

Siege Horrors

clothes are not fashionable here. To have unsoiled linen is to be a marked man."

"You seem accustomed to shot and shell," said Duke, noticing that nobody started or trembled.

"If any one had told me two months ago that I would sit unmoved through such experiences, I wouldn't have believed him," said Ray.

"Mother used to be afraid to stay in the room," said Paul, "where there was a loaded gun, but now I believe she could fire one."

"There's no use cooking horsemeat any more, mother," said Ray, when the platter had been passed around untouched. "It's too sweet and horrible; we can't eat it."

"It's no worse than this musty rice," said Paul, "Will the Relief Column never come?"

"You haven't begun to believe it's a myth and that there is no such thing, have you, Paul?" asked Duke.

"If it doesn't get here soon," said Paul, "there won't be anything left of us to find. Ray and I went round the grounds to-day. We were over at the Foo. We saw what the Chinese Christians have to eat—cakes made of millet, black-bean flour and earth mixed with the leaves of elm trees. If we have to come to that, I'll starve."