

FURIOUS FIGHTING AT PORT ARTHUR.

General Assault that Began at Noon, November 26, is Still In Progress

CARNAGE SOMETHING AWFUL.

Desperate Attacks by the Japanese Were Desperately Repulsed by the Russians.

Headquarters of the Japanese Army Before Port Arthur, Nov. 25, via Tientsin, Dec. 2.—The general assault on Port Arthur which began at noon Nov. 26 is still in progress. In the first series of assaults an attempt was made to capture the forts on Rihlung and Mekwan mountains by penetrating the principal line of fortifications surrounding them, and to envelop the city from the east.

At the same time a strong force pushed up the gorge of the Shishi valley between two fortified ridges and attacked the supporting fort in the rear of West Rihlung mountain (officially called Sungshu mountain), with the intention of enveloping the city from the west.

The attempt failed after the most furious fighting that has been witnessed since Port Arthur was invested. The fighting lasted from noon of Nov. 26 until after dawn of the following day, without cessation.

ASSAULT BEGINS.

The assault began early in the morning with a tremendous bombardment of the forts on the western hill, a battery which had been placed in position on the crest of a ridge to the rear. For hours the western half of the fortified ridge was deluged with heavy shells. At noon the principal line of fortifications was hit by a perfect hail of bursting shrapnel.

The front lines of infantry, having been strongly reinforced, began an attack simultaneously along the entire line from East Kekwan mountain to West Rihlung mountain. Through the haze caused by the smoke of the bursting shells the assaults could be seen emerging from the cover of the parallels, as well as swarming up the fortified ridge at half a dozen different points.

Rifles, rapid-fire guns and machine guns blazed from the Russian positions, where advances were made in the open. The men went down by hundreds. The forts were belching smoke and bursting shells, and the rampart walls were black with assailants, who, on reaching the crests, met with an awful fire from within the forts which swept down line after line of Japanese.

As fast as the assaults were repulsed more Japanese swarmed up, only to be mowed down in turn. The determination and fury of the Japanese assaults were equalled by the stubbornness of the resistance of the Russians.

MEN FELL BY HUNDREDS.

On the eastern extremity of the line the Japanese made an assault in an attempt to capture the Russian trenches situated midway of the slope of East Kekwan mountain. The Japanese paralleled some 35 yards of the Russian trench line and an entire regiment charged across, the men falling by hundreds before the awful fire of the Russians. But still more men came on over the bodies of those who had fallen, and by sheer weight of numbers they reached the trenches, which they captured at the point of the bayonet.

The Russian shrapnel fire made the captured portion of the trenches a perfect hell, while the Japanese shrapnel fire assisted the capture to reach east and west along the trench line.

The assaults succeeded in holding some 50 yards of the trench in front of the parallels, but their efforts to rush the trench line east and west was a failure, owing to impenetrable burning pits which filled the whole space of the trench on the northern side, as well as to the fact that their progress was barred by the fire of the Russian machine guns.

The Japanese built traverse walls across the trench under the protection of their machine guns and tried to cross the pits, but they were unable to do so.

RUSSIAN COUNTER ATTACK.
At 6 o'clock in the evening a furious Russian counter attack drove the Japanese back to the parallels with great loss. At 9 o'clock the Japanese again captured the same portion of the trench and made desperate but unsuccessful efforts to cross the pits.

The awful struggle continued until 2 o'clock in the morning, when the Russians again counter attacked and recaptured the trench, which was filled with dead bodies. For more than 20 yards between the trenches there was a veritable shambles. The last attacks and counter were made over the bodies of the slain.

The first attempt to rush the fort on the northern part of Kekwan mountain was made at 1 o'clock in the afternoon when the attacking army swarmed up the ramparts wall from the moat and met with an awful fire from within and from the Chinese wall in the rear of the fort.

When the Russians saw that it was the intention of the Japanese to rush the fort they moved a considerable force from the Chinese wall into a gorge to the east and to the rear of the fort. During the four or five furious assaults which the Japanese made upon the fort some of the garrison attempted to evacuate the fort over the rear ramparts, but they were fired upon by the Russian fire in the gorge.

WALLS BLACK WITH BODIES.
As the result of the first assault the rampart walls were black with bodies. In the second assault the Japanese succeeded in gaining a foothold in the interior, where the defenses were bomb-proof, with raised lines of protected trenches in the rear of the fort, where the machine guns swept the front of the fort and the walls.

The Japanese attacked this bomb-proof maze, where the fighting was hand-to-hand with bayonet and grenade.

The Japanese mounted six mountain guns on an entrenched hill called "P" fort, immediately to the west, in an endeavor to silence the fire of the Maxim guns, but they were unsuccessful.

At 4 o'clock in the morning the Japanese succeeded in establishing a trench line inside the ramparts, which they held. The first section of the maze of bomb proofs were smashed and piled with bodies. The attempt to rush the interior of the fort proved a failure, but portions of the fort were temporarily occupied. The defenders were annihilated or were unable or unwilling to retire and fought to the last breath.

In the meantime a strong force of Japanese attempted to pierce the line of works east of the fort, but they were

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unable to make progress. It was marvelous how the Russians were able to strengthen their lines of defenses at the points of attack.

FOUR FURIOUS ATTACKS.

Another attempt was made to pierce the principal line of fortifications surrounding the rear of the eastern part of Paulung mountain, where after four furious attempts a small body of Japanese succeeded in getting through the wall and establishing themselves on the lower slopes of Wantai hill. The Russians rushed the supports with machine

guns from the upper slopes of the Wantai hill forts, and the small party of Japanese was virtually annihilated. The most desperate fighting took place at this point, which was made at midnight, assisted by artillery, which covered the slopes of Wantai hill with an avalanche of shells. The Russians fought with tremendous courage, engaging the Japanese with bayonets and grenades when they came to close quarters. The Japanese finally established a trench line five yards in front of the line of fortifications, which they now occupy. The forces are engaged in throwing dynamite grenades at each other.

CAULDRON OF BURSTING SHELLS.

In the first assault against the fort on the eastern part of Rihlung mountain the Japanese were unable to gain a foothold, although their artillery made the interior of the fort a seething cauldron of bursting shells. A strong force of Japanese worked up from the parallels in the gorge between the Fort Hill and Hachimakiima, and entrenched on the hill in an effort to assist the forces, who were attacking it from the rear, and met with a terrible fire from the outer works and with shrapnel from a ridge in the rear. A small party of Japanese gained a roadway leading to the rear of the fort, but was forced to retire.

The attempts which were first made to rush the western part of Rihlung mountain, officially called Sungshu mountain, also ended in failure. The Japanese reached the parapets from the boat, but fled as fast as they came from the fire within the fort. The walls were black with the assailants, who were deluged with shells from the fort on Antae mountain across the gorge of the Shishi valley between the two fortified ridges and from a fort immediately in the rear called the supporting fort of Sungshu mountain.

HAND-TO-HAND ENCOUNTER.

At 9 o'clock at night a force of 2,000 volunteers from the right division, led by a general, started from a point southwest of Shishi valley, pushed on the gorge between the two fortified ridges, and attacked the supporting fort of Sungshu mountain, which is a short distance outside the western confines of Port Arthur, with the intention of enveloping the city from the west, and also for the purpose of assisting the force attacking the two Rihlung mountain forts. This force reached the Fort Hill and engaged a strong force of Russians upon its slopes in a hand-to-hand encounter, which lasted for two hours.

At the same time, the Japanese assaulting the east and west Rihlung forts made desperate attempts to rush the interior of the forts. They gained the ramparts, inside which they established trench lines.

The interior defenses of both forts are the same as those on North Kekwan mountain, but the East Rihlung fort is the largest and strongest of the three forts. It has upper and lower levels. The lower levels were the scene of the most awful struggle, which lasted from 10 o'clock until midnight. Under cover of darkness the Japanese poured over the ramparts and furiously attacked the first section of bombproofs. The defenders repulsed them with bayonets and dynamite grenades, while the machine guns on the upper levels poured a deadly hail into the ranks of the Japanese.

CORPSE COVERED BOMB PROOFS.

The struggle was absolutely hand-to-hand. The defenders of the ground part of the bombproofs on the lower levels of the fort were annihilated and the sections and cross-sections of the bombproofs were piled with corpses. The Japanese virtually gained the whole of the lower section of the fort,

IS KUROKI DEAD?



KUROKI Sketched From Life.

It seems impossible to learn definitely as to whether Gen. Kuroki, the brave Japanese, is dead. It is probable that he is dead and that his body is now at the Chinese city of Yinkow. The above picture is from a pencil sketch of Gen. Kuroki, made at the battle of Liao Yang.

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but were mowed down by machine guns and rifles when they attempted to assault the higher levels. For an hour before midnight the Japanese artillery shelled the higher levels while the Russian guns shelled the lower levels.

A similar struggle was going on all the time in the West Rihlung fort, where the arrangement was made by the Japanese to push a force up the gorge between the East Rihlung fort and Hachimakiima to assist the assaulters against the supporting of Sungshu mountain, but again and again this force was repulsed by the Russians behind the works and by the guns on the ridge behind the fort.

At midnight the column attacking the supporting fort of Sungshu mountain were compelled to retire, having lost half the force.

The struggle in the two forts was continued until dawn when the assaulters were compelled to retire to the trenches established inside the parapet walls which they now occupy.

MOST DESPERATE FIGHTING.

The fighting all the afternoon and night was the most desperate and sanguinary since the siege began. The opposing forces were so close together that only the fort wall or a few yards of level ground separated them. The struggle from start to finish was at close quarters with bayonets and grenades and rifles used as clubs. The ferocity of the attacking Japanese was equalled by the defending Russians, who died at their posts everywhere, fighting till their last breath.

At daylight on Nov. 27 quiet reigned and the silence during the day was broken only by occasional cannon and desultory rifle fire at points along the fortified ridge, where the forces were far enough apart to use their rifles.

JAPANESE FORCES RETREAT.

London, Dec. 10.—According to the Morning Post's Shanghai dispatches, the Japanese forces, with the exception of those manning the forts, have already retreated to Liao Yang.

The Daily Telegraph's correspondent before Port Arthur explains that the

capture of 203-Meter hill was due to a strong feat against the shelter fortifications on the night of Dec. 5, which forced the Russians to evacuate without a contest to a parallel line of semi-permanent defenses extending eastward and irregularly over the slopes within a half-mile north of Elze mountain.

The Japanese casualties at 203-Meter hill alone exceeded the total of the battle of Nanshan. At 2 o'clock in the afternoon of Nov. 29 a Tomoyasu detachment, with a battalion of infantry and a company of engineers, received orders that they must capture 203-Meter hill, while a Yoid detachment of the same strength had similar orders to capture Akasaka hill. On Nov. 30 it became necessary to reinforce the attackers with a detachment under Maj. Shizuka.

During the operations the cold was so intense that many of the men were frost-bitten, as it was necessary to pass the night without shelter. The Japanese, after the capture of 203-Meter hill, anticipated a terrible bombardment from the Russian forts, and made preparations accordingly; but the Russians remained strangely quiet.

The same correspondent says that the Russians at Port Arthur on Dec. 7 resumed mine-clearing operations, presumably to enable the torpedo-boat destroyers to attempt to escape and join the Pacific squadron.

The Daily Telegraph's Tientsin correspondent reports that Gen. Oku, after a three-days' artillery engagement, drove the Russians on Sunday out of the small, lofty island of Gushan, in the river 10 miles below Liao Yang. The Russians abandoned a quantity of supplies and several guns and retired to a position eight miles northwest, whence they heavily bombarded the Japanese, setting fire to kerosene depots and causing a great conflagration which did not cease till Wednesday. The Japanese are still gallantly holding the island with a handful of men. Their casualties, it is alleged, number 5,000.

TORPEDO FLEET NOT SEEN.

Tokio, Dec. 10, 11 a. m.—It is reported here that since the commencement of the bombardment of the Russian fleet in Port Arthur harbor the Japanese military observers on 203-Meter hill have not seen anything of the Russian fleet of torpedo-boat destroyers, and it is presumed it has taken shelter behind Laot mountain.

The Japanese fleet lying off the entrance to the harbor, is constantly on the alert in anticipation of an attempt being made by any of the Russian warships to escape and seek refuge in some neutral port.

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