

CHAPTER XXVI

SIEGE HORRORS

Duke came over to the Gilmours' lodgings the next evening at six. Mrs. Gilmour and Ray had attended carefully to the cooking of the evening meal. The food was placed on a tiny table, but they sat around on boxes with their plates and cups in their laps, picnic fashion. The menu consisted of coarse brown bread, slightly sour; yellow rice, cooked without milk; boiled horseflesh, baked beans, and for dessert the can of peas which was the sole relic of the stock of provisions which Douglas had brought fully six weeks before to the Legation.

The banquet had rather a startling prelude. A shell burst outside, one of the pieces came through the open door, struck the cup Duke held in his hand, and spilled the coffee over his fresh duck suit.

He was irritated by the incident.

"I haven't another change of clothing," he said, glowering at the stains.

"Never mind, Duke," said Douglas. "Clean