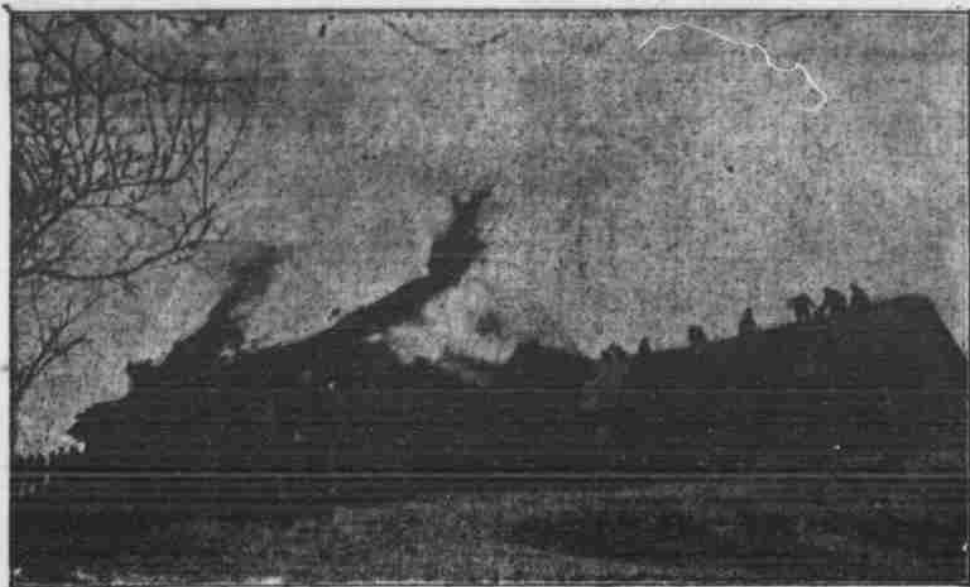


# Crossing of the Yalu River by the Japanese

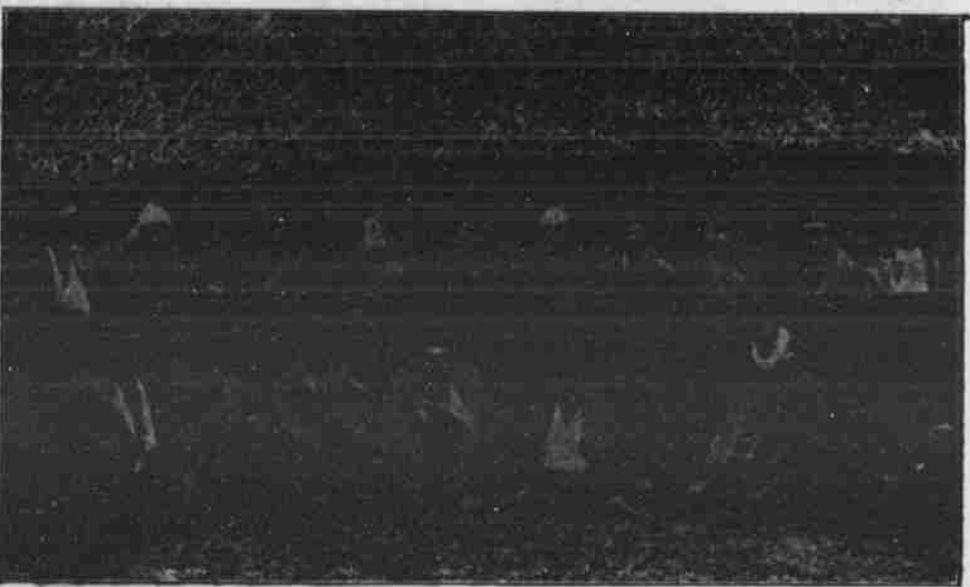
By Frederick Palmer, Collier's War Correspondent Attached to Japanese General Staff in Manchuria



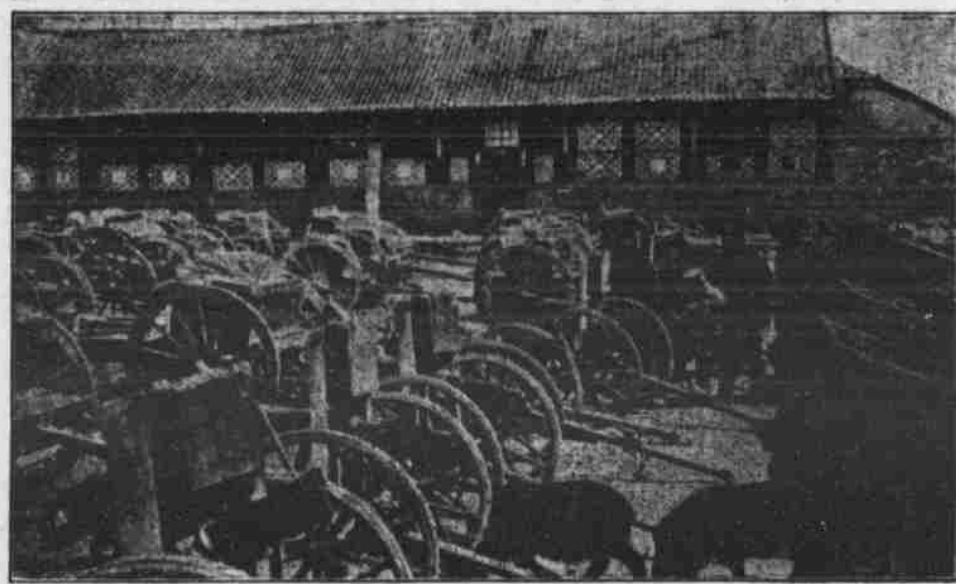
NATIVES ATTEMPTING TO SAVE A BURNING HOUSE IN ANTUNG, SET ON FIRE BY THE RETREATING RUSSIANS.—Photo by James H. Hare, Collier's Special Photographer with Kuroki's Army; Copyright, 1904, by Collier's Weekly.



JAPANESE BRINGING INTO ANTUNG SOME OF THE CANNON CAPTURED AT CHIU LIEU CHENG.—Photo by James H. Hare, Collier's Special Photographer with Kuroki's Army; Copyright, 1904, by Collier's Weekly.



WOUNDED RUSSIANS, BELONGING TO THE ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH SIBERIAN REGIMENTS, TAKEN PRISONER AT CHIU LIEU CHENG.—Photo by James H. Hare, Collier's Special Photographer with Kuroki's Army; Copyright, 1904, by Collier's Weekly.



RUSSIAN CANNON CAPTURED BY THE JAPANESE DURING THE TWO DAYS' BATTLE AT THE CROSSING OF THE YALU.—Photo by James H. Hare, Collier's Special Photographer with Kuroki's Army; Copyright, 1904, by Collier's Weekly.

Through the courtesy of Collier's Weekly, The Bee is enabled to reproduce here photographs of the scenes that accompanied the fighting when the Japanese army crossed the Yalu river at Wiju, on April 30 and May 1. These photographs were made by James H. Hare, Collier's special photographer with General Kuroki's army.

Accompanying the photographs are letters from Mr. Frederick Palmer, Collier's commissioner with the Japanese army. The first of these letters was written just before the advance movement began. Mr. Palmer wrote his description of the battle of the Yalu in three parts—the first describing the crossing of the river, which took place April 30; the second describing the battle of May 1, and the third probably a summing up of the victory. The following letter (dated Antung, May 3) is the second one of this series. The first letter has not yet reached Collier's office, although it was undoubtedly mailed before or at the same time as the one we are now printing, as Mr. Palmer refers to it in the fifth line of the first paragraph of his letter from Antung: "The account of the one I have already sent." This first letter was either held up by the Japanese military censor after leaving Mr. Palmer's hands or failed to catch the same steamer which brought the other correspondence. It will be published in Collier's as soon as it reaches the office.

## Before the Battle.

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**A**T THE FRONT, April 27.—At 4 a. m. the word came that at daylight there was to be an action. You stumbled into your clothes, you stumbled out of your tent, with field-glasses over one shoulder and flash over the other, and a piece of chocolate in your pocket. As your eyes strained to make out the path in the darkness, you felt the cold night mist on your face. From a hill where you waited for dawn, you could see the outline of other hills, and in the valley something dark—the town of Wiju.

There, expectant, in the oppressive stillness, one looked toward the east for the sunrise, and listened for the rattle of musketry, at once the merriest and the most terrible sound of war. It began far away on our right in volleys, as company after company of a line pulled their triggers. It was not a heavy fire; it did not signify a battle, but only one of those many operations by which an offensive force gets the positions that provide striking ground for a great action. Except that one heard the musketry, you at home knew as much of what was passing under cover of the ridges in the breaking light as the spectator who had come 12,000 miles and waited long in Tokio. The moment of "darkness before dawn" was theatrical, as if the lights of a stage were turned down and then up. One second you could see nothing. Ten seconds later, only the mist hanging in

the valleys and cut by the heights shut out the view.

From the left, with a great stretch of silence between, came more musketry and some gun-fire. The left, one was told, was to see the work of the morning. On a ridge near the guns you had the positions of the two armies separated by the river, which may be the scene of vast slaughter if the Russians are strong—and if they choose. Nature here has made a natural barrier of empire; but when a sea free of an enemy's ships permits of landing a flanking column, men, rifles, guns and indomitable energy are superior to nature. To Corea and Manchuria, the Yalu is what the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence are to the United States and Canada. It runs through a country of hills and mountains.

Were there roads, the precipitous banks would be an obstacle more than offset by fords higher up stream. An army, however, is tied to its transportation. Men who climb over untraveled ground must have their dinners and their blankets. So the Japanese keep to the road, and Wiju is on the road. All things in Corea, including the Koreans, serve the Japanese well.

The situation of Wiju is typically Korean, with the water from the ascents making a stew of its own filth. You go downhill to approach it from any direction. Every house is unseen from the Manchurian side. A natural wall protects it from one shore at a point where the Yalu's waters pass in a single channel. Above and below there are islands, low and sandy. This one point in the enemy's lines is an unassailable center.

From the Manchurian bank rises a bare and rocky bluff, with one high hump and one lower, like a camel that is kneeling. A winding path leads between the humps. This is the only sign of human occupation and no one ascends or descends it. Until the Russians put their mountain guns there it was never of any human service. Behind it, as the Japanese do in Wiju, the Russians may move as openly as if they were in a peaceful valley at home. Further down the banks on both sides are still high and on the Japanese side are formed of ridges, which are natural breastworks and earthworks. Shelter for reserves is ready to hand, as if made to order.

With the sun rising gloriously, silhouetting numerous great pines that crown the heights, the sheet of mist lifted from the town, revealing its dark thatches and the water tower at the highest point, where the master eye may see all possible that will serve the master mind which carries the fortunes of an army for an expectant nation. Dots, patches and lines of blue

uniform have taken the place of the peasantry who in other times would be showing spring activity. The only plowing that is done is by bullets and shells.

Rare is the figure of the Korean. The work in hand is war, the scene distinct in its cleavage from all gatherings of humanity. The hillsides where there have been only paths are cut by roads prepared for a battle's work, as the mechanics of the stage prepare for producing a play. In a word this means mobility. The passage of a field gun must be made as easily as that of the theatrical star. The guns are the stars that impress and demoralize the enemy and the little rifles do the work of killing. Below the Tiger's Tail, as the natives call the humps of the kneeling camel, the current is divided between channels that make three islands.

Whoever crosses the river with an army must possess these or those above Wiju. Whoever possesses them may no longer screen the movements on his immediate front, and submits his force to shrapnel from the enemy's heights. Two channels may be forded; the third must be bridged. If the Japanese are to open the way into Manchuria by this route, the making of the bridge, and crossing it in sufficient force to drive back the Russians (should they resist), form the diamond point of interest in this war. It means more than a pass, for here the pass must first be built.

The first of the islands the Japanese already held. The taking of the second I understood was to be attempted at daylight—I understood 4 a. m., daylight being at 5:30. (Your spectator of battles does not get his reserved seat weeks ahead.) On the ridge chosen for seeing opposite the second island (Genkato), we still heard occasional rifle fire to the left (down the river). On the first island (Ranshi), held by the Japanese, we could see the Japanese infantry in their trenches, and the details for water, and wood, and provisions going and coming. There were no signs of an assault by them. Probably from the Russian heights the Russians in their trenches on their island, Genkato, were as visible as the Japanese to us, and the Japanese equally as invisible from the Russian heights as the Russians to us.

On the Russian island is the custom house and a small village, which needed no Goldsmith to sing its desertion. So far as we could see, not a soul was in sight on the whole Russian front except a Russian officer, who rode up and down on his trotting Cossack pony as if he were on his morning constitutional. Was he riding along an entrenched line or not? Were there Russians on Genkato or only pretense? To the onlooker it seemed as if the Japanese might cross over from Ranshi

and take possession of the empty houses. But a gun is silent until it speaks. Later, we had a foretaste of what might happen if the Japanese should rise from their cover.

At the summit of the path leading over the Tiger's Tail, between the two humps, were visible three figures, the only others besides the itinerant horseman which indicated the presence of an enemy. At intervals one of the three would bend over and the other two would stand back. Then there was a puff of smoke, and a shell went flying down the river. Where it burst you could not tell. The solitary horseman rode back again. Some reserves nearby were formed in line and marched away; transportation trains and soldiers on fatigue, and an occasional officer could be seen coming and going, while the roofs of Wiju covered whatever activity existed there.

Ever this is the Land of the Morning Calm, where the still cold of night breaks into the still warmth of day. As I counted the seconds from the time of the Tiger's Tail gun fire till we heard its report (in order to judge the distance), I could hear no sound in this area where two armies faced each other, except the ticking of my watch. Directly from the cover of the Tiger's Tail two companies of Cossacks rode out widely deployed. They were a fair mark; too fair a mark. The Japanese are not so naive in the art of war as to disclose their gun positions on such slight temptation. The Japanese gunners sit and wait. Where their guns are no foreigner knows. Where some of the Russian guns are we learned before the day was over.

Just opposite Wiju itself a number of Japanese engineers were building a bridge over to Ranshi. They went about their work in a methodical way, as if their task was the most natural and commonplace thing in the world. They crossed back and forth in boats with timbers, and they laid planks with seeming unconcern, as seen through the glasses, when doubtless they were making every minute count. It is distance that gives perspective. The doubts or worries of the bridge builders did not occur to the spectators on the heights, who saw simply so many moving figures, ascertained their object and passed to other things. They had the advantage of an army of offense. Either the Russian had to unmask some of his batteries or allow them to make headway. He acted on his decision as to which was the lesser of the two evils with a burst of shrapnel, which made the bridge builders take to cover. That was the work of a few moments—an incident of warfare. So was the

(Continued on Page Eleven.)