

# The Pacific War of 1910

By Charles H. Stuart Wade

## CHAPTER IX.

### A JAPANESE FORCE ANNIHILATED.

THE noontide sun was shining upon the ruins of Victoria City when some 6,000 Japanese formed-up on British soil under the command of General Harcu; these, after looting the buildings not utterly destroyed, advanced as a flying column along the railway line en route for Nanaimo; whilst shortly after three the Japanese fleet reinforced by a number of destroyers, transports, and torpedo vessels, steamed northward through Haro Street, being watched from the American waters by a powerful squadron of the United States navy, under command of Admiral Sperry; the Canadian fleet was in tactical array off Sidney and Saanich where the troops already transported from Victoria were embarked and preparations made for a stubborn defence of the Strait of Georgia from Stuart Island to the Portier Pass. The "Narrows" between the labyrinth of channels had been well and scientifically protected by the naval mechanical engineers with mines and other destructive contrivances; whilst the sympathy of the great American nation (which had no other means of shewing it without breach of neutrality) was evinced by the United States Admiral removing the Beacon Light established by his nation on Stuart Island; a kindly courtesy acknowledged by Admiral Kingston who immediately sent one of his principal officers to thank him in the name of Great Britain and Canada.

The Japanese flying column had meanwhile followed the railway line from Goldstream until at 6 o'clock in the evening it came into conflict with Lieut.-Col.

Todd's outposts which were speedily driven in, whereupon a very hot engagement developed shortly after 8 o'clock. In attempting a turning movement the enemy was attacked by the force of Lieut.-Col. Shields when Capts. Whitmore and Barford rushed to close quarters in a most gallant manner, whilst the machine guns of Lieut. Peary completed the repulse of the movement inflicting great slaughter.

The destruction of the railway line prevented the enemy's projected rapid advance, whilst the defensive arrangements were evidently unexpected and the Japanese accordingly camped under arms. During the night a number of reconnaissances were repelled, and preparations were completed by which a skeleton force of 500 men (with an armoured train provided with three machine guns), under the personal command of Lieut.-Col. Todd should defend the railway line, whilst Lieut.-Col. Shields and 1,500 men fell back and took up a position in ambuscade; the famous local guide "Cougar" Joe who had opportunely arrived and offered his services advising this course, and stating that he knew of a spot near Shawnigan Lake where such strategy was certain of success.

By 4 o'clock in the morning every arrangement had been made and the attack was anxiously awaited by the small force left behind, nor was it long delayed, for the enemy ever a lover of night attack "rushed" the position shortly before day-break, compelling the defenders to retire under the protection of the armoured train, from which so strenuous a fire was maintained by the machine guns that the attackers were compelled to remain at a respectful distance, though ever pressing onward as the entrained force