What Transpired in the Zone of Fire During Early Days of Wan

ACTIVITY OF THE RUSSIANS IN HARBOR

New York Herald Correspondent Gets a Letter Trhough from Chee-Foo

Recounting Some Existing Events.

(Copyright, 1904, by Francis McCullagh.) CHEFOO, Feb. 15 .- (New York Herald Btaff Correspondence-Special to The Bee)-On the night of Monday, February 8, I was lying just outside the entrance of Port Arthur harbor in the British ship Columbia, Captain Anderson. The Columbia had come from Chefoo on Bunday morning, but was soon informed that it was to be quarantined for twentyfour hours. Accordingly I had a good deal of time to watch the Russian fleet and to write about the impossibility of the Japanese ever attacking Port Arthur. The weather was particularly fine, the sun shining brightly and the temperature being sufficiently warm to admit of me strolling about the deck without an overcost,

On Sunday I saw one of the vessels er gaige in target practice, the target being a miniature man-of-war, which was towed by a steam launch, and although the shooting was not good, it was not so bad as it had been previously represented to me.

On Monday we heard that the Japanese monsul at Chefoo was in the harbor on board a British steamer he had chartered with the object of taking all the Japanese away from Port Arthur. This news excited us somewhat and we began to think that despite the fact that things generally seemed to be in exactly the same position as they had been in for months past, something serious must have occurred.

By and by we noticed that the Russians partially cleared for action, and even sent ashore their boats in some cases. But as the day were on and nothing more happened, we gradually forgot about these ominous signs and wondered if we would really get out of quarantine next morning or get an additional twenty-four hours. Toward dusk the three torpedo boats that had been in the habit of patrolling outside the fleet passed us, coming from the shore and making a noise that reminded us of the proverbial policeman's boots, which give fair warning to evil-doers for scores of yards ahead of him.

On the whole, there was a good deal of traffic all day between the fleet and the shore, steam launches, either hooded naval launches or open launches belonging to trading companies, passing continually to and fro. Some of these launches carried coal to make up for that burned by the warships during the day. One carried guished. some women, who probably went to dine on one of the vessels, and one carried a ship's band that had doubtless been performing plete darkness, and if I did not know that at some function ashore,

Work on the Novik.

Alongside the Novik we noticed a small boat with a red flag. We thought at first that this boat carried powder, but the extraordinary length of time it remained alongside the cruiser, the fact that no powder seemed to be passed into the vessel and the movements of the men in the boat led us to conclude afterward that below the boat was a diver who was searching for some leak or other defect in the

About 8 o'clock, just after we had finished dinner on board the Columbia, a sound of turned to the saloon, where the captain singing reached our ears, and, on going asked me to join in a whisky and soda he outside, we heard the Russian sailors chanting their night prayers. The 'Paternoster" in old Russian, the "Ave Maria" or a prayer corresponding to that favorite invocation of the Latin church, and finally a short prayer for the czar. Softened by distance, the chants from the various ships blended together in one harmonious whole and sounded so romantic, so reminiscent of convent schools, of old Spain and of mediaevalism generally that even the chief engineer, a Scotchman of the unromantic name of Smith, was near being affected.

The night was dark and the numerous lights twinkling all over the spacious bay marked the position of the Russian ves

As far as I am able I shall give other pomitions in the accompanying sketch. I am not quite sure of the perfect accuracy of this sketch, as some of the vessels may have moved during the dusk, and as they all moved a good deal next day. I am prepared, however, to vouch for the general accuracy of the plan, which will make it taken up his position at the wheel as if we were going off immediately, the laugh clear to the reader later on that the Japanese selected the ships that were by their that went up from the ship's officers rang position most difficult of all to torpedo. At 9 o'clock I sat down to finish the article about which I have already spoken, in which I had laid it down as a funda- and seeing the lamp that showed the commental proposition that the Japanese pass throwing its pale light on the frightwould never attack Port Arthur. Some- ened face of the Chinaman who had perpe-

FIGHTING OFF PORT ARTHUR how or other I had become more convinced trated the joke, I laughed again. I also thought. In some places, where there you have a some places, where there were vison this point after having neard the sallors say their night prayers. The Russians had evidently the fullest confidence in tifully, and I felt as safe lying on the edge of that mighty fleet as I would have felt in the heart of London,

previous Friday I had seen for myself

that a light was kept flashing on us till we

were out of sight, but on our return we

all up to the time which I have now

At exactly 11:30 I was preparing to re

Anderson, the skipper of the Columbia:

first sleep by their confounded practice

firing he coull not have conveyed a deeper

impression of disgust. I thought it a con-

founded nulsance myself that the Rus-

sians should begin their practice at such a

time, especially as the air was now very

on deck. There I saw nothing very ex-

All the Russian vessels were now using

them shone like a sheet of silver. One or

two searchlights carefully swept the shore

feel slightly uncomfortable, as if a police-

Strong, however, in the conviction of in-

the owner of that particular searchlight.

to be brought into requisition at all. I no-

ticed that the lighthouse lamp burned

brightly and that the guiding lights at the

entrance of the harbor had not been extin-

Some warships were, however, in com-

it was all make believe I should have con-

They had ceased to be ships and become

as death, but liable to burst at any moment

Sound of the Guns.

or three minutes, but the noise was nothing

to what I had heard on other occasions of

feel that the sight was not worth the in-

convenience it caused me. I therefore re-

me of his officers were having

"Let us drink to the war just begun,"

The excitement of the Chinese crew

caused us great amusement, and when the

lighted the compass and engine room tele-

when a vessel is going to sea-and had

I also laughed myself when the joke was

Every mother feels a

great dread of the pain

and danger attendant upon

the most critical period

of her life. Becoming

expiained to me, and on going forward

we all drank to "the war just begun."

above the water."

merrily over the bay.

exploded."

Meanwhile the firing of light guns-six-

ounders, I should say—continued every two

into manifestations of hellish energy.

brimful of bitter frony.

traordinary.

photographs.

But, although also somewhat excited they were too cunning for me. What increased my feeling of confidence only practice," they said, gruffly.

been declared.

At 12 o'clock the firing slackened and 1 though it ought not to have done so, was the fact that the Russians seemed to think enough of it for one night. Later I heard unnecessary to make any considerable use of their searchlights. Previously they the firing recommence, and I now noticed used to annoy the officers of the merchant that somewhat heavier guns were being stenmers by the way in which they blinded fired. I also heard the whizz of shells. In say for certain. them with the flashlight, either until they the early morning the chief officer told me were out of sight on the way to Chefoo a Russian officer had come aboard and or until they had entered the inner harbor wanted to say something, but could not of Port Arthur. manage to make himself understood, as he only spoke Russian, a language with which Flash of Searchlights.

the chief officer is not acquainted. On leaving Port Arthur for Chefoo the

Harbor is Blockaded. thief officer went on to tell me that two the world like a redhot cannon ball. were not, I was told, subjected to such a big battleships had taken up their position long, continuous scrutiny, and on Monday night no light had been flashed on us at right opposite the entrance to the harbor. "A most unusual thing," he added. "They must really have got a scare last night after all. The firing ceased, by the way, at about 3 this morning. These battleships tire to bed for the night when I heard I speak of came abreast of the entrance three muffled explosions, followed almost at 1 o'clock. At about 1:30 a number of immediately by the discharge of small young naval officers came aboard of us, guns. Then arose from amid the blankets evidently very excited, and one of them in an adjoining cabin the voice of Captain tried to talk to me in French, but as he always relapsed in his excitement into his "War's declared!" were the words he utmother tongue I could not make head or tered, and seldom have I heard words so tail of what he said. He got so muddled up that he simply danced around the deck If the captain had cursed the Russians

in pure madness." for half an hour for disturbing him in his There was no light in the cabin, but the reflection from the searchlights showed me that the officer's face was covered with perspiration. He seemed to be very excited. I asked him if he could speak German, and he said he could, and then went

cold, but as I could not afford to miss on to speak to me in Russian. His words were: "His excellency, even a merely spectacular display I hastily vicercy, has issued a decree ordering that pulled on my boots and overcoat and went no commercial ships leave or enter the harbor of Port Arthur." He repeated this twice, and then, apolo

gizing for disturbing me, he turned abtheir searchlights so that the sea around ruptly and disappeared. I cannot say that I was in the least disand especially the entrance to the inner turbed by this occurrence, for I saw nothharbor. One blazing eye glared at the Coing unusual in an order evidently issued umbia for fully five minutes, making us all with the object of keeping merchant steamers from getting into the way of the war-

ships while the latter were engaged in man's bull's-eye lantern had been flashed maneuvers. n our faces or as if we were standing for There was now no firing, but the search lights of the vessels were as busy as they nocence the little group on deck bore that had been the night before. The position of some of the vessels had changed, and, linding stare unflinchingly, making at the ame_time uncomplimentary remarks about true enough, as the chief officer had already informed me, there were two big Some lights were directed upward at an men of war lying close to the mouth of angle of about 45 degrees and did not seem the harbor with all their lights burning and their flashlights playing around them.

> Breaking of the Day. The lighthouse lamp had gone out, though it was still dark, but the guiding

ights burned brightly. "I cannot for the life of me understand." said the mate, "what they mean by placing these warships in such a position. sidered their appearance as awe-inspiring. extraordinary position! Sure enough they must have got a bad scare last night." dreadful black blotches on the water, still

Then we tried to warm ourselves by walking up and down the deck. The moon was now shining. There was a light southerly breeze and a whitish mist lay on the horizon. The peacefulness of nature was in strong contrast to the agitation of man. It was long after the day had dawned before the Russian vessels ceased using their searchlights, and by that time practice firing and the like, and I began to the Columbia had detected something unnatural in the position of the two war-

"They've had a collision or met with some accident," he said, "there can be no quoth the captain, in his most ironical tone doubt about that. See the list that big one -Captain Anderson is a master of delicate has got. Why, her name is nearly touching irony-and, laughing at the skipper's sally, the water. And the other has a list aft. Besides, they're both aground. There can "Well, they're in desperate earnest tonot be more than seventeen feet of water night, anyhow," remarked the mate, as he turned to go. "You must have noticed that there. "By gosh! one of those Chinese boys told

these first three explosions were submarine. me just now two pleces ship strike to-Dindn't you remark how the boat trembled? gether in night time, and you see he's Quite a different thing, a submarine experfectly right after all. There must have plosion, to an explosion that takes place he know it? And what do they all mean. "Yes," said the skipper, "they were sub-I wonder, by flying their flags at the mastmarine explosions right enough, these first head?" three. Should say that one of their mines

It took us some considerable time to realize that two of Russia's best and biggest stone's throw of us. Then we all exclaimed skipper discovered that one of them had simultaneously: "What will the Japanese do when they hear this?" and the answer graphs-which are, of course, only lighted each of us gave was that Japan would declare war at once if she heard it. By and by somebody suggested that perhaps the vessels had been torpedoed or had run on submarine mines, but that view was considered too far fetched, and the general opinion was that there had been a collision. I, for one, was so convinced that this was the only rational explanation that I wrote out a telegram to be dispatched to the Herald from Chee Foo, and gave it to a gentleman on board the ship with instructions to send it off on his return to Chee Foo by the Columbia in case I did not see

> Discuss the Disaster. I did this because I felt sure that the tug would come along for us in a few moments | and that I would have "tiffin" that day in Port Arthur.

him previously.

After having made arrangements for the dispatch of this telegam, I came on deck again and found that the excitement of the ship's officers about the torpedoed ships had only increased. It was generally recognized that the Russians would do all they could to keep the news back for some time, even if they had to cut all communication between Chee Foo and Port Arthur and to administer repeated doses of quarantine to the Columbia and the other British ships in harbor.

"But the Japanese in Port Arthur will soon find out about it," said the mate, "and no power on earth will prevent them from carrying the news to Japan. They'd walk all the way to Cores; they'd go to sea in a sampan.' Japan is bound to know of this n a few days."

"And as soon as she knows of it she'll strike," remarked the second officer; "the two fleets are now on an equality as regards battleships, and the Japanese are not likely to give Russia time to repair these two."

This was the tone of our conversation as we rapidly walked the deck in the faint gray, chilly dawn of that bleak winter morning. We could never get away from the one point, and we were so overwhelmed by the magnitude of the disaster that we could only converse about it in monosyllables. These monosyllables generally constituted abrupt and sometimes profane exciamations expressive of the gigantic nature of the misfortune that had overtaken the Russian fleet, of the great chance the Japanese had got, of the certainty of war.

Never was there such unanimity of opinion on board a ship. It was so perfect that nobody listened to anybody else. Each jerked out explanations absolutely identical with those jerked out by his neighbor, and then, after brooding over his own remark for a few moments in silence and taking yet another long, searching look at the disabled battleships, repeated the same remark in another form It did not seem to strike any of us at the time that this was an absurd form of con-

When the light became stronger we could see that the forts had been manned during the night, rather a strange thing, we

felt quite pelased with myself for knowing were galleries, long lines of men were vis so much more than this ignorant China- lble, and the heads of others peeping above man and tried hard to induce the two Rus- the breastworks showed that all the themselves or they could not pray so beau- sian guards we had abourd that war had fortress artillerymen must have turned out. On the highest point of Golden Hill fort stood a large group of men, probably high officers, all scanning the horizon with glasses. That group stood there throughout all the anxious hours that followed, as ame to the conclusion that I had had long as the Columbia remained in Port Arthur. One of the group resembled the vicercy in the general contour of his figure,

Japanese Ships Seen.

but on account of the distance I could not

I afterward found that one of the Japa nese passengers on board the Columbia arrived independently at the same conclusion.

By and by the sun rose, and, owing to the light mist that lay upon the water, it Without stopping to take breath, the was very round and red, looking for all "That's an ominous sign," I remarked (the rising sun being the flag of Japan), but nobody took any notice of this at-

tempt at a wittleism. The sun revealed a strange sight, namely four vessels lying about five miles off and apparently cruisers. These could not be Russians; what on earth were they? The ship's telescope soon conveyed to us the astounding information that they flew the flag of the Rising Sun. They were caimly lying there, probably trying to find out through their glasses the exact amount of

damage that their topedo boats had done. I became fully convinced, after a few moment's consideration, that these vessels could not be supported by the Japanese fleet. They were simply a few prowlers that had come to do damage and then rush off. And apparently they had done damafe, for it could no longer be doubted that it was the torpedo boats that accompanied them which had attacked the Russians the previous night.

I am not pro-Japanese, but I must con fess that the audacity of this first terrific strike fairly took away my breath. turned to have another look at the torpedoed vessels and noticed how the mer were gathered together with white, scared faces on the lock. There seemed to b no captain, no officers and no order. Th men were no longer important parts of formidable fighting machine; they were mob-a silent, scared mob-looking with terror toward the abyss from which the nonsters of the night had emerged.

Some of them, it is true, still seemed to go about their various duties in a me chanical manner, and I particularly remember seeing the cook of one of the big torpedoed battleships throwing slops over the side. I do not think that I or any of my friends on board the Columbia felt glad at the terrific blow the Russian navy had received. There was something so pathetic in the helplessness and in the unnatural position of these tremendous engines of war which had been so suddenly disabled that we all remained looking or

Togo's Pinn Divulged.

Then we began to notice that a big cruiser on our left had also a suspicious list and an awkward appearance, and soon man who passed us in a launch told us that the too, had been torpedeed. The same man caused us some perturbation of mind by remarking that the whole Japanese fleet was coming up and that if we did not move out at once we would find ourselves right in the line of fire.

As we had already been told not to leave the port and as any attempt to move at all the practiced eye of one of the officers of might draw on us the fire of the forts, we felt in a difficult position.

Meanwhile, the Japanese cruisers, having ships lying at the harbor mouth. He was made a very long, leisurely survey of the not very long in coming to a conclusion. Russians, went away slowly, and the whole Russian fleet got up steam, weighed anchor and started in pursuit. It is a singular instance of the effect of habit that on weighing anchor the Russian sailors very carefully cleaned all dirt from the anchor chain as if they could not perform that operation at a more convenient time. Meanwhile the Russian ships hastily

threw overboard bedding and furniture, which were at once seized upon by eager Chinese sampan men. I noticed one man paddling ashore with something that been a collision. But how the deuce did looked like a ping pong table, and several went very far out in their quest for booty. They all disappeared very quickly, ever, when the shells began to fall. But

no shells fell just then, for the Japanese cruisers soon withdrew and the Russians battleships lay helpless almost within a at once followed them. This was at about 9 o'clock. Admiral Togo probably wanted to lure the Russians outside and to fight them in the open. He did not succeed. The attention of those on board the Columbia was temporarily withdrawn from these great events by the appearance of the doctor, who declared the quarantine at an end, but who could give us no information as to whether we could leave or not He said he would go ashore and inquire. I forgot to say that even before day break the Russian torpedo boats had

> but they seemed to follow in the wake of the warships like a brood of chickens running after a hen. Their commanders had gloomy countenances and some of them leveled their glasses at us and inspected us carefully, as if they were not sure but that we might be a Japanese war vessel. The Russian fleet returned at about 10 o'clock, and soon after sixteen Japanese war vessels, five of them clearly battleships, appeared in a long line on the horizon. Things now looked desperafe for us

on the Columbia, and our captain took

(Continued on Page Seventeen.)

swarmed out to the number of fourteen,

down the quarantine flag and ran up the signal. "Will you give me permission to leave?" The soldiers we had on board got a little

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