

the flames would compel him to leave the regular formation.

Admiral Ito did not see the signal through the billows of cannon smoke rolling over the water and made no reply, so when the Hiyei had transferred her wounded to the transport ship she extinguished the fire and returned to her place in the squadron. She was almost a wreck, but managed to keep her guns going till the end of the battle.

The van squadron of the Japanese fleet, after attacking the right of the Chinese line, turned about and fought its way back toward the northwest, while the main squadron continued on in a circle, the Chinese formation being destroyed and the ships bunched together in confusion. The two ironclads stuck close together, fighting with great spirit.

Just as the flagship Matsushima, at the head of the main squadron, was abreast of the Chinese ironclads a shell from one of the big guns struck her main deck, dismounting her heaviest gun and damaging the whole port battery. The shell struck the ammunition massed on the deck and exploded it. A sheet of fire seemed to sweep up to the sky and the flagship rolled heavily as her riven sides yielded to the terrific shock and her plates were bent outward.

Dead men were blown into the sea, a part of the upper deck was blasted and the officers' quarters were destroyed. A lieutenant, a sub-lieutenant, a midshipman and twelve of the crew were instantly killed. Wounded men were scattered about in the bloody wreckage. The ship was on fire.

Admiral Ito kept his course until he found that the stiff wind on the port bow was spreading the flames, and to save the ship he turned about, followed by the rest of the squadron. From his place on the bridge the admiral could see that one of the Chinese ironclads was also on fire, and he decided to return to the attack, using his starboard battery while the fire on the port side was being extinguished.

Meanwhile the little Akagi and the transport Saikio Maru were separated from the main squadron, being unable to keep up with its swift movements. The Akagi was attacked on all sides by the enemy, but fought bravely. Her mainmast was shot away and her captain, Commander Sakamoto, was killed on the bridge. The navigating officer then took command, but a few moments later fell to the deck wounded in the face and arm. He was succeeded by the third lieutenant, who directed the fighting until the navigating officer's wounds were dressed and he returned to the bridge.

As the Akagi's mainmast crashed down over the side a lieutenant and gun crew in the fighting top were killed. The Chinese poured volley after volley into the battered ship, but the wounded lieutenant kept his place on the bridge and refused to surrender. After three hours of hard fighting he succeeded in withdrawing from the battlefield and getting under cover of the main squadron.

But the Saikio Maru! Hemmed in

by the Chinese ships, the transport was a general target. Her upper works were riddled by the rapid-fire guns of the enemy, but she managed to escape the shots of the heavier batteries. By this time the Chinese fleet was disorganized and the gunnery was wild.

A torpedo was launched at the transport, but it exploded before reaching her. Another torpedo was sent from a ship not fifty yards away.

A THRILL OF TERROR

ran through the Saikio's crew as the huge projectile plunged into the sea, headed straight for the vessel. But the distance was not great enough for the style of attack and before the torpedo could rise to the surface it had passed under the Saikio's hull, and her astonished officers and men saw it come up on the other side and dart away toward the horizon.

A sudden burst of speed carried the transport to the shelter of the main squadron.

As the Chinese line was doubled up the van squadron, under rear Admiral Tsuboi, attacked the bewildered commanders, who seemed to have lost all thought of fleet formation, and were fighting at random. The main Chinese force had gradually drawn away from the protection of the ironclads, and each ship was acting on its own account.

At about 3.30 o'clock in the afternoon the Chihyuen began to sink, bow first. As she went down the Japanese guns pierced her again and again. Her crew jumped into the sea, and her stern rose in the air, the propeller wheel going at full speed.

For a few minutes she was completely hidden by clouds of smoke and steam. Just before she disappeared her propeller reached the water again, and she whirled around in the sea with mighty swirls, drowning men engulfed at every quivering sweep of the sinking ship. Then with a final shudder and lurch she plunged under the surface and was seen no more.

The Chinese ships tried to withdraw from the action, but were pursued by the van squadron. The Laiyuen or the King Yuen suddenly keeled over on her port side and went down sideways. She was sunk by a stern shot, although it is almost certain that she was seriously injured before she attempted to break away.

The wind lulled and the ocean was wrapped in smoke, through which shone the dull glare of a conflagration. The Tshaoyong was in flames, and the Japanese batteries were concentrating their fire upon her. Down went the cruiser with her shrieking crew, and a great cloud hid the spot where she disappeared in the distance, leaving a trail of dying men in the waves.

By this time the two Japanese squadrons, were five miles apart, with the Chinese main force between them. The squadrons were in perfect line, the main squadron advancing on the two ironclads, and the van squadron chasing two or three fugitives headed toward Port Arthur.

It was now a few minutes past 5 o'clock. Admiral Ito feared that the two squadrons might be separated in the darkness, and, not daring to risk a fight at night with the ironclads and the Chinese torpedo boats, he signaled the van to join him and withdrew to westward of the Chinese.

At the same time the Chinese fleet reformed and shaped its course southeast. The Japanese squadrons took a parallel course, but kept at a sufficient distance to avoid an attack by torpedoes. The van squadron followed Admiral Ito and reported that the Chinese cruiser Yangwai was on fire and had started for Talu Island, probably to beach herself.

Ito was satisfied that the Chinese fleet intended to take refuge behind the forts of Weihaiwei. He felt confident that with the superior speed and discipline of his squadrons he could afford to renew the battle at daybreak, and he proceeded at full speed to the neighborhood of Weihaiwei. But in the morning there was no sign of the enemy to be seen.

THE CHINESE HAD FLED

to Port Arthur. Ito steamed straightway to Talu Island. As he approached he saw smoke in the distance, but it vanished on the horizon without a trace of its origin being discovered. The Japanese believe that a fast torpedo boat was in the vicinity.

The van squadron discovered the Yangwai aground and abandoned on the south shore of Talu Island. She was promptly blown up with gun cotton. The Japanese fleet then returned to the new naval rendezvous at the mouth of the Tatong River and the Akagi, Matsushima, Hiyei and Saikio Maru were sent to Japan for repairs, Admiral Ito's flag being transferred to the Hashidate.

While the fleet was lying in the Tatong inlet, the Naniwa and Akitsushima were sent across the Yellow Sea by Admiral Ito, in consequence of a report that one of the Chinese warships had got aground while retreating from the battle. On September 23 they discovered the Kuangki ashore off Talienwhan Bay, near Port Arthur. When the Japanese men-of-war drew near the stranded ship, they saw her blown to pieces by her officers.

This was the fifth warship lost by the Chinese since the opening of the battle.

Not a single Japanese ship was lost.

Twelve Japanese officers and ninety-eight men were killed, while thirteen officers and 170 men were wounded.

The Chinese loss I am unable to give, but it must be nearly two thousand. Probably the exact figures will never be made public. I know from the accounts of a dozen eye witnesses that the sea was full of drowning Chinamen and that few were saved during the fighting, for the reason that the Chinese had no small boats.

"To what do you chiefly attribute the success of the Japanese fleet?" I