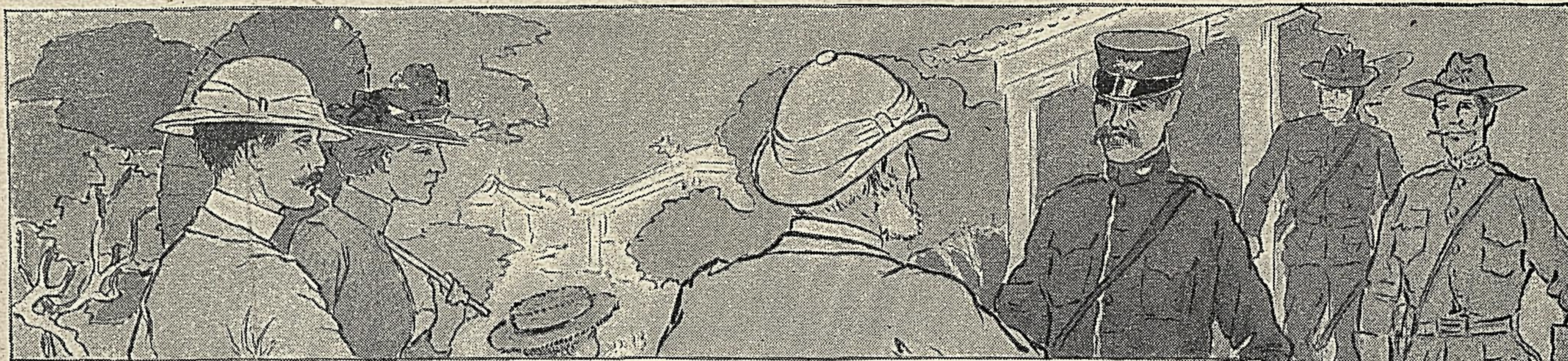




cation offering to have the Boxers stop their firing if the legations would cease replying. There was no real truce. The reader of the message had to raise his voice over the noise of shot and shell. This same messenger brought also the famous message from Secretary Hay to Minister Conger, without date or any sign of the route by which it arrived. Mr. Conger was directed "to communicate tidings to bearer."

On July 17th the attacks suddenly ceased, the Krupps were muzzled, and only sniping shots were heard for days. But the surrounding cordon was kept tightly drawn to prevent any communication with the relief expedition. By this time all were living on reduced rations, the 2,700 native converts being most meagrely fed. It is, indeed, little short of marvellous how, with such little preparation, the community was able to resist a siege of two months' duration; for, besides the converts, there were in the intrenched foreign quarter 400 civilians, 400 soldiers, and 400 servants to be fed. Fortunately there was a mill in Legation Street which furnished 900 pounds of flour a day. Only once did the Tsung-li Yamen offer assistance. It sent 1,000 pounds of flour, some ice, and vegetables—which no one ate for fear of poison. Communications now passed daily either with the Yamen or the group calling itself "Prince Ching and others." The request that sellers of ice and vegetables be allowed to enter the compound was never allowed. But there was ample evidence of the alarm of the government, from which the diplomats augured some catastrophe to Chinese arms. The "Peking Gazette" began to give evidence of the fear at Court. On July 18th "the unknown German" killed on June 20th was announced to have been the Baron von Ketteler, and the deep grief of the Court at his death officially expressed. By decree published on July 2d all the missionaries were "to be driven at once back to their own country." On July 18th it was decreed that they were "to be protected in every province." News of the fall of Tien-tsin reached the besieged on July 18th. The tone of the communications received noticeably changed from insulting to conciliatory as relief approached. But supplies were still cut off, and suffering, particularly among the aged and children, was acute. Some demands were impertinent in the

