northward, they fell in with these two vessels lying helpless where they had been left by

* See p. 762.

the Japanese armoured cruisers.* For more than half an hour the two Russian ships withstood their fire at close range, the *Suworov*, indomitable to the last, replying with her two remaining 12-pounders. The *Kamchatka*, wrapt in flame and having several compartments flooded, was the first to succumb. Just before the end a suggestion to hoist the white flag was made, and one of the boats was lowered in readiness to take off the crew; but Lieutenant Nikonov, who was left in command and was dying from his wounds, had sufficient strength to mutter a refusal, and at 6.50 p.m. his ship went down with her flag proudly flying. It is believed that about fifty of her crew, most of whom were artificers employed in her workshops, managed to escape, and after drifting about in boats for two days were picked up by some fishermen and taken to Japan.

The *Suworov* did not long survive her companion. But this gallant vessel, which had been the mark of almost every gun of the Japanese fleet in turn, was to receive her final blow from the torpedo. After the disappearance of the *Kamchatka*, the Japanese 11th Torpedo Boat Flotilla, which was attached to the cruiser divisions, came forward to the attack. Two torpedoes struck the *Suworov* while still making a last effort at resistance with a small gun aft, and she sank at 7 p.m. Neither officer nor man of those who had fought their ship to the end against overwhelming odds remained; and the tale of their devotion to duty will live for ever as a glowing example of human fortitude.

Loss of the
Knyaz Suworov.

* See p. 765.

CHAPTER LXXXV.

THE PURSUIT AFTER THE BATTLE OF THE SEA OF JAPAN.

(Plate 61 and Plan 77.)

IMMEDIATELY after the *Borodino* met her tragic end Admiral Togo withdrew all the divisions of his fleet and appointed a rendezvous at the Island of Matsushima, which lies two hundred miles to the northward of the scene of the battle and on the direct route of vessels making for Vladivostok. By doing this he left an open field unhampered by the presence of friendly ships for his torpedo craft, rendered an attack upon his own vessels by the enemy's destroyers almost impossible and, since Vladivostok was clearly the Russian objective, placed his fleet in a position to renew the action on the following day.

The night afforded the victorious Japanese an opportunity for tending the wounded, investigating the ammunition supply, and effecting temporary repairs to such injuries as had been received; but it brought no respite to the Russians, who merely exchanged one enemy for another whose

The appearance
of the Japanese
torpedo craft.

attacks might prove yet more deadly. Towards evening, when the wind abated and the sea began to go down, the Japanese torpedo boats, the majority of which had sought shelter in Miura Bay during the day, emerged from their refuge, timing their movements so as to get into touch with the enemy just before nightfall. By the time that the *Borodino* disappeared five flotillas of destroyers and six of torpedo boats were actually within striking distance of the surviving Russian battleships, ready to fall upon them so soon as it was dark; and four more flotillas of torpedo boats were rapidly approaching. These made a total of twenty-one destroyers and thirty-seven torpedo boats, which were preparing to assail the shattered fleet. The 1st and 2nd Destroyer Flotillas and the 9th Torpedo Boat Flotilla placed themselves to the northward

of their enemy, ready to make an attack from ahead, while the remainder were to the eastward and southward.

In the dim twilight the Russians made out some of these vessels as they closed in, and opened fire upon them when they were within four thousand yards, with the result that the Japanese postponed their attack until the growing darkness should give them a better opportunity for getting to close

quarters. Fearing that these craft would drop mines in the path of his fleet, Admiral Nebogatov turned the *Nikolai* to the south-west about 7.15 p.m. The *Orel*, which led the line after the loss of the *Borodino*, also turned and formed astern of the *Nikolai*, followed by the *Senyavin*, *Apraxin*, *Ushakov*, *Sisoi Veliki*, *Nakhimov* and *Navarin*. The cruisers and transports, which were to port of the battleships, observed this manœuvre and led by Admiral Enkvist in the *Oleg* altered course in the same direction. For three-quarters of an hour all continued to steer to the south-west, but about 8 p.m., when it was quite dark Admiral Nebogatov turned to the north-east followed by his line. This last change of course does not appear to have been noticed by the *Oleg* or her consorts, for they held on their old course and with the exception of the *Izumrud*, parted company with the main force—as it eventually turned out—for ever. The *Nikolai* then increased her speed to about eleven or twelve knots, the highest of which she was capable, so as to add to the difficulty of attack by the torpedo craft. At this speed the *Orel*, *Apraxin* and *Senyavin* managed to maintain station; but the *Ushakov* gradually dropped astern, while the *Sisoi Veliki*, *Navarin* and *Nakhimov*, being too badly damaged to keep up, soon lost touch with the rest of the fleet.

The expected attack was not long deferred. No sooner had the Russian ships reached the course which would lead them in the direction of Vladivostok than the Japanese 2nd Destroyer Flotilla appeared ahead and for about three hours the Russians were subjected to fierce attacks from all directions. All the conditions were exceptionally favourable for torpedo craft, for by this time the wind had dropped, the sea was calm and the cloudy threatening day had been succeeded by a clear starlit night. Nevertheless, in so far as the ships which remained in touch with the *Nikolai* were concerned the efforts of the Japanese

were singularly unsuccessful.* Speaking generally, the destroyers struck at the Russian van, while the torpedo boats were principally engaged with the rear ships and the cruisers. Not content with discharging their torpedoes, many of them used their guns when the torpedoes missed the mark, and it was by this fire that several men in the battery of the *Nikolai* were wounded. It is said that one of these boats, which had fired her torpedoes at the leading vessels, was passed in a disabled condition at very short range and was then sunk by a heavy shell. The Japanese drew off about 11 p.m., and the vessels with Admiral Nebogatov, which had certainly had a fortunate escape, were not further molested. About 5 a.m. on the 28th daylight revealed the *Orel*, *Senyavin*, *Apraxin*, and *Izumrud*, in company with the *Nikolai*. No other vessels were in sight, but the *Ushakov*, which had also escaped the Japanese torpedoes, was still following astern.

The three survivors of the Russian 2nd Division, the *Sisoi Veliki*, *Navarin*, and *Nakhimov* were not so lucky. As has already been stated, their injuries had prevented them from keeping up with Admiral Nebogatov's vessels; and when assailed by the torpedo boats they lost touch with each other.

The *Sisoi Veliki* torpedoed and sunk on the morning of the 28th.

The *Sisoi Veliki* had a hole forward near the waterline and had shipped a quantity of water; and though an attempt was made to reduce the inflow by means of a collision mat, it could not be kept in position when the vessel was moving. In this condition she received many attacks, all of which were unsuccessful, until at 2 a.m. a torpedo struck her aft and burst abreast of the tiller compartment, destroying her rudder and damaging a propeller. As she gradually settled down it became apparent she was doomed. At daylight she sighted the *Vladimir Monomakh* and made a signal requesting that her crew might be taken off, but the *Monomakh's* own condition was no better, and she replied that she expected to sink in a very few minutes.†

* At his court martial Admiral Nebogatov attributed the immunity of the vessels which accompanied him to the fact that they did not use their searchlights, and this statement was confirmed by other officers. Nevertheless he added that the Japanese attacks were energetic and daring, that there were several narrow escapes, and that more than one torpedo, although discharged at close range, was avoided by the use of the helm.

† See p. 777. The *Gromki*, which was in company with the *Monomakh*, went to the assistance of the *Sisoi Veliki*; but she was of little or no use. The *Monomakh* remained afloat some two hours longer.

The captain of the *Sisoi Veliki*, in the hope of saving the ship's company, then decided to attempt to reach the Island of Tsushima which was visible in the distance; but it soon became evident that the vessel could not reach the land. About 7.45 a.m., when she was sinking fast, three Japanese auxiliary cruisers, the *Shinano Maru*, *Tainan Maru*, and *Yawata Maru*, which had been charged with the duty of searching the battlefield appeared on the horizon and approached rapidly. Upon being requested by signal to come to the rescue they first ascertained that the Russian battleship was prepared to surrender and then sent in their boats and made ready to take her in tow. Before they could take possession of their prize, however, she sank, and these of her crew who had not already been removed were picked up by the cruisers' boats.

The end of the *Navarin* was more rapid. She did not survive the night of the battle, and only three of her whole ship's company remained to give an account of her end. During the main action her hull had been pierced in four places, three of which were aft, and she had shipped a large amount of water. Her captain had been severely wounded, and had been compelled to hand over his duties to the commander. When Admiral Nebogatov had turned to the north-east the *Navarin* had followed, and, like other ships, soon became the object of Japanese torpedo attacks. The rate at which she was steaming increased the inflow through the shot holes, but she managed to keep up with the rest of the squadron until 9 p.m. when a reduction of speed became absolutely necessary since the water was coming on to the upper deck aft and finding its way into the 12-inch turret. When her engines were stopped in order that a collision mat might be placed the Japanese torpedo craft immediately closed in from all sides. They were kept at bay until 11 p.m., when one of them approached from astern and discharged a torpedo which burst and flooded the after part of the battleship. Before the crew had recovered from the confusion caused by this explosion another torpedo struck the vessel amidships on the starboard side, and the *Navarin* continued to move slowly ahead with a heavy list to starboard. Between midnight and 1 a.m. two more torpedo craft approached, there were two more explosions, and the battleship capsized, crushing the few boats which the crew had succeeded in lowering. Many men remained afloat supported by the wreckage,

The *Navarin*
torpedoed and
sunk on the night
of the 27th.

and hour after hour, their numbers gradually decreasing as one after another dropped off, they clung on in the hopes of being picked up. Sixteen hours after the *Navarin* had disappeared three men, the sole survivors, were rescued by a Japanese torpedo boat.

The *Admiral Nakhimov*, although the first of the three survivors of the 2nd Division to be struck by a torpedo, was actually the last to be sunk. Very soon after the attacks began, the Russians saw a destroyer steaming up, but mistaking her for a friendly vessel refrained from opening fire and allowed her to come close enough to discharge a torpedo. The aim was good, and the shot took effect forward on the starboard side. The disabled vessel stopped and three collision mats were got into place, but the rent was too great to be closed and the water entirely filled the foremost compartment and continued to gain in spite of pumping. In this condition she moved slowly forward, much down by the bows, while the enemy continued to attack for the next three hours. They then drew off and hopes of safety began to revive. At daylight, however, no friendly vessel was in sight, and the *Nakhimov* made for the Island of Tsushima, which was the nearest land. While steaming slowly to the southward she was found a little before 9 a.m. by the Japanese destroyer *Shiranui* and the auxiliary cruiser *Sado Maru*. The latter vessel sent boats to take possession of the disabled Russian cruiser, but they were unable to do more than to remove the crew before she sank. According to one Russian account the Japanese threatened to leave the Russians to their fate if they made any attempt to hasten the sinking of their vessel; but, reckless of their own lives and thinking only of the honour of their ship, some of the survivors opened the Kingston valves and the *Nakhimov* disappeared, her captain still on deck and the Russian flag flying above him. After being seven hours in the water this brave officer was picked up unconscious by some Japanese fishermen.

Excluding those ships which had gone to the northward with Admiral Nebogatov, this last disaster completes the tale of the twelve ships which less than twenty-four hours before had formed Admiral Rozhestvenski's battle line.* But the Japanese

* With Admiral Nebogatov were the *Nikolai*, *Orel*, *Apraxin*, *Senyavin*, *Ushakov* and the cruiser *Izumrud*.

torpedo craft had also taken toll of the cruisers during the night.

When the latter had parted company with the battleships, Admiral Enkvist in the *Oleg* had kept on his southerly course and increased his speed to seventeen or eighteen knots.* He was followed closely by the *Avrora* and at a greater distance by the *Zhemchug*, but the *Svyetlana*, *Dmitri Donskoi*, and *Monomakh* gradually dropped behind. The *Almaz*, which formed part of the *Svyetlana's* division of scouts, turned north very soon after dark and thenceforth acted independently. Availing herself of her high speed, she escaped the enveloping movement of the following day and, keeping close to the coast of Japan, arrived at Vladivostok on the 29th, the only Russian vessel larger than a destroyer to reach that place.

Soon after 8 p.m. on the 27th the three cruisers still with Admiral Enkvist were attacked, the Japanese torpedo craft approaching so close that the flashes were distinctly seen as the torpedoes left the tubes. Though the discharge of seventeen torpedoes

was observed, the continual alterations of course and the high speed at which the cruisers were moving saved them from destruction. When this attack was over the *Oleg* altered course to the north-west, with a view to passing to the westward of the scene of the battle and proceeding to the northward. Shortly afterwards a re-opening of the attack and the appearance ahead of dim lights, which were taken to be those of the Japanese fleet induced the admiral to return to a south-south-west course. Later, about 9 p.m., the *Oleg* steered to the westward, and being again attacked turned once more to the south-west. Several more attempts to break through to the north were made, only to be met by renewed torpedo attacks; and at 1 a.m., although he had been very successful in avoiding damage, Admiral Enkvist despaired of getting away to the north and steered for the southern exit from the Korean Strait. At daybreak on the 28th the three cruisers were still in company, many miles to the southward of the scene of the previous day's disasters, and no other vessels were in sight. Speed was reduced, and during the morning the little squadron stopped in order to carry out temporary repairs to the *Oleg*. Later in the day Admiral Enkvist transferred his flag from that

* See p. 771.

vessel to the *Avrora* which had suffered less from the enemy's fire. His first idea on finding that he had shaken off pursuit was to make for Shanghai, where it was hoped that a supply of coal might be obtained from the Russian transports which had been dismissed before the battle, and on the following day, the 29th, while steaming at slow speed his squadron was overtaken by the *Svir*, which had escaped the dangers of the night following the battle and was also on her way to Shanghai with part of the crews of the *Ural* and *Rus*. Towards evening Admiral Enkvist changed his intention and, ordering the *Svir* to send him a collier from that port, altered course for Manila. On the evening of the 2nd June, since coal was running low, he put into Sual, in the Gulf of Lingayen, on the west coast of Luzon. On finding that he could not procure a fresh supply there he went on to Manila where he arrived on the following day. Before long he received instructions from the American Authorities that he could not shelter indefinitely in the port and must either leave within twenty-four hours or be disarmed. Since the *Oleg's* injuries did not permit of her proceeding to sea again Admiral Enkvist chose the latter alternative, and his crews were interned.

Of the remaining vessels which had been under Admiral Enkvist's command during the battle the *Svyetlana* and *Dmitri Donskoi* were not attacked during the night of the 27th, but the *Vladimir Monomakh* was less fortunate, her end being very similar to that of the *Nakhimov*. After losing sight on the night of the 27th of the fleeing vessels whose fate has just been recorded she followed for a time in the wake of the *Dmitri Donskoi*. When that vessel also disappeared in the darkness the captain of the *Monomakh*, finding himself quite alone, turned to the north-east and shaped course for Vladivostok. Before long the *Monomakh* was joined by the destroyer *Gromki* which took station close under her stern after making the private recognition signal. After surviving three torpedo attacks without receiving any hurt, she was struck soon after 9 p.m. on the starboard side by a torpedo discharged from a destroyer which had come in quite close.* The explosion occurred abreast of a coal bunker and was so violent that the engines

The *Vladimir Monomakh* gets separated and is torpedoed and sinks on the morning of the 28th.

* Some eyewitnesses state that they saw the destroyer make the secret recognition signal. But, whether she did so or not, there appears to be no doubt that she was mistaken for a friend and so found her opportunity.

stopped for the moment and the crew of the 6-inch gun immediately above the point of impact were hurled through the gun port overboard. Further attacks which were kept up until nearly 2 a.m. made it impossible for the *Monomakh* to stop, and although she escaped further damage very little could be done to repair that already suffered. At daylight, finding that the water could not be kept under, the captain of the cruiser, like his brother officer of the *Nakhimov*, resolved to make for the nearest land in company with the *Gromki*. About 6 a.m. on the 28th, as already related, both vessels fell in with the *Sisoi Veliki*, and in response to the signal of distress the *Gromki* went to the assistance of the battleship; but she could not take off the whole crew and her services were dispensed with. Some two hours later the *Monomakh*, which had approached the sinking *Nakhimov*, fell in with the Japanese cruiser *Sado Maru* and the destroyer *Shiranui*. After an exchange of shots the *Gromki* steamed away to the north pursued by the Japanese destroyer, while the *Sado Maru* took measures for saving the crew of the *Monomakh*, which was now also on the point of sinking. Some of the men were taken off in the Japanese boats, others landed in their own boats, and about 10 a.m. the *Monomakh* went to the bottom without further loss of life, her end hastened by the fact that the Kingston valves had been opened.

The destruction of the *Monomakh* completed the work of the Japanese torpedo craft during the night. Of the four Russian ships which they had succeeded in striking one did not last out the night, while the other three sank on the following morning. In

The work of
the Japanese
torpedo craft.

accomplishing this feat two Japanese torpedo boats, Nos. 34 and 35, had been sunk by gunfire, and one, No. 69, as the consequence of a collision with a destroyer, while the destroyers *Harusame*, *Akatsuki*, *Ikadzuchi*, *Yugiri*, and the torpedo boats *Sagi*, Nos. 32, 43, and 68 had suffered sufficient damage to put them out of action. Although the men belonging to the boats which sank were rescued by the others, the casualties among the crews had been numerous. Four of the torpedo boat flotillas had searched all night without finding any of the Russian vessels.

At daylight on the 28th the main body of the Russian fleet under Admiral Nebogatov was steering a northerly course towards the Island of Matsushima. The amount of damage which his ships had suffered on the previous day varied greatly. The

Nikolai, with several holes slightly above the water-line and one of her 12-inch guns disabled, was now comparatively feeble for offence. The *Orel* was almost a wreck, and only two of her 12-inch guns were serviceable. The *Senyavin* and *Apraxin*, on the other hand, had come to little harm, although the latter was leaking at points where hits on her armoured belt had started the plates. At 5 a.m. faint hopes of escape had begun to revive amongst the Russians, for the horizon was clear and no hostile vessels were in sight; but it was not long before they saw ominous smoke streaks on the port quarter. For more than an hour they tried to persuade themselves that the ships which were following them were friendly vessels which had lost touch during the night and about 6.30 a.m. the *Izumrud* started off to reconnoitre. After proceeding about six miles she returned and reported that the vessels were Japanese. As they crept up on the port beam, keeping at a distance of over seven miles, they were seen to be cruisers of the *Matsushima* type, and about 7.30 a.m., Admiral Nebogatov, after ascertaining what guns in his ships were serviceable, made the signal to prepare for action. Since the Japanese now appeared to be engaged with some vessels on their far side, invisible to him, he felt it his duty to steam towards them.* He therefore altered course to port and steered to cut across their course; but so soon as the Japanese—who were Admiral Kataoka's 5th Division and were not in point of fact engaged with any other enemy—observed this movement they also turned to port and declined action. Finding that he was not reducing his distance from the enemy Admiral Nebogatov returned to his former course towards the Liancourt Rocks, two rocky islets some fifty miles south-east of Matsushima.

Meanwhile Admiral Togo, with the 1st and 2nd Divisions, had reached a point fifteen miles to the southward of Matsushima. At 5 a.m. he had been informed by Admiral Kataoka's dispatch vessel, the *Yaeyama*, of the movements of the Russian force.

About 5.40 a.m. he turned to the southward, and at 7.10 a.m., on receipt of further news, altered course to the eastward so as to block the enemy's advance. The 4th and 6th Divisions, which through the night had followed some twenty miles astern of the armoured divisions, were also informed that the Russians had been discovered and steered to cut

Admiral
Nebogatov's five
remaining ships
surrender on
the morning
of the 28th.

* This was so stated by Admiral Nebogatov.

THE BATTLE OF THE SEA OF JAPAN, 28TH MAY, 1905.

Plate 61.



IMPERATOR NIKOLAI I.

GENERAL-ADMIRAL APRAXIN. ADMIRAL SENYAVIN.

OREL.

(To face p. 778.)

SURRENDER OF REAR-ADMIRAL NEEBOGATOV.

them off. Five Japanese divisions, therefore, were now converging against the five ships with Admiral Nebogatov.* Between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. the Russians caught sight of the Japanese light cruiser divisions coming up from the southward, and at 9.15 a.m. observed the 1st and 2nd Divisions on the port bow steaming to cross their course from the westward. An hour later the armoured cruisers leading the Japanese line opened fire, their example being followed within a few minutes by the battleships. The range was between 7,000 and 8,000 yards, and although the shooting was not at first accurate it quickly improved, and some hits were made. When it was noticed by the Japanese that the enemy was not returning their fire and that the Russian ships were turning away from their leader who appeared to be signalling, a rumour that the Russians had surrendered spread through the fleet and caused a slight lull in the action. But since no confirmation was at once forthcoming a few more rounds were fired before the signal flying on board the *Nikolai* was seen to be an international signal to the *Mikasa* to indicate that she surrendered. It was only when the remaining Russian ships, with one exception, repeated this signal that the Japanese realized the situation and the completeness of their triumph. The fact was that the strength of the enemy was so manifestly overwhelming that Admiral Nebogatov had come to the conclusion that further resistance was hopeless.

The only ship which did not surrender was the *Izumrud*, then about a mile on the starboard beam of the squadron. Her captain had no sooner made out the meaning of the signal which the *Nikolai* had hoisted than he decided to try whether the speed of his ship would

The *Izumrud* runs ashore in Vladimir Bay on the morning of the 29th.

enable him to escape the fate which had overtaken his companions. Putting on full speed, he steered to the eastward, the only direction clear of the enemy. Some of the Japanese 6th Division gave chase, as did also the *Chitose*, which had come from the southward after her visit to Aburatani

Bay, but the *Izumrud* proved too fast for her pursuers, who abandoned the chase after two or three hours. Had they not done so it is quite possible that they might have brought her to action, for she broke a steam-pipe soon after losing sight of the Japanese and was then unable to move at more than fourteen knots.

* The *Nikolai*, *Orel*, *Apraxin*, *Senyavin* and *Izumrud*. The *Ushakov* was still out of sight astern.

But though she escaped capture she was not destined to reach Vladivostok. Apprehensive, on account of his reduction of speed, of being forestalled off that port by the enemy's cruisers, and doubtful as to the disposition of its mine defence, the captain steered for Vladimir Bay, burning all the available wood in order to economize coal, the supply of which had fallen very low. Arriving off the bay at 1.30 a.m. on the morning of the 29th, he decided to enter in spite of fog. The result was disastrous, for the *Izumrud* ran on the rocks. Since there was no hope of getting her off her crew was put ashore and she was blown up.

The escape of the *Izumrud* was a matter of comparatively little importance to Admiral Togo, whose foresight in making for Matsushima during the night had been rewarded by the easy capture of four battleships. The work of taking possession of his prizes occupied the Japanese some hours, and about 3 p.m., while they were still engaged upon it, the *Admiral Ushakov* is sunk on the evening of the 28th. *Admiral Ushakov* was reported to be approaching.

As described, this vessel had dropped astern of Admiral Nebogatov's division during the night and was now following, ignorant of the fate which had overtaken it. While steaming northward in the early morning she had been sighted by Admiral Kataoka's division, but since more important prey was then in view she had been allowed to proceed on her way unmolested. She had also fallen in with the *Chitose*, which had approached to within about seven thousand yards and then steamed away to the eastward. For some hours no other enemy appeared and she held her northward course, occasionally turning to port or starboard to avoid vessels the smoke of whose funnels showed up on the horizon. About 3 p.m. the masts of the Japanese 2nd Division were made out ahead, and the *Ushakov* turned sharply to the southward and steamed away at nine or ten knots, the highest speed of which she was capable. But, unfortunately, she had been observed by the Japanese who at once dispatched the cruisers *Iwate* and *Yakumo* to deal with her. When Captain Miklukha of the *Ushakov* saw that these two vessels were in chase he realized that an engagement could have but one end and summoned a council of officers. In this case the saying that a council of war is always inclined towards prudence proved false, for it was resolved to fight the ship to the last and then to sink her rather than to let her fall into the hands of the enemy.

By about 4 p.m. the Japanese cruisers were not more than eight or nine miles away, and although the distance was too great for the signal flags to be made out it could be seen that the *Iwate* was flying a signal with the Russian ensign above it. As the Japanese came up on the beam, still keeping at a distance of nearly seven miles, the upper hoist was made out to signify in the international code "I invite you to surrender." Without deigning to reply Captain Miklukha at once gave the order to fire, with the guns at their maximum elevation. The Japanese replied. For the first ten minutes their fire was somewhat inaccurate; it then began to improve and hits followed one another in rapid succession. Captain Miklukha several times attempted to close his adversaries; but they made use of their immense advantage in speed to keep out of range of the 4.7-inch guns of the *Ushakov's* secondary armament. Early in the action the hydraulic training gear of the *Ushakov's* fore turret ceased to work, while a slight list to starboard rendered training by hand so difficult that the rate of fire from the two foremost 10-inch guns was slow. After twenty minutes fighting one of the 4.7-inch guns on the engaged side was put out of action, and fire broke out in the battery, caused by the ignition of a number of cartridges by the enemy's shell. Ten minutes later the Japanese guns reduced the *Ushakov* to helplessness. Several holes on the waterline increased her list to such an extent that the guns could not be elevated sufficiently for the range at which the enemy was fighting, and training became impossible. The moment had now come to carry out the resolution which had been formed hardly an hour before, and orders were given for the Kingston valves to be opened and the pipe of the circulating pump to be destroyed by explosives. No boats being in condition to float, the men were called on deck as the ship slowly settled down and were ordered to make what use they could of life-buoys or any other material available. Listing more and more to starboard, she turned keel upwards about 6 p.m. and then disappeared stern first, her end hastened by the Japanese fire which continued so long as she remained afloat. The survivors were picked up by the *Iwate* and *Yakumo*, but the gallant Captain Miklukha perished with his ship.

This completes the tale of the Russian battleships, all of which were either captured or sunk. A few of the Russian smaller vessels remain to be accounted for. On the morning of the 28th, about the time of Admiral Nebogatov's surrender near Matsushima,

the cruiser *Svyetlana* was being bravely fought to the last between that island and the Korean coast. She had been severely damaged on the 27th by a large-calibre shell which had struck her below the waterline and flooded a compartment containing two 6-inch magazines, a 3-pounder magazine, and the dynamo engines. In addition to depriving her of the greater part of her ammunition, this injury had caused her to take a list to port and brought her down by the head, thereby preventing her from keeping pace with Admiral Enkvist's detachment which she had at first attempted to follow. Finding herself quite alone on that evening, she had turned at 10.40 p.m. to a northerly course. Some torpedo craft were seen during the night. They were not fired upon, and it is quite possible that they may have been Russian destroyers, for the *Buistri* joined the cruiser before morning. In the faint light of early dawn on the 28th the Japanese 5th Division—the same that first sighted the Russian battleships—was seen on the starboard quarter, and the *Svyetlana's* course was altered to port and her speed increased. But no sooner had these vessels dropped out of sight than others appeared above the horizon ahead. These were the second and third-class cruisers which were concentrating against Admiral Nebogatov; and from them Admiral Uriu detached the *Otowa* and *Niitaka*, which had been placed under his command late on the previous day, in pursuit of the *Svyetlana*. When the Russian cruiser perceived her danger she turned and endeavoured to escape steaming full speed to the westward; but with her flooded compartment she was incapable of more than sixteen knots, and by 8 a.m. it became clear that she was being overhauled. Her captain then assembled his officers and explained the situation. As in the case of the *Ushakov*, there was an unanimous resolve to fight so long as ammunition lasted and then to sink the ship. The destroyer *Buistri* still accompanied the *Svyetlana*, and with the Japanese cruisers was the destroyer *Murakumo*. As the *Otowa*, which was leading, approached, the *Svyetlana* opened fire with her two 6-inch guns aft, and before long all three ships were engaged in a running fight. At first the Japanese made few hits, for the Russians altered course whenever the former seemed to be getting the range, but as the chasing vessels came closer their shooting became more accurate, and the *Svyetlana* was several times hit close to the waterline. She was also set on fire in different places. The fires had barely been extinguished

The *Svyetlana*
is sunk on
the morning
of the 28th.

when a shell struck the armoured grating, penetrated to the engine room, piercing a steam-pipe, and wrecked the port engine. With only one engine working, she was quickly overhauled by the two Japanese cruisers and received their combined fire at close range, every shell taking effect. Her ammunition was now almost exhausted and, true to his resolve to sink the ship rather than to surrender, so soon as the last round was fired the captain gave the order to open the sea valves. Heeling over to port until her upper deck was level with the water the *Svyetlana* sank about 10.45 a.m. with her flag still flying. The *Niitaka* and *Murakumo* immediately went in pursuit of the *Buistri*, while the *Otowa* directed the auxiliary cruiser *America Maru*, which was approaching from the southward, to pick up the survivors of the *Svyetlana*. About one-half of the officers and two-thirds of the crew of the *Svyetlana* were rescued and taken prisoners to Japan.

With the *Niitaka* and *Murakumo* in chase, the *Buistri* made for the Korean coast, where she was run ashore about five miles to the northward of Chukupen Bay, and her crew were landed after they had blown up their vessel. Her officers and crew were subsequently taken off by the auxiliary cruiser *Kasuga Maru*.

Like the *Svyetlana*, the *Dmitri Donskoi* lost touch with Admiral Enkvist soon after dark on the 27th May and her captain, finding himself separated from all his consorts, made for Vladivostok.* The damage received by his vessel during the battle was

The *Buini* sunk by the Russians on the morning of the 28th. confined to the upper works and boats, and she was fortunate in having suffered nothing from torpedo attacks during the night. When day broke on the 28th it was found that three destroyers, the *Buini*, *Byedovi*, and *Grozni*, had attached themselves to her and were following. The commander-in-chief was still on board the *Buini*, and since she had been damaged by a shell and was short of coal it was suggested to him that he should be moved to the cruiser. He preferred, however, to go to the *Byedovi*, to which vessel he was transferred; and about two hundred men of the *Osl'yabya's* crew, who were also on board the *Buini*, were transhipped to the *Donskoi*. Soon after

* See p. 775.

7.0 a.m., the Japanese cruiser *Chitose* was sighted, and the destroyers went on ahead of the *Donskoi*, but an hour later the *Buini* returned and signalled that she had broken down. Her crew was therefore transferred to the cruiser and she was sunk by a 6-inch shell.

The *Donskoi* then proceeded at about eleven knots on a course which would lead her midway between Matsushima and the Liancourt Rocks. The various incidents of the morning had kept her some distance in rear of Admiral Nebogatov and the battle-ships, and it was not until 5 p.m. that she sighted the smoke of some Japanese cruisers to starboard. She then turned to port, but her effort to avoid attention was unavailing, for two more hostile cruisers appeared on that side. The latter were the *Otowa* and *Nitaka* returning from the destruction of the *Svyetlana* and *Buistri*, while the vessels first sighted were from Admiral Uriu's 4th Division of cruisers. Both the Japanese forces gave chase, so that six protected cruisers were then converging from opposite sides upon the *Donskoi*, which was steering directly for the Island of Matsushima, distant some thirty miles. The *Otowa* and *Nitaka* were the first to come within range and opened fire about 6.30 p.m. at eight thousand yards without waiting for Admiral Uriu's squadron, the *Donskoi* replying with her port guns. Steering a course nearly parallel to the enemy the Russian cruiser maintained the contest for half an hour, until the Japanese 4th Division came up on her starboard beam, and so placed her between two fires. Nevertheless, fighting on both sides, she kept up a steady resistance until night caused a cessation of gun fire, by which time she had lost nearly one-third of her company in killed and wounded. But, as in other cases, one enemy was then merely exchanged for another, for the darkness which shielded her from the guns of the Japanese gave the torpedo craft their opportunity.

Their first onset, made by the 2nd Destroyer Flotilla, was unsuccessful. For a time the *Donskoi* was left unmolested; but around her could be seen the lights of the Japanese vessels waiting for daylight to enable them to complete their task of destruction, and after all she had gone through since midday on the 27th she was in no position to renew the fight on the morning of the 29th. Her captain was dangerously wounded, the men were exhausted, and she could only steam at slow speed.

The *Dmitri*
Donskoi sunk
off Matsushima
on the morning
of the 29th.

Though there was no hope of escape, the Island of Matsushima was close at hand and it was decided to land the crew there and sink the ship. The wounded men were disembarked in the only two serviceable boats and one which was obtained from the shore, while many of the others swam ashore in lifebelts. Soon after daybreak the few men who were left on board to scuttle the ship took her out into deep water and sank her. The survivors of her crew were later on taken on board the Japanese destroyers and subsequently transferred to a cruiser.

The movements of the *Byedovi* and *Grozni* after parting company with the *Dmitri Donskoi* on the morning of the 28th are not quite clear. According to the Russians the smoke of two vessels which eventually proved to be the Japanese destroyers

The *Byedovi* surrenders with the Russian commander-in-chief on board on the afternoon of the 28th.

The *Grozni* escapes to Vladivostok.

Sazanami and *Kagero* was seen about 1 p.m.

At 3.25 p.m. they were sufficiently close to open fire, and the *Byedovi* then surrendered without offering any resistance, while the *Grozni* steamed away at full speed.* A Japanese account, on the other hand, states that the Russian destroyers coming from an easterly direction, were sighted about 3.10 p.m. by the *Sazanami* and *Kagero* which opened fire after a chase lasting an

hour and a quarter.† The difference in detail is not important, and both reports are in agreement upon the fact that the *Byedovi* surrendered without fighting.‡ There was no loss among her crew, nor does she appear to have been damaged in action. The *Sazanami* took possession of the prize and towed her into port while the *Kagero* went in chase of the *Grozni*. The pursuit was kept up until 6.30 p.m. on the 28th when an engagement took place at long range. The *Grozni*, however, made good her escape and reached Vladivostok on the 30th May.

Of the Russian destroyers whose fate has not been recorded two had already met their end. When, on the morning of the 28th, the *Vladimir Monomakh* was found in a sinking condition

* From the evidence given at the court martial on Admiral Rozhstvensk and the officers of the *Byedovi*.

† Admiral Togo's report.

‡ At the subsequent court martial this surrender was explained upon the ground that the commander-in-chief's staff were anxious that he should not be exposed to further dangers. But this was held not to be a sufficient excuse for surrendering and the principal responsibility was fixed upon the flag captain, the flag navigating officer, and the captain of the *Byedovi*.

by the *Sado Maru* and *Shiranui*, the *Gromki*, as already related, steamed away to the northward with a Japanese destroyer in pursuit. It appears that the *Shiranui* was then reinforced by torpedo boat No. 63 and that while the latter kept directly astern of the *Gromki* the former succeeded in steaming round her and getting before her beam, although the Russian vessel is stated at one time to have developed twenty-four knots. Some long-range shots were fired, and soon after 11 a.m., when the chase had lasted more than two hours, the vessels came into close action. The greater accuracy of the Japanese fire quickly asserted itself, and before long two of the *Gromki's* boilers were disabled and her speed reduced. Her captain then turned on the smaller vessel and attempted to sink her with torpedoes set to run on the surface, but this effort met with no success, and he continued to fight with guns. The *Shiranui* took advantage of this opportunity to approach to still closer range and poured in a heavy fire. Most of the *Gromki's* guns were put out of action and her magazines became flooded through holes near the waterline, but with a stock of ammunition which had been got on deck she fought on gallantly until she was in a sinking condition. Though more than two-thirds of her complement were killed or wounded no suggestion of surrender was made and she went down about 12.30 p.m. still fighting. The survivors of her crew, including the wounded, were picked up by the enemy.

The fate of four more of the Russian destroyers remains to be described. When in the early morning of the 28th the *Chitose* was seen by those on board the *Ushakov* to turn suddenly to starboard, she had sighted a hostile destroyer which was invisible from the Russian ship.* This was the *Bezuprechni*, whose adventures during the night of the 27th will never be known. On the morning of the 28th, when sighted by the *Chitose*, she made off to the eastward followed by the Japanese cruiser and the destroyer *Ariake*. The end was not long delayed, for she was quickly run down and sunk.†

The *Bezuprechni* sunk on the morning of the 28th.

Of the other destroyers only one, the *Bravi*, succeeded in reaching Vladivostok. Two of her boilers had been disabled by a 6-inch shell during the main action, and she was consequently

* See p. 780.

† Exactly what happened is still a mystery. The Japanese have published no detailed report, and the Russian crew perished to a man.

unable to steam more than eleven knots. When she became separated from the other ships about 9 p.m. on the 27th her captain worked north along the shores of Japan, and was fortunate enough to escape attention. On the night of the 29th her third boiler became partially disabled, and it was only by burning all her wooden fittings that she succeeded on the 30th in creeping into Vladivostok at a speed of five knots.

The *Bravi* reaches Vladivostok on the 30th May.

The *Bodri* and *Blestyashchi* followed Admiral Enkvist. The latter vessel had been so damaged that she was unable to keep up and sank about 5 a.m. on the 28th, the *Bodri* standing by and rescuing her crew. The *Bodri* then endeavoured to reach Shanghai ;

The *Blestyashchi* sunk on the morning of the 28th. The *Bodri*, *Svir* and *Koreya* interned at Shanghai.

but her stock of coal, even when supplemented with all the wood on board, did not permit her to get so far under her own steam. On the 4th June she was found by a trading ship drifting about helpless and in great straits for food and water, and was towed to Shanghai, where she was interned.

The merchant vessels *Svir* and *Koreya* had previously arrived at that port and, together with the transports which Admiral Rozhestvenski had sent in before the battle, received similar treatment.

The *Irtwish* had also been so much damaged during the course of the main action that her captain made for the shores of Japan and ran her ashore near the Island of Minoshima, where her crew were landed and were made prisoners. For weeks the fate

The loss of the *Irtwish* and escape of the *Anaduir*.

of the *Anaduir* remained unknown, it being generally supposed that she had sunk after the battle. But her arrival at Diego Suarez on the 27th June, after a month's voyage, put an end

to further speculation. On board her were ten officers and three hundred and twenty-six men saved from the *Ural*.*

* Of the four vessels which had been detached by Admiral Rozhestvenski with a view to inducing the Japanese commander-in-chief to divide his forces, the *Kuban* returned to Russia after calling at Saigon for coal, the *Terek* when about 150 miles north of Hong Kong captured and sank the British ship *Ikhona* on the 5th June and the Danish ship *Prinsesse Marie* in the South China Sea on the 22nd June and arrived at Batavia on the 29th, where she disarmed. The *Rion* sank the German ship *Tetartos* in the North China Sea on the 30th May and the *Dnyeyr* sank the British ship *St. Kilda* near Hong Kong on the 5th June. The sinking of the latter vessel provoked strong representations on the part of the British Government, as a result of which orders were conveyed to the *Rion* and *Dnyeyr* to return to Russia and not to interfere further with neutral shipping.

This long tale of Russian disaster, relieved by scarcely a gleam of success, may now be brought to a close. Rarely indeed has a naval battle been so completely one-sided. Of the twelve ships which formed the Russian battle-line eight were sunk and four were captured. Of the latter the *Orel* was, owing to her injuries, only with considerable difficulty taken safely into Maizuru, the nearest naval port, under the escort of the *Asama*. The three remaining battleships, the *Nikolai*, *Apraxin* and *Senyavin*, accompanied the Japanese Combined Fleet to Sasebo. The Russian cruisers did not suffer quite so heavily as the battleships. Including the *Ural*, four were sunk, one ran ashore, and three were interned at Manila, one only escaping to Vladivostok. Of the nine destroyers, four were sunk, one was captured, one was interned at Shanghai, and two succeeded in reaching Vladivostok. Six special service vessels accompanied the fleet into action, and of these three were sunk, two reached Shanghai and were interned, while one reached Diego Suarez a month later. In effecting this complete destruction of the Russian fleet Admiral Togo suffered the loss of three torpedo boats only, and although several of his ships were damaged or had guns disabled all were perfectly fit for further service.

The disparity in the losses of personnel are hardly less astonishing. The Russians had 216 officers and 4,614 men killed or drowned ; 278 officers and 5,639 men, many of whom were wounded, were taken as prisoners to Japan ; and 79 officers and 1,783 men were interned by neutral countries. Against these figures, the Japanese loss is given as 110 officers and men killed, and 590 wounded.*

Prepared to some extent as was the world at large by the events of the previous year for a Japanese victory, this utter destruction of the Russian naval force came as a complete surprise. In St. Petersburg and Moscow it produced a feeling of despondency

which the defeats on land had failed to arouse. When the fleet left Cronstadt in August 1904 few of the Russian public believed that it would ever reach Far Eastern waters. Indeed, outside naval circles its fate was regarded with something akin to apathy. Two months later the excitement caused by the incident of the Dogger Bank attracted wider interest ; and the praise bestowed by

* The Russian losses are from official sources. The Japanese losses are taken from the *Japanese Medical History of the War*.

French naval critics upon the subsequent movements of the fleet off Madagascar at length raised Russian hopes to such a pitch that the people began to believe that the heterogeneous assembly of naval units was a really powerful instrument of offence in the hands of a commander of genius. Its safe arrival in Indo-Chinese waters was regarded as further proof of Admiral Rozhstvenski's skill. Finally, the concentration of Admiral Nebogatov's squadron with the main fleet completed the change of the mental attitude of the Russian nation from indifference to overweening confidence that Russia was about to vindicate her claim to be regarded as mistress of the Pacific.

From such sanguine dreams as these the reality was a bitter awakening, and when the first rumours of disaster were corroborated and its magnitude began to be appreciated gloom and consternation spread. For the first time were the horrors of war brought home to the upper classes in St. Petersburg, for none of the regiments of the Guard had left for the front, few officers of the garrison had volunteered for service with the army in Manchuria, and great though the Russians losses on land had been, they had as yet hardly been felt in the capital. With the fleet, however, there were many who belonged to the "Equipage" of the Guard, which comprises members of the best families in Russia, while the officers of the *Alexandr III* were the élite of the Russian nobility. It was now felt on all sides that peace could not be long delayed, for the last chance of interrupting the sea communications of the Japanese army was gone, and the advantage which undisputed command of the sea gives to a belligerent power had passed irrevocably into the hands of Japan. Although more than three months elapsed before hostilities finally ceased, the battle of the Sea of Japan really exerted a greater influence for peace than any other event of the war.*

* As a criterion of the feeling produced by the news of the battle it may be mentioned that Russian bonds at once appreciated in value.

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

NAVAL COMMENTS.

THE course adopted by the Russians in retaining the First Pacific Squadron in Port Arthur and their policy in delaying the dispatch of any naval reinforcements until a strong squadron had been collected have already been reviewed.* At the time when the Second Pacific Squadron set out on its voyage the hope was still entertained that it might reach the theatre of war before the First Pacific Squadron was destroyed, and might by drawing off some portion of the blockading force give the surviving Russian vessels a reasonable chance of breaking out and forming a junction with Admiral Rozhstvenski's squadron in Vladivostok. Before the new squadron passed the Cape of Good Hope, however, this hope was shattered by the series of disasters which followed so quickly upon the capture of 203 Metre Hill; and the fall of the fortress on the second day of the New Year dealt the final blow to Russian aspirations in this direction. This catastrophe placed an entirely new aspect upon the situation, for Russia's naval power in the Far East was then reduced to the two damaged cruisers *Rossiya* and *Gromoboi* and a few torpedo boats lying at Vladivostok. The immediate object with which the Second Pacific Squadron had set out could no longer be achieved and the ultimate object—the isolation of the Japanese armies by the destruction of their oversea communications—had been rendered enormously more difficult of achievement, for if the squadron were at this juncture to press on in order to endeavour to obtain unquestioned command of the sea or even to place it once more in dispute it would have to encounter the whole naval power of Japan. The advisability of continuing its voyage therefore became a matter for serious consideration.

Some light upon the views of the Russian Government regarding the change in the aspect of affairs brought about by the fall of Port Arthur is to be obtained from a telegram sent by

* See Vol. II, pp. 643-646.

the Admiralty to Admiral Rozhestvenski in the middle of January, 1905.* It was explained that the object of the Second Pacific Squadron was to gain command of the sea in order to destroy the Japanese army in Manchuria, and reinforcements comprising every war vessel remaining in the Baltic Sea were promised if the Russian naval commander should consider that his force was not equal to this task. Admiral Rozhestvenski's reply was to the effect that he had no hope of gaining command of the sea with the force at his disposal; that the vessels which it was proposed to send him would tend rather to be a handicap than an addition to the fighting power of his squadron; and that the only plan which appeared to him to be feasible was to attempt to break through with the more efficient ships to Vladivostok and to operate thence against the enemy's communications.

Scanty as is the above information it is enough to show a great divergence in principle. The Government wished Admiral Rozhestvenski to proceed and to make a final effort to gain command of the sea. He deprecated the continuation of the expedition, but was inclined, if he went forward at all, to attempt merely to keep that command in dispute by means of raids.

It is difficult to estimate the possible effect of Admiral Rozhestvenski's plan. His squadron could hardly have reached the Sea of Japan before March, by which time the Japanese would have had more than two months in which to repair their ships, and the difficulties in the way of the Russians reaching Vladivostok without being brought to action could only have been overcome by an unusual combination of skill and good fortune. But even if it had succeeded in evading the enemy, had passed safely through the mines outside Vladivostok, and had reached the port undamaged, it would have been in no better position to interfere with the Japanese communications than the Port Arthur Fleet had been throughout the previous year. The approaches to Vladivostok on the land side were, it is true, less advantageous to an enemy who had control of the sea than had been those of the Kuan-tung stronghold, and owing to its two entrances the port would have been more difficult to blockade; but in another way the problem of attacking it would have been simpler, owing to the fact that there could be no threat of further naval reinforcements from Europe. In recommending the course he did the Admiral may have been influenced by the idea that

* Telegram No. 244. See Semenov, *Rasplata*, p. 379.

the presence of a considerable Russian naval force at Vladivostok might induce the Japanese to undertake land operations against that place and so weaken their field army, as they had done in the case of Port Arthur. If, however, the Russian ships had again declined to leave the protection of a fortress there would not have been the same imperative need for the Japanese to bring the army into play for their destruction; whereas, if the commander of the Second Pacific Squadron had proved more enterprising in his projected raids from Vladivostok than his predecessors had been in Port Arthur, there can be little doubt but that he would have been brought to action by a superior force before he could have made any serious impression upon the Japanese communications.

There is some reason to think that in insisting that the Second Pacific Squadron should proceed on its voyage, and that Admiral Rozhestvenski should persevere in a mission of whose prospects of success he had expressed profound mistrust, the Russian Government was not influenced solely by strategical considerations. The progress of the squadron had been watched with deep interest and attention by the whole world, and it was believed in certain quarters that to countermand its further advance at this juncture would be an acknowledgment of failure entailing almost as great a loss of prestige as would be caused by defeat. It seems that it was to a great extent due to this feeling, to the exhortations of the Press and the pressure of public opinion, that the reinforcements under Admiral Nebogatov were sent out in February, 1905.*

From the fact that by the 16th March, when the Second Pacific Squadron started from Madagascar, no rendezvous had been appointed for meeting the reinforcements, it would appear that the decision of the Government had not then been communicated to the commander-in-chief. It therefore could not have been until the 8th April, at the earliest, when he was passing Singapore, that he received definite orders to wait for Admiral Nebogatov and that the more ambitious plan of attempting to gain command of the sea was forced upon him.†

To form a correct appreciation of the Russian policy in the matter of sending on the Second Pacific Squadron after the fall of Port Arthur, it is necessary to regard the situation created by

* Russian public opinion at this time appears to have been influenced to a great extent by Captain Klado, an officer who had been left in Europe to give evidence in connexion with the Dogger Bank incident.

† *Novoe Vremya*, 23rd February, 1906.

that event from the Japanese point of view. Nine months of warfare had sufficed to drive the Russian army far to the north of the Ya-lu River, and the capture of Port Arthur had rendered Japan's position in Korea virtually impregnable. With the possible exception of the Island of Sakhalin—always regarded as part of her original empire, which she was in a position to reconquer when the season was sufficiently advanced, she was then holding by force of arms all the territory which her policy demanded. The final stage had almost been reached; and in order to crown her successes Japan must compel her adversary to acquiesce in such terms of peace as would entitle her to maintain the position she had won. While a decisive victory on land would probably be sufficient to effect this, any less result might only lead to a prolongation of the struggle. But the difficulty of forcing a decision on land had already been made clear in two battles, since when the conditions had not become more favourable to her, for the numerical preponderance of the enemy which had hitherto foiled her strategy had grown and was still increasing. There was a limit to the distance to which her army could penetrate into Manchuria without exhaustion to her resources, and it had been almost reached. But in case the army should be compelled either to move forward, or to remain in its then position for any length of time, the approach of Admiral Rozhdestvenski gave the Japanese the opportunity of finally securing its sea communications. And if the intervention of the Russian Second Pacific Squadron gave the Japanese an opportunity for striking, which they could not otherwise have obtained, it was the deliberation of that squadron's movements which did much to ensure that the blow should be decisive. As has been pointed out, the Japanese battleships were enabled to refit, while a few cruisers patrolled the seas, safeguarded the passage of supplies to the army in Manchuria against the possibility of raids from Vladivostok and, by watching the three entrances to the Sea of Japan, prevented supplies and stores destined for the use of the approaching Russian squadron from reaching that port.*

Later the result of the battle of Mukden only accentuated the complexity of the situation on land, because though the Russians

* The Japanese appear to have neglected La Pérouse Strait until the end of January, but that channel was then closed by ice and from that time the blockade of Vladivostok, although not existing in name, was in fact effective.

were again defeated it became more than ever obvious that they were by no means beaten. Almost at the same moment that the news of this last great though indecisive victory reached Japan, it was definitely announced that the Baltic Fleet had left Madagascar. Its long period of inactivity at Nossi Bé had not unnaturally given rise to an idea that its further progress might be stopped on account of the destruction of the Port Arthur Fleet. When that last doubt was dispelled, and so soon as the more important ships had been thoroughly overhauled, the Japanese Naval Staff developed the plan for meeting the fresh foe.

The strategy adopted by the Japanese may be described as the assumption of a defensive position in home waters to which, in order to effect anything, the enemy was bound sooner or later to come. Two objectives only lay before the Russians—the Japanese fleet and Vladivostok. If the former were selected the Russians must themselves seek out their enemy: if they chose the latter, Admiral Togo, by remaining in Japanese waters, was in a position to make certain, so far as anything at sea can ever be certain, that they should either be brought to battle by the massed strength of the Japanese navy when all the advantages would be on its side, or, if they reached Vladivostok without fighting, that they should not be able to leave without being brought to action by a superior force. It is worthy of remark that he made no attempt either to seek out the enemy's fleet or to prevent a junction of the Second and Third Pacific Squadrons. Indeed it is possible that he considered that the reinforcement under Admiral Nebogatov was so small as not to justify him in breaking his concentration, and that its presence on the day of battle would rather add to the completeness of a victory than diminish the chance of success. In accordance with his final plan the Japanese fleet was to be concentrated in the Strait of Korea, on the most direct route from the south to Vladivostok. Instead, however, of selecting a fortified harbour on the shores of Japan as his base he for the reasons already given chose Masampo on the Korean coast. Had the fleet remained in a Japanese port neither its movements nor its preparations could have been kept hidden from the enemy, whereas in the unfrequented anchorage of Sylvia Basin, as has been seen, the secret of its presence was so closely guarded that Admiral Rozhdestvenski had no certain knowledge of its disposition until the actual moment of contact, and could only assume

from the general strategical situation that it was somewhere in the vicinity of the Korean Strait.

To revert to the strategy of the Russians, when the Third Pacific Squadron joined up, there was no longer any suggestion of avoiding a fleet action, and discussion was confined as to whether the decision should be sought on the way to Vladivostok or at a later date. There is some doubt as to what Admiral Rozhstvenski really intended, but his object appears to have been to court action and after inflicting some tangible damage to the enemy to break through to Vladivostok—the only place where he could obtain coal or shelter.* Such plan, however, was far from deliberately seeking battle in order to crush the enemy and so obtain command of the sea before proceeding to his base; and it seems to have been due more to the position of the enemy rather than to any hope of a successful action.

The correctness of Admiral Rozhstvenski's decision has been questioned and in some quarters condemned. But his critics apparently assume that if the Russian fleet had succeeded in reaching Vladivostok without fighting it could have been strengthened materially in order to meet the enemy at a later date. The two cruisers *Rossiya* and *Gromoboi* would certainly have been an addition to its strength; but to have derived the advantage of their presence it was not necessary for Admiral Rozhstvenski to reach Vladivostok himself: it was quite feasible for him to have asked for some action on their part to coincide with his own, either with the object of effecting a junction with his force or of drawing off some portion of the enemy's. He must

* In a dispatch written by Admiral Rozhstvenski when a prisoner in Japan his appreciation of the situation at this time was summed up in the following words:—"Undoubtedly the squadron would be met by the entire Japanese fleet with its numerous cruisers and torpedo flotillas, but the armoured squadrons would be almost of equal strength. Against the twelve armoured ships of the 1st and 2nd Japanese Divisions, we, with Admiral Nebogatov's division, had eleven battleships and the cruiser *Nakhimov* which was accustomed to manœuvre with them. From the point of view of matériel our task was by no means hopeless; our duty was to court an action, reckoning on breaking through to Vladivostok after inflicting some tangible damage on the enemy."—Beklemishev, Lecture No. 3.

On the other hand, according to the account of the battle, based on the official records, which was published in the *Morskoi Sbornik* in April, 1913 (M. Smirnov), Admiral Rozhstvenski, when called before the Commission of Inquiry assembled to consider the circumstances attending the action, gave evidence that he recognized the superiority of the Japanese fleet and wished to break through, avoiding an action, if possible. He added, however, that a meeting with the hostile fleet was inevitable.

have realized that even if he succeeded in avoiding Admiral Togo the danger to his fleet would be great, for he knew that during the early part of the war the Japanese had carried out mining operations round Vladivostok on a large scale, and there was no reason to suppose that they would now neglect so obvious a method of obstructing his entry.* The depth of water, too, permitted of mines being laid at a distance from the shore where it was difficult to carry out sweeping operations so long as the Japanese held the command of local waters. His fleet would therefore have had to run the gauntlet of mine-fields both in entering and on leaving Vladivostok, with the consequent risk that its chance of ultimate success might have been impaired rather than improved by a visit to port. It is true that some of the ships were in need of repair; but the dockyard at Vladivostok was so poorly equipped that their condition could not have been much improved. Similarly, with regard to the crews, it is difficult to see what advantage could have been derived from a long or short stay at that place. If the sea experience of the six months' passage from Europe and the two months' stay in Nossi Bé had not been sufficient to provide the practice in gunnery and combined tactics which is so essential to battle efficiency there was little prospect that better opportunities for training would be provided in harbour. On the other hand, the news of the safe arrival of the fleet in Vladivostok would undoubtedly have been received with much satisfaction in Russia. It would have been counted a great success and might have encouraged the nation to pursue the war with renewed energy. This spirit, however, would soon have evaporated if it were seen that the ships remained inactive. On every ground, therefore, it appears that the Russians had nothing to gain by postponing the day of battle, and that Admiral Rozhstvenski was justified in his view that it was his duty to fight, and not to avoid, the Japanese fleet.

The difficulties which this course presented can hardly be exaggerated. Fully aware of the shortcomings of his own fleet, the Russian commander knew that he was faced by an enemy who had carried out one phase of the war with success and had then enjoyed four months' time to prepare for the next, and that he had no option but to fight in the enemy's waters, close to shores which would doubtless be lined with hostile observation stations

* The fact that the Japanese had laid so many as seven hundred mines in the approaches to Vladivostok was not known to the Russians.

able to report his every movement. On the whole, it must have seemed to him that astonishing good fortune alone could render success possible.* Nevertheless he retained the power of selecting within certain limits when and where the action should take place. It was manifestly to his advantage to fight as near his goal as possible, in order to simplify retreat in case of defeat, to have supplies at hand with which to follow up a possible success, and to carry as little coal as possible on board when in action, so that excessive draught and the consequent immersion of armour might to some extent be obviated.

Of the three passages into the Sea of Japan the nearest to Vladivostok was the Tsugaru Channel. By striking boldly into the Pacific and trusting to whatever opportunity might offer for coaling at sea, Admiral Rozhstvenski would have had a chance of reaching the eastern entrance to the strait before any report of his movements could have reached the enemy. Two serious drawbacks, however, must be set against the advantage which might thus have been gained. The entrance to the strait is so narrow that the fleet would certainly have been observed from the shore so soon as it approached, while the length of the channel is so great and the current which sets constantly through it to the eastward is so strong that the ships could not have got through in less than eight hours.† On the other hand, in clear weather and in daylight there would have been little risk from torpedoes, while the depth of water and the strength of the tide would have precluded any danger from mines. If Admiral Rozhstvenski had decided to attempt this passage, his best course would have been to time his movements so as to pass through during the day and reach the exit shortly before dark. In this way, though he would have run some risk of being attacked by the Japanese in the strait itself, it is more

* It appears that suggestions had been made to Admiral Rozhstvenski before he sailed that his wisest course was to seize a temporary base either amongst the Japanese islands of the Pescadores, Lu Chu or Bonin Groups, or on the neutral coast of China, in the hope that he might thereby induce Admiral Togo to break his defence. These ideas, however, had been quickly dismissed; in the first case because the enemy's territory contained no suitable anchorage for so large a concourse of vessels as he had with him, and in the second owing to the difficulties with neutral powers which would certainly have arisen.

† The strength of this current varies, as a rule, from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 knots according to the state of the tide, but the Vladivostok cruisers are said to have found a 6-knot current when they passed through to the eastward on the 20th July, 1904.

probable that he would have found Admiral Togo waiting for him outside the western end. In the latter case a fleet action could hardly have been completed before dark, and Admiral Togo, relying on his well proven officers and men, might either have fought by night, or have deferred the final decision until the next day, when it would presumably have taken place at some point not very far from Vladivostok. Moreover, unless he had gained definite information of the Russian movement before the fleet had actually been sighted at the entrance to the Tsugaru Strait his position would have been difficult. If he had stopped too long watching the Korean Strait the Russians might have got close to Vladivostok before he could bring them to action, whereas, if he had fallen back in good time he would have had to leave a detachment of cruisers on the watch, and they could hardly have been called up in time to join in the battle. On the whole, therefore, it appears that a general action near Vladivostok was more likely to have been brought about had the Russians proceeded through the Tsugaru Strait instead of through the Strait of Korea, and that some of the Japanese cruisers might have been absent on the day of battle.

The passage of La Pérouse Strait, involving as it did a much longer journey, in certain ways compared unfavourably with the middle route. Its western end is a hundred miles farther from Vladivostok than is that of the Tsugaru Channel and hardly nearer to that port than the Island of Tsushima. Moreover, before entering the strait the Russian fleet would have had to traverse the channel between the Kurile Islands, whence its position would assuredly have been reported while it was still two hundred miles from La Pérouse, and Admiral Togo thus given ample time to make his dispositions. This northern route, therefore, had little to recommend it. The only real advantage of its adoption would have been that the inevitable battle would have been fought at a considerable distance from the Japanese base.

The third and most direct route from the China Sea to the Sea of Japan lies through the Strait of Korea. And, as Admiral Rozhestvenski must have realized, unless he could by a feint induce Admiral Togo to relinquish his supposed position or divide his force, he must in following it expect to encounter the whole Japanese fleet in a battle which would take place off the shores of Japan, in close proximity to two of its most important naval bases and many miles distant from his own goal. Strategically,

therefore, this route would appear to have been the least favourable to the Russian chances of success.

The dangers of navigation, however, figured largely in Admiral Rozhestvenski's calculations. In the fogs which prevail in those latitudes he saw insuperable difficulties to the passage of the La Pérouse Strait with the heterogeneous collection of vessels under his command; moreover coaling operations in the open sea might prove impossible so far north, where smooth waters could not be expected, and it might be necessary to pass near the shores of Japan in order to economize fuel. The Tsugaru Channel was also rejected, partly for the latter reason and partly on account of its narrowness, which would allow no room for manœuvring in case of attack by a fleet of higher speed.* The southern strait was open to none of these objections. The navigation was simple, and the broad channel with well-marked lines of soundings on either hand allowed the possibility of a fog to be contemplated with equanimity as a possible screen to the fleet's movements.

So soon as Admiral Rozhestvenski had settled upon this route it became of the utmost importance to induce the enemy either to fall back from his presumed station near the Korean Strait to some position less distant from Vladivostok or to divide his force. It was not to be expected that the Japanese admiral would lose touch with any of his armoured vessels; but if any uncertainty as to the course of the Russian fleet could be aroused, and if its appearance off the southern strait could be delayed until sufficient time elapsed to enable it to proceed some distance on its way towards the northern passages, Admiral Togo might be compelled to choose between taking the main Japanese fleet away to the north or running the risk of not bringing Admiral Rozhestvenski to action until the latter was close to his goal. A paramount duty of the Russians, therefore, was to mislead the enemy as to their intended route. Owing to the difficulty of locating the hostile fleet in so wide an area by means of his cruisers, it was not unreasonable to suppose that for intelligence as to the movements of the Russians after they had left Van Fong Bay until they came into the area regularly patrolled

* Captain Semenov goes so far as to ridicule the idea that Admiral Rozhestvenski could have attempted this route with "an Armada which only managed with difficulty to maintain something in the shape of a formation even in clear weather and under the most favourable conditions for navigation."

Admiral Togo would be forced to depend upon trading vessels or upon observers on land.

Admiral Rozhstvenski's movements from Sunday, the 14th May, when he left Van Fong Bay, until he was close to the Korean Strait must be considered from the point of view of whether they were, or were not, calculated to deceive. Looked upon in this light, his first step, to the Balintang Channel north of the Philippines, was correct, since it might well have been interpreted as an indication that he intended to strike out into the Pacific. But it is difficult to find any justification for his turn to the north-westward after passing the Miyako Group, and for his approach towards the Yang-tse River, into waters which were crowded with the trading vessels of all nations, where he ran the risk of having his position reported and immediately telegraphed to Japan. It is hardly conceivable that this was a calculated attempt to confuse the Japanese strategy and to induce Admiral Togo to believe that since the Russians had deliberately shown themselves to the westward their real intention must be to pass round the east coast of Hondo. The probable explanation of this movement is that Admiral Rozhstvenski wished to protect the colliers which he had sent into Woosung, but it seems an inadequate reason for risking the disclosure of his position so near the Korean Strait.*

A more definite attempt to mislead was made when the armed merchant cruisers *Kuban* and *Terek* were dispatched to the east coast of Japan. But it is doubtful whether Admiral Togo even heard of the movements of either of these vessels before the battle was over. And in any case the diversion was not of sufficient weight to carry conviction, for nothing less than a strong force of cruisers acting boldly on the trade route to Tokio and within sight of Japanese shores, would have been likely to influence the Japanese dispositions. The dispatch of the *Rion* and *Dnyepr* into the Yellow Sea was still less likely to be of use. The time for operations of any importance in those waters had passed with the fall of Port Arthur, and the appearance there of these two armed merchant cruisers could never have been taken as an indication that the Russian main body was moving so far away from its only base—Vladivostok; while as a threat the diversion was too weak to bring about any detachment of force on the part of the Japanese. If Admiral Rozhstvenski could not afford to detach

* See p. 743.

any of his more formidable fighting ships he would have done better to place all four of the above-named vessels under one commander, with orders to show themselves to the eastward and to act in such a way as to attract a fair proportion of the enemy.

As has already been indicated there was another means of misleading the enemy open to the Russian admiral. Had he been able to defer his appearance in the Korean Strait a little longer than was actually the case and at the same time to keep his movements secret, it is by no means impossible that he would have produced the impression that he had gone out into the Pacific and was making for the Tsugaru Channel. In point of fact, however, anxiety about his coal supply after leaving the hospitable neutral ports of Indo-China hampered his further movements and limited his power of waiting at sea, while every day's delay increased the danger of his fleet being sighted by vessels on their way to Japan. It would, therefore, be unjust to do more than point out the difficulty in which Admiral Togo might have been placed had the Russian fleet failed to put in an appearance when it did. As it was, its voyage from Van Fong Bay took thirteen days, and there is reason to believe that the advisability of leaving Sylvia Basin for a port whence the Japanese could command all three approaches to Vladivostok was actually under consideration at the moment when the *Shinano Maru* sent in her memorable message announcing that the enemy was in sight. But for the fact that the Russian hospital ship *Orel* was considerably astern of station it is very doubtful whether she would have been sighted by the *Shinano Maru*, in which case the Russian fleet would have reached the Korean Strait unobserved, but the subsequent movements of the Japanese look-outs were certainly facilitated by the apparent indifference of the Russians to observation. They made no attempt, either by sending cruisers to drive off the vessels which were watching them, or by interfering with the wireless telegraphic messages which they knew were passing, to prevent Admiral Togo from receiving the fullest intelligence as to their movements and formation. And it was the accurate information which the Japanese commander received through his cruisers which enabled him to meet the Russian advance without loss of time and with all the advantages possible. Indeed, were it not for Admiral Rozhstvenski's subsequent statement that he was courting an action, his neglect of obvious precautions at this time might lead

to the supposition that he changed his mind at the last moment and decided to try to slip past the Japanese unobserved in order that the inevitable action might be fought nearer to Vladivostok.

Turning from the strategy of the campaign to the tactics of the battle of the Sea of Japan, it must be noted at the outset that there is no action which occurred during the war with which it can be justly compared. It is true that at the battle of the Yellow Sea on the 10th August, 1904, a Russian fleet was endeavouring to reach Vladivostok, prepared to accept action but not seeking it. But whereas the Russians then had a port under their lee they now had no port upon which to fall back. On the former occasion, also, the Japanese admiral was compelled to act cautiously, since the enemy was known to be fitting out a second fleet, while for him there was no possibility of replacement or reinforcement. In May, 1905, he was in this respect on equal terms with his opponents and could therefore without thought for the future devote his whole attention to the work of destroying the hostile fleet and preventing the escape of any portion of it. He had, moreover, the experience of the previous battle to help him in gauging the effects of the fire of modern guns on modern warships and in appreciating the characteristics of the enemy he was about to fight; and he appears to have been fully able to turn previous experience to account. There is no doubt that Admiral Togo's tactics at the battle of Tsushima were of a higher order than they had been eight months previously.

Unlike his opponent, Admiral Rozhstvenski had not the advantage of battle experience; but the incidents of the 10th August must have been known to him, and their teaching properly applied should have been of value. The position of the Japanese fleet directly upon the Russian line of advance and its greater speed placed the Russians at such a disadvantage that their only hope of success lay in manœuvring to get on to equal terms tactically and trusting to gunfire to beat the enemy off. The Russian commander, however, from the outset surrendered all initiative by delaying to form single line until the enemy was in sight. Even then he did it in such a manner as to take an unnecessarily long time, with the result that his formation was in a state of confusion at the outset of the battle. He afterwards relied entirely upon the defensive.

Though the idea uppermost in his mind seems to have been to break through to Vladivostok he was fully alive to the fact that

the attempt was hopeless until the enemy had been beaten or severely crippled. During the time that the Japanese vessels were making the turn of sixteen points to port at the beginning of the action, he was quite justified in holding on to his course since this procedure gave him a distinct tactical advantage. But unfortunately he was unable to make full use of it owing to the disorder in his own formation caused by his initial manoeuvre of forming single line. Admiral Nebogatov has stated: "The enemy continued to turn to port and lay parallel to our mob, since this is the only adequate word to express our formation at the time. The 1st Division continued to steam, but the 2nd and 3rd Divisions reduced speed, and even stopped to avoid collision."*

It is difficult, however, to justify his turn to port—if such took place—at 2.0 p.m. He ought rather to have altered to starboard so as to place his fleet on terms of equality as regards position, and by continuing to circle in the same direction, always keeping his leading opponent abeam, retain the same relative position in spite of his inferiority in speed. It was only five minutes later, when the punishment became greater than he could bear, that the Russian admiral turned away. But it was then too late, for his fleet had been crippled. After the first hour of the action, when the *Suvorov* had been disabled and the *Osl'yabya* sunk, all cohesion was lost and the Russian movements can no longer be dignified by the name of tactics: they became nothing more than the efforts of a defeated and disorganized fleet to avoid the overwhelming fire of the enemy and to escape. The confusion was increased by the disablement of the commander-in-chief, for the command then devolved upon an officer who does not appear to have been in the confidence of his superior.† From that moment the signal "Course N. 23° E." seems to have been the only attempt made to exercise any control over the Russian fleet.

In contrast with the unsatisfactory relations between the principal officers of the Russian fleet, Admiral Togo placed absolute charge of his 2nd Division in the hands of his second in command. That this division consisted only of armoured cruisers has no special significance, since they were not called upon to deal with corresponding vessels on the opposing side and, so

* Evidence of Admiral Nebogatov at his trial by court martial.

† Admiral Nebogatov stated in evidence at the court martial held on him that no plans had been discussed between Admiral Rozhëstvenski and himself.

soon as it was seen that the Russians intended to place all their armoured vessels in the line, the Japanese 2nd Division acted to all intents and purposes as a portion of the battlefleet. The two Japanese divisions acted independently, and the manner of employing the 2nd Division appears to have been left entirely to Admiral Kamimura's discretion, subject, it need hardly be said, to a previous understanding with the commander-in-chief. The battle showed that Admiral Togo's confidence was not misplaced, for this distribution of force gave great flexibility to his fleet. During the most critical period of the action, from 1.50 p.m. until the loss of the *Oslabya*, Admiral Kamimura's division, in rear of the 1st Division, was hotly engaged with the centre ships of the Russian line, and there is reason to believe that the overwhelming fire from his cruisers was the principal cause of the disaster to the *Oslabya*. Later in the battle, when the Russians became disorganized, the Japanese divisions, acting independently, prevented their escape, a duty in which they were so ably seconded by the divisions of light cruisers that in spite of adverse weather conditions no Russian vessel got away during daylight.

Admiral Togo, with the Japanese 1st Division, devoted the whole of his attention to the destruction of the four Russian battleships of the *Suvorov* class, concentrating his fire principally on whichever was the leading vessel for the moment, with the result that three out of the four were sunk before dark, while the fourth was so shattered that she fell a prize on the following day without being able to strike a blow. With the exception of the *Suvorov*, which met her end from a torpedo after having been rendered helpless, these ships were destroyed entirely by gunfire.

From the point of view of design and construction it is worthy of special notice that the sinking of the Russian battleships was in each case of which we have an account due to loss of stability and consequent capsizing and not to direct foundering. Damage at the waterline, with corresponding loss of waterplane area was the primary cause of this, its effect being accentuated by excessive draught and a large amount of "tumble home." Since it seems to be established beyond doubt that at the moment of going into action the ships were carrying only their full bunker capacity of coal—although it is known that approximately double that amount had been stowed during the voyage from Europe—this excess of draught during the battle must be ascribed to other causes than the weight of coal carried. It is possible that the

length of time taken in building these vessels, which in some cases amounted to five years, had led to modifications in the original designs and consequent increase of weights. The fact that this capsizing was responsible for the large number of lives lost renders this point one of importance.

At the battle of the Yellow Sea, on the 10th August, 1904, some time elapsed before the Japanese superiority of fire asserted itself, owing, there is no doubt, partly to the great range at which the action was fought. Whether on the 27th May, 1905, the closer range was deliberately sought by Admiral Togo, or was forced on him by the misty weather is uncertain, but its effect in more rapidly forcing a decision is indisputable. At first sight it might appear that a closer range is in favour of the fleet whose training in gunnery is the less perfect; but it must be remembered that whatever the range may be the better trained guns' crews will obtain the greater number of hits; and it was the frequency with which they were hit that had such marked effect upon the Russian ships. The aim of their gunners was disconcerted, the fires which broke out could not be extinguished, and minor damages which in less unfavourable conditions might have been put right, assumed great importance. In a word, the intensity of fire from the Japanese ships overwhelmed their opponents and provided their own protection. And the victory was gained entirely by the gun, for during the action the ships that formed the Japanese line of battle only fired eight torpedoes, of which none took effect. It has been said that the fire discipline of the Japanese was such, that each gunlayer ceased firing, without orders, immediately his target became obscured by mist or smoke. If this is true it will be agreed that men could hardly display a higher degree of self-control during the excitement and exaltation of battle than is evinced by this refusal to waste ammunition.

That the Russians fought splendidly is undeniable. Nevertheless, neither in the laying of their guns nor in the handling of their ships could they compare with their more highly trained adversaries. Perhaps the dogged resistance of the *Suvorov* furnished the finest example of courage, but most of the other ships fought to the end with hardly less resolution. The final surrender of Admiral Nebogatov has been the subject of severe criticism on the part of his fellow-countrymen, but allowance must certainly be made for the hours of almost incessant fighting

he had been through and for the hopeless position in which the remnant of the fleet under his charge was placed.

In regard to the Japanese, the most striking minor feature is the comparative failure of their torpedo craft. On the 23rd June and on the 10th August, 1904, the Port Arthur Fleet had been at their mercy and had escaped uninjured. On the 27th May, 1905, the survivors of the Baltic Fleet were in a very similar position, and again the results achieved by torpedo work were insignificant. Between eighty and ninety torpedoes were fired during the night, yet not more than five or six hits were made. These figures speak for themselves, and are all the more noteworthy since the training of the Japanese was thorough and their efficiency remarkable. It is probable that a large number of the failures was due to the crews having been trained to fire torpedoes at long ranges; to the difficulty of estimating at night and at long range a ship's course and speed; and to the very natural desire on the part of the men to discharge the torpedoes as soon as possible.

Although the final overthrow of Russia's navy and her disappearance from the list of first-class naval powers on the 27th May, 1905, may fairly be ascribed to weak tactics, poor shooting, and faulty construction, the underlying cause of its failure was more deeply seated. It lay in lack of preparation and training for war in time of peace. Irresolution of policy, also, which caused so much delay in the dispatch of naval reinforcements was responsible for much, while the final undertaking of an enterprise with an insufficient force commanded by an officer who had expressed his inability to carry it through was almost doomed to failure. Even a commander of genius placed at the head of a fleet such as that led by the ill-fated Admiral Rozhestvenski might well have failed against an enemy whose natural military aptitude had been developed in the best possible school—that of war itself.

CHAPTER LXXXVII.

THE RUSSIAN LINES OF COMMUNICATION.

(Strategical Map 6.)

THE question of the Russian railway communications is almost wholly bound up in that of the railway system which linked the armies in Manchuria with Europe. This, which may as a whole be termed the Trans-Siberian Railway, was a single line of five-foot gauge, and ran from Syzran, in European Russia, via Omsk to Baikal, on the western shore of the lake of that name, where there was a break in continuity for the first nine months of the war. From Mysovaya on the east side of the lake the line ran via Harbin to Vladivostok and down through Manchuria to Dalny and Port Arthur. The total distance from Syzran to Port Arthur is 4,863 miles, but the length of the line in employment was slightly reduced during the course of the war, as railhead was gradually moved back with the retirement of the Russians, to Liao-yang, Mukden and finally to Kun-chu-ling.*

The Trans-Siberian Railway system.

The system was subdivided into the following sections :—

- (a) The Siberian Railway, properly so called, running from Syzran, which was on the European railway system, to the western shores of Lake Baikal.
- (b) The passage of Lake Baikal, firstly on the ice, then by ferry; and later the Circum-Baikal line.
- (c) The Trans-Baikal Railway, from the eastern shores of Lake Baikal to Manchuria station on the Chinese Frontier.

*Syzran to Chelyabinsk	713 miles.
Chelyabinsk to Irkutsk	2,021 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
Irkutsk to Manchuria Station ...	944 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
Manchuria Station to Port Arthur ...	1,184 $\frac{2}{3}$ "
	4,863 $\frac{5}{2}$

- (d) The Chinese Eastern Railway, which was divided into three branches, i.e., the Western, from Manchuria station to Harbin; the Eastern, from Harbin to the frontier of the Maritime Province where connexion was made, by a branch of the Ussuri Railway, with Vladivostok; the Southern, from Harbin to Liao-yang.
- (e) The Ussuri Railway, from Vladivostok to Khabarovsk, with a branch line to the Chinese Eastern Railway.

Over and above the break in continuity at Lake Baikal and its great length the railway suffered from various drawbacks which handicapped it as the main line of communication of an army in the field. Being a single line, its capacity depended upon the distance apart of the crossing-places. These had not originally been spaced with a view to carrying the traffic which was demanded by the concentration and maintenance of a large force in the field, and consequently an immense amount of actual construction had to be done during the war—whilst the line was being worked at pressure—in increasing the number of crossing and watering-places and the siding accommodation generally. The whole system was comparatively new, the different sections of it having been built at different times, and the eastern portion only opened for two and a half years before the war started. There was, moreover, a great shortage in rolling stock, both locomotives and wagons, and in permanent way material; and part of the traffic had to be taken up in sending material eastwards.* Owing to the difference in the nature of the country traversed, also, the carrying capacity of the line varied considerably, the weakest portions being Lake Baikal, and the hilly sections on the Trans-Baikal and Siberian Railways. On the Siberian Railway, for instance, the load for the same class of engine varied from sixteen vehicles in the hilly stretches to thirty-six in the flat. The railway was therefore of far from uniform capacity, being only as efficient as its weakest section at the moment, whether this weakness was caused by lack of crossing places and siding accommodation or by a dearth of rolling stock. The climate of the country, again, was adverse to railway

* During the war the rolling stock of the Siberian Railway was increased temporarily seventy-two per cent and the Trans-Baikal Railway over one hundred per cent by stock borrowed from the railways of European Russia.

working, especially in winter. Though the whole system was not under one management, which fact militated against the smoothness of working through traffic, one official had general charge of the constructional improvements. This was Prince Khilkov, the Minister of Ways and Communications, and it was largely due to his exertions and energy that the power of the line was developed to meet requirements so well as it did. It will give some idea of the actual improvement attained if a brief account is given of the traffic expansion in the different sections of the system.

At the beginning of 1904, by the winter time-table, the Siberian Railway was scheduled to run nine pairs of trains daily. The construction of new crossing-places and other improvements increased its powers by the end of May to twelve and a half, and by the end of October to fifteen pairs of trains a day, of which seven were military. Nevertheless, this expansion, though steady, was not sufficient, and at the end of 1904 further efforts were made to increase the capacity of the line, which resulted in the beginning of 1905 in a time-table allowing for seventeen trains going east and sixteen returning west, twelve of the former being military. In practice, however, this schedule could not be worked to, and even so late as the summer of 1905 a service of fourteen trains was maintained with great difficulty. It was hoped by the end of September of that year to have established a twenty-pair service of trains, thirteen of which were to be military, but the conclusion of hostilities prevented this being carried out. It is probably accurate to state that twelve military trains per diem was the maximum number that actually ran eastwards and that it was only reached towards the end of the war. The Siberian Railway enjoyed advantages over the Trans-Baikal and Chinese Eastern Railways from its union on the outbreak of war with the European railway system, from the easiness of its grades, and from the fact that it had been working for some time. But it was put to an additional strain by being the root, so to speak, of the system, and having to carry more ordinary traffic in addition to that demanded for the army than either of the two other main sections.

As regards the chief obstacle of the whole line—Lake Baikal—this was normally crossed by the help of two steam ice-breaking

ferries, the *Baikal* and *Angara*, the former of which was capable of carrying trains.* These ferries usually ran from April

Lake Baikal
and the Circum-
Baikal Railway.

to January, i.e., until the ice was too thick for them to force a passage, when traffic was taken across the ice. In order to save the delay and inconvenience caused by this transshipment and break of bulk the Russians had before the Boxer Rising begun the construction of the Circum-Baikal line round the south of the lake to connect Baikal with Misovaya; but the transport of troops during that trouble had been carried out so well by the existing means that the completion of this railway had not been pressed on with. During the winter of 1903-04, traffic was conveyed by the ferry steamers from Baikal to Misovaya until the 14th January, 1904, when the eastern section of the Circum-Baikal line from Tankhoi to Misovaya was opened. This at once shortened the journey across the lake from forty-nine to twenty-eight miles. On the 27th January, the ferry ceased to run, and from that time until the 30th April all traffic passed across the ice from Baikal to Tankhoi. The roadway across the ice, of twenty-eight miles length, was furnished with heated shelters at four-mile intervals. The troops marched across in one day while the goods were first carried in horse-drawn sleighs for which three thousand horses were maintained. Prince Khilkov, however, had taken measures to obviate the break of bulk entailed by this system, and on the 15th February, a rail track was laid across the ice, over which the loaded trucks could be drawn by horses, since the ice would not support the weight of locomotives.†

In spite of the great difficulties caused by cracks in the ice, the first twenty trucks under load reached the eastern side of the lake on the 2nd March. This method of transport continued for only twenty-five days, for the line had to be removed on the 28th March; but during that time 2,285 loaded trucks and twenty-five coaches passed across, also sixty-five dismantled locomotives in

* At the beginning of the war the *Baikal* could carry twenty-eight loaded trucks, or 2,300 men and 250 horses, and could make the round trip between Baikal and Misovaya in ten hours. In twenty-four hours she could deal with the contents of five troop trains, which was all that the Trans-Baikal line could then carry. In the summer of 1904, she made four trips in the twenty-four hours and conveyed the contents of ten troop trains in one day which was also more than the Trans-Baikal Railway could deal with.

† The ice varied from three feet to four feet six inches in thickness.

parts. The movement of goods and troops by sleighs, ordinary wheeled vehicles and route march continued until the 30th April. Five days later the ice broke up sufficiently for the steam ferries to start work again, and two days before this the Circum-Baikal Railway reached another stage toward completion, the section between Kultuk and Tankhoi being opened to military traffic. The whole line, however, was not finished until October, 1904, and was not in full use until January, 1905. It was supplemented by the ferry during the summer of 1904 and by transport over the ice during the winter of 1904-05. The service aimed at on the Circum-Baikal line during the summer of 1904 was fourteen pairs of trains per diem, but it is not known when this was reached. In spite of all the efforts by the Russians to surmount the difficulties presented, Lake Baikal proved a most serious handicap to them during a great part of the war.*

On the Trans-Baikal Railway the daily service at the end of 1903 consisted of three and a half pairs of trains, and in January, 1904, four pairs of military trains were run. A time-table for nine pairs of trains, of which six pairs were military, came into force on the 14th April, 1904, and exactly three months later a twelve-pair time-table providing for eight military trains was actually in operation. This service, however, was only attained at the expense of the supply of railway stores and the maintenance of the line. Nevertheless, speeding up still continued, and a sixteen and a half-pair time-table was brought into force on the 28th September, but though the necessary alterations to the line were made the additional rolling stock required for this had not arrived and it could not be carried out in its entirety. An effort was made to maintain the service of military trains—fourteen pairs—provided by this new schedule, but owing to the insufficiency of locomotives this could only be done by neglecting the traffic necessary for the upkeep of the line. In other words, the railway was living on capital instead of on income. By the end of September only two hundred and sixty-four locomotives—about one-third of the total required—had arrived. The unpunctuality of trains now became serious, and complete disorganization threatened the traffic. The first frosts in the autumn of 1904 added fresh

* It has been alleged that the Japanese purposely delayed the declaration of war until the passage of the lake was at its most difficult stage.

difficulties. Scarcity of fuel and labour difficulties still further complicated the situation, and the result was that over two thousand trucks were blocking the Trans-Baikal Railway sidings. The problem was not solved until March, 1905, when sufficient locomotives arrived to justify the publication of orders for seventeen pairs of trains—nine pairs being military. On the 28th August a new time-table was introduced for twenty pairs of trains, which included twelve pairs of military trains per diem. The adoption of oil fuel obtained from local sources enabled the latter number to be raised to fourteen pairs. The Trans-Baikal Railway thus forestalled the Siberian Railway by a month in scheduling twenty pairs of trains per diem.

The Chinese Eastern Railway had been laid in great haste, for strategic considerations had pointed to the advisability of uniting Vladivostok and Port Arthur with the rest of the railway system as rapidly as possible. The survey for the Eastern and Western Branches had been commenced in 1897 and for the Southern Branch in the following year. By October, 1901, passengers, mails and troops were being carried.* Naturally in such a new line there were found to be defects in construction, many of which had to be made good during the campaign, at a time when the almost entire absence of reserves of material constantly delayed consolidation. The line, also, had been built with a view to carrying seven pairs of trains a day. When mobilization was ordered the shortage of rolling stock was so great that not more than four military trains per diem could be sent south from Harbin. On the 26th February, 1904, this number rose to five, and a few days later seven military trains were dispatched, though with great difficulty. Assistance, however, was given by the Ussuri Railway which by the end of March had handed over nearly forty engines. Another circumstance which helped the line to emerge from its difficulties was the fact that its engines were more powerful and could haul longer trains than those of the Trans-Baikal Railway. Nevertheless it suffered greatly from lack of rolling stock, and its very poverty in this respect stood in its way, for by borrowing flat trucks from the Trans-Baikal Railway it prevented the transit of the urgently required rails which were now lying on the eastern shore of Lake Baikal. The labour question was also a difficulty, while the supply of coaches

* Whether over the whole line or not is uncertain.

now began to suffer from their seizure as offices and quarters by unauthorized persons. Some relief, however, was afforded early in May by the cessation of railway communication with Port Arthur, which cancelled some of the service on the Liao-yang—Port Arthur section. Eventually, after unremitting efforts, the following timetable was brought into use on the 25th September, 1904:—

Western Branch ... 16 pairs of trains (10 pairs military).

Eastern Branch ... 15 pairs of trains (4 pairs military).

Southern Branch ... 19 pairs of trains (13 pairs military).

When the Russians withdrew from Liao-yang the loss of the Yen-tai coal mines added a fresh difficulty, and it was found necessary to construct a branch line to the Fu-shun mines. The labour question was also again a source of delay, for the Chinese miners were afraid to work so close to the fighting line. Working parties, however, were drawn from the troops, and by the middle of January, 1905, some five hundred and fifty miners from the ranks were at work. Although the Western and Southern Branches were scheduled to work twenty-one pairs of trains per diem in February, 1905, only fourteen trains could be dispatched eastward from Manchuria Station, i.e., eleven military, one mixed goods and passenger, and two construction.

After their retirement to Hsi-ping-kai the Russians found themselves in an area practically exhausted of supplies, and provisions, grain, cattle, and even hay had to be brought by railway from Harbin. The number of military trains from that place necessary to satisfy the needs of the army after the expected arrival of the 53rd Division and the IXth and XIXth Corps was estimated in July, 1905, at twenty-two.* A committee which had been

* Daily supplies and forage, 337 trucks ...	...	...	Trains.
			9 to 10
Stores ...	...	...	1
Medical ...	...	...	1
Artillery and engineer loads ...	...	...	1
Red Cross and private ...	...	...	1
Troop trains ...	...	...	5
Slaughter cattle ...	...	...	2
Reserve stores for intermediate stations ...	...	...	1
			<hr/>
	Total	...	21 to 22
			<hr/>

In addition were required:—

Railway service ...	...	Trains.
		1
Fuel and railway material not less than ...	...	3
Margin ...	...	4
		<hr/>
		8
		<hr/>

appointed by the commander-in-chief to consider the railway problem, however, reported that the Southern Branch could not carry this number of military trains unless the line were doubled; that, owing to the absence of any local reserve of railway material, to the impossibility of obtaining it before the middle of the autumn, and to the lack of labour, preliminary work alone could be undertaken during 1905; that the commencement of construction would have to be postponed to the next season; and that regular traffic could only be expected in December, 1906. That date, it was thought, might be considerably advanced if troops could be used on the construction work. But in order to have the double line open to traffic even by June, 1906, twenty-seven thousand rank and file would have to be continuously employed.

The commander-in-chief was, therefore, faced by a serious problem. On the one hand the Southern Branch of the railway could not meet the growing needs of the army. On the other, the necessary improvement of the line would certainly, for a time, still further reduce its efficiency. The only way out of this difficulty lay in organizing road transport from Harbin to the area of concentration in order to compensate for the reduction in the railway's carrying power during the doubling of the line. The conclusion of peace, however, removed the necessity for this measure.

The Trans-Siberian Railway system required most careful guarding; and it is not difficult to imagine the disastrous results which would have followed the destruction of any one of its great bridges. On the European section of the Siberian Railway, which ran for miles across steppes, the protecting troops averaged about two men per mile. For the remainder of the Siberian Railway and for the Circum-Baikal and Trans-Baikal lines eight Siberian Reserve battalions were employed. The number of men per mile on these lines reached the maximum about August, 1904, and remained constant till the conclusion of hostilities, being six to seven men per mile. The protection of the Chinese Eastern Railway bore quite a different character to that of the other railways, since the line had to be guarded against the attack of large, more or less organized bodies of brigands and the regular forces of the enemy. The measures taken to guard it have already been described in the account of the Japanese raids.*

* See pp. 238-40.

From the 18th August to the 18th September, 1905, the daily number of trains of all sorts dispatched south from Harbin was never less than twelve. On four days fourteen trains per diem ran, on eight days fifteen, on ten days sixteen, on three days seventeen, and on one occasion—the 8th September—nineteen trains left for the south. The latter was the greatest number of trains which ever left Harbin for railhead on any one day throughout the war. These figures give the daily average of this branch at this time as fifteen trains in a southerly direction, of which 13·5 were military. The greatest number of trains of all kinds arriving at railhead throughout the war was twenty-one. This was on the 27th August, 1905. Of all the 2,698 echelons dispatched to the Far East 71·3 per cent arrived with a delay of from one to thirty-nine days, 19·4 per cent arrived exactly to time and 9·3 per cent ahead of time.* In all 20,116 officers, 1,274,450 other ranks, 230,269 horses and 935,000 tons of stores were transported to Harbin.†

On the whole, the performance of the long railway leading to the Far East was so remarkable as to be one of the features of the war. As has been stated, the line suffered from many drawbacks which militated against its efficiency as the main artery of communication of a large army.‡ And the history of its working

* The term "echelon" means a body of troops or a consignment of material dispatched at one time in a train or group of trains.

† The stores were in the following proportions:—

	Per cent.
Supplies	45
Artillery stores	26
Engineer stores	7
Troops' stores	8·5
Medical stores	2·5
Naval stores	3·5
Railway stores for the Chinese Eastern Railway ...	7·5
	100

‡ The difficulties under which the traffic was carried on in winter and the possibly far-reaching effects of a block on a single line of railway are illustrated by an incident which occurred on the Siberian Railway in December, 1904. At Taishet station two locomotives were derailed by a collision in such a manner as to foul the line and cut off access to the water and coal supply. During the three days required to re-rail these engines several others in the running shed became damaged by being allowed to grow cold, and owing to the complete block in traffic locomotives stabled in at two of the neighbouring running sheds also became damaged from the same

[Continued on next page.]

is one long story of struggles against obstacles, of great efforts to increase the rolling stock and equipment in order to compete with the demands for accommodation ; of improvements in the structure of the line necessary to carry that traffic ; and of general expansion of the organization to enable it to be handled. And yet, in spite of the progress made and the exertions of the Russian engineers and railway staff under the Minister of Ways and Communications, by which the carrying power of the system was in some sections more than quadrupled, and in spite of the fact that the difficulties were not increased by damage done by the enemy, to whom the line with its numerous bridges presented a tempting object, the fact remains that towards the end of the war the railway failed to meet the requirements of the vast army which Russia had massed east of Lake Baikal, as it had failed at the beginning to ensure a quick concentration.

Without entering into technical details, it may be said that from a staff and railway point of view the experiences of the Russians in working military traffic furnished yet one more confirmation of the lessons taught by the Franco-German and South African Wars. The first was that for the successful working of a line during war it is essential that the technical railway staff, whether civil or military, should be protected from the summary demands of local military authorities with which it is often impossible to comply without detriment to the railway service as a whole ; and that, to ensure this, necessitates the intervention of a trained military staff, who by their knowledge of both railway and military requirements are capable of adjusting conflicting demands and by their position are empowered to act as the channel of communication between the army and the officials of the railway. Other points that were again brought to light were the necessity for the organization and training in peace of men to carry out rapid repairs, and for the provision of labour to load and unload wagons, so as to obviate the congestion of sidings. Lastly, it was made clear that for the best results to be obtained it is essential that the

Continued from previous page.]

cause. On receipt of the news of the occurrence at St. Petersburg on the 10th, the forwarding from Europe of all goods trains, except those carrying warm clothing, was countermanded. Nevertheless, on the 15th December, over one thousand wagons of troops were held up outside Taishet, while some four thousand eight hundred trucks under load had accumulated to the west of that place. Four days later this number had grown to five thousand two hundred. It needed a cessation of all but urgent troop traffic for ten days and of goods traffic for twenty-three days to restore equilibrium on the line.

track should be in good order, that there should be a sufficiency of trained personnel, of locomotives and rolling stock, and of siding accommodation and marshalling facilities, that the distances between block signal stations, or stations, should be approximately the same, and that the speed of the trains should be uniform. It was a failing in each of these particulars which contributed to bring about the fact that the Russians, in spite of all they achieved, did not obtain even better results from the system at their disposal.

To turn to subsidiary rail communications in the neighbourhood of the field armies, the main line was supplemented by branches, from Yen-tai station to the Yen-tai mines, from Su-chia-tun to Ta-wang-kuan-pu, and from Hsiao-ho-tun to the coal mines at

Fu-shun, and also by a horse-tramway system.*

Horse-tramway
systems at
the front.

Altogether, during the war, two hundred and fifty miles of horse-tramway were laid and the earthwork for another seventy miles was pre-

pared. On the battlefield of Liao-yang a system of such tramways to An-ping and farther to the south-east had been projected, but the only lines actually constructed were one from Liao-yang to Shou-shan-pu and two for the purpose of moving siege guns in rear of the city. At the battle of Mukden, however, these tramways played a greater part.† The most important line was that which ran from Fu-shun Junction in a southerly direction. The laying of it began on the 14th December, 1904, and on the 2nd January, 1905, it was open to traffic as far as Ma-chun-tan. On the 14th January the track had been laid to half a mile south of San-lung-yu, but beyond that point, over the Tun-kua Ling and for fourteen miles on, only the earthwork was completed. The Fu-shun horse-tramway, as it was generally called, was worked up to the 7th March, 1905, and during that period it conveyed more than seven thousand tons of stores for the troops of the left flank. It also carried sick and

* While the Russians were still watching the Ya-lu General Kuropatkin, with the intention of facilitating an offensive into Korea, had arranged for the organization of an advanced base on that river, and for the construction of a branch line of railway from Hai-cheng to a point near Wiju. Money was allotted for this line, and work commenced on the 20th April, 1904. Ten miles of formation level, however, had alone been finished when the Japanese victory on the 1st May put an end to the project.

† The system is shown by dotted black lines on the plans of the battle of Mukden.

wounded in specially adapted trollies and passengers. The period of the employment of horse-tramways at the time of the Liao-yang fighting had been too short to give sufficiently definite results of their utility, but the favourable results obtained from the Fu-shun line, by which the supply of the troops of the left flank was quite secured, induced the commander-in-chief to make arrangements for the laying of a branch from Ku-chia-tzu on the Fu-shun line to Kang-ta-jen-shan. It was, however, only completed beyond Erh-tao-kou when the opening of the battle of Mukden stopped construction. Its whole work is stated to have consisted of the transport of a few wounded.

A system was also constructed radiating from Su-chia-tun. It was mainly designed for the movement of siege guns though some branches were made for carrying supplies.* The necessity for these latter is open to doubt, since the distance they covered was in many cases so short that the transport with the troops could have done the work. Their construction, therefore, drew upon the supply of tramway material to an extent that was not justified by the results attained.

As a possible method of communication supplementary to part of the Chinese Eastern Railway there were several waterways in the Far East. These were:—

- (1) The Schilka-Amur waterway from Strietensk to Niko-laievsk.
- Waterways.
- (2) The River Ussuri with its tributary, the Sungach, and Lake Khanka.
 - (3) The River Sungari, with its tributary the Nonni.
 - (4) The River Liao and its tributaries.

So far as concerns Lake Baikal, its shipping resources could only be used to aid the Baikal Ferry, and in consequence the Lake Baikal flotilla was of no importance for water-borne military traffic in the actual theatre of war. Similarly, from its position, the River Ya-lu was of no value to the Russians.

The River Schilka is navigable for about three hundred and thirty miles from its mouth, but there is only a regular steamboat service on its lower portion, that is to say, from Strietensk to Pokrovka, where connexion can be made by rail with the Trans-Baikal Railway. Steamers run between these points for five months, from the beginning of May to October.

* The smaller branches, many of which were very short, are not shown on the plans.

From Pokrovka to Nikolaievsk the River Amur is navigable for its whole length, but for only about one hundred and forty days in the year. Its mouth is closed by a bar, which can be crossed only by ships drawing less than thirteen feet, and these can ascend the river to Nikolaievsk, about seventy-five miles upstream, where they have to transfer their cargoes to the river steamers.

The River Ussuri and its tributary the Sungach and Lake Khanka form a navigable waterway for five hundred and thirty miles. After the railway along the Ussuri was laid, however, the importance of this waterway was restricted to its middle and lower portions.

The River Sungari is navigable from Kirin to its junction with the Amur—about seven hundred and ninety miles. Its tributary the Nonni is only navigable from Tsitsihar to the mouth, or for two hundred miles; from Tsitsihar up to Mergen, about the same distance, it is only navigable when the river is high.

The Rivers Sungari and Ussuri are only open for six to seven months, from April to November.

The River Liao is only important as a waterway from Tieh-ling to its mouth, a distance of two hundred miles. On this portion of it there is a considerable traffic, carried on by means of small junks from five to eighteen tons. In its lower part, the Liao, after receiving the Hun Ho, Tai-tzu Ho and other tributaries, is possible for larger craft, especially during flood water, when ships with a draught of nine feet can ascend for from twenty-three to twenty-six miles. The river is navigable for a period varying from six to seven months.

Extensive preparations were made by the Russians to use the Ussuri and Amur, firstly, in order to relieve the Chinese Eastern Railway between the Trans-Baikal and Amur Provinces; and secondly, to take the place of the railway from Chita to Harbin in case of interruption to the line. Both rivers were open for traffic by the middle of May, 1904. As a matter of fact in carrying powers the Chinese Eastern Railway, kept up with, if it did not surpass, the Trans-Baikal Railway, which fed it. Consequently there was no necessity to relieve the former by water carriage. During 1904 this waterway carried recruits for the reserve battalions in the Amur Province, and remounts for the same district. It was only once used by the field army in Southern Manchuria—to convey one battalion from Blagovieshchensk to Harbin.

On the Sungari the passenger service between Kirin and Tao-lai-chao was maintained, partly for political reasons, in order to keep up connexion with Kirin, one of the most important centres of Manchuria, and partly on account of the Kirin garrison, which had no other convenient means of reaching the railway.

As regards the Sungari the demands of the field army were generally speaking insignificant. The Red Cross Society had proposed to use the Harbin—Khabarovsk waterway for the evacuation of the sick and wounded of the field army into the Amur Province. The Chinese Eastern Railway was prepared to place at the disposal of the Society seven steamers, three passenger barges, one landing stage and seven decked barges, with a carrying capacity each of from two hundred and twenty to two hundred and thirty men, from one hundred and fifty to two hundred horses, and two hundred and seventy tons. At the end of May, 1904, four of the steamers and all the barges were handed over to the Society; but a regular system of transport was not established, partly because of the length of the journey to Khabarovsk and Blagovieshchensk and back—about eighteen days, and partly because of the shoal water in the Sungari which was also obstructed by rapids. Another objection was the lack of hospital accommodation in Harbin, which made it necessary to use the barges as stationary hospitals. During the whole of 1904 only twenty-two officers and two thousand and thirteen other ranks were conveyed by water by this route, and in consequence, at the end of September, the Red Cross Society found it necessary to maintain only two steamers. The River Amur closed on the 8th October.

The River Liao and its tributaries were only made use of to a slight extent. The supply of small detachments of the right flank of the army in the neighbourhood of Hsin-min-tun and Ta-wan was carried out from Tieh-ling and Liao-yang via the Liao Ho and Tai-tzu Ho, and the Liao also served for the transport of supplies and forage from the depot at Newchuang to the north in May, 1904, when it was seen that that town would have to be evacuated. A tributary of the Liao—the Hun Ho—was also used during the advance at the battle of the Sha Ho, for supplying some of the units on the right flank. On the Liao Ho and its tributaries the service was carried out entirely by junks.

Nevertheless, early in 1905 the rivers of the Far East seemed likely to play a more important rôle in the campaign than they

had done, for it was thought possible to base the Russian forces to a certain extent upon the sea. In other words, a suggestion was

made to supply the field army and the Pri-Amur Command with supplies to be imported from

America and landed at Russian Pacific ports.

It was proposed, in the event of the meeting of the Second Pacific Squadron with the enemy ending in favour of the Russians, to deliver the cargoes at Vladivostok, and thence to forward them by rail to Harbin until the rivers were open, and afterwards to land supplies at Nikolaievsk, and thence send them up to Harbin and the southern part of the Pri-Amur Command by river. The hiring of vessels for this river line of supply was commenced in May, 1905, the total number taken up being seventeen steamers and fifteen barges of a combined carrying capacity of six thousand tons. But the result of the battle of the Sea of Japan at once eliminated all possibility of supplies reaching the Russian armies via the Pacific Ocean.

Russia therefore depended on her single line of railway throughout the war. And, as has been said, the results obtained surpassed general expectations, not excluding those of her enemy.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

THE RUSSIANS TAKE UP A POSITION ABOUT HSI-PING-KAI—PAUSE IN ACTIVE OPERATIONS—REINFORCEMENT OF BOTH SIDES—RUSSIAN RAIDS—OPERATIONS IN THE SUBSIDIARY THEATRE OF WAR DURING 1905—INTERVENTION BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE CAUSE OF PEACE—THE TREATY OF PEACE—THE ARMISTICE—CONCLUSION.

(See Strategical Map 6 and Plans 53, 71, 78.)

PRACTICALLY the first step taken by General Linevich in his new capacity, as commander-in-chief, was to call upon the Chief of Staff for his opinion regarding the possibility of continuing the struggle. On the 19th March General Sakharov submitted his views which were marked by extreme pessimism.

The Russians. He stated that there was no hope of overcoming
Their intentions. the Japanese and that it was impossible to carry on a war with forces that were unfitted for the purpose, and attributed such unfitness to the difficulties of maintaining the army by the Trans-Siberian Railway system, to its ignorance of the country in which it was then acting and to its faulty intelligence system. He criticized the tactical training of the troops, alleging that staunchness in passive defence was its only result. As regards the relative strength of the opposing armies he considered that in actual number of bayonets the Japanese had all along been stronger than the Russians. Most interesting, however, is his opinion that the *moral* of the armies had been lowered to such an extent that there was not only no desire to move forward and beat the enemy, but not even any inclination to fight.

If this appreciation was justified the new commander-in-chief had no easy task to perform in carrying on operations. On the 20th March he issued orders for the occupation of the position about Hsi-ping-kai as a temporary measure;* but he was to some extent

* This position had been prepared by the Russians in anticipation of retirement; and there were also defensive lines more or less prepared at Kung-chu-ling and Kuan-cheng-tzu.

spared the necessity of formulating a definite plan, for two days later he received a telegram from the Emperor outlining a course of action. This was:—

(1) To ensure that Vladivostok should be able to make a prolonged resistance in case of siege; (2) to protect the line of railway which linked the army with Europe; and (3) to ensure communication between the field army and Vladivostok, either by the railway from Harbin or, failing that, by the Rivers Sungari and Amur to Khabarovsk and thence by the Ussuri Railway. The method of carrying out these tasks was left to the commander-in-chief, but the advisability of posting troops along the line of railway westward of Harbin and of arranging for communication from the Chinese Eastern Railway to Blagovieschensk was suggested. Measures were also to be taken to protect the course of the River Amur to its mouth.

On the day that this telegram was received, but apparently before its arrival, General Linevich had sent out a circular letter to his army commanders relative to the possibility of making a protracted halt on the Hsi-ping-kai position, about which he appears to have been doubtful. The army commanders, however, although not in complete agreement as regards the importance of the position and the methods of defending it, were unanimous that a further retirement without pressure from the enemy was uncalled for. On the strength of these opinions General Linevich decided to halt for a more or less prolonged period, and on the 26th March gave instructions to that end:—

Their strength
and disposition.

The First Manchurian Army:—The 1st Corps, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Siberian Corps and General Rennenkampf's detachment were to be east of the railway,

The Second Manchurian Army:—The 1st Siberian, VIIIth, Xth, XVIth and Provisional Rifle Corps, and General Mishchenko's cavalry, were to be west of the railway.

The Third Manchurian Army:—The XVIIth Corps, 5th and 6th Siberian Corps, the IVth Corps and the 3rd and 4th Rifle Brigades were to be in General Reserve.

These positions, taken up about the end of March, remained practically unaltered until the end of the war. The First Manchurian Army lay east of the railway, the Second west of it, while the Third lay to the rear overlapping the right.

The total strength of the three armies now amounted to 465,557 men and comprised 217,745 bayonets, 12,861 sabres and 1,129 guns. But the units were far short of their authorized establishment, the average strength of a battalion being 542 bayonets, and that of a squadron 105 sabres, revealing a deficiency of over 38 per cent in the infantry and 25 per cent in the cavalry. The 5th and 10th Rifle Regiments no longer existed, while in the 55th (Podolia) Regiment there remained but the equivalent of two companies. Speedy reinforcement was therefore a matter of urgent importance, but there was a divergence of opinion at General Head-Quarters as to the advisability of making good the wastage by drafts or by fresh units. The great advantage of reinforcement by drafts lay in the fact that it could be carried out in approximately one-third of the time required by the latter method, and it was favoured by the Chief of Staff. General Linevich, however, proposed a compromise by which complete battalions should be sent up in addition to drafts. On the 24th March he telegraphed for 150,000 men to be drafted without delay, and two months after the Russians reached Hsi-ping-kai these reinforcements began to arrive.* They were almost entirely to replace wastage and included no new units. Certain of the latter, however, were actually on their way;†

* The time of arrival and the numbers of the drafts which actually reached the front are shown in the following table :—

Category of Drafts.	Time of arrival.	Men.		Percentage that fell out en route.
		Started.	Arrived.	
23 reserve battalions	19th May—4th June	37,720	34,345	8·9
Old soldiers	19th May—9th June	45,504	42,325	7·0
Young soldiers... ..	6th July—12th August	135,000	126,678	6·2
Total ... ..	... ..	218,224	203,348	6·8

Of these drafts 17,338 men were sent to the Pri-Amur District, and 2,080 men to the reserve battalions in the rear of the army, to complete the infantry units.

There were only 34,345 reservists, i.e., 16·9 per cent; the remaining 83·1 per cent consisted of young men—old soldiers and young soldiers.

50,000 reservists who had also been detailed were not sent, owing to the conclusion of the war.

† The 3rd and 4th Rifle Brigades which arrived between the 11th and 23rd March, the IVth Corps, the 2nd Kuban Battalion Cossack Brigade, the Mixed Caucasian Cossack Cavalry Division, and four Sapper battalions. Not counting the 9th and 10th Rifle Regiments, which arrived before the end of the action of Mukden and took part in it, these reinforcements would have increased the army by 50 battalions of infantry, 24 squadrons, 144 dismounted and 12 horse artillery guns, and five sapper battalions.

and the 2nd Brigade 41st Division, the Don Cossack Division and three horse mountain batteries of the Frontier Guard were under orders to rejoin the army from protective duty on the railway.* Further, it was intended to send out the 53rd Division for the purpose of reinforcing the garrison of Vladivostok.†

To bring the establishment of officers up to its proper level was a more difficult matter. On the 23rd March the average deficiency amounted to 35·5 per cent of the establishment. This shortage, however, was very unevenly distributed, for whereas that of the infantry was over 43 per cent, in the cavalry only 1 per cent of the establishment was lacking. To bring the officers of the infantry up to the establishment 2,522 officers in Europe were placed under orders to proceed to the front, and the first contingent of these arrived in Manchuria about the middle of March.‡

By the first week in April portions of the IVth Corps had arrived from Europe, and the number of battalions in the army on the 7th of that month amounted to 383½, or 240,464 bayonets.

For the Japanese the battle of Mukden, like the previous encounters of Liao-yang and the Sha Ho, prescribed a period of rest and recuperation before a further advance should be possible.

Drafts to replace losses had actually arrived before the termination of the battle and had joined the fighting line during its progress. But the casualties had so greatly exceeded the estimates on which the demands for reinforcement had been based

that a long halt was now necessary. While the ranks were full of recruits, the heavy losses among the officers had materially reduced the fighting efficiency of the units. Further, the capacity of the railway was found unequal to supplying the armies, and the river line of the Liao Ho required time for development. Over and above this, it appears that the original plan of campaign ended with the occupation of Tieh-ling and that the information available regarding the terrain north of that city was extremely

* See pp. 261, 262.

† As a matter of fact it joined the field army. See p. 842.

‡ These could, however, only meet half the requirements of the infantry; and even when the less severely wounded cases began to rejoin after the battle of Mukden there was still a deficiency of 26·4 per cent. Recourse was then had to a system of promotion from the ranks to the grade of Acting Ensign, and nearly 2,000 appointments of this nature were made. By this means the shortage in infantry officers was reduced to under 9 per cent.

incomplete. In these circumstances the Japanese armies settled down to a long period of instruction and waiting, their left flank being covered by the 1st and 2nd Cavalry Brigades on the line Chang-tu-fu—Chin-chia-tun.

Insignificant collisions between the opposing outposts were the only affairs which were to occur for some months, varied by a few enterprises of a slightly more important nature in which the Russians were the aggressors.

As regards the operations, in an order of the 30th March the Russian commander-in-chief alluded to the necessity of preparing for the offensive, and gave instructions relative to careful reconnaissance of ground lying in front of the army generally; but the actual actions of the Russians—although to some extent of an aggressive nature—were protective in their scope. Nevertheless, they furnished some intelligence regarding the disposition of the enemy and afforded practical training to the young soldiers arriving at the front. Operations up to the end of April. The first reconnaissance worthy of note was one carried out in the east under the personal command of General Rennenkampf. His force amounted to one battalion, eight scout detachments—of which four were mounted—seven squadrons and six guns, and its task was to explore the Hun Ho valley down to Ying-pan. It left Pa-chia-tzu on the 10th April, and the bulk of it got to within a few miles of Ying-pan, where it located some units of the Japanese 11th Division, while one detached squadron reconnoitred Hsing-ching, where some of the 1st *Kobi* Division were found. The operation was therefore a success, and though there was some fighting, the Russian losses were insignificant. Between the 21st and 23rd April another reconnaissance was made along the whole front and further information was gained.

The most important exhibition of activity by the Russians after the battle of Mukden was a raid carried out by mounted troops in May. Early in that month it was arranged that the main body of the cavalry of the Second Manchurian Army—54 squadrons—under General Mishchenko was to cross to the right bank of the Liao Ho. Since information was about this time received pointing to the possibility of an advance by the Japanese against the Russian right in the middle of the month, it was decided that that commander should undertake a raid against the rear of the left of their line with a force of some two divisions to stop the hostile

The Russian
raid in May.

movement, at least until the Russian reinforcements then expected came up. The immediate objects of the operation were to destroy the Japanese supply depots and communications, and to capture their transport, particular attention being paid to the Hsin-min-tun railway.* The main important Japanese depots were supposed to be at Newchuang, Hsin-min-tun and Fa-ku-men, and their chief communications the Liao Ho, from Newchuang to Tung-chia-kou, the Hsin-min-tun railway, and the roads from the latter place to Fa-ku-men, Kai-ping-chuang, and Tieh-ling.†

On the 16th May General Mishchenko's detachment was concentrated about Liao-yang-wo-peng. In view of the swampy nature of the ground to be traversed the commander decided to take with him only two guns and five limbers from each of his three batteries. In marked contrast to the unwieldy supply column which had so impeded the raid on Newchuang, only two days' biscuit and ten days' tea and sugar were to be carried. Everything else was to be obtained by requisition en route. The medical transport consisted of two flying Red Cross detachments with seventeen two-wheeled carts, and each squadron was equipped with one- or two-horsed stretchers. The greatest difficulty encountered in preparing for the raid was that of obtaining maps, for on the Russian maps the area to be traversed was a blank.

Shortly before the force started in two columns on the morning of the 17th May,‡ orders were given to consider the Hsin-min-tun railway neutral and to refrain from touching it. On the 17th both columns came into collision with outposts of the 28th Regiment of the 7th Division of the Japanese Third Army, captured a few carts, and spent the night in Li-chia-wo-pu, having covered

* It is not clear that the Japanese were using this line.

† Tung-chia-kou is not on any plan. Its exact position is not known.

‡ *Left Column.*

11 squadrons of the Ural Cossack Brigade.
9 squadrons of the Trans-Baikal Cossack Brigade.
2 squadrons of the Caucasian Mounted Brigade.
2 guns and 2 machine guns.

22 squadrons, 2 guns, 2 machine guns.

Right Column.

24 squadrons of the Caucasian Cossack Division.
4 guns.

24 squadrons, 4 guns.

about thirty miles.* On the following day the march was resumed with Fi-cheng-pu† as the objective; but owing to the resistance encountered the direction was altered and both columns assembled at nightfall at Chang-chia-wo-pu. The day had brought some small success to the Russians in the capture of some more carts and a treasure-chest. The telegraph wire between Fa-ku-men and Kai-ping-chang was cut, and a Japanese officer carrying dispatches from General Head-Quarters to General Nogi was taken prisoner. The 19th May led to the seizure of some more vehicles. The night was spent at Tung-chia-fan-sheng.

Orders were issued on that night for the force to move eastwards and act against a series of Japanese line of communication posts, which had been located running from Fa-ku-men through Ta-ku-chia-tzu towards Mukden, with the object of destroying as much transport as possible and of cutting the telegraph line. On the morning of the 20th the right column came into collision with a detachment of the 49th *Kobi* Regiment about Hsin-chia-pao, and after some severe fighting captured some sixty prisoners, and reaching the Fa-ku-men—Ta-ku-chia-tzu—Hsin-min-tun road seized and burned eight hundred loaded carts, as well as a depot of provisions, destroyed the telegraph for several miles, and rounded up about a hundred horses before a Japanese battalion compelled it to retire. The other Russian column failed to cooperate. Some two miles south of Hsin-chia-pao the Japanese were again encountered—this time by the left column—and were forced to fall back to a village, where they obstinately held their ground. The right column was also stopped by the garrison of the village of Ta-hsin-tun, which was occupied in some force, and it drew off, leaving a detachment to watch the place. This was soon joined by a squadron from the left column, which had been detached on protective duty. A further attempt against the village was then made by the combined force, with the result that a company of the 49th *Kobi* Regiment consisting of one officer and one hundred and thirty-five rank and file laid down their arms.‡

* The 7th Division was the most westerly unit of the Japanese armies and was disposed about Kai-ping-chang.

† Not on plan. This village is about six and a half miles north-east of Fa-ku-men.

‡ Two Japanese officers were killed in the engagement; another committed suicide.

That night the force collected at Hsiao-fan-sheng, some ten miles from the scene of fighting. General Mishchenko then decided to retire, since he was running short of ammunition, and had one hundred and fifty wounded men to look after and two hundred prisoners to guard. On the night of the 21st-22nd May the force was at Tung chia-pao. By that time a Japanese brigade—which had apparently come up from the south—had arrived at Tung chia-fan-sheng, where it was joined by a cavalry brigade. The combined force followed up the Russians, but the latter, making a detour to avoid the left of the Japanese outpost line, reached Liao yang wo peng without incident on the 24th. A Russian patrol sent to Hsin-min-tun discovered a Japanese fortified position eight miles north-east of that town.

The results of the raid were in striking contrast with those achieved by the Russian cavalry during the whole battle of Mukden. Two hundred and thirty-four Japanese, including five officers, had been made prisoners; one large supply train had been burned; two machine guns had been taken; nearly two hundred horses had been captured; and telegraph communication had been interrupted in several places. The Russian casualties amounted to thirty-seven killed and one hundred and fifty wounded. It is true that nothing had been achieved that was likely seriously to hinder any Japanese advance, but the gain in *moral* to the Russians was great. Their cavalry had seen the enemy in actual flight and had witnessed the rare event of a Japanese surrender.

Meanwhile General Linevich still continued to appeal for reinforcements. On the 7th April he had telegraphed to the Emperor, assessing the strength of the Japanese as 390,000 bayonets, and stating that he considered it necessary for the Russian army to exceed that number by 160,000.

Further reinforcements for the Russians in May and June.

On the 5th May he demanded an additional 80,000 young soldiers in order to expand the two-battalion and three-battalion Rifle regiments to a four-battalion establishment, and about the same time also asked for three fresh army corps, if possible of three-division strength each. In reply the Emperor communicated his intention of sending out 55,000 young soldiers and two more corps—the IXth and the XIXth. Later, in the middle of June, when Admiral Rozhestvenski's defeat at the battle of the Sea of Japan led to anxiety concerning Vladivostok, some 17,500 men belonging to drafts were sent into the Pri-Amur Military

Command. This circumstance, coupled with the fact that a large number of additional troops were required to bring the battalions of the Rifle regiments up to a strength of 1,000, caused General Linevich on the 3rd July to make application for 50,000 more young soldiers, and two more corps. To this the reply was that the XIIIth and XXIst Corps would follow those already promised.

Meanwhile great developments were taking place. The battle of the Sea of Japan had placed the command of the sea beyond dispute, and this Japanese victory at sea, coming as it did so soon after that at Mukden, appears to have given rise to a general feeling that peace had been brought appreciably nearer. At Japanese General Head-Quarters it was decided, apparently about the 7th June, that no forward movement would for the present be made; and this decision was followed on the 9th June by an important announcement. On that date the President of the United States of America instructed the United States representative in Tokio to urge the Japanese Government to open direct peace negotiations with Russia, and forwarded a similar note to the Russian Government through the United States' representative in St. Petersburg. Japan's reply intimating acquiescence was made on the 10th June; and Russia lost no time in taking a similar step. Peace was now definitely in sight, though two months were to elapse before the plenipotentiaries of the two nations were to meet.

To return to the operations in Manchuria, some six weeks after his last exploit General Mishchenko carried out a second reconnaissance in force against the Japanese about San-wa-tzu, his detachment being strengthened for the purpose by the inclusion of the 2nd Independent Cavalry Brigade.

Operations in July and August. Liao-yang-wo-peng was again the point of concentration, and from there an advance was made in three columns on the morning of the 1st July. The distance to the objective in a straight line was about nine miles. On arrival within striking distance of the village the Russians carried out a preliminary bombardment, and then moved forward in dismounted formation. The Japanese retired unpursued, a Russian outflanking detachment to the west effecting but little.* Only a few

* According to a report submitted by General Mishchenko a Japanese battalion was "almost entirely cut to pieces," but accounts from the other side refer to a loss of ninety killed and wounded.

prisoners were made by the Russians, who discovered that the force opposing them had been from the 25th Regiment of the 7th Division. They attained the object of their expedition at a cost of two hundred and thirty-eight casualties including thirty killed.

Another reconnaissance which had important results was that carried out by the Russians from Ta-wu-lu on the 27th and 28th August. By that date the front of the Japanese armies had, in the main, been fairly well explored; but of the strip of country between the Japanese First and Ya-lu Armies information was still wanting. To explore this area a strong mixed force of two battalions, some four squadrons and two guns was sent out in two detachments from Ta-wu-lu on the 27th. Early that morning the advanced guard of the right detachment seized a river crossing in the Japanese outpost line then moved against the heights commanding the crossing, where it surrounded a company of the 29th *Kobi* Regiment. After suffering a loss of some sixty killed, the Japanese broke. The commander and one of his officers committed suicide, and the remainder of the company took refuge in a field of *kao-liang*. After an obstinate fight the Russians captured the whole force, consisting of one officer, one hundred and thirty-six rank and file, of whom thirty-four were wounded.* The left detachment also encountered some Japanese; but the force was recalled before it effected anything.

An account has already been given of the topography and strategic value of the four subsidiary portions of the theatre of war—Vladivostok, Sakhalin, North-Eastern Korea and Southern Ussuri—and of the events occurring therein during

the year 1904.† When Port Arthur fell the Russians considered that the Japanese might possibly devote considerable attention to Vladivostok, which was then Russia's sole naval base in the Far East and the only goal for the Second Pacific Squadron; and this view was confirmed by the intelligence obtained from secret service agents. On the 23rd January, 1905, the Quartermaster-General informed the commander of the Pri-Amur District that, according to reports received from Shanghai, some Japanese cruisers had arrived at Hakodate on the 19th January, and that it was thought that they were on their way to blockade Vladivostok.

* According to a Japanese source the number taken was one hundred and twenty-two of whom seventy were wounded.

† See Chapter LIX.

Subsequently, on the 18th April, he stated that he had received information that the Japanese were preparing an army of eighty thousand men and over two hundred guns to operate against the place, and that their action was directed not so much towards the capture of Vladivostok itself, as to the application of pressure on the Russians which might lead to the early conclusion of peace. It was, however, asserted that they considered that the fortress would surrender after the first bombardment. In view of these circumstances, the condition of Vladivostok and of the Maritime Province very naturally aroused anxiety.

Interest now centred in Vladivostok, as the sole surviving Russian strong place in the Far East. In the beginning of February it was raised to the status of a first-class fortress, and provision was made for the necessary increased staff and services; and on the 7th a new commandant—Lieutenant-Vladivostok. General Kazbek — was appointed by Imperial Decree, and was directed to proceed there without delay. Great efforts were also made to reinforce the garrison, which towards the end of February consisted of twenty-two battalions of infantry, four battalions of fortress artillery, thirty-two guns, three sapper companies, one mining company, one mounted detachment and a few smaller units.* During

* (1) The Staff and Administration of the Fortress.

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|--|-----------------------|
| (2) The 8th East Siberian Rifle Division; 29th, 30th, 31st and 32nd East Siberian Rifle Regiments, of a strength of three battalions each | 12 battalions. |
| (3) The 6th and 7th East Siberian Rifle Regiments of a strength of three battalions each | 6 battalions. |
| (4) The Khabarovsk Reserve Regiment... .. | 4 battalions. |
| (5) The Vladivostok Fortress Artillery, 4 battalions. (The 5th and 6th were already mobilized) | 4 battalions. |
| (6) The Possiet Supernumerary Light Battery... .. | 8 guns. |
| (7) The 8th East Siberian Rifle Artillery Division, 3 batteries | 24 guns. |
| (8) The Kun-chung Artillery Detachment. | |
| (9) The 1st and 2nd Vladivostok Sapper Companies. | } 3 sapper companies. |
| (10) The 2nd Company of the 3rd East Siberian Sapper Battalion | |
| (11) The 1st Vladivostok Mining Company | } 1 mining company |
| (12) The Vladivostok Military Telegraph Detachment. | |
| (13) The Vladivostok Field Police Detachment. | |
| (14) The Vladivostok Volunteer Rifle Militia. | |
| (15) The Nikolsk Volunteer Militia. | |
| (16) The Vladivostok Reconnoitring Mounted Detachment. | |

the month General Velichko, of the Engineers, inspected the fortress. He criticized the unnecessarily advanced situation of portion of the perimeter of defence, in view of the probable maximum garrison, the unfinished condition of some of the more important works, and the weakness of the artillery.

On the 22nd February some excitement was caused in the fortress by the appearance of a number of boats which were thought to be Japanese torpedo boats. The new commandant, General Kazbek, arrived on the 15th March, and on the 7th April reported to the commander-in-chief that the place was absolutely unfitted for defence, being deficient in garrison, armament, supplies, staff, naval and engineering services, hospitals and police. However, while conferences and discussions took place reinforcements continued steadily to arrive; and upon the 17th July, in accordance with orders from the commander-in-chief, the important step was taken of placing all the naval and military forces at Vladivostok under the fortress commandant. By the end of that month the garrison had been increased from its original strength at the outbreak of hostilities—some eight thousand six hundred—to about fifty thousand men. The number of infantry battalions had risen from eight to forty, the fortress artillery from two to six battalions, and the sapper companies from two to four, and four mining and one balloon company of engineers had been added. Further, the armament had been increased by fifty-six quick-firing field guns, and the fortress had been provisioned for fifty thousand men for twelve months. The spirit of the troops was also much improved. Indeed it was at this time thought that the fall of Port Arthur might, to some extent, be retrieved by a successful defence of Vladivostok. The war, however, was to terminate without affording an opportunity for submitting the fortress to the test.

After the battle of the Sea of Japan, when the possibility of an early peace began to be discussed, it was natural that Japan should wish to be found in occupation of as much territory as possible when negotiations should begin. It was partly this reason and partly sentiment which prompted her to send an expedition to conquer Sakhalin in the summer of 1905. The force taking part in it was the newly formed 13th Division consisting of twelve battalions, three

squadrons, thirty-six guns and twelve machine guns.* And in order to guard the Tsugaru and La Pérouse Straits, to escort the transports conveying the troops and protect them from a possible raid by the Vladivostok cruisers, to cover the disembarkation and generally to act in co-operation a squadron termed the Northern Squadron was formed. It was composed of fifty-one vessels belonging mainly to the Third and Fourth Squadrons under the command of Vice-Admiral Kataoka.† The expeditionary force proceeded in two portions, the first, consisting chiefly of the 25th Brigade, sailing from Aomori on the 4th July, and the second from Otaru on the 21st. The subsequent operations

* ORDER OF BATTLE OF THE JAPANESE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE TO THE ISLAND OF SAKHALIN.

13th Division. Commander: Lieutenant-General Haraguchi.	
25th Brigade. Major-General Nakenuchi.	26th Brigade. Major-General Koizumi.
49th Regiment. ■ ■ ■	51st Regiment. ■ ■ ■
50th Regiment. ■ ■ ■	52nd Regiment. ■ ■ ■
19th Artillery Regiment. | | | | | | (36 guns.)	
18th Cavalry Regiment. ■ ■ ■ ■	
1½ Engineer companies. ■	
12 Machine guns.	

Total 12 battalions, 3 squadrons, 36 guns, 12 machine guns, 1½ engineer companies.

† Four 2nd class battleships (including the *Nikolai*, *Apraxin*, and *Senyavin* which had been renamed respectively the *Iki*, *Okinoshima*, and *Mishima*), four armoured cruisers, seven 2nd and 3rd class cruisers, five armed merchant cruisers, four gunboats, ten destroyers (including the *Byedovi* and *Ryeshitelni*, which had been renamed *Satsuki* and *Akatsuki*), sixteen torpedo boats and a dispatch vessel.

were carried out in two practically distinct spheres—Northern and Southern Sakhalin respectively; and it will be convenient to deal with these separately, taking first those which occurred in the southern part of the island.

On the Russian side, in view of the small number of troops in Southern Sakhalin the commander of the island had decided

not to make any protracted resistance in the event of a hostile landing, but at once to resort to guerrilla tactics. For this purpose five independent detachments were formed to act in the neighbourhood of Dalny, Lake Tunaichi, Sevastianovka, the Luitoga valley and the Naiba valley, respectively.*

Operations in the south of the island.

The Japanese flotilla entered Aniwa Bay early on the morning of the 7th July, and, after spending some time in searching for mines, put ashore a naval landing party at Mereya, which met with no opposition and occupied the shore to the east of the village. The 1st Battalion of the 50th Regiment, a company of engineers and a machine gun detachment quickly followed, relieving the seamen, who returned to their ships.† During the course of the day the remainder of the 25th Brigade, one squadron and two batteries, disembarked and took up a position to the north of Mereya. The Russians blew up the guns of the coast battery with which they had maintained an artillery duel with some of the enemy's destroyers while they were searching for mines. The Russian 1st Detachment then fell back from the vicinity of Mereya to Solovevka; but on the 8th two Japanese destroyers steamed up Lososei Bay and began to enfilade its position, and Colonel Artsishevski had to retire to Dalny, the Japanese cavalry squadron following up to Homutcvka, where it arrived on the 9th July. On the following day two

* *1st Detachment*, under Colonel Artsishevski, consisting of 415 men and 10 guns. Amongst the latter were included the four guns taken from the *Novik*, now forming a coast battery under Lieutenant Maksimov. This detachment was to operate in the vicinity of Dalny.

2nd Detachment, under Staff Captain Grotto-Slyepikovski, consisting of 178 men and one machine gun, to operate between Chepesan and Lake Tunaichi.

3rd Detachment, under Captain Polubotko, consisting of 157 men, to operate round Sevastianovka.

4th Detachment, under Staff Captain Dariski, of 184 men, to operate in the valley of the River Luitoga.

5th Detachment, under Captain Buikov, of 226 men, to operate in the valley of the River Naiba.

† The Northern Squadron, with the exception of a detachment under Admiral Dewa, which remained at Korsakovsk, then proceeded to Hakodate.

cruisers, with a company of the 49th Regiment on board, proceeded to Cape Krilon and landed a party of troops and seamen who seized the lighthouse. The pursuit of the Russians was meanwhile energetically carried out by the Japanese 25th Brigade, and by the 14th July Colonel Artsishevski was in a hopeless situation near Dalny, being practically surrounded, and he surrendered on the 16th. One and a half battalions of the Japanese 50th Regiment then advanced against Naibuchi in consequence of a report as to the presence there of a hostile force. This was the Russian 5th Detachment, which moved westwards and came into collision with the Japanese at Otradna. A stiff fight ensued in which the Japanese had eighty-five casualties. The Russian commander then determined to join the Russian forces in the north of the island, and after a difficult journey arrived at Tikmanev. Here the detachment embarked in boats, and proceeded first to Anugina Bay and later to Pogibe, where it was taken off by a Russian steamer. It arrived on the 2nd September at Nikolaievsk, having lost fifty-four men.

When the presence of the 2nd Detachment near Lake Tunaichi was discovered, the Japanese detailed half a battalion of the 50th Regiment to deal with it by land, while a cruiser and torpedo boat were sent round to Cape Tonin to co-operate. On the 2nd August the Japanese infantry attacked the Russian camp. Three days later the ships of war co-operated, and for two hours the entrenched Russians were shelled from land and sea.* When their commander was killed they surrendered. The 4th Detachment set out on the 24th July from the vicinity of Lutoga for the village of Mauka, which it reached on the 7th August. It then endeavoured to move north to Alexandrovskaja, but on the 10th it was observed marching along the coast by the Japanese cruisers, which landed a company of the 49th Regiment. The Russians then attempted to escape to the north-east. Finding the country almost impassable they retraced their steps and made up the Naiba valley; but were intercepted by the Japanese and wiped out after an obstinate fight. The 3rd Detachment made no resistance whatsoever. While on its way to effect a junction with Colonel Artsishevski its commander halted the force, ordered it to pile arms, and declared he was about to surrender. This statement seems to have elicited some protest; but Captain Polubotko

* The Japanese infantry were now assisted by a field battery.

adhered to his decision, asserting that he was suffering from sore feet. During the discussion that ensued the Russians were surrounded and captured, except about fifty men, who broke away and subsequently joined Captain Buikov.

Thus, by the end of August, all the Russian forces in the southern part of Sakhalin had been killed, captured, or driven north, and that part of the island was in the hands of the Japanese.

On the 20th July, after taking on board the remainder of the 49th Regiment, the Japanese transports, escorted by the ships of war under Admiral Dewa had sailed from Korsakovsk, and doubling Cape Krilon had steamed northwards up the Gulf of

Operations in
the north of
the island.

Tartary. The 26th Brigade, with the remainder of the divisional infantry and cavalry, having assembled at Otaru in twenty-two transports, left

that port on the 21st, escorted by a squadron under Admiral Kataoka, who got into wireless communication with Admiral Dewa on the following day. On the morning of the 23rd the leading vessels of the escort were within three miles of Alexandrovskaja. Four destroyers and a cruiser opened fire against Due and two destroyers shelled Arkovo Island. The following morning a party was landed from the warships immediately south of that island, and encountering no opposition it took up a position to cover the disembarkation of the troops. The 26th Brigade, two squadrons, eighteen guns and eight machine guns were then put ashore, while the 49th Regiment and the remainder of the artillery landed at Alexandrovskaja under the protection of some torpedo boats.

The Russian troops in this portion of Sakhalin, amounting to five thousand nine hundred and seventeen men and five hundred and seventy-six horses, under the general command of General Liapunov were, like those in the southern portion of the island, divided up into independent forces, which were to avoid serious fighting on the coast and to fall back and harass the enemy. There were four separate detachments.*

* (1) *The Arkovo Detachment*.—Four companies, two militia units, fifteen mounted men and four guns under Colonel Boldirev.

(2) *The Due Detachment*.—Four companies, two militia units, fifteen mounted men and two machine guns under Lieutenant-Colonel Domnitski.

(3) *The Alexandrovskaja Detachment*.—Eight companies, four militia units, thirty-one mounted men, four guns and six machine guns under Colonel Tarasenko.

(4) *Reserve*. — The Ruikovsk Detachment of one company under Lieutenant-Colonel Danilov.

On the Japanese side Lieutenant-General Haraguchi, the commander of the 13th Division, took over the personal control of all the landing force and decided to move forward in two columns. Of these the northern was to advance from Arkovo and the southern from Alexandrovskaja.* On the 24th July the Japanese drove back the Arkovo Detachment and sent a battalion of the 51st Regiment to reinforce the Southern Column, which, however, was in no difficulties and had captured two hundred prisoners, seven ammunition wagons and a large quantity of stores. The Northern Column pushed on, and its advanced guard reached Derviusk at 3 p.m. on the 26th, while the cavalry occupied Ruikovsk, from which place the bulk of the Russians was now retiring south. Practically speaking the Japanese encountered no opposition worthy of the name. By the 29th General Liapunov had assembled his forces at Onor, having been closely followed up by the now united Japanese columns, and here during the evening he received a letter from General Haraguchi suggesting the surrender of the Russian troops. The Russian commander consulted the officers commanding the various detachments, who were unanimously in favour of immediate capitulation, and late at night sent a dispatch to the Japanese announcing that he was willing to surrender and suggesting an armistice. On the 1st August sixty-four officers and three thousand eight hundred and nineteen men laid down their arms. A few small parties of Russians who were not included in the capitulation managed to make their escape and eventually reached the mainland.

Thus, after a brief campaign of a few weeks, the Japanese were in possession of the whole of Sakhalin. Since they had command of the sea, invasion of the island was a comparatively easy matter, but the problem of penetration and conquest had been much simplified by the absence of serious opposition on the part of the Russians, of whom some seven thousand had surrendered. The casualties among the Russians were by no means severe, amounting to about seventy killed and ninety wounded. The inferiority of their resistance can be explained by the facts that the military value of the troops, which contained an undesirable leaven of convicts, was not of the highest; that the end of the

* The Northern Column consisted of the 26th Brigade, two squadrons, three batteries and eight machine guns. The Southern Column was formed by the 49th Regiment, one battery, four machine guns.

war was probably felt to be imminent; and that the character of the island was not calculated to inspire a defence to the last. That their spirit was at a low ebb is shown by the fact that over sixteen hundred of the combatants, or nearly twenty per cent of the whole force, were reported "missing."

In North-Eastern Korea during 1904 the Japanese, in addition to holding Gensan, had in October occupied Ham-heung with seven hundred men and had in the last days of December been engaged with the Pri-Amur Mixed Cossack Brigade near

North-Eastern Korea. Hon-won.* When Port Arthur fell it was thought probable by the Russians that the Japanese might

prosecute a more energetic policy in this quarter, and the commander in that district ordered the mounted troops to fall back upon Novokievsk without becoming too heavily engaged, if the enemy landed in any force. Towards the end of January the Pri-Amur Cossack Brigade—as it was then called—received orders to concentrate [about Kyung-song, and by the 2nd February it was distributed as follows:—

The 9th Siberian Cossack Regiment and a Horse Battery at Kyung-song.

The 1st Nerchinsk Cossack Regiment at Meng-cheng.

The 6th Siberian Cossack Regiment at Pu-rong.

By order of the commander-in-chief the 9th Siberian Cossack Regiment was then detached from the brigade and sent to Hun-chon to protect the Vladivostok—Harbin Railway. It was just about this time, however, that every available mounted man was required, for on the 28th February secret service agents announced that two thousand Japanese had landed about Song-chin.

What had actually taken place on the Japanese side was as follows. Early in 1905 the Government had resolved to send an expeditionary force into Korea in order to force the Russians out of the country, and for this the 2nd *Kobi* Division, consisting

The Japanese land at Song-chin. mainly of the 16th and 17th *Kobi* Brigades, was selected. It was also decided that the detach-

ment at the time in Ham-heung was to push northwards and seize Song-chin, at which place the 2nd *Kobi* Division would then land. That force embarked at Sylvia Basin on the 24th February in six transports and sailed for Korea,

* See p. 95.

escorted by a special squadron under Admiral Kamimura.* Gensan was reached on the 26th, and there some details and stores were disembarked for the garrison, and on the 28th the flotilla started north, arriving off Song-chin early on the 1st March. Disembarkation was at once begun and by evening all the troops were on shore. Three days later all the stores and transport had been landed. About the end of the month some of the opposing forces came into contact. The action of the Russians seems to have been purely of the nature of a reconnaissance; and after a little fighting the Pri-Amur Cossack Brigade retired northwards.

Rumours now began to spread amongst the Russians to the effect that fifteen thousand Japanese had sailed with the object of effecting a landing and cutting the railway between Nikolsk Ussuriski and Vladivostok; and orders were given for the Pri-Amur Cossack Brigade to be withdrawn to the left bank of the Tumen River in order to anticipate the disembarkation of the enemy. On the 8th April, however, this movement was cancelled, and the brigade once again took up a position about Kyung-song. For more than a month after this no important move was made by either side, but on the 26th May spies brought in word to the Russians that there was a hostile detachment estimated at from two thousand to five thousand men to the south. Three weeks later a Japanese force of all arms was known to be in Meng-cheng, and in consequence of this the Pri-Amur Cossack Brigade retired. Continuing their progress, the Japanese occupied Kyung-song on the 18th June. On the 22nd they forced the Russian cavalry to fall back still farther. An advance in the nature of a reconnaissance was then made by the Russians on the 1st July.

On the 4th July the Japanese began to move forward along the coast road, opposed by the Russians, who had been reinforced by a column from Southern Ussuri, of which the 6th and 7th East Siberian Rifle Regiments formed the main part. Three days later, the commander of the Pri-Amur Military District ordered that all the units which had been sent into Korea from Southern Ussuri were to be united with the troops already in the former place to form a Korean Field Force. This force amounted to seven and a half battalions, twenty guns,

* See p. 724.

twelve and a half squadrons and half a company of engineers.* By the 15th July it was distributed in seven detachments.†

The Japanese expeditionary troops at this time comprised three infantry brigades, one squadron of cavalry, four field artillery batteries and one company of engineers. On the 16th July they were augmented by two squadrons of cavalry and a company of engineers, which landed at Song-chin. Next day Japanese ships approached the coast from On-ga to Cape Linden. A party was landed south of the former place and destroyed the telegraph; but nothing further was effected and the vessels put to sea again. On land the Japanese still kept pushing forward, and on the 25th were in occupation of three passes of some tactical importance. A further reinforcement consisting of a regiment of infantry and a few drafts disembarked on the 15th and 16th August at Song-chin and Kyung-song. When the truce preliminary to peace negotiations was entered on the Russians were holding a line running north-westward from On-ga, and were apparently in touch with the Japanese along the whole front. The operations in this subsidiary quarter of the theatre of war on the whole were not unfavourable to the Russians, whose main object was to avoid being driven out of Korea, principally for political reasons. In this they were successful.

In Southern Ussuri, in the year 1905, there was no fighting of any kind. It has been related how in July the mounted troops

* The 6th East Siberian Rifle Regiment	...	...	4	battalions.
The 7th East Siberian Rifle Regiment	...	...	3½	battalions.
The 3rd Battery of the 2nd East Siberian Artillery				
Brigade	...	...	8	guns.
The 2nd East Siberian Mountain Battery	...	...	8	guns.
A Supernumerary Horse Mountain Battery	...	...	4	guns.
The 1st Nerchinsk Cossack Regiment	...	{ Pri-Amur	6	squadrons.
The 6th Siberian Cossack Regiment	...	{ Cossack	2½	squadrons.
The 9th Siberian Cossack Regiment	...	{ Brigade	4	squadrons.
Half a company of the 9th Sapper Battalion	...	...	½	company.

† *Kou-yen*.—Head-quarters, thirteen companies, one battery, half a squadron, half a company of engineers.

Ko-pung-san.—Nine companies, one battery, one squadron.

Kuan-go-dere.—Four companies, a horse mounted battery and half a squadron.

Pu-rong and neighbourhood.—Four squadrons.

Mu-san.—Two squadrons.

On-gar.—Four companies and one squadron.

Sa-ma.—Half a squadron.

in Korea were reinforced by a column from this district composed mainly of the 6th and 7th East Siberian Rifle Regiments. And after its departure the troops of Southern Ussuri Southern Ussuri. — exclusive of the garrison of Vladivostok — were distributed in five detachments at Possiet, Slavyanka, Razdolnoe, Shkotovo and Nikolsk Ussuriski.*

Though the above completes the brief description of the more important of the operations carried out on land after the battle of Mukden it was really to preparation for the future in the main theatre of war that the energies of both sides were directed. As regards numbers, the Russians were able, thanks to Russia's population and resources, to increase the strength of their forces in the field at a far greater rate than the Japanese. In fact, shortly before the conclusion of hostilities the size of the army was causing anxiety as to the question of supply, for local stocks were becoming exhausted, and to feed the troops was beyond the capacity of the railway. Since March, 1905, the army had been reinforced by the IVth, IXth and XIXth Corps, while the XIIIth was en route to Manchuria when peace was signed. The 53rd Division had been sent to join the 71st Division, and by this union was created the 7th Siberian Corps, which formed part of General Rennenkampf's detachment on the left of the Russian line. In all, at the end of August, the strength of the Russians in round numbers amounted to 446,000 bayonets, 25,000 sabres and 1,520 field guns. And not only had immense reinforcements been received, but in quality the troops were considerably superior to those sent to the front earlier, which had consisted very largely of reservists and untrained men. Deficiencies in armament and equipment had been remedied, and the army was well supplied with howitzers, mountain artillery and machine guns. As weeks passed the Hsi-ping-kai position grew more and more formidable. Its organization had been thought out beforehand on a definite scheme, and its preparation was carried out at leisure. The

* *Possiet*.—Seven battalions; one squadron; fourteen guns; one sapper company.

Slavyanka.—Two battalions; one-quarter squadron; two guns.

Razdolnoe.—Two companies; one squadron; sixteen guns; two sapper companies.

Shkotovo.—Four battalions; eight guns; half a squadron; one sapper detachment.

Nikolsk Ussuriski.—Six battalions; one detachment of volunteers, one section of Cossacks.

defences were extremely strong; the different parts of the position were well connected by roads and light railways and lavishly furnished with both telephonic and telegraphic communications; and the country round was mapped. On the whole, in contrast with General Sakharov's appreciation in March, the opinion of Generals Kuropatkin and Bilderling was that in August, 1905, the Russian forces were in every way better prepared for action than they had ever been before.

The Japanese had also added largely to their numbers, though they were naturally experiencing greater difficulty in finding men than the Russians. The ordinance extending the period of service of the Second Reserve and Conscript Reserve of the 29th September, 1904, was followed on the 21st April, 1905, by a decree by which the five youngest categories of the *Kokumin Hei-eki*, or National Army, had been called up for service with the *Kobi*.* The extent to which Marshal Oyama's forces were reinforced during the spring and summer of 1905 has, so far, not been made public. Only an estimate, therefore, can be given as to their strength when the war ended. It is known that the 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th Divisions were raised in 1905 as well as four additional *Kobi* brigades. The 13th Division proceeded to Sakhalin and two *Kobi* brigades were sent to Korea. Of the remainder the 14th, 15th and 16th Divisions and some, at least, of the *Kobi* troops seem to have joined the field armies. It is thought that the number of Japanese bayonets was between 300,000 and 360,000. In field artillery the Japanese appear to have been outnumbered by about fifty per cent, while in mounted troops they were outmatched by at least two to one. They also employed the pause in activities to consolidate their position, though it is doubtful if they had made it as strong as those of the Russians.

On the 2nd June a Japanese squadron under the command of Vice-Admiral Uriu was dispatched to the southward to search for and seize any Russian vessels that had not yet disarmed. It first proceeded to the Saddle Islands and then on to the Pescadores, where information was received that all the Russian ships which had escaped had been interned. The squadron consequently left on the 16th for Sylvia Basin, arriving there on the 20th. Meanwhile the fleet had been reorganized and divided into four squadrons of nine divisions, with the requisite number of torpedo craft and

* See Vol. I, p. 17, and Vol. II, p. 238.

auxiliaries. During the course of the next three months the Japanese naval forces were employed in co-operating with the troops sent to Sakhalin and North-Eastern Korea, guarding the various straits, surveying, sweeping for mines, reconnoitring the shores of the Gulf of Tartary, the Okhotsk Sea and the eastern coast of Kamchatka, and searching for contraband.

It has been mentioned that early in June Russia and Japan had agreed to discuss the question of peace. Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in the United States, was the place selected for the conduct of the negotiations. On the 6th August the plenipotentiaries of the opposing powers were received and introduced to one another by the President of the United States on board the United States Navy Yacht *Mayflower*. Two days later they assembled at Portsmouth, and on the 9th August the first meeting of the Conference took place. Next day the Japanese representatives laid upon the table the terms they were prepared to accept, and the Conference adjourned for the consideration of the terms by the delegates of Russia. The reply of the latter was given on the 12th, and was chiefly remarkable for a rejection of the demands which had been put forward for a war indemnity and for the cession of Sakhalin. After many references to both Tokio and St. Petersburg the Japanese made a proposal to ransom Sakhalin to the Russians for a sum variously stated as £120,000,000 to £150,000,000. The Russians declined to entertain the suggestion; and for a few days matters were at a deadlock. At this stage the American President intervened with a personal appeal to the Emperor of Russia to reconsider the question of the war indemnity. But the invitation was refused. On the 29th August the situation underwent a complete change, for Russia offered Japan the southern portion of Sakhalin. The offer was accepted; and on the 5th September the Treaty of Portsmouth was signed. The Treaty was ratified on the 14th October and promulgated on the 16th.

The representatives of the two nations at the Peace Conference had also arranged the terms of an armistice which was to be put in force so soon as peace was declared, and had signed the protocol defining these terms in principle at Portsmouth on the 1st September. The terms were briefly to the following effect:—

1. That a certain distance between the respective armies in

The progress
of the peace
negotiations.

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1. That a certain distance between the respective armies in

Manchuria and Northern Korea was to be marked out as a neutral zone.

2. That the naval forces of neither belligerent should bombard territory in the occupation of the other.

3. That captures at sea were not to be stopped during the armistice.

4. That during the armistice no reinforcements should be sent to the theatre of war. That those en route from Japan should not proceed north of Mukden and those en route from Russia should not proceed south of Harbin.

5. That the commanders of the military and naval forces respectively of the two nations should mutually fix the detailed conditions of the armistice in conformance with the above principles.

6. That the two Governments should order their commanders in the field to put the protocol into execution immediately upon the Signature of the Treaty of Peace.

The arranging of the details of the armistice was carried out separately between the main armies facing each other in Manchuria, between the Japanese 2nd *Kobi* Division facing the Russian Korean Field Force in Northern Korea and between the naval forces. As regards the former, the representatives selected to negotiate were:—Major-General Fukushima for the Japanese and Major-General Oranovski for the Russians. They met on the 13th September at Sha-ho-tzu Station, and after some delay caused by the difficulty of expressing exactly the same meaning in two languages signed a protocol on that day, which was not to come into force until the 16th owing to the difficulty of communicating with detachments. The text of the protocol is as follows:—

Article 1.—Hostilities are suspended throughout Manchuria.

Article 2.—The space between the front lines of the Japanese and Russian armies as indicated on the maps exchanged with this protocol is constituted a neutral zone.

Article 3.—Any person having any connexion with either army is absolutely forbidden to enter the neutral zone under any pretext whatsoever.

Article 4.—The road from Shuan-miao-tzu to Sha-ho-tzu is fixed as the route for communication between the two armies.

Article 5.—The present protocol will enter into force at noon on the 16th September, 1905, and will continue till the

ratification of the Treaty of Peace signed by the plenipotentiaries of the two Powers at Portsmouth.

The present protocol is signed by the representatives of the commanders-in-chief of the Japanese and Russian forces in Manchuria in virtue of the full powers they hold from the said commanders-in-chief.

Drawn up on the road near Sha-ho-tzu, the 13th September, 1905, two copies in Japanese, two copies in Russian, each party retaining one copy in Japanese and one in Russian.

FUKUSHIMA,

*Major-General and Officer of the General Staff
of the Japanese Army in Manchuria,*

ORANOVSKI,

*Major-General, Quartermaster-General of the
Russian Army in Manchuria.*

There was some delay in the actual carrying out of the arrangement for the armistice in Northern Korea owing to the fact that until the 11th September the officer in command of the Russian Korean Field Force had not been informed of the signing of the Treaty of Peace; but a preliminary agreement to maintain the *status quo* was arrived at on the 9th. Major-General Kossakovski was sent by General Linevich to represent the Russians, while Major-General Miyoshi, commanding the Japanese forces then in Korea, represented the Japanese. The plenipotentiaries met on the 16th September, when the Japanese suggested a protocol expressed in great detail. The terms were not acceptable to the Russians, chiefly on account of the definition of the neutral zone, and negotiations continued till the ratification of the Treaty of Peace on the 14th October.

On the 18th September an agreement defining the sphere of the armistice on the seas was signed by Admirals Iessen and Shimamura, who met with their respective squadrons off the North-Eastern coast of Korea for the purpose.

By the Treaty of Portsmouth Russia recognized the predominant interests, political, military, and economic of Japan in Korea; and with the consent of China ceded to Japan the lease of the Liao-tung Peninsula as well as all the rights,

privileges, concessions, public and private property appertaining to the same. As regards cession of purely Russian territory the southern half of Sakhalin was surrendered to Japan. The railway from

The Treaty of
Portsmouth.

Kuan-cheng-tzu to Port Arthur was, with the consent of China, also transferred, without compensation, to Japan, as were the fishing rights along the shores of Russia's Far Eastern possessions. Both nations engaged to begin the evacuation of Manchuria immediately the treaty should be ratified, and to complete the evacuation within eighteen months, the Liao-tung Peninsula being excepted from the provision of this article; but both reserved to themselves the right to maintain guards to protect their respective railways in Manchuria, the number of such protective troops being limited to fifteen men per kilometre. It was also agreed that the expenses incurred by Japan for the maintenance of Russian prisoners during the war should be reimbursed by Russia, less the cost to the latter of keeping the Japanese prisoners.* Some important restrictions were laid down as binding upon the contracting parties. Both pledged themselves to refrain from taking any military measures on the Russo-Korean frontier which might menace the security of Russian or Korean territory; and neither was to exploit the Manchurian railways for strategic purposes, not to build on Sakhalin or on its adjacent islands, any fortifications or other military works, nor to take any steps which might impede the free navigation of the Strait of La Pérouse or the Gulf of Tartary.†

The conclusion of peace has given rise to some speculation as to the causes which led Russia and Japan to agree to end the struggle. On the one hand, Japan had enjoyed an unchecked succession of victories; on the other, Russia, though consistently forced back, had never been decisively beaten in the field, and in the months immediately preceding the Treaty of Portsmouth had scored some minor successes. While the annihilation of the last fraction of her navy had left her army in no worse plight than before, the steady stream of reinforcements from Europe had placed it once again in a position of great numerical superiority to that of her opponent. Thus, at first sight, there seems to have been reasons which might have induced each of the contestants to essay another trial of strength.

As regards Russia the main influences working for peace were her grave internal political situation and the fact that the whole

* By this arrangement Japan obtained a payment of some four millions sterling.

† The full text of the Treaty of Portsmouth is given in Appendix 31.

nation was weary of the war, which had never been popular. And in spite of the optimistic utterances of some of its leaders, there is no doubt that the army had become tinged with the general feeling and that large numbers of the rank and file only desired to return to their homes. The result of the battle of the Sea of Japan, also, had affected the members of the governing class more than any other event, and caused them to throw their influence on the side of peace. Finally, by August, 1905, the limit of the capacity of the Trans-Siberian Railway had apparently at last been reached, and it was not able to support and maintain a larger force than was then in Manchuria.

The chief factor predisposing Japan towards a cessation of hostilities was the fact that she was rapidly approaching exhaustion both in her financial resources and her resources in men. She had already, in April, 1905, been forced to call up the youngest categories of her National Army, while the expenses of the war had already almost quadrupled her National Debt. Further, she had secured the object for which she had ostensibly fought—the exclusion of Russia from Korea—and by recapturing Port Arthur had wiped out the retrocession which had for ten years been considered a stain on her honour. Though the Japanese soldiers had entered upon the war with more knowledge and enthusiasm than the Russians it seems that in the summer of 1905 their spirit was also waning slightly, and surrenders were more frequent than they had been.* Again, it was obvious that in spite of all her successes Japan had reached the limits of her power to harm the Russian Empire, which was strategically stronger for resistance against aggression than it had been at the commencement of hostilities. The performance of the Trans-Siberian Railway, also, had been a disagreeable surprise to the Japanese, since it had enabled Russia to put far greater forces into the field than it had been imagined was possible, and it is doubtful whether they realized that the railway had now reached the limit of its capacity.

* The following paragraph is taken from *The Russian Army and the Japanese War* by General Kuropatkin :—

While we remained at Hsi-ping-kai the number of prisoners taken by us began to increase, and they ceased to display the fanaticism shown by those captured in 1904. Many openly acknowledged that they were weary of the war, and from the nature of numerous letters from Japan found on the killed and prisoners, it was evident that this weariness was general (English translation).

The failure to obtain a war indemnity was a disappointment to the whole Japanese nation, but more profound discontent was felt at the retention by Russia of one-half of Sakhalin; and resentment found vent in popular disturbances. Though the whole course of the war, culminating in the victories of the Sea of Japan and Mukden, had given striking proof of Japan's military prowess and powers on sea and land there is no doubt that in September, 1905, she was wise in laying aside her arms.

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