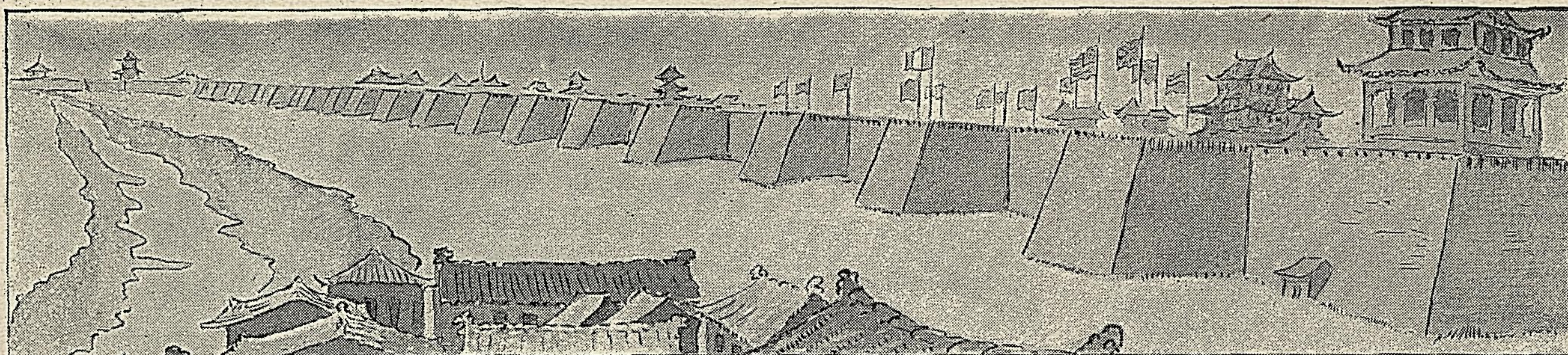




extreme. The imprisoned ministers were ordered to send lying reports to their governments about their safety and comfort. There was no civilized armistice. Sniping was continuous. The brave French Captain Darcy was killed by a stray shot just two days before relief came. Over the city came the noise of the brave resistance which the priests were making at Peitang cathedral.

Actually, during the first days of August, the Court sent in to the besieged diplomats courteous condolences upon the deaths of King Humbert and the Duke of Saxe-Coburg. On August 10th came news that relief was almost at hand. The Chinese had also heard it, for the last two days of the siege were devoted to a desperate resumption of the attack by the Imperial troops on the legations. Shells fell continually, one entering the British Minister's bedroom. But the defending garrison made a great record for itself during these last days. Polyglot difficulties had been overcome, and an active, compact force created. Successful sorties had seized the adjoining quarter known as the Mongol Market, and resulted in the death of the general of the Shansi troops, who had boasted that he would reduce the legations in five days. Early on the morning of the 14th, noise of a loud bombardment at the great Eastern gate brought all the people to the walls. And by noon a British officer, followed by Sikhs, made his appearance under the water-gate of the canal leading into the legation grounds. Relief had come.

Just as the wonderful story of this siege shows up clearly Chinese ideas of honor, of hospitality, of international comity, so do the accounts of the reception of the relief troops give almost as significant a picture of a contrasting civilization. There were no tears, no cheers, no shouts of joy as the men from the beyond-world rescued these people out of the very jaws of death. Dust- and mud-stained soldiers, who had fought through an exhausting forced-march to rescue the starving legations, were received by a garden-party company spotlessly arrayed in white flannels and summer chiffrons. Eager questions asked by the rescuers received only the most composed and unmoved answers. One soldier rushed up to an aged diplomat, with his haversack in hand:

"Are you hungry? Have you had enough to eat?"

"Yes, almost; but we are out of butter and condensed milk."

