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(For *SECRETARY'S NOTES*, see commencement of Notes.)

SOME PERSONAL REMINISCENCES OF THE SIEGE OF THE PEKING LEGATIONS IN 1900.

By COLONEL THE RIGHT HON. SIR C. M. MACDONALD, G.C.M.G.,
G.C.V.O., K.C.B.

On Wednesday, March 25th, 1914.

FIELD MARSHAL LORD METHUEN, G.C.B., G.V.C.O., C.M.G.,
in the Chair.

THE CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, It must be a very bitter disappointment to you that His Royal Highness Prince Arthur of Connaught is not able to be here to-day to take the Chair; he has to remain with his regiment. I am sure it will disappoint him as much not to come here as it disappoints you not to see him.

Now may I say this on my own behalf, that it gives me very great pleasure to be in the Chair to-day for this reason, that not one of us can ever forget the kindness and the hospitality shown to us by Sir Claude and Lady MacDonald during the time that our Mission was in Japan. I am sure that we shall all welcome him here, and learn with the greatest interest, his experiences during the time he represented his Queen and country at Peking, in one of the very great crises that have happened in that kingdom. With these few words I call upon Sir Claude MacDonald to give us his lecture.

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A

LECTURE.

MANY accounts have been written of this memorable siege by many writers, but beyond my official despatches, buried in Blue Books, and a short paper read at the Japan Society a few weeks ago, dealing with the work of the Japanese detachment, I have never written, or spoken in public, on this extraordinary outbreak of midsummer madness; but an invitation to read a paper on the subject before the Royal United Service Institution, most willingly accepted, has caused me to dig up my buried despatches, and put together, in narrative form, some of the more stirring events of this great upheaval.

Looking back over the 14 years which have elapsed since the outbreak took place, and with the added knowledge which these years have brought, it is interesting to note how inaccurate were many particulars in the accounts given at the time, especially as to the genesis of the movement. I hasten to add that this remark applies equally to my own despatches. I do not wish to dwell on these errors or inaccuracies, but to state, without "partiality, favour, or affection," what, after sifting evidence which, owing to the post I held, I was enabled to obtain, and at the same time to state what I personally saw and heard before, and during the siege.

This will perforce, make my paper a very egotistical document, for which I tender my apologies, but it may also, on the other hand, add to its interest.

The Rising of 1900 was undoubtedly the outcome of a combination of circumstances, which, commencing in events of great importance, produced a state of affairs so charged with electricity, that events in themselves of minor importance brought about an explosion which was far reaching in its effects, for it shook the Throne of the Manchu Dynasty to its foundations, and in a space of time, the shortness of which surprised all those who were experts in matters Chinese, caused an ancient form of monarchical Government to become a Republic.

The important events to which I allude took place in 1897-98, at a time when the policy of "Spheres of Influence" was very much to the fore. They began by the lease to Germany of the Harbour of Kiaochau and adjacent territory in December, 1897; of Port Arthur to Russia in March, 1898; of Kwang-Chou-Wan in the South to France in April of the same year; and to Great Britain the Harbour of Weihai-wei in Shantung in the North, as well as part of the mainland of China in the neighbourhood of the walled city of Kowloon, opposite to the Island of Hong-Kong in the South.

In this general, and not very edifying scramble, in which it will be observed that we went one better than anybody else, for we obtained the lease of two places to everybody else's one, Italy did not join. Japan, in an official note to the Chinese Government, "earmarked" the Province of Fukien, opposite to Formosa, as her "Sphere of Influence," in the same somewhat futile manner in which we "earmarked" the Yangtze region, a mark which in both cases has more or less become ineffective.

And now occurred an incident which I venture to think had much to do with the policy adopted by the so-called anti-foreign party during the Boxer troubles. Italy had made no move during the scramble for leases, but when this was at its height, a new Italian Representative was appointed to Peking, a capable diplomat, but of a restless and ambitious temperament, and, of course, a "new broom." With great zeal and energy this official set to work, and eventually persuaded his Government to put forward a demand for a harbour, and selected about the only one then left to China. The turmoil accompanying the negotiations for the leases, the successful obtaining of which depended very much on the number of war ships which the negotiating Power had in Chinese waters, had ceased, and comparative calm reigned, when this new demand burst like a shell in the midst of the Tsung-li-Yamen, or Board of Foreign Affairs. Two of its most influential members, one being the "Grand Old Man" of China, Li-Hung-Chang, came to see me, and begged me to use my influence with my Italian colleague to withdraw his demand. I pointed out that my situation was somewhat delicate, because I had only recently acquired a lease, indeed two, myself, and my colleague might very easily remind me of the fact, with unanswerable effect. His Excellency, Li, was particularly indignant at the demand from a Power which he said only possessed two ships of war in Chinese waters, one the "Marco," and the other the "Polo"! I did not lessen my colleague's chances by informing His Excellency that, in fact, there was only one ship, the "Marco Polo." To make a long story short, the Italian Minister, through a misunderstanding with his Government, sent in an "ultimatum" to the Chinese, fixing a day for the signing of the lease and delivery of the harbour. When the Italian Government became aware that their Representative had done this without, as they considered, proper instructions, they sent a peremptory telegram recalling him, and, with the sanction of Her Majesty's Government, appointed me Acting Italian Minister. The Chinese Government in the meanwhile, doubtless stiffened thereto by the nautical knowledge of His Excellency, Li, had telegraphed protesting strongly against the Italian ultimatum. As I was aware of the bad effect which would be produced by the recall of a foreign Representative from Peking, practically at the instance of the Chinese Government, I took upon myself to telegraph to the British Ambassador in Rome, stating my views, and the urgency and importance of rescinding the orders of recall.

On the following day I received a telegram from Rome informing me that the recall had already been made public, and a few days later the Italian Minister left Peking to the unconcealed joy of Prince Ching, President of the Foreign Board, His Excellency Li-Hung-Chang, and the Chinese Court and Government generally, who were elated at the unexpected success of their "firm" policy. Italy, of course, never got her harbour, which should now be to her, and doubtless is, a source of sincere satisfaction. This episode took place at the commencement of 1899, and, with a Government differently constituted, might have had no ill effects; but with the Head of a State, such as was the Empress Dowager, surrounded by a Court composed of Princes and members of

the Imperial House, all bitterly anti-foreign, and with a Government composed of Manchu and Chinese officials whose ignorance, for the most part was only equalled by their arrogance, the situation became fraught with grave danger.

On my return from leave of absence in the early autumn of the same year, the change in the tone of the members of the Tsung-li-Yamen and their chief, Prince Ching, was very marked.

Encouraged by the success of their resistance to Italian demands, the Chinese Government "sat down" and indulged in a course of passive resistance, which was very trying; they opposed everything and everybody, even matters which would have been greatly to their benefit they declined to touch. I had numerous complaints from my diplomatic colleagues of their inability to get any affairs put through, except matters of the merest routine. My own particular difficulties were enormously increased by the fact that the war in South Africa was then at one of its most unsatisfactory stages, and it was incumbent on British representatives all the world over to keep matters quiet, so that Great Britain might concentrate her attention on South Africa, where the trend of affairs certainly needed all her energies. My instructions were strong and definite on this point.

The forced lease of portions of Chinese territory to certain of the Great Powers had undoubtedly created great dissatisfaction amongst the ruling classes of China, and the successful policy of opposition to the Italian demands had made them show their patriotism by a passive resistance to, and a scarcely-concealed hatred of all foreigners.

So much for the upper classes; as for the people, several incidents had combined to make them ready, if needed, to carry out the wishes of the governing class and turn their passive resistance into a deep and active hatred. In the spring and early summer of 1899 the famine in Northern Kiangsu had been so severe that children were sold into slavery for a mere song.

"China's sorrow," otherwise the Yellow River, had overflowed its banks and flooded 2,500 square miles of country, containing some 1,500 villages, and much distress and starvation prevailed; small risings in the metropolitan Province of Chi-li took place, but these, at the time, were local, and were not connected with foreigners.

Matters were in this state when there appeared in the neighbouring Province of Shantung a Secret Society named Ch'uan-I-Ho—Ch'uan (Fists) I (Righteous or Public) Ho (Harmony)="The Fists of Righteous Harmony." As the Chinese phrase (Fists and Feet) signifies "boxing and wrestling," there appeared to be no more suitable term for the Society than "Boxers," and this name was given to it by the missionary correspondents of foreign journals, and later on universally adopted for lack of a better one, though the antics of these gentry would certainly have come as a surprise to the votaries of the prize ring. The Boxers laid claim to supernatural powers, such as being invulnerable to bullets, swords, or any lethal weapon—they worshipped various divinities, chiefly heroes of extinct dynasties, they claimed also to be able to set fire to buildings, which would burn like paper without injuring

other and adjacent houses. It was this supernatural element which gave the sect its powerful hold upon the popular imagination and belief.

In October, 1899, an encounter took place between a military official with a party of his men, and a considerable force of Boxers.

As a result of this fight, 98 Boxers were left dead on the field, and a large number wounded. There is very little doubt that this would have been the end of the Boxer movement had it not been for Yü-Hsien, Governor of Shantung, who degraded the unfortunate officer in command and compensated the families of the defunct Boxers.

This official, Yü-Hsien, took such a prominent part in the rising, that it is necessary here briefly to sketch his career.

Originally the Prefect of a small town in the South-West of Shantung, where he is supposed to have organized and been the originator of the Ch'uan-I-Ho, he rose with great rapidity and was appointed Governor of the rich and populous Province of Shantung.

On December 26th his ill-deeds had become so notorious that, as a result of strong pressure and repeated protests on the part of all the Foreign representatives in Peking, Yü-Hsien was removed from his post, and General Yuan-shi-K'ai, a man of very different type, appointed in his place. Had the latter official, now President of the Chinese Republic, been given the free hand he undoubtedly desired (and deserved) he would have exterminated the Society root and branch.

Yü-Hsien, although deposed, was honoured by an audience with the Empress, had the Character for "Happiness" added to his titles, and was appointed Governor of the Province of Shansi, which lies immediately to the West of Peking. Here he once more launched on a career of persecution and tyranny, culminating a few months later in the murder of innocent and unoffending British missionaries and their wives and children. It must not be thought that this appointment of Yü-Hsien met with no opposition from the diplomatic body, the protests were immediate and pressed home; but, in the mood of the Empress Dowager and the Chinese Government, I have mentioned, nothing short of the threat of force, followed by the presence of a considerable fleet at Taku, would have had any effect, and this the British Government, for the reasons I have stated, were loath to sanction. Matters were so serious, however, in the middle of March that the Ministers of Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy, suggested to their respective Governments by telegram that a naval demonstration should be made in North Chinese waters.

The reply I received, as published in the Blue Book, was "It will be desirable only to resort to naval action when other means of pressure are exhausted." The French Minister for Foreign Affairs, however, stated to the British Ambassador in Paris "that it would be difficult to avoid acting upon a suggestion which the representatives of five Powers, who ought to be good judges, considered advisable," and on the 23rd the United States sent one ship of war to Taku, Italy two, the Germans with characteristic thoroughness, moved up their entire squadron, and at my earnest request two ships, the "Hermione" and the "Brisk" were sent, with the result that the Chinese military

authorities were ordered to take energetic action. General Mei, in conjunction with the local officials, attacked the Boxer strongholds and killed many of their number, but the movement had gone too far, and the constant drilling of Boxers in the vicinity of Peking and Tientsin continued.

On April 16th a satisfactory edict was obtained from the Throne denouncing the Boxers by name, matters quieted down, and the men of war shortly afterwards left Taku.

Still the drilling of the Boxers continued, and it was noticeable that any officials, military or civil, no matter how highly placed, who attempted to deal effectively with the trouble, were quickly made aware that their actions were not approved of by the Throne; so the movement spread daily in intensity. During the month of May the disorders increased and continued—vigorous protests were made by the Foreign Ministers, but protests without a backing of force were in those days of no avail whatever. On May 17th a Guard of Royal Marines landed at Tientsin, was under orders to return to its ship, but was, at my telegraphic request, made direct to the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Edward Seymour, ordered to remain. It is hardly necessary for me to say that throughout all these troubles Sir Edward Seymour supported me most loyally and energetically, and with the utmost promptitude.

In the previous month I had written a despatch to Her Majesty's Government, in which I gave it as my opinion that several days of heavy rainfall would do more to put an end to the Boxer disorders, than anything else. This statement has been much criticised, but I venture to think that it was not far from correct. The Rev. A. H. Smith, an American missionary, and one of the greatest living authorities on China and the Chinese, and the author of two standard works: "Chinese Characteristics" and "Village Life in China," states in his book, "China in Convulsions," dealing with the Boxer Rising: "There were special causes for a popular rising during the spring. The drought was great and practically universal. For the first time since the terrible famine in 1878 no winter wheat to speak of had been planted in any part of Northern China. Under the most favourable circumstances the spring rains are almost invariably insufficient, but that year they were almost wholly lacking. The ground was baked so hard that no crops could be put in, and at such times the idle, restless population are ready for any mischief."

In a book, entitled "Martyred Missionaries," published by the China Inland Mission, giving an account of the rising, and containing the terribly pathetic story of the deaths of these martyrs, occurs the following passage:—

"Local circumstances at that time made the Shansi people specially ready to respond to Governor Yü-Hsien's plans. There had been a prolonged season of drought, and the usual crops had failed; the people, instead of being busily engaged on their farms, were idle, hungry, and discontented. They were face to face with a serious famine. Heaven must be displeased, for if not, why was the rain withheld."

In Northern Shansi a native pastor gave evidence, all the English missionaries having been killed :—

"The trouble first arose because of the excessive drought. In Hun Yuan prayers and processions were increasing, and the foreigners were reported to sweep away the approaching clouds with a yellow paper broom."

Again, in the metropolitan Province of Chi-li, the Rev. C. Green, who escaped after undergoing terrible adventures and trials, states, "The continued drought in the Province caused much unrest amongst the people and no doubt tended to accelerate and strengthen the anti-foreign movement; there had practically been no rain since July of last year, the autumn crops had been a failure, the wheat for this year's spring could not be sown, so there were no spring crops; now the time for sowing the autumn crops was fast passing away, and still no rain. The anti-foreign party, taking advantage of this, issued broadcast inflammatory accusations, saying there would be no rain until all foreigners had been exterminated."

It will thus be seen that the absence of rain was a very important factor in the troubles which ensued.

Towards the end of May matters became very serious indeed, and the Boxers revelled in murder and pillage up to the very gates of Peking, and still the Empress Dowager and her Ministers did nothing; and here it should be clearly understood that the movement could have been completely crushed in a summer's day, had those in power but said the word, because the Boxers were, with the exception of a few fanatics, a mob of peasantry armed only with swords and pikes. But the Empress hesitated, for the Boxers carried on their banners the legend, "Support the Dynasty and exterminate the Foreigners." On May 27th, Her Majesty's Government telegraphed that if the lives of Europeans were in danger I had permission to call for guards of Royal Marines, and H.M.S. "Orlando" and "Algerine" were at once ordered to Taku by Admiral Seymour. On the following day it was unanimously decided by the Foreign representatives to send for guards for the various Legations, but some time was lost owing to the refusal of the Chinese Government to permit this. On the 30th I telegraphed: "The situation is one of extreme gravity, people very excited, troops mutinous; without doubt it is now a question of life and property being in danger here." Certain members of the Court and Government, of whom I will speak later, now became alarmed, and realized the folly—indeed, they had seen it all along—of the policy which the Empress Dowager was pursuing in encouraging the Boxers, whose pretensions to invulnerability and the possession of supernatural powers had in numberless instances been proved to be a myth. By the influence of these high officials, notably the Manchu statesman, Jung-Lu, the prohibition to bring up guards was withdrawn, and on May 31st the following troops arrived:—British, 3 officers and 79 men; French, 3 officers and 75 men; Americans, 3 officers and 53 men; Russian, 2 officers and 79 men; Italian, 1 officer and 28 men; Japanese, 1 officer and 24 men; the German and Austrian detachments, consisting

of 1 officer and 51 men and 5 officers and 30 men did not arrive until June 3rd—the total consisted of 19 officers and 419 men. I had asked for 3 officers and 100 men, but owing to Russian objections the number was reduced in Tientsin to 79, the same number as the Russian detachment. The French and Italians detached 2 officers and 41 men to guard the Peitang Cathedral.

In the Cathedral precincts resided the French Roman Catholic Bishop Favier, a renowned Sinologue who had passed practically the whole of his life in China, many priests and Christian converts, nuns and sisters of mercy. The defence made here was most heroic, the defenders losing heavily but holding out with conspicuous gallantry until relieved the day after the entry of the allied troops.

It was owing to the information given to the French Representative in Peking by Bishop Favier, obtained from his missionaries and converts all over North China, which enabled the French Legation to strike the first notes of serious alarm, and caused the French Government, as I have shown, to realize the seriousness of the rising before the Governments of other Powers.

On May 31st, as the sun was setting, the troops I have mentioned marched in at the Chien Men, or a great central gate of the Tartar City, and everybody turned out to see the entry, which was most impressive, and had a very marked effect upon the populace, whose demeanour changed suddenly from truculence to something approaching humility.

But, unfortunately, the favour shown to the Boxers in the past, and still shown by the Empress Dowager and her fanatical advisers, notably Prince Tuan, the Kansu General Tung-Fu-Hsiang, Yü-Hsien, Li-Ping-Heng and others, only cowed these gentry for a short time, and within a week the outrages became more audacious than ever.

It is to be noted that Bishop Favier, who called upon me both before and after the arrival of the guards, and the late Sir R. Hart, whom I saw frequently, as well as other foreigners, who from long experience might be expected to know the Chinese well, unanimously expressed their opinion to me that once the guards arrived the Empress Dowager would see the error of her ways and matters would quiet down.

In the book "China in Convulsions," which I have already mentioned, the author writes :—

"The indisputable fact that men who knew so much about China did not see the Boxer movement on the horizon nor yet apprehended it when it was at their doors, is one of the most remarkable psychological facts of modern times, but it is, nevertheless, a fact."

It is hardly to be wondered then that the foreign representatives who were merely birds of passage, and upon whom so much obloquy was subsequently hurled by writers who were wise after the event, failed to presage the terrible events which actually occurred.

The first two weeks of the month of June were characterized by scenes of the wildest anarchy and bloodshed in the immediate neighbourhood, and, indeed, under the very walls of Peking. Christian

establishments were burnt down; the summer residence of the British Minister and his staff, just completed at the cost of £10,000, was similarly treated; two devoted English missionaries of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel were murdered near the Peking—Tientsin line, and the anti-foreign party at Court, particularly those whose names I have mentioned, seemed to have obtained a complete ascendancy over the Empress Dowager. The Manchu Prince Ching, President of the Tsung-li-Yamen, who might be looked upon as the head of the pro-foreign party, had evidently given up all hope of stemming the wave of anarchy; with him were known to be the two Ministers of the Tsung-li-Yamen, both Chinamen, Yuan Chang and Hsu-Ching-Cheng, and, fortunately for us, though at the time we did not know it, the Manchu statesman, Jung-Lu.

Repeated telegrams were sent by all the Foreign representatives to their respective Governments during these two weeks, and on the 8th I received one from Her Majesty's Government saying that my discretion must be quite unfettered, and I was to take precisely what measures I thought expedient.

On June 10th, a hastily organized expedition under Sir Edward Seymour, numbering some 2,000 men, of whom 900 were British, left Tientsin by train for Peking. This mixed force consisted of men of eight different nationalities, whose battleships and cruisers were then lying in the Taku roads. It is interesting to note that even at this juncture the Russian Government, through Count Mouravieff, complained that we were sending up more men to the relief than they were! (Blue Book, China No. 3, 1900.) The "Entente Cordiale" with France, followed by a similarly cordial understanding with Russia, has most fortunately put an end to the insensate rivalry and jealousy which in those days obtained between England and Russia generally, but particularly in the Far East. Admiral Seymour's expedition was, on June 20th, attacked by Imperial troops on all sides. The railway line was torn up by Boxers, and the allied troops had to fight their way back to Tientsin with a loss of 62 killed and 212 wounded.

To return to Peking. On June 16th the Boxers, who had confined their pillage and massacre outside the walls of the Tartar City, poured through the Hata Men, which had been conveniently left open; they charged down the great street which runs north and south from this gate, burning and slaying as they went. In crossing the east end of Legation Street they passed barricades manned by Italians and Japanese, who opened a smart fire, which effectually put an end to the claims of invulnerability which these fanatics had set up. On June 12th the telegraph line to Tientsin was cut, but I succeeded in getting two telegrams through to London, via Kiachta; these were the last I was able to send, because on the 14th that line, too, was destroyed, and we were thus completely isolated from the outside world, except for a few notes which in the next few days came through sewn in Chinamen's clothing or secreted in the soles of their boots. The last of these notes I received was from Admiral Seymour, written at a place called Langfang, on the Peking—Tientsin line, about two-thirds of the way from the latter town. This little letter told of the line being

destroyed and other troubles, but was written in a strain of cheery optimism which the gallant Admiral must have been far from feeling, and ended with the prophetic words: "All will yet be well."

The Boxers who on the 16th had been allowed to enter the Tartar City spread themselves over the greater part of the same, killing all the Christian converts they could find, burning and sacking their chapels and houses, and even destroying Chinese shops where foreign articles were for sale. They attacked and burnt the Tung-Tang, or East Cathedral, committing the most terrible atrocities.

I have mentioned the names of the Prince and high officers of State who were opposed to the mad policy of murder and pillage which was then in full swing, and had for its object the extermination of all foreigners. It may be as well to mention here the names of those who were in favour of this policy, which, it must be remembered, was considered a highly patriotic one, and therefore very popular with Chinese and Manchus alike. Prince Tuan was son of Prince Tün, the fifth son of the Emperor Tao-Kuang. He was a rough and imperfectly educated man of violent manners and ambitious character; behind him were ranged most of the other Imperial Princes and nobility.

Tung-Fu-Hsiang was a General who had acquired a great reputation with the Empress Dowager, having suppressed a Mahommedan rebellion in the wild Province of Kansu with ruthless severity. A rough and boorish soldier much disliked by the Manchus at Court on account of his bad manners, but feared by reason of his influence with the Empress, he was our most implacable enemy during the siege, and his Kansu braves gave us considerable trouble. Three other high officials, Kang-Yi, Chao-Shu-Ch'iao, and Li-Ping Heng were also bitterly opposed to any policy which did not include the utter extermination of all foreigners. Yü-Hsien I have already mentioned; he was certainly the most fanatical and cruel of all. There was one other who was many times heard to say that he greatly wished to possess a mat made out of a foreigner's skin! This man's house was in the Legation quarter; on June 17th he was made prisoner whilst trying to escape, French marines being his captors. Unfortunately he was liberated by orders of the French Minister, who, however, did not then know what a prize we held. This bloodthirsty individual's name was Hsü Tung, a great favourite with the Empress Dowager, and his temporary incarceration amongst the "foreign devils" gave Her Majesty much uneasiness.

On June 18th, when wreaths of smoke from the burning Chinese houses drifted over the Legation quarter, and the sound of falling timbers, the crackling of flames and the cries of the infuriated Boxer mob were to be heard, I received a message to say that a deputation from the Chinese Government wished to see me. The deputation was ushered into the dining room of the Legation; it consisted of two members of the Tsung-li-Yamen, Hsu-Ching-Cheng and Yuan Chang, old friends of mine, and a high official, evidently a Manchu, of the name of

Li-Shan, whose appearance and manners were exceedingly prepossessing. Neither Mr. Cockburn, Chinese Secretary of Legation, nor I had ever seen him before, but it was evident that he came as specially representing the Empress Dowager, to convey to her the result of our interview. After compliments, Hsu-Ching-Cheng, who was spokesman, said that the deputation had come direct from Her Majesty with a special message to Lady MacDonald, expressing regret that, owing to the misdeeds of the local banditti and Boxers, who had rendered the surrounding country unsafe, the members of the British Legation, especially the ladies, had been unable to go out to their summer residences in the western hills. This would, however, soon be rectified and the Boxers dealt with as they deserved. As not only the surrounding country but Peking itself was in a state of the wildest anarchy I refrained from any comment, beyond saying that the Empress Dowager's message should be conveyed to Lady MacDonald. I pointed out to the members of the Tsung-li-Yamen, however, that what I and all the Foreign representatives had incessantly warned the Chinese Government against, was now taking place. I did not labour this point, because it was already threadbare, and also because it was evident that the Empress's solicitude for the ladies of the Legations was only a prelude to questions of greater gravity. After a pause, during which the members of the deputation eyed each other furtively, Hsu-Ching-Cheng said that Her Majesty was anxious to hear from me personally what exactly were the intentions of my Government towards the Manchu Dynasty, and with regard to China generally—did we mean to partition it with the other Powers? I explained that I had been sent to Peking to maintain the most friendly relations with the present members of the Manchu Dynasty, and that my Government had no intention whatever of partitioning China. I added that these were the instructions I had received, and this the policy of my Government when I last had had an opportunity of communicating with them, but as the Chinese Government had permitted the Boxers to tear up the railway line and cut all the telegraph wires and thus completely isolate me from my Government, I could not say what their present intentions were, but I should think that they would at any rate hear with great displeasure the state of anarchy into which the capital had been allowed to drift. They again questioned me with regard to the annexation policy, and I again assured them, and particularly Li-Shan, that until these troubles had been allowed to come to pass Her Majesty's Government had been imbued with the friendliest feelings towards China and towards the Dynasty. My assurances were received with evident satisfaction by the two Chinese members, who said to Li-Shan, "Now you have it from the Minister himself." They then asked whether I could give similar assurances on behalf of the other Powers. I said that of course I could not do so personally, but suggested that they should go and ascertain for themselves. After some further discussion as to the foreign reinforcements under Admiral Seymour, then on their way up to Peking, the Mandarins left, apparently well pleased, assuring me that what I had said with regard to the intentions of my Government would be conveyed to the Empress. I never saw these officials again, but I heard from

my Russian and American colleagues that they had received visits from them after they had left me; similar questions had been put to them and similar answers given.

Late in the afternoon of the following day, June 19th, a day memorable in the annals of this extraordinary uprising, all the Foreign representatives received despatches dated "Four hours after noon on the 23rd day of the 5th moon, twenty-third year of the Emperor Kuang-Hsü, *i.e.*, 4 p.m., 19th June, 1900." These despatches, which were identic, were signed with the seal of the Board of Foreign Affairs, and stated that "news had been received from Tientsin that on the 17th June the naval Commanders-in-Chief of the foreign Powers had demanded the surrender of the Taku forts, and stated that if the forts were not given up they would be occupied by force." The despatch went on to say that "this news had been received with the greatest astonishment by the Chinese Government, that in spite of the friendly relations hitherto existing between China and the foreign Powers, the foreign Admirals should suddenly talk of occupying the Taku forts, shows a deliberate intention to break the peace and to commit an act of hostility. The Tsung-li-Yamen, therefore, request that, within 24 hours, Your Excellency will start, accompanied by the Legation guards, who must be kept under proper control, and proceed to Tientsin."¹

If the news was received with astonishment by the Chinese Government it was received with something like stupefaction by most of the representatives of the Powers. A meeting was at once called at the French Legation; on the way there I met my Russian colleague, who expressed himself very satisfied with the Note, and said that the Chinese Government had at last come to their senses, and were behaving in a manner which was "quite correct" in handing us our passports and conducting us to a place of safety. Before we arrived at the meeting I had convinced my colleague that if the information about the Taku forts was true, in which case the Chinese Government were within their rights in sending us this ultimatum, it would be quite impossible for them to conduct hundreds of women and children and thousands of Christian converts through a province swarming with Boxers, mutinous soldiers, and maddened peasantry, who had sworn to exterminate all foreigners. If the news about the forts was untrue, which I personally thought was the case, it was only a ruse to entice us out from the security of our Legations and massacre us in the open. Six years later, when I was Ambassador in Tokio, I had an interesting conversation with a son of Prince Ching, who was passing through Japan; he told me that his father and all the members of the pro-foreign party were immensely relieved when we remained in our Legations, for the Empress and the so-called patriotic party were so infuriated with the attack on the Taku forts, that it would have been quite impossible for his father, or Jung-Lu, to protect us on our journey to Tientsin.

At the meeting of the diplomatic body held on the night of the 19th, a letter was written to the Chinese Government requesting an

¹ An escort and transport were promised.

interview with Prince Ching and Prince Tuan at 9 o'clock on the following morning, 20th June, 1900.

Shortly before the hour named the diplomatic representatives again met and waited for the Government's reply, which, as most of us expected, never came. It was at this meeting that the incident took place which led to the death of the German Representative. What happened on that occasion has often been recounted by those who were not present. It may here be useful to state the facts by one who was. The German Minister, Baron von Ketteler, was a very capable diplomat, and a most courageous, straightforward, and charming man. At the meeting he exhibited considerable impatience at no reply having been received from the Yamen, and stated his intention, if an answer did not come soon, of going there and personally seeing whether it would not be possible to obtain an audience of some of the Ministers, who might be present.

It was pointed out to him that no Ministers would be present because no reply had been sent, and the Russian representative suggested that, as the Yamen was some distance outside our barricades it might be dangerous to proceed through streets crowded with Boxers and soldiery. To this the German Minister replied that he had sent his Secretary the day before, and he had not been molested in any way. "That being the case," said the Russian Representative, "why not send your Secretary now?" Baron von Ketteler, who was sitting next to me, thought for a moment and said: "A good idea, I will do so."

He then left the room and the meeting broke up. Arrived at his own Legation he must have changed his mind, because, as afterwards transpired, he ordered his official chair, and followed by his Secretary in another, passed through our barricades on his way to the Yamen. When about half way he was shot by a soldier in uniform and killed on the spot. The Secretary, though desperately wounded, succeeded in making his way back to the Legation quarter, and some two hours afterwards was carried into my study, where he remained for the remainder of the siege. His wound was at first thought to be mortal, but he ultimately recovered. I am convinced that Baron von Ketteler would not have risked his life, and still less his Secretary's, for such a small matter, had he thought that there was any real danger.

The report of the Minister's murder was brought to me some three hours later by Captain Strouts, in command of the British detachment, and I was terribly shocked and grieved, for the Baron and I had been close friends ever since he had been appointed to Peking, and also years before in Berlin. It was evident that now the Empress Dowager had made up her mind to throw in her lot with the anti-foreign party, and that Prince Tuan and his following were entirely in the ascendancy.

It will be remembered that at the interview I had on the morning of the 18th inst. with the two Chinese Ministers—Hsu-Ching-Cheng and Yuan-Chang, and the Empress Dowager's special envoy Li-Shan—I had at their request empowered them to inform the Empress that my last instructions from my Government were to maintain the friendliest relations with the Chinese Government, and also that I was sure England had no intention of interfering with the Dynasty in any way.

If these unfortunate men carried back to the Empress Dowager the message they had asked me to entrust them with, the delivery of the same most probably synchronized with the arrival at the Palace of the news of the taking of the Taku forts. The fact that they brought back to their terrible mistress solemn assurances of goodwill from the diplomatic Representatives of the Powers, at the very time the naval commanders of these Powers were battering down the fortified sea gates of her Capital was not calculated to put the "old Buddha," as she was called by her immediate entourage, in a good temper. However that may be, Hsu-Ching-Cheng and Yuan Chang were both executed not many days afterwards by her orders, and Li-Shan had his head struck off by orders of Prince Tuan. He was a very good-looking man, and the proceeding, it is said, annoyed the Empress very much. In a book entitled "China under the Empress Dowager," by Messrs. Backhouse and Bland, one of the most fascinating works ever written on things Chinese, a chapter entitled "In Memory of Two Brave Men" is devoted to the last days of these Chinese statesmen, executed because they had the temerity to point out to their Imperial Mistress the wicked folly of her ways and policy.

There is no doubt but that these boldly faced certain death in an endeavour to save their country from ruin. With perfect calm and a fine courage "they consummated their duty." I deem it a privilege to have been on terms of friendship with such men.

Immediately the death of the German Minister became known it was clear that we had a different foe to deal with, and preparations were made to defend the Legations in real earnest. A plan which had been sketched out previously by the commandants of the Legation guards was immediately put into execution, all barricades were hastily strengthened and outlying pickets withdrawn inside the Legation walls, and a barricade; a portion of which, I recollect, consisted of Her Majesty's Office of Works' best garden roller, was hurriedly commenced in front of the main gate. All women and children were ordered into the British Legation, which had been, by the decision of the eight commandants above mentioned, selected as the final rallying place in case events should turn out really desperate, which, however, no one believed, convinced that at the last moment the Empress Dowager would see the error of her ways. Our Legation was chosen, not because it was less exposed than the others, but because it was the largest and most compact, and contained by far the greatest number of solid buildings. The number of British diplomatic and consular staff who occupied these buildings in normal times was between 30 and 40. During these two months of storm and stress the number of those who here sought, and obtained, shelter under the shadow of the British flag amounted to 883, of these 223 were women and children. The student interpreters gave up their quarters and slept in the open reception halls; most of the Staff also gave up their houses; the Second Secretary's house was handed over to the Russian Legation and Bank; the Accountant's was handed over to the members of the French Legation and their wives and families; the ladies of the American Legation occupied the doctors' quarters, and one block of the students'



rooms was given over to the I.M. Custom; 15 ladies were accommodated in the ballroom of the Minister's house; 12 others lived in the smoking room; two families occupied the billiard room, whilst many missionaries slept in the corridors. The Belgian, Japanese and Italian Ministers and their families, together with the widowed Baroness Ketteler, were also accommodated in the Minister's house. In all, 78 Europeans slept in this building, which usually accommodated a dozen. The Legation chapel was occupied by the American missionaries and their wives, the fives court was a hospital for any infectious diseases which might occur, the chancery and my study were converted into hospitals for the wounded, the theatre into a barracks for our marines, and the bowling alley formed the resting place for waifs and strays. It was a good thing that Her Majesty's Office of Works had provided the British Mission in China with such commodious quarters.

The afternoon of the 20th dragged slowly on and the shadows had begun to lengthen. There was an ominous stillness, and amongst the charred and blackened ruins which the Boxers had left to the north of the Legations, and in the houses beyond them, not a living soul was to be seen. It will be remembered that our ultimatum expired "four hours after noon." A few minutes before that time, that is 4 p.m., I strolled out of the main gate together with the constable of the Legation, an ex-member of the "A" Division of Police—we stood under the trees looking up towards where the sun glinted on the yellow-tiled coping of the Imperial City wall, and lit up the blackened ruins in the "Street of Permanent Peace," as the street running north of the British Legation is called. It must have been on the stroke of the hour when, "whiz," the almost forgotten sound, followed by another, and yet another, and then some summer leaves from the trees above fell slowly to the ground—then a bullet struck the coping of the canal a few inches from where I stood, and, with as much dignity as we could command, we walked back to the kindly shelter of the main gate.

The siege of the Legations had commenced in grim earnest, and we now had to deal with the armed forces of China and not with unarmed peasantry and Boxers. The above-mentioned shots, which were undoubtedly aimed at the constable and myself, were the prelude to a tremendous fire which was opened upon the Legation quarter from east, and north, and west. The houses and ruins I have mentioned bristled with the enemy's riflemen, and the air was full of the whistle and hum of bullets, which pattered on the great green-tiled roofs of the Legation buildings literally like hailstones. At first artillery did not join the chorus, indeed, it was not till the afternoon of the following day that the enemy brought up three or four Krupp field guns and fired at close range at the upper storeys of our buildings. They did a great deal of damage, but had they understood the effect of indirect fire and lobbed shells into us from two or three thousand yards, we should have suffered terribly.

At first there was, of course, a certain amount of panic, but gradually matters quieted down, and the ladies of the British Legation

busied themselves till late at night dividing up the Legation buildings I have mentioned amongst the refugees.

A general glance at the position held may here be useful.

The garrison were fighting literally with their "backs against a wall," in this instance, the wall being that of the Tartar City, 50 or 60 feet high, and 30 feet wide at the top.

The German and American Legations were the two which abutted on to this wall, a narrow street only dividing them and it. The line of defence on June 21st commenced on the east at the German Legation, and crossing Legation Street took in the French Legation, a compound of five or six acres containing the Minister's residence and those of his staff. The line then followed the wall of and included the Su Wang Fu, from there it crossed the canal, and took in the British Legation; going south it included the Russian and American Legations, finishing again at a point on the wall some 500 yards from where it commenced. In the defence the French Legation formed a sort of salient, open to close attack from the north and east, and also from the City wall and houses to the south-east. By the burning of the Customs quarter, the Su Wang Fu—generally called the Fu—became open to attack from the east; its north wall faced the enemy, its west side was covered by the British Legation. On the south of the Fu were situated the Spanish and Japanese Legations, which were included inside the lines of defence and never suffered from a direct attack. The British Legation was completely open to attack from the north and west. Abutting on the north face were the buildings, temples, examination halls, and library of the renowned Hanlin Yuan, or Hanlin College—commonly called "the Hanlin." On the west was the Imperial Carriage Park, consisting of an enclosure 12 acres in extent, with handsome trees and capacious storehouses roofed with Imperial yellow, in which were stored the Imperial sedan chairs and carriages. This Carriage Park was held throughout the siege by the enemy. It was noticeable that the yellow-tiled roofs of the storehouses, though they commanded the British Legation at close range, were never utilized by the enemy, possibly on account of their Imperial character. To the south of the Carriage Park and abutting on the west wall of the Legation, in some places actually built against this wall, were the houses which surrounded an open space some two acres in extent, which went by the name of the Mongol Market. As its name implies this enclosure was used by the Mongols, who visit Peking in the winter, as a market place for their wares. The south of the Legation was defended from direct attack by the Russian Legation, but between these two, which are some 50 yards apart, was a large collection of Chinese and Mongol houses. These houses were a source of grave danger to both Legations on account of the ease with which they could be set on fire; as the siege progressed they were levelled. South of the British Legation was situated the Russian, the north-eastern half of which was protected from direct attack by the British, but the north-west formed part of the Mongol Market, and was under fire from the north and west. Abutting on the west of this Legation were Chinese houses. The whole of the south wall faced Legation

Street, on the opposite side of which was the American Legation, which was separated from the Tartar City wall by a narrow street. It was commanded at close range from the wall.

It was evident from the commencement that to the general defence the most important points were the Tartar City wall and the Fu, the former because an enemy holding it commanded easily the entire circle of defence, and the Fu because its loss would render the British Legation almost untenable, and here were assembled, by the decision of the military commandants, the women and children, spare ammunition and provisions.

The day after the firing commenced I was waited upon by a number of missionaries, mostly American, who suggested the formation of committees for the proper organization of the life of the 800 souls within the Legation walls. I immediately fell in with their suggestions, and before many days everything was going on wheels. A food committee was established under the superintendence of one of my secretaries, now a Minister Plenipotentiary in the Diplomatic Service. Amongst his multifarious duties was to select the ponies and mules to be slaughtered daily for our sustenance. I shall never forgive him, however, for executing my best carriage mule the day we were relieved, and serving it up as soup, instead of a very inferior China racing pony belonging to himself, of which he was inordinately and quite unnecessarily proud. A water committee, to measure daily the depth of water in the five excellent wells in the Legation; a medical and sanitary committee, with a staff of sweepers; a bakery, and last but not least, a laundry. As may be imagined this laundry was a great joy, and, of course, to this was due the clean appearance of the besieged, which was much commented upon by the relieving troops. That it should have been carried through at all with insufficient accommodation, lack of appliances, amid incessant rifle and cannon fire, during which on more than one occasion the washermen were wounded, reflects great credit on the energy and resource of the head laundryman, an Englishman and a high official of the Imperial Maritime Customs.

On the morning of the 22nd it was reported to me that the garrisons of the various Legations were all falling back on the British, and on hurrying to the main gate I found this to be the case. Owing to a mistaken order carried from one detachment to another, the officer commanding the latter, who was considerably senior to the rest, had given the order for an abandonment of all the Legations, and a general retirement on the British. The other commandants remonstrated strongly, but owing to the seniority of the officer in question the retirement took place, and for the space of half an hour all Legations, excepting the British, were practically unoccupied and at the mercy of the Chinese. It was a critical moment, and my feelings may be imagined when I saw the detachments of the seven other Powers coming at the run, but in perfect order, the French, German, Austrian, Japanese, and Italians by the main gate, and a few moments later the Americans and Russians by the little south gate, and forming up

inside the British compound. This meant that the entire defences had been abandoned practically without firing a shot. When the full extent of the danger was known a hurried conference was held between the five Ministers of France, Russia, America, Japan, and Italy, Germany and Austria being represented by Secretaries, and I was asked, as having held combatant rank in the British Army, to take general command of the defence. This I at once consented to do. I would take this opportunity of stating that during the remainder of the siege I was throughout supported with the greatest loyalty and willingness by my colleagues, and also by the commanders of the various detachments. The fighting which took place during the siege was undoubtedly severe but of a very simple character, and consisted entirely of house to house fighting, barricade against barricade, and loophole against loophole. My military knowledge was therefore of no great advantage, but the fact that I had been a soldier acted as a species of link with the young commanders of detachments, who obeyed my orders, though they often hesitated to carry out the wishes of their own Ministers. On the other hand, such diplomatic training as I possessed was constantly brought into play in smoothing down the friction which took place between various nationalities, especially in the matter of supplying reinforcements to each other. The various posts were re-occupied by their detachments; unfortunately it was found that the enemy had discovered the absence of any defenders in the Italian Legation, and had set it on fire. The Italian detachment was ordered to occupy, together with the Japanese, the Su Wang Fu already mentioned. This Palace, or Fu, subsequently formed one of the principal parts of the defence; it consisted of an enclosure of some 12 to 14 acres, surrounded by walls 20 feet high. Inside were some 30 buildings of various sizes, beautiful gardens, houses, pavilions, rockeries, summer-house, etc. The garrison of the Fu now consisted of the Japanese detachment, 1 officer and 23 men, besides 39 volunteers, most of whom had served in the Army; the Italian detachment of 1 officer and 8 men, the whole under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Shiba, Japanese Military Attaché, now General Shiba, C.B., K.C.V.O.

Late in the afternoon of the 22nd the enemy developed their attack from the west, opening fire from the Mongol Market, the houses surrounding which had been loopholed. A private of the Royal Marines was shot dead on the west wall of the Legation whilst returning the enemy's fire. At the commencement of the siege our men had not learnt the art of barricade fighting, and exposed themselves needlessly; as time wore on the deadly fire from our loopholes would have done credit to the crack shots who figure in the novels of Fenimore Cooper. I had observed this particular Marine on the west wall, and had cautioned him only half an hour before. Some days afterwards the sergeant of the Marines in the north stable picket shot a man through the head who was peering round a wall some 100 yards distant; as he fell two of his comrades jumped out to pick him up, but were instantly shot down by the same sergeant.

I have spoken of the renowned Hanlin Yuan, or Hanlin College, situated due north and abutting on to the British Legation; Captain

Strouts, the Commandant of the British detachment, to whom I had handed over entire military charge of the Legation, spoke to me several times of the great danger in which we should be placed were the enemy to set fire to these buildings, and suggested that we should either destroy or occupy them. This would have been a difficult task, owing to their extent; furthermore, I was assured by the numerous authorities on China now gathered in the Legation that it would be quite impossible for a nation of "literati" to destroy a library, full of the most priceless books and manuscripts, which was held semi-sacred throughout the length and breadth of China. Nevertheless, the very first day the wind was in the north the enemy fired the Hanlin; no greater proof can be given of the insensate nature of the attack upon us than this. The authorities on China above mentioned, now said that we might be prepared for anything. As soon as it was ascertained what had happened the fire bell rang, and all hands were quickly at work endeavouring to extinguish the flames. A stubborn fight was maintained until late in the afternoon, when the conflagration was subdued, but not before more than three-quarters of the temples, examination halls and libraries forming the Hanlin College had been destroyed; there remained only one building entirely intact, the heavy wooden eaves of which overshadowed and almost touched the students' quarters in the Legation. Had this building caught fire we should most probably have been doomed, but owing to the splendid efforts of the garrison, men, women, and children joining in the work of passing water to the engines, and particularly to a providential change of the wind to another quarter, the danger was averted. Orders were given to save as many of the valuable books in the Hanlin as possible. The greater part had, however, been destroyed either by fire or water, but amongst those saved were several sections of the famous Chinese Encyclopædia compiled in the reign of Jung Lo, a work which ranks easily as the biggest literary undertaking in the world, having had over 2,000 scholars engaged in its compilation; it contains a total of 917,480 pages, containing 366,992,000 characters. For the next five days the enemy endeavoured to burn out the garrison by setting fire to the native houses, which were in some places built against the Legation walls. A daily and hourly fight took place, resulting in a complete victory for the defenders. This was kept up until all the native houses had been destroyed. In the course of one of these attempts to burn us out, it was decided to make a sortie. A hole was made in the Legation wall, and a party of Royal Marines, headed by Captain Halliday, dashed into the burning buildings and cleared them at the point of the bayonet, unfortunately, he was almost immediately very severely wounded by a rifle shot through the shoulder and lung; notwithstanding the severe nature of his wound, Captain Halliday shot three of his assailants dead, and, refusing all aid, walked to the hospital, a distance of some 200 yards. For his gallant conduct on this occasion Captain Halliday was awarded the Victoria Cross. Captain Strouts now took command of the sortie, and inflicted considerable loss on the enemy, killing 34 in one house. One Marine was mortally wounded, and others slightly, in this affair, which had a most excellent

effect, as it destroyed some 200 yards of cover which the enemy possessed, and drove them back to their barricades situated at the same distance from the Legation wall.

For the next few days fighting was incessant in every part of the defence, and casualties averaging three to four killed and six to seven wounded occurred every day. The losses were the most heavy in the two places I have mentioned, the Fu and on the City wall. The former place was selected for the heaviest onslaught, it is believed, and I think rightly so, because it sheltered the Christian converts, against whom the attacking forces of Tung-fu Hsiang seemed to hold a particular grudge. The Fu was held mainly by Japanese and Italians, but a force of British Marines and volunteers was kept there permanently and fought and died side by side with them. The entire force here was under the command of Colonel Shiba, whose resourcefulness and brilliant leading were the admiration of all.

Shortly after 4 p.m. on June 25th great excitement was caused in the British Legation by the appearance of a small group of men carrying a board on the north bridge, and word was passed to the north defences and to the Fu to cease fire. By means of glasses from the north stable the board was made out to be an Imperial decree stating that the Chinese troops were sent to protect the Legations and stop the firing, and adding that a despatch would be handed to the Legations on the north bridge. One of the garrison, a Chinaman, volunteered to go out and receive the despatch; he was furnished with a notice board with black characters painted thereon, to the effect that the Imperial decree had been understood and that the despatch would be received. Wearing an official hat the messenger sallied out, watched by an expectant garrison. On arrival at the bridge he was received with cries of "lai, la" (he has come), whereupon his courage seemed to fail him, and, dropping the board, he retreated hurriedly back to the Legation, arriving unhurt. Two mandarins accompanied by soldiers appeared round the corner of the bridge and everybody hoped that communications with the enemy were about to be opened, but some dropping shots were heard and the mandarins and soldiers quickly disappeared. It was thought at the time that some too zealous sentries in the Fu had been unable to resist the temptation of shooting a mandarin, and had disobeyed orders, but I have subsequently ascertained that the shots were fired by Tung-fu Hsiang's soldiers at the party bearing the Imperial decree, and that one of the bearers was actually shot dead, the rest taking to flight. The board with the Imperial decree inscribed thereon remained for many days on the bridge, a curious commentary on the thousands of bullets which swept over it and pattered on the roofs and defences of the Legations.

The immediate effect, however, of this notice was a sounding of horns in the Imperial City, which was taken up all round the defence, and the firing instantly ceased, thus showing very clearly the complete command the *de facto* Government, whether Dowager Empress, Prince Tuan, or both, had over their troops. The lull in the firing was the signal for increased activity in the British Legation on the part of the fortification committee, and soon some hundreds of converts were

busily at work strengthening weak places and adding to the defences. Our advanced posts in the Hanlin entered into conversation with the Chinese soldiers. From the latter it was gathered that Yung Lu had ordered the "cease fire," and that a communication was coming from him to us, but it never came. The Empress Dowager, womanlike, had again changed her mind. In the very remarkable and interesting diary of His Excellency Ching Shan, which forms Chapter XVII. of Messrs. Bland and Backhouse's work, from which I have already quoted, occurs the following in reference to this incident:—"For three hours not a shot had been fired, but En Ming has just come to tell me that the situation has again changed, and that the 'old Buddha' has heard such good accounts of the defeat of the foreign relief force (Sir Edward Seymour) on its way to Peking, that she is once more determined to give the Boxers their head and 'to eat the flesh and sleep on the skins' of the foreign devils."

About midnight, Prince Tuan and the war party having presumably again got the upper hand, a tremendous fusillade was opened from all sides, but principally from north and north-west. This was the heaviest fire to which we had yet been subjected, and the bullets struck and ricocheted off the roofs of the various buildings like hailstones. This fire was kept up all through the night and very few of the garrison obtained any sleep.

June 26th.—In the morning the enemy, exhausted evidently by their efforts of the previous night, kept fairly quiet, allowing the worn-out garrison to snatch a few hours sleep. At 9.30 desultory sniping took place all round the defences.

Mr. Cockburn, Chinese Secretary, and Mr. Ker, Assistant Chinese Secretary, remained with the picket in the north stables the whole day, in case any message should come from the Imperial City, but in vain, and it was now evident that the war party was in the ascendant and that a policy of extermination of the Legations had been decided on. The enforced retreat of Admiral Seymour, and the successful blockade and bombardment of Tientsin, of which we were of course unaware, would be sufficient to account for this decision.

The above paragraph is taken verbatim from my report written November, 1900, and is strangely corroborated in His Excellency Ching Shan's diary, quoted above, published ten years later.

To-day was organized the last reserve, and the following order was posted on the Bell Tower: "In case of heavy firing all men with guns of any description who are not on special duty at the time are to assemble at once at the Bell Tower and there await the orders of Captain Strouts." Subsequent instructions were given that the assembly should only take place at the ringing of the "General Attack Bell." The Bell Tower was erected three years previously for the 1879 Jubilee of Queen Victoria, it had a fine bell; during the siege the tower was used for the posting up of notices.

At 6.30 p.m., June 28th, the "general attack" bell was sounded. The enemy had manned their loopholes in the Mongol Market, and opened a heavy musketry fire against the stable quarters. Suddenly

a gate at the north-west corner of the market flew open and two Krupp guns opened fire at the top storey of the stable quarters at a range of about 200 yards. Shell after shell crashed into the building, completely wrecking one window, shattering the barricade of the next, and driving the defenders out of the two upper rooms down below into the stable yard. Our men were not slow to return the fire, but having been driven out of the top storey of the building we could only bring a few rifles to bear; these, however, delivered an effective fire into the gateway, where through the smoke we could see the gunners at work. They, however, stuck to their guns, and it was only when it seemed as if the upper storey of the house must come down that the fire suddenly ceased. Two or three more rounds and the supporting walls would have given way, sending the heavy Chinese roof crashing into the storey below. The Chinese gunners must have suffered severely, for they were considerably exposed, and they never again attempted an artillery attack from the Mongol Market. The food supply suffered considerably during this bombardment, two mules and a pony having been killed by exploding shells; several of the men had narrow escapes, but only two were wounded. Together with a corporal of the Royal Marines I was on the upper storey of this house when the fight began; we made a record descent down the stairs and into the open.

July 1st.—The morning began quietly, but at 9 a.m. the enemy showed in force towards the Hata Gate, and creeping up the ramps, surprised the German guard, who retired down the reverse ramp, thereby exposing the rear of the American barricade, some 350 yards distant; the latter coming under a reverse fire also left the wall, and the situation for a time was very critical. The Chinese, however, did not realize, or at any rate did not avail themselves of the advantage they had gained. Russian reinforcements were at once sent to the Americans, and shortly afterwards they re-occupied the barricade, but the German barricade on the wall remained in the hands of the enemy to the end of the siege. Fortunately they were Prince Ching's men and gave little trouble. At 10.30 a further reinforcement, consisting of ten Marines under Captain Wray, was sent to relieve Captain Myers on the wall; seven Marines also went to the German Legation. Whilst this was going on a fierce attack was made on the French Legation. Mr. Wagner, one of the Customs Volunteers, was shot dead, and the garrison momentarily fell back to their last line of defence, leaving the German Legation in a somewhat exposed and critical position. Mr. von Below, German Chargé d'Affaires, sent word informing me of the state of affairs, and asking for reinforcements. Though the Kansu troops were busy attacking our north and north-west defences, Captain Strouts was able to detach six men and a corporal to the relief. The French had, in the meanwhile, advanced and re-occupied the Legation. The enemy had during the night built a formidable barricade in the north of the Carriage Park. To cope with this the Italian quick-firer was with some difficulty hauled up into the Student's Library, a large, upper storey room, and opened with deadly effect on the said barricade, completely silencing its fire.

At 2 p.m. Captain Wray, who, it will be remembered, had been sent to Captain Myer's assistance on the wall, was brought in with a Mauser bullet through the shoulder. I had given this officer orders whilst on the wall to commence a barricade some 200 yards east of the American one, in order to hold the enemy in check from the Hata Gate side, and to cover the rear of the Russo-American position. On advancing towards the spot indicated he and his small party were met by a severe cross fire from both the Hata and Chien Gates, the Mauser bullets from the latter just clearing the top of the American barricade in rear of the little party, and ricocheting along the wall. They nevertheless continued to construct the work. Captain Wray whilst directing his men was wounded; soon after one of his party was also shot down. The fire now became so hot that it was quite impossible to continue the work. Captain Wray therefore ordered a retreat, which was carried out with most exemplary coolness under a severe fire.

At 3.15, Lieutenant Paolini, the officer commanding the Italian detachment in the Fu, reported that the Krupp gun which had been firing all day had been moved nearer, and he thought by making a sortie he might be able to take it. He asked for assistance and also for permission to make the attempt. Thinking the proposition rather risky I consulted Colonel Shiba, in whose judgment of affairs in the Fu I had the fullest confidence, the Colonel replied that he thought the capture of the gun practicable, and that the sortie should be made. I accordingly gave orders that the desired reinforcements should be sent to Lieutenant Paolini, and that he might proceed. There was no time to discuss the details of the sortie, as the position taken up by this gun was evidently only temporary, but the general idea was for Lieutenant Paolini's party to attack from the west while Colonel Shiba attacked from the east. The reinforcements detached by Captain Strouts consisted of seven British Marines and five volunteers, the latter all student interpreters in the Consular Service. I ordered all firing to cease from the north stable picket and main gate, and waited results. The attacking party sallied out of the gate of the Fu, and going along the wall disappeared round the corner up a lane which forms the north boundary of the Fu. A heavy fusillade was heard and a Marine was seen staggering back waving his hand as if to attract attention; he had not gone very far when he fell. Three of the garrison instantly dashed out and brought him in. No man of the attacking party returned, and it was hoped that the attack had proved successful. This, however, proved not to be the case. It appeared that when the party turned into the lane they were met by a severe fire from a barricade some 40 yards in front, as well as from the left wall of the lane, which was only some 18 to 20 feet broad. Lieutenant Paolini was shot almost immediately whilst gallantly leading the party; two Italian Marines also fell, one shot dead, the other mortally wounded. The barricade, some 8 feet high, was a blaze of fire, as well as the side wall. The little party finding themselves in a death trap sought to escape through a hole or breach in the wall of the Fu, which was, however, only large enough to allow of two passing through at a time. It was whilst getting through this breach that two other men were wounded. Mr. Russell, a young student interpreter, with great

presence of mind, ordered his party of four volunteers to take cover behind a small heap of earth and bricks and wait till the regulars had got through the hole. As soon as all had passed through, the students dashed across the lane, one at a time; in doing this Mr. Townsend was shot in the shoulder and thigh, and fell. He was, however, pulled through the hole, still retaining possession of his rifle. Mr. Bristowe, another of the party, with great coolness and presence of mind, picked up and brought in the rifle belonging to the Italian Marine, whose dead body was lying in the lane. But for Mr. Russell's cool action the confusion and consequent loss amongst the attacking party would most certainly have been greater. A fight now took place over the dead body of the Marine, but the fire was so deadly in the lane that it was found impossible to recover it. Three of the enemy, tempted doubtless by the reward offered by the Chinese Government for the head of a foreigner, came out from behind their defences, but were instantly shot down by our advanced post on the other side of the canal.

Lieut.-Colonel Shiba came over to me at once and reported the ill-success of the sortie, for which he very generously took the entire blame. It was impossible to reconnoitre the ground outside our defences so that sorties were at all times very risky, and with so small a garrison only to be undertaken under very special circumstances. Colonel Shiba's party had also encountered an unexpected barricade, and been forced to retire. Had we been able to capture the enemy's gun and its ammunition the loss we suffered would have been small in comparison to the addition to our strength in the shape of even one piece of artillery.

On July 2nd the American Minister and the First Secretary of Legation, Mr. Squiers, an ex-officer of American cavalry, reported that the enemy had crept along the City wall from the west by means of a sap or zig-zag wall and had established themselves in a sort of tower from which they completely commanded our defences. A small force was immediately organized, consisting of British, American and Russian Marines, British predominating. As two of our Royal Marine officers were wounded, and the third, Captain Strouts, could not be spared from the Legation defences, the British Marines were in charge of a volunteer, Mr. Nigel Oliphant. The attack was delivered at 3 a.m., and was brilliantly successful, the enemy being driven from their tower with heavy loss. The above was one of the most successful operations of the siege, as it rendered our position on the wall, which had been precarious, practically secure. The enemy belonged to the commands of Tung-fu Hsiang and Prince Tuan, and received a salutary lesson, leaving many of their dead on the City wall. Our losses were three killed and six wounded. A return was furnished to me this day by the officers commanding detachments of the numbers of killed and wounded in the various detachments, the total amounted to 38 killed and 55 wounded, this included one officer killed and four wounded; all the wounds were severe, necessitating removal to hospital.

July 4th.—Several attempts had been made through the converts to communicate with the outside world, from whom we had received no news whatever since the commencement of the siege. Our messengers were at first let down over the Tartar City wall, or went through

the Canal sluice gate under the same. None had succeeded, so far as we knew, in piercing the strict cordon drawn round us; some had returned, baffled in their efforts, and some we feared had been killed. To-day a Shantung lad of about 14, well known to the American missionaries, volunteered to go. He took a letter from me to the British Consul sewed up in a piece of oilcloth, the package was flat, just an inch long and half an inch broad; instead of concealing it in the thick sole of his shoe or sewing it in to his clothes, hiding places with which the enemy had become well acquainted, he concealed it in a bowl of rice which he carried with him, after the fashion of some Chinese mendicants, so that when the charitable filled up his bowl of rice, they helped to conceal the urgent cry for help sent out by the besieged. As this was the first of our messengers who got through, his adventures are worth recounting. He left the water-gate at night, and, after having narrowly escaped capture, reached the south gate of the Chinese City; watching his opportunity he slipped through with some mendicants and gained the open country, working his way with great caution from village to village. As he was not certain of the road to Tientsin, and fearing to excite suspicion by making enquiries, he used, on arrival at a village, to join the children at play, and from them ascertain by degrees the general lie of the country, the names of adjoining villages, and the direction of Tientsin. The country was over-run with Boxers, and the villages were full of wounded, the result of the fighting with Admiral Seymour. When within sight of Tientsin he was commandeered by the enemy and made to work for them for over a week. At last he managed to escape, and slipping through the Allied sentries, which was certainly not the least risky part of the journey, he arrived at Tientsin on the 19th, five days after the taking of the Chinese city by the Allies. He wandered about for a couple of days before he met any European who could talk Chinese, but at last was fortunate enough to do so, and was at once taken to the British Consul, where he delivered his letter on the 21st inst. The 4th was the latest news received from Peking. He started back on the 22nd, and made the return journey in six days. The lad stated that when he arrived in the vicinity of Tientsin the enemy were in the greatest state of demoralization, flying in every direction and leaving their artillery in ditches and hidden in the millet fields. On the return journey he noticed that, finding they were not pursued, they had recovered most of their guns and were entrenching themselves at Peit'ang and other places. All the above we ascertained on the 28th inst., when the lad returned.

What this lad told us about the demoralization of the Chinese forces after the fall of Tientsin, and their subsequent recovery when they found they were not pursued, was made pretty clear to us by the behaviour of our own particular enemy, as will be seen later.

The letter which was received on the 21st by the British Consul was the facsimile of several others I had sent on previous occasions, the number of casualties only being altered from day to day. By July 4th we had 46 killed and about double that number severely wounded; of these, 8 civilians had been killed and 11 wounded. The slightly wounded were not entered in the returns, and only went to

hospital to have their wounds dressed and then returned to duty. The letter gave the relieving force all needful information with regard to the position we held, and also pointed out that the water, or sluice gate, through the Tartar City wall afforded the easiest means of entering the Legation quarter. The Tientsin correspondent of the *Times* reported the arrival of my letter in the following words. "This forlorn message seemed to bring men back from thoughts of petty intrigue to the duties of our nobler common humanity. Perhaps by the very absence of passion displayed, it re-awakened in men's minds the passionate thoughts their own dangers had dulled. The inactivity to which the forces here are condemned by lack of proper transport facilities seemed to grow suddenly maddening. In the meantime, the world thinks only of what weighs upon us like a nightmare here—the safety of the sorely-tried besieged; the 'common interest' which binds for a moment all the civilized nations of the earth."

July 5th.—At a European shop within our lines were found some Japanese fireworks. The light-hearted Japanese garrison amused themselves at night by a pyrotechnic display, but one of their number discovered that a very effective missile might be constructed by opening these fireworks and filling them with nails, scrap-iron, etc.; this was accordingly done, and they were used against the Chinese with considerable effect.

The enemy were during the morning very active in the Hanlin. A party under Captain Poole were out clearing the ruins. The fire became very severe and a retreat was ordered. Mr. David Oliphant, of my Consular staff, was busy cutting down a tree in company with the signalman of the "Orlando," and before he had time to obey the order was shot through the body and fell; the signalman stayed beside him under a shower of bullets until a stretcher was brought. The wound was mortal and the poor young fellow died and was buried the same afternoon. His loss was deeply felt by the whole British community, with whom he was an immense favourite; owing to his coolness under fire, and his knack of commanding men, I had appointed him in charge of the eastern defences of the Legation, and I felt his loss very keenly.

At midday a sentry in the upper storey of the students' quarters sent word that the enemy were at work on the Imperial City wall. I proceeded to where the man was, and recognized him as the bad character of the detachment, but, as so often is the case, one of the best shots and craftiest fighters. Looking through my glasses I saw that the beautiful yellow-tiled coping had been removed for a distance of 14 feet or so, and in some manner two guns had been placed in position, how, it was difficult to surmise, for the wall was 20 feet high, but only three feet thick. I also saw with great distinctness a military mandarin looking along the nearer of the two guns in the act of taking aim; dropping my glasses and seizing the Marine's rifle, I took a steady aim at the spot where I had seen the mandarin, and pressed the trigger; as I did so a small cloud of white smoke rose from the yellow-tiled battery, and a 14-lb. round shot tore through the wall some three

feet above my head, but to the right, doing no damage, but covering us all with bricks and mortar. It was a good shot for a smooth-bore at 300 yards, but I trust mine with a Martini-Henry was better.

This shot was the introduction to many more, all of which took effect on the buildings in the Legation, the Minister's house, and upper students' quarters being particularly favoured. The bombardment continued with intervals day and night for the next ten days, and over 150 round shot were fired into the Legation and Hanlin buildings alone. Curiously enough the only casualty resulting from this fire was an old Chinese woman, whose leg was broken by a round shot, from the effects of which she died. Some people were hurt by falling bricks, displaced by the shot, but no one seriously. There were, of course, some narrow escapes: the British Nordenfeldt, which was temporarily in action on the balcony of the nursery in the Minister's house, was struck by a round shot, which came through the wall and broke the wheel. The seaman who was working the gun escaped uninjured. Another struck a chimney high up, fell down the same and rolled out of the grate on to the floor occupied by three young ladies of the garrison; one crashed through the smoking room of the Minister's house and fell amongst the occupants, all ladies, but without touching any of them; another, after carrying away part of the coping of one of the bedrooms in the Minister's house, smashed its way through a thick wall in the escort quarters occupied by the Maritime Customs and fell between two ladies without touching either; and, lastly, one entered the big dining room through the north wall, and passing behind a large picture of the Queen without in any way injuring it, pierced the south wall of the dining room and fell into the little central garden where the children were playing at Boxers, barricades, sorties, and mimic warfare generally. Though the enemy's fire from these two batteries (for very shortly a second appeared some 30 yards to the right of the first, also furnished with two smooth-bores) was ineffective, the same cannot be said of our return fire, which seemed to annoy the enemy considerably; the invaluable Italian gun was got into position, and the second shell exploded in the westernmost battery, completely silencing one gun for the rest of the siege. The others continued to fire at intervals. Our rifle fire was so searching, however, that the gunners were unable to take aim. On the other hand, at that short range they could not help hitting some part of the Legation. The rifle practice, nevertheless, prevented the enemy from concentrating their fire on any one part of our defences and thus making a breach. Very shortly, owing doubtless to their losses at the guns, each embrasure was provided with an iron door, which opened at intervals, the muzzle of the gun was hastily protruded and the gun fired. The opening of these doors was a signal for a volley from our people, who had the range to a nicety.

After the siege was over the batteries were found to consist of very elaborate gun platforms, 20 feet by 16 feet, made of scaffolding strong enough to hold guns of a much heavier calibre than those actually used; they could accommodate from 30 to 40 men, and were made of timbers, nine inches in diameter, some 700 to 800 being employed to

make each battery. The construction of the platforms must have taken from a week to ten days and occupied from 30 to 40 workmen apiece. Ramps 12 feet broad led up to the platforms; a small gallery supported by scaffolding ran along to right and left of the batteries just below the yellow-tiled coping on top of the wall—this gallery was loopholed for musketry.

One day, July 3rd, when the whistle of bullets overhead was continuous, a pigeon, which had the temerity to cross the line of fire, came fluttering down, and was instantaneously snapped upon for the pot by eager hands. Almost immediately afterwards the Union Jack over the main gate slid slowly and silently down its staff and reposed in graceful folds at the bottom. Accompanied by two bluejackets I climbed up the little stair inside the gateway and found that the halyard had been severed by a bullet. One of the men, taking the cut end in his teeth, proceeded to swarm up the pole, but the fire was too hot. He was ordered down, and we all three crouched behind the parapet in consultation how we could circumvent the situation. Suddenly one of the men had an inspiration. Underneath where the huge flagstaff was fastened into the masonry just above the gateway was a small room. A hole was made in the floor of this and the masonry detached above. The flagstaff was slowly lowered until it reposed in all its stately length on the roadway beneath. The old flag, sadly but gloriously tattered, was then nailed to the mast, laboriously pushed back through the hole, and flag and staff majestically reappeared on the top of the arch. It took some 20 to 30 men to hoist this heavy staff through the hole, prominent amongst them were the American and French Ministers. The latter said to me, "Ha! ha! Sir Claude, you can always now say that the Representative of France helped to hoist the British flag." The speaker was M. Pichon, who, as Foreign Secretary, accompanied the French President to London last year. When the siege was over, the flag was sent as it was, nailed to its piece of staff, to Queen Victoria. It only reached Her Majesty a few weeks before her lamented death, and it was at once given a home in Windsor Castle, where it now is.

A Russian Consular student, whose mind had, it appeared, been somewhat affected by the strain of the siege, suddenly left the French barricade in Legation Street, and before he could be stopped advanced alone and unarmed towards the Chinese barricade, some 60 yards distant. The enemy allowed him to approach to within 10 yards and then shot him down. Instantly several Chinese soldiers rushed forward to seize the dead body, but the French sharpshooters were on the alert, and man after man of the enemy dropped, until 11 had paid the penalty of their temerity with their lives. During the night the body was removed by the Chinese. Since the commencement of the siege this was the third, and last, European whose dead body fell into Chinese hands.

There were now, July 7th, only 14 shells remaining for the Italian quick-firer, so this gun was only used when the case was urgent. The armourer of H.M.S. "Orlando," with considerable ingenuity, devised a new cartridge for the same. Taking one of the empty copper cases,

most of which had been converted into playthings by the children, but which were now collected, he cast some conical solid shot made from pewter vessels, teapots, candlesticks, etc., which had been found in the neighbouring houses, the charge consisted of pebble powder taken from the Russian shells, which had been fished up from a well where they had been thrown the day all the Legations were temporarily abandoned, the difficulty was the percussion cap; this was surmounted by removing the cap end of a .45 revolver cartridge, which exactly fitted the hole made in the copper case by the removal of the original percussion cap. One of these projectiles was used experimentally in the Italian gun and answered admirably. The shot being solid pewter and weighing more than the old shell, the shooting was not so accurate, neither was the effect of the solid shot so good as the explosive shell, but as a makeshift it was excellent. As soon as the shells were finished these projectiles were taken into use and continued until the end of the siege; so far as I know, though upwards of 70 were utilized, not one missed fire.

July 8th.—At 2 a.m. a very heavy fusillade took place, but lasted only 15 minutes. It was so severe that the "general attack" bell was rung and the garrison stood to their arms; the smooth-bores on the Imperial City wall joined in the chorus and the din was deafening. The morning passed quietly until shortly after 10, when the rattle of musketry burst out all round the north and the east of the Fu, accompanied by the fire of the two Krupp guns, which were so close that they made the windows of the British Legation rattle again. At 10.15 the following note was brought to me by a Japanese volunteer: "Pressed hard, please send strong reinforcement, Shiba." Warned by the musketry fire a reinforcement was in readiness, a non-commissioned officer and six Marines, also six volunteers, were at once hurried over. I also wrote to the Russian Legation and they sent ten sailors. The attack had, however, in the meanwhile been repulsed, and their services were not required. The French Legation, to whom Colonel Shiba had also applied, had not been able to help, as they were themselves hard pressed, being subjected to a severe shell and rifle fire from the Hata Gate. Captain Thoman, of the Austrian frigate "Zenta," who had come up to Peking as a visitor, and had been unable to return to his ship, was killed on this occasion in the French Legation by a fragment of shell. He was a courteous and gallant officer, and his loss was much felt by those who knew him.

On the previous day one of the gangs of Chinese converts at work under the supervision of Dr. Dudgeon, discovered in an old foundry within our lines, what appeared to be an old piece of iron, but proved on closer examination to be a small cannon; the trunnions had been knocked off, and it was one mass of rust and dirt. It was handed over to Mr. Mitchell, the master gunner of the American detachment, and after much hard work, scraping and cleaning, it presented quite a creditable appearance. It was first lashed to a heavy spar, when this was found unsatisfactory, it was mounted on a spare set of wheels belonging to the Italian gun. The shell of the Russian gun, when removed from its projectile, fitted, with some coaxing, the bore of this

new gun, which was found on closer examination to be rifled, and apparently either made of steel or fitted with a steel lining, and probably dated back to 1860, when the Anglo-French forces were in Peking. As the gun was found by Chinese converts in charge of a British subject, and was probably of either British or French manufacture, as it fired Russian ammunition, was mounted on an Italian carriage, and, further, was put together and fired by an American, it was with much truth christened "the International Gun," though our Marines more often called it the "Dowager Empress," or "Betsy." The performances of this piece of ordnance were erratic, but, owing to the close quarters at which the fighting was carried on, eminently satisfactory. The first shot was aimed at the corner battery on the Imperial City wall about 300 yards distant (as there were no sights the aiming consisted of pointing the gun generally in the direction of the object aimed at), the projectile went screaming over the battery into the Imperial City. The result was received with great cheering by the onlookers in the Legation, who, truth to say, had not much confidence in their new acquisition, and by an astonished silence on the part of the enemy, who were apparently startled to find that after so many days we had at length opened fire with comparatively heavy ordnance. The second shot went woefully short, but the third landed in the battery. This woke the enemy up from their astonishment, and the Mauser bullets began to whistle all round in uncomfortably close proximity. The "International" was temporarily withdrawn, and transported, not without considerable difficulty, over to the Fu, where it was twice fired under Colonel Shiba's orders with telling effect at a barricade some 30 yards distant. The first shot carried away one of the enemy's standards, and the second discharge, which consisted of old nails and bits of scrap iron, was fired into the barricade, and judging from the yells which followed did considerable damage. One drawback to this gun was that immediately the enemy located its whereabouts (which was not at all difficult to do, as the noise and smoke created by it were out of all proportion to its size) they opened a heavy rifle fire on the spot and the gun could not be used for more than three or four shots in succession from the same place. This defect was made up for by frequently shifting the locale.

One of the Krupp guns suddenly turned its attention from the Fu to the Union Jack over the gateway; three shells in quick succession struck the gateway and several exploded on the tennis lawn, just missing the staff; as the latter was apparently drawing the enemy's fire, and thereby endangering the women's and children's lives, the question of hauling the flag down, or at any rate moving it to another position, was mooted to me by the missionaries. Captain Strouts, whom I consulted, was of opinion that this would only encourage the enemy to further efforts, and would lead to great discontent and possible mutiny on the part of the British Royal Marines guard. Fortunately the enemy settled the difficulty by turning their attention to other parts of the defence, and never again made a deliberate target of the flag.

In my diary I note that the temperature to-day registered 102 in the shade, it had not fallen below 90 for some days; the heat and a perfect plague of flies, together with the stench from dead bodies of men

and animals, was very trying, especially for the wounded; the poor living—pony and mule broth—was beginning to tell on the children.

July 13th.—And a Friday.—This was the most harassing day for the defence during the whole course of the siege. During the night Tung-fu Hsiang's men had been particularly active in the Hanlin; shortly after daylight the Fu was heavily shelled by four guns with shrapnel; the defenders could do nothing with such a hail of shot except keep close under cover; the attack became so severe that notwithstanding reinforcements and a most stubborn resistance on the part of the Japanese, Italian, and British, they were compelled to fall back to the last position but one. Colonel Shiba had originally planned nine lines of defence, one behind the other; the 7th had been held since the 9th inst., but had now to be abandoned as most of its buildings were in flames and the enemy's Krupp guns were riddling them with common shell and shrapnell at a range of 150 yards.

About 4 a tremendous fusillade broke out on all sides, the "general attack" bell sounded, and as many men as could be spared were "fallen in" ready to reinforce any part of the defences which was more than usually hard pressed. The sound of the firing seemed as if the defenders were being gradually driven back, and I expected every minute to see our people coming out of the Fu gate, crossing the canal and falling back on to the Legation. I had sent over every man that could be spared, for on all sides we, too, were being attacked. I wrote to the Russian Legation for reinforcements, and very soon ten Marines came over at the double. As soon as they had got their breath I sent them over in charge of Mr. Barbier, a Russian volunteer who did good service throughout, and who knew the geography of the Fu well. They had barely disappeared through the gate of the latter when a welcome messenger came from Colonel Shiba to say that he was holding his own well and had driven off the enemy and for the moment required no further men. I was about to recall the Russians when Herr von Bergen, Second Secretary, German Legation, came running across the lawn with an urgent message from the German Chargé d'Affaires saying that he was very hard pressed and begging for immediate help. The ten Russian Marines no longer required in the Fu were at once sent to his aid, and arrived in the nick of time. The enemy, after a smart fusillade, had left their defences and charged into the open with waving banners and loud shouts; they were met by a volley which accounted for six or seven of their number; the rest wavered; the Russians coming up at that moment, the united forces under Lieutenant von Soden, charged with fixed bayonets and pursued the enemy, capturing one of their standards.

In the meanwhile, the French Legation was being vigorously attacked, and shortly after 7 the Chinese exploded two mines underneath the Second Secretary's house and the east side of the Minister's. The explosion completely destroyed these buildings and set fire to those adjacent. Two French sailors were killed and buried under the ruins; Captain D'Arcy, the commandant, was also partially buried and badly cut about the head by falling stones; his wounds were fortunately not serious. The enemy not having properly judged the force of the

explosion suffered severely, and a spy stated that carts next day carried away 30 dead from the vicinity of the crater formed by the explosion. The command of the French detachment for the moment devolved upon Captain Labrosse, an officer of Marine Infantry, a visitor to Peking. After he had satisfied himself that it was impossible to recover the bodies of the buried men he ordered a retreat to the next line of defence. After the explosion the Chinese, notwithstanding their losses, seemed to be greatly elated at the success of their mining venture and opened a sharp fusillade, but did not leave their defences. The French and Austrians now occupied a trench which they had prepared, and also the Legation chapel, which was loopholed, and held the enemy at bay. In spite of their severe repulse by the Russian and German detachments the Chinese attempted another attack along the road leading at the back of the German Legation under the City wall; the Americans were at this moment changing guard at this post; in the half light they detected the attempt, and the double guard opened a withering fire on the advancing enemy, who retired in confusion, leaving several dead in the road.

While all this fighting had been going on in the east and north-east the enemy had also made demonstrations against the Hanlin, but had been kept in check by the fire from the loopholed defences and the upper windows of the students' quarters; just in front of the west corner of the Hanlin's defences against the Carriage Park wall there had been a temple; this had been burnt by the enemy on June 23rd, and only the four walls remained standing. Captain Strouts saw it was important to occupy this enclosure, as the enemy had pushed their attack to within a few yards of it; a hole was made through the wall and a party under Captain Poole dashed in and occupied the place. A heavy fusillade was opened, but by keeping close to the west wall no one was hit; here two sentry posts were established, so close to the enemy's sandbag entrenchment on the Carriage Park wall that amenities in the shape of bricks, stones and water melon rinds were freely exchanged between the besiegers and besieged, and our sentries could hear the enemy quarrelling over their rice rations and discussing matters generally. The net result of this day was that the enemy had undoubtedly lost heavily and had been severely handled, our defences had been pushed forward in the Hanlin, as shown above, but we had lost ground both in the French Legation and in the Fu; our losses amongst the fast diminishing garrison were very serious, amounting to five killed and double that number wounded.

July 15th.—At 6.30 Mr. Warren, student interpreter, was brought in from the Fu mortally wounded by a splinter shell in the face; he died within a few hours without recovering consciousness; he had only been in Peking a few months and was much liked by his fellow students.

Colonel Shiba reported to me that the men of his detachment, sailors and volunteers, were quite exhausted, they had all been on duty night and day since the commencement of the siege, and had none of them even changed their clothes since June 20th, nor had they had more than three or four hours of consecutive sleep during that time. He begged that if possible half might be taken off duty for a clear 24 hours

and replaced by British Marines and volunteers, after which the second half might be relieved in a similar manner. I consulted with Captain Strouts, and it was arranged that although our people were in the same plight, an effort should be made to carry out Colonel Shiba's wishes. The Marines and volunteers responded with alacrity to this call made upon them, for they knew what splendid work the Japanese had done and were doing. It was decided that the Japanese sentries should be relieved by ours at 7 o'clock on the following morning.

July 16th.—At 7 a.m. Captain Strouts took over the relief party. He was accompanied by Dr. Morrison, *Times* correspondent, and after having posted the last sentry they were returning, and had just left the Italian post when a shower of bullets came over the barricade, and Captain Strouts fell mortally wounded. Dr. Morrison was severely wounded by the same volley. Colonel Shiba, who was coming towards them at the time, seeing Captain Strouts and Dr. Morrison fall, ran forward to help them. Stretchers were procured and both wounded men were brought into hospital. This was done under a heavy fire, a bullet passing through Colonel Shiba's coat. From the first there was no hope for Captain Strouts, and he died within three hours of his entry into the hospital, to the inexpressible grief of all who knew him. I have no hesitation in saying that I have never met an officer who combined cool and fearless daring with judgment and skill to such an extent as did this young officer of Royal Marines. He was buried at 6 p.m. in the same grave with young Warren; the funeral was attended by all the foreign representatives, the officers commanding detachments, and as many of the garrison as could be spared from their defence duties. This day had been most disastrous to the defence, the death of Captain Strouts was little short of a calamity. Dr. Morrison, who had rendered splendid service, was incapacitated for the rest of the siege, the little garrison, both regulars and volunteers, had suffered severely, and, in fact, the end, to those who knew, was clearly in sight, for a very simple problem in "possibilities and probabilities" showed that if our losses continued at the same daily rate, by the end of July, or even before then, there would be nobody left to oppose the entry of Tung-fu Hsiang's bloodthirsty ruffians, but women and children and 120 grievously wounded men.

But the night is darkest before the dawn. While the funeral of the two young Englishmen was actually in progress and most of us were standing by the grave side with very full hearts, a messenger with a flag of truce was signalled coming from the direction of the North Bridge. Whether to accelerate his movements or because the troops in that quarter belonging to the anti-foreign leaders objected to the peaceful purport of the letter he carried, two shells were fired over his head, the fragments from which tore through the trees of the little cemetery in which we were standing.

The letter which the messenger carried was from "Prince Ching and others," and practically initiated a species of armed truce, which lasted until ten or twelve days before the entry of the relieving force. For the first day or two the enemy for the most part were embarrassingly

demonstrative in their endeavours to be friendly; they came out unarmed from behind their barricades in considerable numbers, and advanced towards ours. They had repeatedly to be warned back, for we were afraid of treachery, neither did we wish them to see how few were the defenders behind the barricades which otherwise looked formidable to them.

As time wore on this friendliness became less and less apparent, and by the beginning of August matters had become almost normal, and the attacks and counter-attacks were as brisk and determined as ever. The precious days of blessed and holy calm which followed the 16th were utilized by us in working with increased energy at our defences and in giving rest to the weary garrison. The messenger, besides the official despatch from Prince Ching, brought a cypher telegram for Mr. Conger, American Representative, from the State Department at Washington; this, he said, he had received from the Tsung-li Yamen.

The arrival of this telegram created great excitement amongst the besieged, as it was the first news we had had from the outside world since the commencement of the siege. There could be no question of the genuineness of the message, as it was in a cypher possessed only by Mr. Conger and the State Department. Mr. Conger replied in the same cypher. This message was duly forwarded by the Yamen and duly arrived at Washington. When I was passing through Washington a year later the officials at the State Department told me that as they had quite made up their minds that we had all been massacred, the reply telegram was supposed to have been sent by the Chinese Government, who had possessed themselves of the cypher.

July 17th.—At the east barricade in the Fu, the Chinese came from behind their defences in considerable numbers and advanced up to Colonel Shiba's post; six of them were forthwith made prisoners; the rest beat a hasty retreat. Colonel Shiba reported the matter to me and I ordered the men to be released with a message to their commander to the effect that if more than two left their barricades together, they would be fired on. The same afternoon I was on the Tartar City wall inspecting the defences, together with Mr. Squiers, whom I had appointed Chief of the Staff. The Colonel Commanding Tung-fu Hsiang's troops in the opposing barricade some 60 yards off had shouted a message across for permission to bury his dead which were lying at the foot of our barricade; the result of the sortie of the 3rd inst. . . This permission, as may be imagined, was readily granted. The Chinese barricade was swarming with men, at least 250 being visible on it and the adjacent walls; their arms were all out of sight; they were dressed in a variety of uniforms, the scarlet and black of Tung-fu Hsiang's men predominating. Six of the Chinese soldiery descended with spades and large pieces of matting on which they proceeded to carry away the rotting corpses. Through our interpreter, I requested the Colonel to come and have a talk with me; after some demur he consented. I offered him a cigar, which he gladly accepted, and we sat on the top of our barricade and chatted until our cigars were finished. He told me that he belonged to the Kansu troops, but was at present

under the immediate orders of Yung Lu, who was desirous of stopping the fighting. I remarked that the fighting was none of our doing, but we were quite prepared to defend ourselves whenever attacked. I said that, to prevent misunderstanding, it would be better if not more than two men left their barricades at a time. If more than these did so, I should be compelled to open fire. He said he thought it would be a good thing if some such understanding were arrived at and suggested my writing a letter to Yung Lu to this effect; he assured me that any letter handed to him for Yung Lu would most certainly reach its destination. On my return from my interview, whilst standing on the top of our barricade, I could see the enemy's positions stretching away to the north until they disappeared in the direction of the Imperial City. There were barricades in the streets below the wall; a large temple was loopholed and put into a state of defence and full of men; more men were amongst the ruins west of the Russian Legation and a species of mound which commanded this Legation and the Mongol Market was gay with the uniforms of hundreds of Imperial infantry. Following the line west of the Mongol Market, the tops of the houses carried nests of these bright-coated soldiery; altogether from my position I saw some 1,500 to 2,000 men, and many more must have been hidden behind the walls and ruined houses. From where I stood I noticed that the men in the opposing barricade could overlook certain portions of our position on the wall, and would probably remark the very small garrison we were able to maintain. I therefore requested the Americans and Russians to send up as many of their reserve men as could be spared, with orders to show themselves as much as possible on the barricades; this order was promptly and quietly carried out, and very shortly our position was occupied by a goodly number of Russian and American sailors, as well as by some 20 of our Royal Marines.

On my return to the Legation I wrote a despatch to Yung Lu and stated that in view of the negotiations which had commenced with the Tsung-li Yamen the defenders of the Legation would not fire unless they were fired at, but to prevent misunderstandings it would be better if not more than two soldiers left their barricades, and these must be unarmed; any armed soldier leaving his barricade would at once be fired at. I also added that if the enemy were making new barricades in advance of those already existing fire would be opened on their working parties even if they were unarmed; this letter was delivered into the hands of my friend the colonel, who promised to deliver it to Yung Lu.

The commanders of all portions of the defence reported that the enemy had ceased firing and showed a friendly disposition and a desire to enter into conversation with the besieged; this was much less the case in the north and west, where they were decidedly treacherous and unfriendly, though they had evidently received the same orders as their comrades. From information picked up by the Japanese at their barricade it was evident that the cause of this sudden change in the demeanour of our assailants was due to the news which the high authorities, whoever they may have been at that time, had received of the capture of the native city of Tientsin by the Allies,

and the rout of the Chinese Army. By some friendly soldiers we were warned against mines, which were especially to be directed against the British Legation.

On July 18th a messenger who had been sent out by Colonel Shiba returned from Tientsin with a message from the Japanese Headquarters Staff at that place, giving the news that the native city had been taken by the Allies and that a relief force was being organized, consisting of 4,000 Japanese, 4,000 Russians, 2,000 British, 1,500 Americans, and 1,500 French, and would leave on or about July 20th and advance on Peking. This notice was posted on the Bell Tower; it was the first news we had had from Tientsin, and was joyfully welcomed by the besieged, though many were disappointed that the force was not already well on its way. As a matter of fact, the message was far less hopeful in its character; it mentioned the heavy losses sustained by the Allies, and also spoke of the absolute absence of transport; to keep up the spirits of the besieged, however, the message, as posted, was made as cheerful as possible.

The Japanese also started a small market for eggs, which the Chinese soldiers brought over hidden in their capacious sleeves and sold to our people; the eggs were mostly distributed by the Food Supply Committee to the Hospital and amongst the women and children. The weather was very hot, and the latter began to feel the want of proper food. Between now and the arrival of the relieving force, six of the younger ones died in the Legation.

On the 20th it was reported to me that the Chinese were heard mining in close proximity to the Hanlin. I descended our countermine and heard them distinctly at work; they seemed quite close but somewhat above my level, a pick was handed down and at the first few blows the enemy stopped working. From that time a strict watch was kept at this countermine, but the enemy had either abandoned their mine or had changed direction, for the sounds gradually died away and then stopped altogether.

After the entry of the relieving force the mine was thoroughly examined and opened up by the Royal Engineers. It was found to commence in one of the large buildings in the Carriage Park enclosure and to proceed straight for our barricade in the Hanlin, it arrived within a few feet of our countermine, and then suddenly changed direction to the south and followed parallel to the dividing wall for some 40 feet till it arrived opposite the centre of the building facing the students' library and mess room, when, instead of turning east under this building it turned west, described a curve, and finally ended at a point some 30 yards due south from where it started.¹

There is no doubt that our countermine checked the enemy's advance underground and headed them south, but why, when they again got to a convenient striking point, they went away from their objective it is impossible to say.

¹ This mine is shown in the plan of British Legation defences, top left-hand corner.

On July 18th, one of Yung Lu's men advanced with a flag of truce along the City wall and came down to the German defences with a letter for me from Yung Lu accepting the arrangements which I had suggested with regard to terms of a truce. This man was very intelligent and friendly. He had been specially selected to come, as he had had to do with foreigners, having been a policeman on the Peking-Tientsin Railway, he was recognized by one or two foreigners in the Legation. The same afternoon another soldier came in with his ear partially severed; he had been in the employ of Sir Robert Hart, and was bugler to the regiment at the Hata gate, he came in, he said, to have his ear seen to as he knew that foreign surgeons were good and humane men, he said his officer had wounded him with a blow of his sword for not being sufficiently proficient on his instrument! He informed us further that the men were very discontented, and were sick of fighting the foreigner. The same story was told by three soldiers who strolled along the wall from the direction of the Hata Gate to the American barricade. It was very evident throughout the siege that the enemy on the east, *i.e.*, Prince Ching and Yung Lu's men, were much more friendly and had not the same stomach for the fight as our friends in the north and west. From this direction not a single man ever came in, neither did any of our messengers ever succeed in getting out. My conversation with the Colonel on the City wall was the only instance of a friendly act on that side.

Even when the truce was at its height, from the 17th to the 20th, it was unsafe to show oneself for an instant at the barricades in the Hanlin. On the 19th some of the enemy held out a water melon at the end of a pole at one of the Hanlin barricades. One of our volunteers advanced to take it and was instantly fired at, the bullet passing within an inch of his head. On the 20th and subsequent days several of our people, mostly Chinese converts, were hit whilst working at the defences; this was, of course, in accordance with the terms of the truce, and we returned the compliment.

On the 24th the supply of eggs began to dwindle down, and the men who brought them reported to the Japanese that their officers had threatened to execute anybody found bringing in anything to the besieged. On the 23rd two men were beheaded for this reason within sight of the Japanese. The firing also became more general, in other words the inaction of the Allies through want of transport, and perhaps national jealousies, at Tientsin, was beginning to re-act upon us.

During the early days of the armistice, from their barricade on the east of the Fu, the Chinese adopted a novel way of communicating with the Japanese defences. One day a large dog trotted into the Japanese barricade with a note tied round its neck; this was from the Chinese General commanding in that quarter pointing out the futility of further defence and recommending unconditional surrender. A reply, declining the suggestion in somewhat forcible terms, was tied on the dog's neck, with which it trotted back, this was repeated several times, the dog seeming to enjoy the fun, the advisability of surrender being urged with greater insistence each time, the answers varied only in

the strength of their language. Letters demanding and suggesting surrender were also tied to arrows and shot into the Japanese lines.

In the afternoon of July 29th, the Chinese began to throw out heaps of bricks and stones at the corner of some ruined houses on the east end of the north bridge over the canal. This bridge was commanded by the north stable picket and by the caponier in front of the main gate of the Legation, called by the Marines Fort Halliday. The road across it is one of the main arteries of the city from east to west, and to avoid the bridge the Chinese had to make a considerable detour through the Imperial City. It had always been a source of surprise to us that no barricade had been constructed across the bridge; in addition to allowing passage across, the fire from it would command the whole length of the canal with the roads on either side, and also sweep the south bridge, which was one of our means of communication (the only one for carts) between the east and west defences; during the night time the north bridge was undoubtedly used by the enemy, but in the day time the fire of our pickets was so deadly that after losing several men they gave up all attempts at crossing it.

It soon became evident that the heap of brick and stones was the commencement of the long expected barricade; immediately a lively fusillade was opened on the inoffensive looking heap, and bricks and stones were sent flying, but as soon as they were shot away others appeared in their place, very shortly, wooden cases evidently filled with bricks and stone, were pushed forward from behind the heap, the barricade stealthily crept forward. The enemy's sharpshooters in the ruins on the other side of the canal were in the meanwhile very busy, and some very pretty shooting took place, they had the most modern rifles with smokeless powder, and the men in the north stable picket had some very narrow escapes, bullets pattering round their loopholes and even coming through. Having been musketry instructor of my old regiment, the 74th Highlanders, I could not resist the temptation of trying my luck, and, borrowing a Marine's rifle, at the third shot carried away a large brick which was being placed on the top of the barricade by visible hands belonging to invisible workers. With the brick went, I think, portions of a human hand; recollecting that I was breaking one of my own regulations regarding the waste of ammunition, I "ceased fire" and handed the rifle back to its owner. As I did so, a bullet flicked viciously through my loophole, the only comment my friend the Marine made was "nearly had you that time, Sir!"

The International gun was at that time doing good service in the French Legation, so could not be used, but the Italian one-pounder with its solid pewter bullets was hauled up into a sandbag battery on the roof of the cow house, which formed part of the north stable picket, and opened fire. The enemy were not slow to return the compliment, and the Mauser bullets soon began to knock the sandbags about at this close range, 60 yards, cutting them into shreds. The Italian gunner behaved with great coolness; unfortunately, as he was laying the gun, his hand was smashed by a Mauser bullet, and he was taken to hospital, the sergeant commanding the Marine detachment immediately went up and fired the round, but the enemy's fire now

became so hot—pieces of silk damask curtains, and sand being scattered in every direction by the hail of bullets—it was found impossible to continue the gun in action, it was also impossible to remove it; this was eventually done under cover of darkness. On the following morning it was found that the enemy had succeeded in building a barricade six feet high, the whole length of the bridge, a distance of 35 or 40 yards. In the correspondence which was at this time proceeding between the diplomatic body and the Chinese Government, as represented by "Prince Ching and others," expostulations had been made respecting the strengthening of our defences, attention was therefore drawn to the building of this formidable work by the Chinese Imperial troops; the reply received was that "we must not be alarmed as the troops of Tung-fu Hsiang were only engaged in mending the road!" Fire was immediately opened from this barricade, and the road along the canal became very dangerous; to obviate this a large traverse was run across the road at the smaller gate of the Legation and a barricade was constructed across the south bridge. Correspondence between the Chinese Government and myself at this time was not lacking in humour, not that the former intended to be funny, but there being two opposing parties made them so; thus our friends the pro-foreign party, wrote me a charming despatch conveying the condolences of the Chinese Government on the death of the Duke of Edinburgh, as I was about to respond in my best diplomatic manner, the anti-foreign party landed a 2-in. shell in my bedroom, and blew both my windows on to the flower beds in front.

From about August 4th or 5th the attack began to close in on all sides; the bullets were coming much lower and women and children were as much as possible kept indoors. From spies we ascertained that a new General had arrived from Shansi who had sworn to the Empress Dowager to take the Legations in five days.

On August 6th, in consultation with Mr. Squiers, a plan of the Chinese and Tartar Cities was drawn up showing clearly the position we held on the Tartar City wall marked by three flags, American on the east, Russian on the west, and British in the centre. Under the British flag was the water gate which led direct unto the Legation quarter; accompanying the map we sent full directions in cypher as to the best means of entrance, these were sent out by trusty messengers to the British and American Generals; they reached their destination safely and, as will be seen, greatly facilitated the entry of the British troops.

August 10th.—At 3 in the afternoon a tremendous fusillade took place against the Fu and all our defences: Hanlin, Carriage Park, and Mongol Market; the big gun fire had entirely ceased since the commencement of the armistice, but the rifle fire was very heavy, and cut our fortifications about considerably.

On this day a messenger, who had been sent out on the 6th to the advancing forces, returned with the following letter from General Gaselee, dated August 6th:—"Ts'ai Ts'ung; strong forces of Allies advancing, twice defeated enemy, keep up your spirits." Colonel

Shiba also received a letter from General Fukushima:—"Camp at Chang Chiang, 2 kilometres north of Nan Ts'ai Ts'ung. 8th August; Japanese and American troops defeated enemy on 5th instant near Pei-tsang and occupied Yang-tsun; the Allied force, consisting of Americans, British, and Russians, left Yang-tsun this morning, and while marching north I received your letter at 8 p.m., at a village called Nan Ts'ai Ts'ung. It is very gratifying to know that the foreign community at Peking are holding out, and, believe me, it is the earnest and unanimous desire of the Lieut.-General and all of us to arrive at Peking as soon as possible and relieve you from your perilous position. Unless some unforeseen event takes place the Allied force will be at H.S.W. on the 9th, Ma-ton 10th, Chang-chia-wan 11th, Tung-chow 12th, and arrive Peking 13th or 14th." These dates were accurately kept by our gallant allies.

August 12th.—From various quarters of the defence reports came in that the enemy were very active, and it became evident that the relief force was nearing. From the Russo-American position on the Tartar City wall, numerous bodies of troops were reported leaving the Chien Men. From the north stable picket bodies of cavalry were seen to advance up to the bridge, dismount and lead their horses across under cover of the barricade; their movements were considerably accelerated by our riflemen from that post and the Main Gate caponier. The Krupp gun by the Hata gate, which had been silent for several days, again opened—nickel-plated bullets fired at a range of 20 yards pierced our defences in the Mongol Market and elsewhere. In their eagerness to press forward the enemy overthrew one of their own barricades; instantly our sharpshooters opened a deadly fire, and the Nordenfeldt was brought to bear. Before they could escape this hail of bullets, 27, including their leader, were shot down. The next day "Prince Ching and others" wrote an indignant protest saying that the "converts" had again opened fire on Imperial troops, killing an officer and 26 men. We subsequently heard that the officer was none other than the General of Division whose rash oath has been recorded.

When the evening closed in the enemy had made no advance in our direction and had lost severely; our casualties were few, but they included Captain Labrosse, of the French Staff, an officer who had done excellent service, both in the French Legation and on the Tartar City wall. In this capacity, he came particularly under my notice, his reports being very lucid and of great service to the defence. In him the French Army lost a smart and capable officer.

The morning of the 13th commenced with sharp firing in every direction, which lasted with scarcely an interval throughout the day. Towards evening it was reported to me that the enemy were at work in the battery on the Imperial City wall. I immediately proceeded to the north stable picket, and in the failing light, through glasses, saw that work of some kind was being carried on. The sergeant of the picket reported that previous to my arrival he had seen what he thought was a modern piece of artillery, owing to the light catching on to the brass mountings. As the enemy had not fired from this battery since

July 16th, I thought that it would be advisable to "let sleeping dogs lie" and not draw the fire unnecessarily, as the relief force was so close; but to be on the safe side before the light died away, the Austrian Maxim was brought into the North Stable picket and careful aim taken at the battery; the American gunner in charge of the automatic Colt in the main gate caponier was instructed also to lay his gun on the embrasure. Both had orders that immediately fire was opened from it, the two machine guns were to return the fire; the ranges were 200 and 350 yards. Shortly before 8, a tremendous rifle fire opened all round, and instantly the above-mentioned battery joined in; the sergeant had been right in his surmise, for instead of our old friend the smooth-bore, it was a 2-inch quick-firing Krupp which opened on us with segment and common shell. Hardly had the crash of the first exploding shell taken place when the Austrian Maxim and the American both rattled out their reply; at the seventh round the gun was silenced, but not before it had done considerable damage. Every shot had told, two had struck the main gate caponiers, the remainder had practically destroyed the back premises of the Minister's quarters; in ten minutes this gun had done more damage than the smooth-bores had effected during a five weeks' bombardment.

The enemy seemed particularly active in the Mongol Market. Reinforcements were urgently requested from this quarter and were promptly sent; the Chinese officers were heard inciting the men to charge, laying stress on the fact that they far outnumbered us, and the distance was very short. The firing ceased and an ominous silence followed, as if they were in reality gathering for the attack; it was then that our commandant sent for reinforcements; before they arrived the enemy had evidently thought the better of their intention to attack with the bayonet, and had recommenced firing and throwing bricks.

In the very early dawn, while the moon was still shining brightly, a new sound was added to the din to which we had grown accustomed, it was the far away boom of heavy field guns, the rattle of quick-firers, from the direction in which our hopes were centred, from Pung Chan away to the eastward, and it told that the avenging army was drawing near. Instantly the Legation grounds were alive with men, women and children of many nationalities, shaking hands, dancing, laughing, crying, and going mad with joy. A sight which will never fade from the memories of those who participated.

Mr. Squiers reported about 6 a.m.: "On the wall there has been no sign of the approach of our troops beyond the firing of the machine guns. The direction of the firing seemed to be the Chinese wall just to the right of the part where it joins the Tartar City wall. There is no commotion in the Chinese City or at either of the gates. Your flag staff was shot away during the night, the flag falling over the wall. Fortunately it was secured and pulled back before the Chinese had a chance to capture it. If you will send a carpenter I will attend to repairs." The armourer and signalman of the "Orlando" were sent, the staff was mended and the flag re-hoisted.

At 11, Mr. Squiers again reported: "Large numbers of Chinese soldiers are passing through the Chien Men into the Imperial City."

The defending troops were evidently being withdrawn from the Chinese City to meet the Japanese attack, on the east gate of the Tartar City.

Shortly before 2 p.m. a breathless messenger from the Tartar City wall arrived to say that foreign troops were under the City wall opposite the water gate. I immediately followed him, and arrived in time to receive General Gaselee and his staff as they came through the water gate and stood in the canal road. From there I led them through the Russian Legation to the British, where they were welcomed by the rest of the besieged garrison. The regiment which first entered the Legation quarter was the 7th Rajputs, under Major Vaughan. With them was Major Scott of the 3rd Sikhs, attached to the 1st Sikhs, with a few men of this regiment. This officer with several men ran along the canal road from the south bridge to the gateway opposite the First Secretary's house, and were the first to enter the British Legation. On arrival in the Legation which was still being hotly attacked by the enemy from the Hanlin and Mongol Market, a small detachment of the 7th was sent into the main gate caponier to assist in repelling the attack; a man of this regiment was almost immediately seriously wounded, one of the ladies of the garrison was also wounded on the lawn. In the meanwhile, Mr. Squiers, with a small party of American and Russian Marines, Captain Vroubleffsky and Captain Percy Smith, had proceeded along Legation Street and to the Chinese gate, which they opened, allowing the Sikhs under Colonel Pollock and the Hong Kong Artillery to enter, the Chinese making a stand here and charging up to the Maxims of the artillery. The American troops under General Chaffee, and the Russians under General Linievitch, had with considerable loss forced the north-east gate of the Chinese City, and proceeding underneath the wall, had entered, some by the water gate and some by the Chien Men. Two guns of Major Johnson's battery, R.A., had also been got through the water gate and up an improvised scarp on to the canal road; one of these guns was brought on to the south bridge, and effectively shelled the north bridge barricade and the battery on the Imperial City wall. The besieged lost no time in taking the offensive. As has been seen, the American and Russian Legations were instrumental in opening the Chien gate. The Germans attacked the enemy and drove them to the Hata gate, capturing their guns and banners; the Italian and Japanese detachment in the Fu drove the enemy from their positions and re-occupied the entire Fu; a detachment of British Marines and volunteers under Captain Poole cut a hole through the Carriage Park wall and occupied the whole of this enclosure, driving the enemy before them with loss.

During the siege 66 foreigners, *i.e.*, Europeans and Americans, were killed and 126 severely wounded, the slightly wounded are not included; 166 cases were treated in the international hospital, *i.e.*, the Chancery of the British Legation; 40 of these cases were of sickness, mostly enteric and dysentery, of whom 2 died; 17 of the wounded died

in hospital. Of the 166 cases treated, 142 were soldiers and sailors, the rest civilians; one woman was wounded the day we were relieved. None of the 77 children who went through the siege were wounded.

A few days after our troubles were at an end, I was approached by the American missionary, the Rev. A. H. Smith, who went through the siege with us, and from whose works I have quoted. He said, "With your permission I should like to preach a sermon in the British Legation, which has been so welcome a refuge to us all during this terrible time, for the purpose of pointing out to those who have been through the siege in how special a manner and how often the hand of God has intervened to help us in our dire straits." My friend then proceeded to remind me of some happenings which, I venture to think, bear out his contentions in a very remarkable manner,* to these I added some experiences which had come under my special knowledge :—

- (1) The arrival of the Legation guards by the very last opportunity. Had they delayed another day they never could have reached us. The very day after the arrival of the guards the Boxers commenced destroying the line to Tientsin.
- (2) Rather more than 3,000 souls had to be fed daily. How was it that food sufficient for this large number was found in our small area? When, early in June, the Boxers were revelling in an orgy of fire and slaughter they set alight to a street up which was coming a long procession of carts bearing the annual tribute of grain to the Court from the Province of Honan. The procession was consequently deflected into the Legation quarter, and quietly annexed, as "bread sent from Heaven." This little help consisted of 200 tons of wheat, besides mountains of rice, white and yellow, and Indian corn. The spring races held in May provided an abnormal number of racing ponies. These were all eaten, with the exception of some few, including the particular one I have mentioned.
- (3) The restraining hand of God on the Chinese when they tried to burn us out, the providential change of wind on several occasions, but notably in the Hanlin—this last a very "close call."
- (4) The extraordinary immunity from disease amongst the besieged, nearly 900 people cooped up in a confined space during the two hottest months of the Peking summer, when the thermometer frequently rises into the hundreds, and does not often, in the day time, fall below the nineties; living under the most insanitary conditions, closely surrounded by the rotting corpses of men and animals; poor food, starving ponies and mules, and no vegetables. Yet there was no contagion and no epidemic.
- (5) A spirit of dissension amongst our enemies, the pro and anti-foreign parties fighting against each other, and on more than one occasion coming to blows.

To these I added the numbers of times when the defence had been on the point of breaking down owing to the heavy and incessant fire

of the enemy on one particular section, when suddenly, and for no reason whatever, they ceased and never again fired a shot at that particular, and almost broken, link in the chain of defence. I do not think I can better end this narrative of never-to-be-forgotten days and nights by quoting the concluding words of the sermon which was duly preached by the Rev. A. H. Smith in the British Legation, the Sunday after we were relieved. He said, "In all these things we see the hand of God in the siege of Peking." In many of its aspects it is fully and comprehensively anticipated in the Psalm cxxiv., especially the 7th verse, which was sent home as a telegram the day after relief came; we honour the living for their heroism in defending us, we cherish the memory of the brave dead, but most of all we thank the Lord who has brought us through fire and water into a safe place."

DISCUSSION.

[During the reading of the lecture, the Chair was vacated by Lord Methuen, and taken for the remainder of the meeting by General Sir Edmund Barrow.]

General Sir Edmund Barrow: Ladies and gentlemen, Lord Methuen requested me to apologise to you for having to leave the Chair as he has been called away "to another place," where he has important duties.

Before inviting remarks on the very interesting Lecture which Sir Claude MacDonald has just given, I desire to take this opportunity of calling attention to a somewhat interesting episode to which he alluded in his lecture. In the course of his remarks he told you of a cypher despatch which he sent out from Peking. That despatch was addressed to my old and gallant chief, Sir Alfred Gaselee, and reached him on August 8th, at Tsai Tsun. As his chief of the staff, I took the opportunity on that occasion of retaining the original cypher despatch, and I have it here to-day. (Producing the document). You will see that on the back there is a plan of the Chinese city and of the Legations, and on the reverse side there is the cypher message which he sent us. I shall have great pleasure in handing this cypher to the Secretary of this Institution, to be retained in the Museum, if the Council so approve, as it is an historical document of some interest. I may say, that owing to this cypher despatch, we not only had the satisfaction of being the first to rescue the people in all the Legations, for as you have seen from the maps and photographs that have been shown, the Legations were all close together, but we were also enabled to enter the Legations without any loss of life: only two of our men were wounded at the entry. I see one or two officers here who I hope may favour us with some remarks, particularly Admiral Sir Edward Seymour, and General Sir Alfred Gaselee.

Admiral of the Fleet Sir Edward Seymour: Ladies and gentlemen, I did not come here expecting to be called upon to say anything, but I am much obliged to my friend General Barrow for inviting me to do so, because I can assure you that I have listened with the greatest interest and satisfaction, if I may use such a word, to the admirable account that we have just received from Sir Claude MacDonald, of the defence of the Legations in Peking. The siege of the Legations was a very extraordinary one, and I am even surprised at many of the things he has mentioned. Nothing is more extraordinary than the fact that we did succeed in defending the Legations against the Chinese, and the reasons why we were able to do that which Sir Claude has emphasized

in the last part of his Lecture, must have impressed themselves on all his hearers. I was also very much interested in the reference he made to our little Expedition, which was the commencement of the Boxer Rising. I feel, and always have felt, that it was a very great piece of good fortune for us that Sir Claude MacDonald, a distinguished and experienced soldier, was there to take charge of the defence of the Legations.

General Sir Alfred Gaselee: Ladies and gentlemen, as I have been called upon by name to say a few words I feel I must comply, but at the same time I can add very little to the admirable lecture we have heard to-day as a contribution to the historical interest of that memorable siege. You have heard enough to tell you what a remarkable event it was, and how difficult must have been the task of Sir Claude MacDonald, who, under the stress of circumstances, was called to take control of such a mixed body of defenders. I can only say for myself and for those who were with me who had the very great pleasure and satisfaction of being able to arrive in time to help in relieving the Legations, that at one period things looked very dark indeed, in fact, even up to the moment when we arrived within sight of the walls and saw the three flags flying, which have been mentioned, we could hardly believe that those we had come to relieve were in the land of the living. Dead silence reigned over the whole scene, and it was not until we heard the bugle sound summoning us to advance that we were able to realize that we had arrived for any good purpose. Ladies and Gentlemen, I will not trespass any further upon your time, except to add my quota of thanks to Sir Claude MacDonald for his very admirable lecture.

General Sir Edmund Barrow: Ladies and gentlemen. Apparently there is nobody else who is prepared to speak, and as time is getting on it only remains for me to propose a vote of thanks to Sir Claude MacDonald for the very interesting lecture he has given us to-day. I can only say that it has afforded me great pleasure, knowing as I do so well the places that we have seen depicted on the walls, to have been present this afternoon to hear Sir Claude's description of the stirring events that then occurred. He has given you a clear account of what took place. The events were of such extraordinary complexity that it is difficult for people who were not there to follow what actually took place, without such a description. Amongst other matters Sir Claude has told us how providential were the various events which followed one upon another, but I have always thought, and still do, that the most providential fact of all was that an old soldier of the British Army was present in Peking as Her Majesty's Representative in China. It was the fact that he was the senior soldier there that made all the people there obey him, and it was owing to his great popularity with the representatives of all the nationalities and classes gathered together in the Legations, that he was able to exert the influence which he did so happily for our country and for those others whose fate was linked with his. In your name, ladies and gentlemen, I tender to Sir Claude MacDonald our grateful thanks for his interesting lecture.

Sir Claude MacDonald: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen. In a very admirable play which you have all seen, no doubt, called "The Great Adventure," when they have buried the wrong man in Westminster Abbey, the society lady says that she knows what everybody was thinking about while they were there; they were not thinking about the poor man they were burying, but of how they were going to get their afternoon tea, and I am sure you are all thinking of that now. Therefore I will not detain you any more, but simply beg to thank you most heartily for the very sympathetic way in which you have listened to my lecture.