

# SUN YAT SEN

## AND THE AWAKENING OF CHINA

By

JAMES CANTLIE, M.A., M.B., F.R.C.S.

*Dean of the College of Medicine, Hong Kong (1889-1896)*

AND

C. SHERIDAN JONES

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## FOREWORD

**S**EVERAL publishers within the last six months have favored me with a request that I should write an account of Sun Yat Sen and his work. I felt honored by their doing so, but being diffident of my ability to accomplish the task, and not having sufficient time at my disposal, I most reluctantly had to decline, and it was not until there was promised me the valuable help of Mr. C. Sheridan Jones that I was able to entertain the idea.

To the excellent chapters contributed by Mr. Sheridan Jones I have only been able to add my personal experiences, and to tell something of the character and career of Sun Yat Sen, and the nature of the arduous struggle in which he engaged. For twenty-five years my wife and myself have had the privilege of a close and intimate acquaintance with Sun. With the passing of years the ties of friendship have increased, and we have

learned more than ever to appreciate his strength of character, his earnestness of purpose, his modesty of mind, and to understand the secret of his power, whereby he was enabled to bring to a successful issue the great work of his life.

My chief regret is that I have been able to paint so meagre a picture of a truly noble character.

JAMES CANTLIE.

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## I

### INTRODUCTORY

**I**T was in the autumn of 1896 that the world first heard of Dr. Sun Yat Sen. A Chinese refugee had been kidnapped—kidnapped in London; and Englishmen rubbed their eyes as they read how he had been seized in broad daylight, and was being held a prisoner in the Chinese Embassy, his liberty denied him, his very life in danger. Who does not remember the sensation the story caused, the tense excitement as to the man's fate, the wild conjectures as to the mode of his delivery? For a day or so the town, the whole country, talked of little else. And then, suddenly, Britain intervened! Within a few days Sun was released. Almost as speedily, for the excitement soon subsided, he was forgotten.

But a decade and a half later the public recalled the strange event. For, on December 29, 1911, they read with something like amazement the message from Reuter's Nanking correspondent telling the world that this

same refugee, who had been hunted out of his own land and pursued even in ours, had lived to be proclaimed First President of the Chinese Republic and, quite obviously, was master of the unprecedented situation which had been created in that land of mystery. What had happened in the interval to give him this unique authority? How had this man, poor, obscure, unaided, achieved so wonderful a sway over the countless millions of his fellow-Celestials, usually deemed the most elusive of mankind? In what lay the secret of his power? To answer these questions, so that the public may see Sun Yat Sen and the Chinese Revolution in their true perspective, is to describe a career that, alike for sheer romance and historical importance, has never been surpassed.

For twenty years Sun Yat Sen has devoted every day and almost every hour of his life to one single object—the overthrow of the Manchu rule in China and the establishment of such representative Government as will insure the people elementary justice, freedom from the extortions of corrupt mandarins, a free press, and facilities for education. He has risked death and torture on innumerable occasions. He has travelled on foot throughout a large part of the four million square miles of China, and, under vari-

ous disguises, he has penetrated to almost every nook of his native country and left representatives in almost every town, building up, with matchless skill and patience, an organization whose network has gradually spread over the whole of that vast Empire.

More, he has drawn upon the huge reserve of Chinese scattered in thousands all over the world, and to his countrymen in America, Honolulu, Japan, the Malay Peninsula and the Straits Settlements he has carried the message of revolt against the Manchu dynasty—the dynasty that every Chinese hates instinctively. He has visited these exiles repeatedly, gaining with each visit some new recruit or gleaning information that made possible some further avenue of activity inside the Flowery Land. He has bought arms in Europe to smuggle them through under the very nose of the authorities. He has made friends at many European Embassies, and—hardest task of all—he has induced the Powers, through their representatives, to hold their hands whilst China worked out her own salvation.

All this he has done, aided at first by only a few devoted friends, without resources of his own, and with his life and safety perpetually menaced by the ubiquitous Manchu

agents, who have left no stone unturned to destroy him or his influence.

That he has succeeded so far as to bring China within sight of deliverance stamps him as one of the most remarkable men of our time. We have only to reflect for a moment upon the magnitude of his task, to recall the almost overwhelming obstacles confronting him, to realize how great a part he has played in the world's history.

For if ever there was a country that offered difficulties to the organizing of a revolution, that surely was China. First, there is the almost overwhelming magnitude of the territory. To say that China has an area of 4,218,201 square miles is only to confuse the mind. But when we remember that the Empire is one-third larger than all Europe, that it is bigger than the United States, with Alaska and Great Britain thrown in (it is, in fact, a fourth of the habitable globe), we get some idea of its immensity. To arrange for men to act in concert over an area so great as this, or any large portion of it, is to overcome a difficulty that seems almost insuperable. Then consider the temperament of the people. They have been described as "moving less in centuries than Western people do in decades." "For nearly five thousand years," says Dr. Arthur

J. Brown in his book, "New Forces in Old China," "they have lived apart, sufficient unto themselves, cherishing their own ideals, plodding along their well-worn paths, ignorant of or indifferent to the progress of the Western world, mechanically memorizing dead classics, and standing still comparatively amid the tremendous onrush of modern civilization." The very resources of their own land they have allowed to lie neglected. Baron von Richthofen estimates that they have 419,000 square miles underlaid with coal, of which 600,000,000,000 tons are anthracite, and that the single province of Shen-si could supply the entire world with coal for a thousand years. Add to this, apparently inexhaustible quantities of iron ore, and we have, of course, the two products on which material greatness largely depends. But the coal and iron are both unworked! It is not so very long ago since the Chinese Government acquired the first railway constructed in China. It ran from Shanghai to Wu-sung, and great was the excitement of the populace; but no sooner was it completed than the Government bought it, tore up the road-bed and dumped the engines into the river—*pour encourager les autres!* To-day the great bulk of the population of China are as untouched by railways as they are by

modern thought or literature. "Books on politics," said Sun Yat Sen, "are not allowed; daily newspapers are prohibited in China; the world around, its people and politics, are shut out; while no one below the rank of a mandarin of the seventh rank is allowed to read Chinese geography, far less foreign.

"The laws of the present dynasty are not for public reading; they are known only to the highest officials. The reading of books on military subjects is, in common with that of other prohibited matter, not only forbidden, but is even punishable by death. No one is allowed, on pain of death, to invent anything new, or to make known any new discovery. In this way are the people kept in darkness, while the Government doles out to them what scraps of information it finds will suit its own ends."

That Government's own decrees are eloquent of the benighted condition of the people and of the almost incredible apathy that has fallen upon them. Take, for instance, the edict issued by the late Empress Dowager in November, 1906, in which she complains that "officials and people are separated by the employment of forms and ceremonies so as to make all matters neglected. These officials do not pay attention to the welfare

or troubles of those under them, and often to such an extent are they indifferent and corrupt that relatives and secretaries are permitted to browbeat and oppress the masses, while the gate-keepers and runners of the Yamens prey upon and devour the substance of the people. In such circumstances can any one expect these local governments to flourish? How can the spirits of the people, moreover, be elevated under such a state of affairs? Dwelling upon this point makes us feel very indignant indeed." Can we imagine such a confession of impotency being addressed to a European people without exciting the promptest and most stimulating of replies? But the Chinese grins and bears it, or rather he did until a few months ago.

The fact is that long ago there descended upon him the paralyzing blight of spiritual pride, and until very recent days its fetters have hung heavily on his soul. When the rest of the world was sunk in barbarism, China had a great, a splendid civilization of her own. Her people had created great buildings while Europeans had no better shelter than caves, her astronomers made accurate observations two hundred years before Abraham left Ur. "They used firearms," says Dr. Brown, "at the beginning



of the Christian era; they first grew tea, manufactured gunpowder, made pottery, glue, and gelatine; they invented printing in movable types five hundred years before that art was known in Europe; they discovered the principles of the mariner's compass without which the oceans could not be crossed, conceived the idea of artificial waterways, and dug a canal six hundred miles long; they made mountain roads which, in the opinion of Dr. S. Wells Williams, 'when new, probably equalled in engineering and construction anything of the kind ever built by the Romans'; and they invented the arch to which our modern architecture is so greatly indebted."

It is not surprising, therefore, that with triumphs and achievements such as these to their credit, and with no rival, no competitor in civilization, near their throne, the Chinese became wedded to the idea that other nations were negligible quantities, barbarians who did not count, that they alone were the people, and wisdom would die with them. The obsession has remained nearly to our own day, and when Lord Napier proceeded to Canton, empowered by an Act of Parliament to negotiate with the Chinese regarding trade "to and from the dominions of the Emperor of China, and for the purpose of