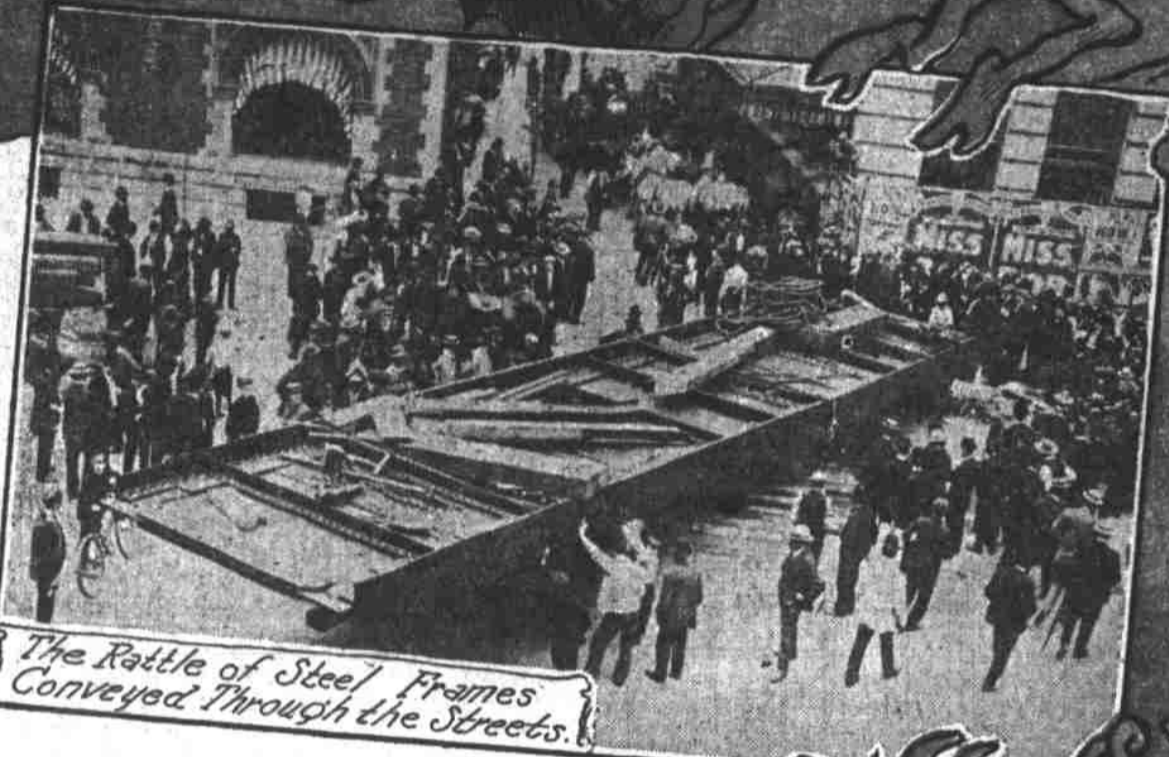


PEACE for the NERVES; or the WAR on NOISE



The Rattle of Steel Frames Conveyed Through the Streets.

The Remarkable Campaign That a Woman is Leading



The Street Fokir Who Makes Life Miserable.

AMPAIGNING as valiantly as soldiers in the field, the frazzled heroes of humanity are in rebellion. At last an active, widespread fight is on to put an end to the clatter, rumble and roar of unnecessary noises in the crowded abodes of man.

Beginning in New York, headquarters of the evil spirit of hideous din, the war on noise has spread over a large part of this country, and in Europe is enlist- ing thousands of influential people in its cause.

City life at best is wearing on the nerves, yet city life in a continual uproar of harsh, startling sounds has grown to be almost unbearable to hundreds of thousands. The ears of the nervous hospital patient, the shrinking schoolchild at its desk, the weary men and women in the downtown business houses, pedestrians along the streets and even worshipers in the churches are continually assailed by the fearful din of modern city life.

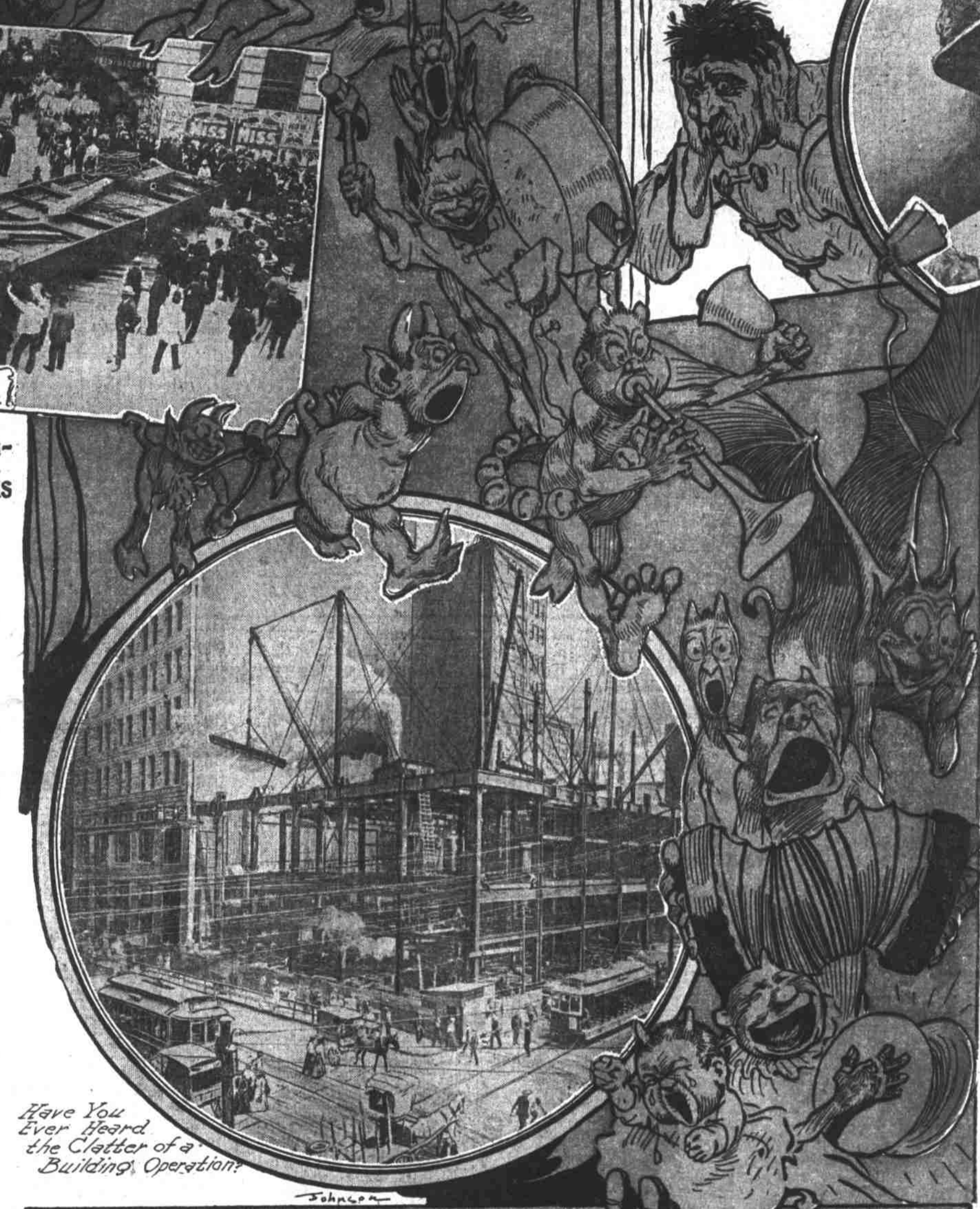
Is there no relief? That is what a determined band of campaigners against noise, headed by a woman, started out to ascertain some time ago. Since the war on noises has spread with gratifying rapidity, and some interesting results have been obtained.

No hammer fell, no ponderous axes rung: Like some tall palm the mystic fabric sprung—Majestic silence. —Heber.

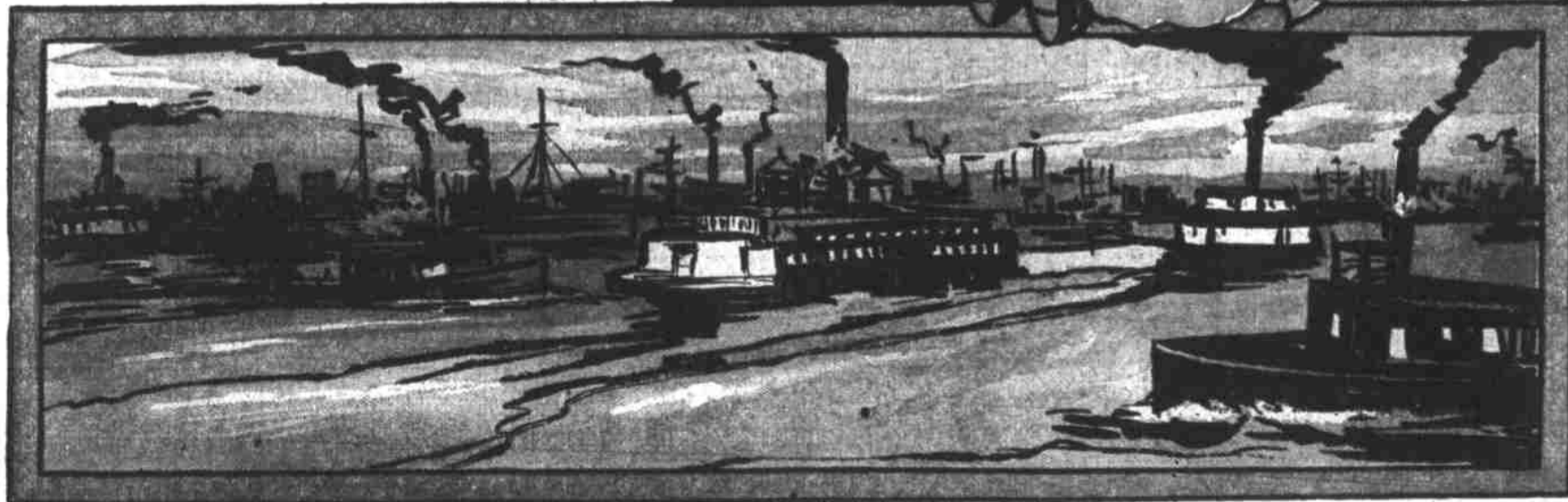
ATHUNDER of crashing iron, the grating of steel girders, the deafening clatter of pneumatic hammers, the puffing and roaring of steam engines, the whirl of trolley cars, the hoot of automobile horns, the rattle and rumble and roar of a thousand loose-jointed wagons pounding over the streets, the growl of overhead cars—this is the city by day, and night, too.

A pandemonium of noises—noises that continuously beat upon the poor, tired eardrums and gradually wear out one's nerves; that follow you when you retire at night; that boom and whirl in your restless dreams; that assail you and make your head ache in the mornings, and crash and rip and roar about you all day long—an incessant, crazy, delirious medley that racks and tears the nerves, wrecks the constitution, weakens the sick and hastens the dying toward their end.

Who really rests in the midst of a big city? How many really enjoy sound sleep? Who knows periods of sweet silence, the blissful calm of absolute repose? Who would not greet the day when city life would run as though on oiled wheels, swiftly, silently, without jar or friction? A movement which has for its end this millennial condition was started in New York by



Have You Ever Heard the Clatter of a Building Operation?



Or the Din of Steamer Whistles on the River?

Mrs. Isaac L. Rice, who is devoting her life to the suppression of unnecessary noise. Most noise, according to Mrs. Rice, is unnecessary. The crusade for peace to the nerves began about three years ago with a little meeting at Mrs. Rice's apartments on the Riverside drive, in New York city. Mrs. Rice, who had been a poor sleeper herself, realized what the sick in the hospitals along the river must suffer from the clamor of boat whistles alone. She interested a number of influential persons in New York city in her ideas, and the result was the organization at a meeting in her home of the Society for the Suppression of Unnecessary Noise. Among the members were the surveyor of the port of New York, the president of Columbia University, the president of the College of the City of New York, the chancellor of the University of New York, the com-

missioner of health, an archbishop, several congressmen and many other men of influence. Along the East river of New York are located two-thirds of the hospitals of the city, among them the Bellevue Ward and the Manhattan State Insane Hospital. To silence the uncanny and demoniacal blasts of whistles on the river became the task of the plucky New York woman. "These noises," Mrs. Rice declared, "were a menace both to health and to navigation. "I contended that all signals given besides those required by statutes were a detriment because they covered or rendered hard to distinguish those necessary for safe navigation, and that there was absolutely no excuse for a tug captain, while leisurely making his way up to the pier, to whistle loudly for half an hour, in order to summon the scow captain or crew

from neighboring saloons or from their sleep below decks. "I maintained that signals could be given noiselessly, except in foggy weather, and that the parties leasing the piers could, for a small sum, hire watchmen to summon those attached to the scows so as to be in readiness for the approaching tugs. "Sleep would thus not be rendered impossible for a large part of the city's population, to say nothing of the relief thus afforded to the sick and suffering inmates of our municipal institutions along East river. "At that time it was declared that this being a local nuisance on a federal waterway, it could be suppressed by neither municipal, state nor federal authorities. In other words, there was no one in all the United States who had authority to regulate the size of a whistle nor



Mrs. Isaac L. Rice, Generalissimo of the War Against Noise!

the manner in which it might be blown, no one to forbid the smallest tub carrying the largest whistle and shrieking it just as madly as possible."

But Mrs. Rice won her first victory over the tugboats. And she did it just this way: She began to gather evidence with which to justify an amendment forbidding the abuse of noise. With the aid of stop watches a corps of Columbia University students for a week kept tally on the whistling in the harbor, day and night. They learned the names of the vessels by following boats in launches, and according to their reports, there were 5000 unnecessary deafening shrieks a night.

Meanwhile many persons laughed at Mrs. Rice, the harbor men sniggered, and the noises became all the more intolerable. Mrs. Rice was serenaded by night by the most infernal whistles. Boats passing her home in a conspicuous apartment house on Riverside drive gave vent to wild outbursts of savage glee. One night a boat focused its searchlight on Mrs. Rice's room and all the boats passing joined in a horrible charivari.

A few days later Mrs. Rice went to Washington and saw the secretary of commerce and labor; she gave him proofs of the noise nuisance, cited the evidence of physicians concerning the wreck of noise upon the nerves and the evil effects in the hospitals. When she returned to New York an order was promulgated forbidding all unnecessary whistling.

But the harbor men still flaunted their defiance. One boat shrieked its whistles whenever it passed a hospital. Mrs. Rice secured evidence and preferred charges against the skipper. He was found guilty by the secretary of commerce and labor and suspended for five days, with a warning that with another violation his license would be suspended. Following this, the first test case, were other prosecutions, and the whistling on the river near hospitals stopped.

But this was only the beginning. There are other noises in the city than those of steamboats.

THE CONFUSION OF DINS

The city noises—you know them! Trolley cars thumping along, gongs ringing crazily; automobiles flying through the streets with hoarse, ear-splitting horns rending the air; new buildings going up where steam engines are thumping hideously, hammers ringing on the steel framework, laborers crying to one another, teams loaded with girders and stones lumbering into the alleys, rails clattering to the ground! Noises of all sorts and all kinds, rising in one hideous cacophony. The blowing of whistles and the clanging of bells of factories, trains, boats; the noise made by street vendors, creating a din with bells, whistles and cries; of amusement resorts and nickel palaces with phonographs rattling of loose wagons; noises due to bad paving of streets—the noises arising from a hundred sources to smite the nerves and make both day and night hideous.

With the formation of the Society for the Suppression of Unnecessary Noise in New York an advisory board was elected, as follows:

- Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, president of Columbia University; Dr. Thomas Darlington, commissioner of health; Dr. Charles L. Dana, president of the Academy of Medicine; Dr. J. W. Brannan, president of the Bellevue Hospital board; Dr. DeLafeld, Professor W. H. Thompson, Professor Kirchwey, dean of Columbia College Law School; Professor J. Bassett Moore, professor of international law, Columbia University; William Dean Howells, Professor Howe, Congressman J. Van Vechten Olcott, Congressman William S. Bennett, Dr. Steadman, editor Medical Record; Captain Norton, editor Marine Journal; Dr. William Hirsch, Dr. George J. Jacoby, Captain Luther B. Dow, of the American Association of Masters, Mates and Pilots; De Lancy Nicolai, Dr. E. Lederer, ex-commissioner of health.

The campaign was waged valiantly. An alderman became interested and an ordinance establishing "quiet zones" about hospitals was drafted. It was passed by the Board of Aldermen and promptly signed by the Mayor.

Police Commissioner Bingham enforced it; he forbade peddlers to invade the zones, compelled drivers to walk their horses and trolley cars to cease ringing their gongs. The era of peace began in New York, the noisiest city of the world.

So far has the movement progressed in New York that a campaign was recently waged for the passage of an ordinance proposed by Alderman Samuel Marx, which, if enforced, would (CONTINUED ON INSIDE PAGE)