

there. The Play of Death had produced its first sensation.

Over on the highest knoll of the central kopje General Stackelberg stood unmoved and immovable. Dressed all in white, cool and collected, he directed the affairs of the fight as a chessplayer the pieces. He seemed something out of place in this hideous inferno. Below our guns barked devilishly. The Japanese sought to disconcert our right, blazed mightily at a lonely kopje there. Growing wearied, they concentrated on the centre, smothered the position in dust and broken stone. Above the sun glowed mercilessly. The Play of Death was interesting now, and he permitted not a cloud to veil the spectacle from his sight. Men, overcome with the heat, fell dead from sunstroke. The horrid chant of the guns augmented in malignancy. The shells searched the ground behind the kopjes.

An aide, as perfect as his general, well groomed, and graceful in his saddle, rode rapidly down the flank of the principal position, cantered across the zone of fire in the valley, pulled pantingly up the slope to the General of Artillery. At what was his Excellency directing his fire? The Brigadier indicated the position. The aide saluted, galloped down and across the field where the kiaolang crop was being reaped with shell-fire.

The enemy found the mud-huts in the Chinese village, gnawed at them viciously.

Out from the houses swarmed the peasants, old men and children, women with babes at their breasts, the dogs and the squealing swine. The farmers seated them-

selves in a row, impassive, awe-struck. House after house crumbled to its constituent mud. The men sat as statues—a row of Buddhist images contemplating ruin. The Play of Death demanded change of scene.

The gun was hastening on its mission westward. The sea glowed as a burnished buckler. The fields of the morning were bedraggle straw litter. The dust of battle hung low over the landscape. The enemy slackened his fire. The Brigadier of Artillery anxiously scanned the horizon. Experience has taught the danger in these silences of the enemy.

Half an hour passed and then the crash of guns reopened from the west. The Japanese had shifted their position. They were reaching the batteries through the wide strath on the right, having found our true position thus late in the day. Our General of Artillery was wounded in the arm. Evening fell, and twilight.

Now, for the first time, one could learn the position of the Japanese. Red tongues of fire licked their way through the gathering gloom. Wicked snakes' shapes of flame darted across the distant blackness. The Play of Death was closing in a pyrotechnic display.

Night fell, and with it stillness. Away to the left the rattle of infantry fire grew more insistent as the big guns lapsed to silence. The lights of the Red Cross parties and of weary gunners watering horses flecked the darkness. The Play of Death had ended its performance.

DOUGLAS STORY.

