

## CRUSHING BLOW TO RUSSIA.

### London Correspondent Says Battle at Port Arthur Still Rages.

London, Feb. 10.—In a dispatch from Chefoo, dated February 9, a correspondent of the Daily Express says:

"The Japanese have dealt the Russians a crushing blow at Port Arthur. An advance squadron of the Japanese fleet, under command of Vice Admiral Togo, and comprising sixteen battle-ships and cruisers, with a numerous torpedo flotilla, left the main fleet off Shan Tung Peninsula on Sunday immediately that the news of the diplomatic rupture became known. This information was conveyed to the Japanese admiral by a despatcher dispatched from Tsushima Saturday evening.

"The Japanese scouting cruisers had given accurate information of the precarious situation of the Russian fleet outside Port Arthur. The squadron steamed slowly in battle formation Sunday mid-day toward its goal, and came within sight of Port Arthur, under cover of darkness. It cruised slowly outside without showing lights. The Russians were lying in the roadstead apparently feeling secure from attack."

"Nearly all the Japanese torpedo boats were dispatched on their dangerous and daring task. They rushed, full steam, on the enemy, who were completely surprised. A great rattle of small arms greeted the invaders, who, however, escaped unhurt, and the *Rutvizan*, the *Czarvitch*, and the *Pallada* were almost immediately torpedoed. The Japanese dashed along the entire line of the Russians, exposed by now to a terrible fire from machine guns and small arms from both the ships and the shore. There was the utmost consternation among the Russians, which probably accounts for the Japanese torpedo boats escaping practically unscathed and rejoining the admiral outside. The admiral's fleet, during the attack, kept out of range of the Russian searchlights.

"Line of battle was then formed and the Japanese fleet moved in within a range of two and one-half miles and opened fire on the Russians. The booming of guns was heard far out to sea by the officers and crew of a Japanese ship which has arrived here.

"The battle is understood to be still raging, and the wildest reports are current. The Chinese population of Chefoo is in a frenzy of excitement at the reports that the Japanese, whom they regard as their friends, scored the first victory."

#### On Eve of the Battle.

Paris, Feb. 10.—The correspondent at Chefoo of the Paris edition of the New York Herald describes in a dispatch the tranquil appearance of Port Arthur on Monday night when a Russian official said he expected the Japanese fleet in three or four days. The weather was fine, and the Russian sailors impressively chanted their evening hymn. At 8 o'clock the lighthouse was lighted and the guiding lights were burning. Only one Russian warship was using her searchlight, and this in a leisurely fashion. Three torpedo-boats were patrolling on the outskirts of the fleet. All the others were inside the basin. A deep silence settled down, but this was broken at half past 11 o'clock by three muffled explosions, which made the steamer *Columbia* vibrate violently. Instantly firing began, and the searchlights were used, but without much method.

"I watched the operations," the correspondent goes on, "thinking they were only maneuvers, until midnight, when the firing almost ceased. It stopped entirely at 2 o'clock in the morning."

The correspondent then describes the arrival and beaching of the Russian vessels, which were at first supposed to have been in collision.

#### Ordered Not to Leave.

"But at 2:40 a. m.," he continued, "Russian naval officers boarded the *Columbia* in a great state of excitement, saying the viceroy had ordered the *Columbia* not to attempt to leave. This was apparently done with the idea of preventing the ship from acquainting the Japanese with the extent of the Russian damage.

"Daylight revealed two Japanese cruisers watching on the horizon. After day-break a strange apathy seemed to possess the Russians. The white-faced, gaping crews crowded forward on the decks of the damaged vessels. None of the Russian vessels showed a disposition to chase the Japanese warships.

It apparently having occurred to the Russians that the Japanese had effected a complete surprise owing to their bad outlook, the Russians have now outside the harbor five effective battleships and five effective cruisers, besides smaller vessels, and seventeen torpedo boats. It was almost 11 o'clock when the Japanese squadron of sixteen, including five battleships, appeared in line order. At 11:15 o'clock there came the first flash from a Japanese vessel, and a twelve-inch shell landed near the torpedo boats grouped near the entrance of the harbor. The aim was splendid.

Owing to confusion on the part of the quarantine officials, or perhaps because the Russians thought the Japanese would not like to fire near the British flag, the *Columbia* was close to the Russian fleet and in the line of fire, and the Japanese shells fell thickly around her, some bursting near and strewing her decks with splinters and water. The captain of the *Columbia* then got under way in spite of the protests of the Russian guards on board and got his vessel out of danger, making full speed for Chefoo. The Russian guards were praying fervently, and the Chinese crew of the ship was frightened, but they worked well.

#### Feared They Would Be Sunk.

Those on board the steamer feared the Russian batteries would sink them for disobeying orders, the captain's repeated signals for permission to proceed having been ignored.

The bombardment lasted until a quarter of 12. The Japanese aimed their fire well, two shells bursting at the summit of one fort and a number on the cliff and the beach. All were heavy shells. Some of them emitted a yellow smoke, but from a majority came a dense black smoke. The rate of fire on both sides was slow. Three Russian battle-ships were hit, but the extent of the damages could not be ascertained. Apparently no ship on either side was disabled.

The Russian cruiser *Novik*, fought pluckily, keeping closer by far than any other Russian vessel to the Japanese until the heavy firing concentrated on her compelled her to retire on the battle-ships. The other Russian cruisers fought at first outside the line of battle-ships.

The Russians seemed to fight with little formation, but this probably was due to the cramped space, they being never more than one and a half miles from the shore, and under the guns of the forts, which fired over them. This fire, however, was not frequent.

Before the action the men on the warships could be seen throwing beds and lumber overboard. The Russian ships constantly wheeled around in the same position, while the Japanese kept in splendid formation. The latter retired slowly in line to the southeastward. The *Columbia* escaped with a small hole in her after-deck.