

The Christian Hero "Chinese Gordon."

By Belle V. Chisholm.

General Charles George Gordon, popularly known as "Chinese" Gordon, the Christian hero of Khartoum, was born in Woolrich, on the Thames, on the 28th day of January, 1833. A long line of soldier-ancestry was behind him, and with the love of the profession of his forefathers in his loyal heart, the boy never had any other thought than to follow in their footsteps. He was a lad of quick, generous impulses, with plenty of energy and enthusiasm, but he was scarcely up to the average in physical strength, a fact that sometimes made him seem indifferent or uninterested in what was passing around him. Upon one such an occasion, his superior in military tactics rebuked him sharply, declaring emphatically, "You are incompetent, sir; you will never make an officer, never. Such stupidity would be unpardonable in a clown; how much more in your father's son." All the latent fire in the lad's nature flamed to the surface instantly, and with eyes flashing indignantly and cheeks flushing with anger, he tore from his shoulders the epaulettes that he wore, and casting them down at his reprover's feet, exclaimed, "Then I'll serve my country as a common soldier; if shoulder straps are beyond me, let some one more worthy wear them."

He was only nineteen when he received his first commission, and until he yielded up his life in the massacre of Khartoum, his record as a leader was singularly pure and unselfish.

His activity and faithfulness among the Chinese, where he won the name of "Chinese Gordon," and his long service of Christian living and teaching in the Soudan, reads like a romance. After his appointment as Governor-General of this strange, then almost unknown country, the Soudan, a long journey under the burning skies lay between him and the seat of government. He was aware that he would be called upon to fight with fanaticism, to attend to Greeks and Turks and Bedouins, and to stand up against the arch rebel, Lebehr, who had seized Bahr Gazelle. He had plenty of time to think about the difficulties he would have to face, as his camel went swiftly over the desert. He was alone, entirely alone; one man against fearful odds; but with "God on his side"; that had been the story of his whole life, and well he had learned that in times of trouble, God was more than a multitude. He reached the place awaiting him in good time, and was royally received. He disliked the pomp and glitter, but was obliged to submit to the customs of the country, to close his eyes against the splendor and ignore the retinue of two hundred servants appointed to wait upon him. Of course the people demanded an address, and the one he delivered was indeed eloquent. It was also very short; there was no need of stenographers to report it. It contained only eleven

words and was as follows: "With the help of God I will hold the balance level." The people were satisfied. It was a royal speech; they understood it and it was exactly what they wanted. He kept it to the letter, and years afterwards when Egypt was in darkness, when the Soudan was rent with strife within and foes without, the natives, remembering him lovingly and gratefully, joined in the cry of the foreigners, "Would that our good Gordon Pasha were here!"

It was during the early weeks of 1884, while resting a little from the toils of his busy life at Jaffa, that the English government took steps to send him to the Soudan, more in the capacity of a commissioner of peace, than that of a warrior. Like the good soldier he was, General Gordon responded at once, and in a few hours was on his way to Khartoum. As he went forth on his solitary mission of peace, accompanied only by his military secretary, Colonel Stewart, of the 11th Hussars, prayers for his success and safety rose from many English hearts and lips.

General Gordon emerged from the desert of Berber, where he addressed the crowds of dusky natives come to welcome him. The desire that he should take the reins of government into his hands again was general, and his assurance that he would fight with no weapons but justice, promised much towards the peaceful termination of the existing troubles. For a brief time all was quiet, and then the Mahdi renewed the quarrel, besieging Khartoum, with a demand for immediate surrender. "Not for ten years," was the reply of the intrepid Gordon. "There will never be a surrender," he insisted, and to the Mahdi he sent the word, "When you, Mahdi, order the Nile to dry up, and walk across with your troops, and come into Khartoum to me, and take me, then I will surrender the town to you, and not before." The Mahdi, thinking himself equal to God, attempted by jugglery to dry up the Nile, and actually sacrificed three thousand of his men in an insane attempt to have them cross the river by walking on the water.

Though the garrison had been greatly weakened by the desertion of native troops, General Gordon would doubtless have continued master of the situation until England's long-expected relief reached him, had not Faragh Pasha, one of his own officers whose life he had once saved, betrayed him into the hands of his enemies. Another treacherous pasha marched the Khartoum garrison to the Omdurman side of the city, and as soon as the troops were out of the way, the traitor Faragh Pasha, opened the gates of Kartoum, and the Mahdi's forces swarmed in and the massacre began.

A few hours later the boat carrying reinforcements, steamed up within a few hundred yards of Khartoum, but alas! instead of the welcome they expected to receive from the gallant little band they had come to succor, they were greeted

with a storm of shot and shell and rifle-balls; and the treacherous foe had turned the slain warrior's guns against the friends who had come to his rescue. Friends nowhere; enemies on all hands. At the same moment all England was rejoicing over Lord Wolseley's message of yesterday, "A few hours more and Gordon will be relieved." And relief had come, but not through the English government. A Greater than even the Queen of Great Britain had relieved him by promoting him to the rest that remaineth for the people of God. His life of self-sacrifice had been crowned by a hero's death, and through the skies he had already entered into his blood-bought inheritance. Relief was almost within his grasp, he only waited to hear the hearty greeting of even the least of his own countrymen who would take his hand and receive his thanks. And while he waited, he saw not the faces of friends; he saw, but only for a few moments, the hostile numbers, the flashing steel; but above the clash of arms and roar of battle, he heard the voice of his Commander, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler of many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Not so Dreadful After All.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."—Ps. 23: 4.

When we returned from Italy some years ago, the Mont Cenis tunnel was newly opened, and we reckoned that it must be a dreary passage. We thought it must be very dark, and therefore we had better be provided with a candle. It would be damp and close, and therefore we reckoned upon closing every window, for fear we should breathe the impure air. So we speculated; but when we traversed that wonderful passage, the carriages were well lighted and much of the tunnel also, and we sat with open windows, finding it as easy to breathe as on the mountain's side. It was a joy rather than a peril to pass through the dreadful tunnel. So shall the voyager along the good old way find that death is not what he dreams. Jesus will light the darksome way, and the soul will need no candle of earth; fresh breezes from glory shall drive away the death-damps, and the music of angels shall make the heart forgetful of all pains. How can the good old way lead into danger? What can it conduct us to but eternal rest?—Spurgeon.

Christ will be your light in darkness, your companion in solitude, your rest in weariness of mind, your teacher in doubt, your physician when you are heartsick, your strength in weakness, your consolation in sorrow, your life in death.—Catholic Universe.