

STRIKING CAREER OF SIR ROBERT HART

Sir Robert Hart, the Inspector-General of the Chinese Customs since 1863, died on September 20th at Great Marlow. With his death there passes from the scene one of the most picturesque figures of the 19th century, a man whose remarkable talents and personality could not have failed to bring distinction in any work or environment of life, and who, by virtue of the unique background in which his career was set, attained at a comparatively early age to world-wide fame. The name of Robert Hart was a household word in China before he was 30 years of age; it grew in prestige with the marvellous organization of the Chinese Customs Service of which he was for so long the distinguished head, and it gained naturally in importance from the crises through which China passed during his administration of her revenues, crises in the settlement of which his personal influence and exceptional knowledge saved the Manchus and the Chinese Empire from the consequences of the folly of the Mandarin.

Born on February 20th, 1835, in the North or Ireland, he graduated at Queen's College, Belfast in 1853, and he went out to China in the following year, as a student interpreter in the Consular Service. Employed as secretary to the allied commanders during the Anglo-French occupation of Canton in 1858, he was appointed in 1859 Inspector of Customs in that city. This was his first connection with the service he was ultimately to be connected with in all his work in China.

His Work in China

When young Hart first went out to China in 1854 the Southern and Central Provinces were the scene of a great popular upheaval, the Taiping Rebellion. The Taipings had in that year swept down the valley of the Yangtze and seized the native city at Shanghai, compelling the Chinese Superintendent of Customs to close his office. The European settlement held its own, and two months later the Shanghai custom-house was reopened in the settlement for the collection of Imperial revenue under the joint inspectorate of the three Treaty Powers, then in relation with the provincial authorities—Great Britain, the United States, and France.

This was the origin of the great organization which Sir Robert Hart was destined to govern for so many years and which he first represented at Canton.

In 1861 Prince Kung, the President of the Tsung-li-Yamen, formally invested the Collector of Foreign Customs at the Treaty ports with regular powers from the Central Government, and placed the management in the hands of Mr. Lay, who was then in charge of the Shanghai Collectorate. Mr. Lay, however, was compelled, almost immediately, to return to England on sick leave, and deputed his duties during his absence to Mr. Hart. In the same year the Tsung-li-Yamen invited Mr. Hart to Peking to consult with him on the organization of the service, and he soon acquired, by sheer force of character and ability, an

amount of influence over the Central Government which no foreigner had ever possessed since the days of the great Jesuit-missionary statesmen.

When Mr. Lay resigned in 1863 owing to serious differences of principle between himself and the Chinese Government, Mr. Hart, although then only 28 years of age, was appointed to succeed him.

From that day he devoted himself with all the dogged perseverance, the shrewd intelligence, and business-like capacity of a typical Ulsterman to the task of evolving European order out of Chinese chaos. In his masterful hands the Maritime Customs, which originally represented mere local agencies for the collection of duties on foreign goods, grew to be a great and complex organization, administering the one substantial and liquid source of revenue at the disposal of the Central Government of China. In 1864 the value of the foreign trade with which the Imperial Maritime Customs had to deal was 11,664,770 hai-kwan taels, in 1869, the year before the Boxer outbreak, it was 460,533,285, while in the same period the home trade rose from 114,218,655 to 731,942,126 hai-kwan taels. The revenue of the Maritime Customs when Sir Robert Hart became Inspector-General was 8,509,528 hai-kwan taels; in 1899 it attained the unprecedented figure of 26,661,460 hai-kwan taels, though the Japanese War had in the meantime taken away two important collocations in Formosa. The number of ports actually open to trade in 1864 was only 14; by 1899 there were 32. When he entered upon his new duties the Inspector-General had a staff of barely 200 foreigners. In 1899 the great administration over which he presided employed 993 foreigners, of whom 503 were British, and 4,611 Chinese. But these figures only convey a very inadequate idea of the enormous development of a service which undertook the lighting of the coast and inland waterways of China, which disposed of a fleet of revenue cruisers, which instituted a European University in Peking, and which of late years became the sheet-anchor of Chinese finance.

Loyalty to the Chinese

Sir Robert Hart's career since 1900 has little to show in the way of new constructive work. After the restoration of peace his life at Peking returned almost without effort in the old groove, and he continued until January, 1908, loyally to serve a Government which had ill-requited his services and which, as he himself was forced to confess, was apparently incapable of learning or forgetting anything. It was through his mediation and chiefly owing to his influence and wise guidance that Prince Ching and Li Hung Chang were able to pave the way for the restoration of the Manchu Dynasty and practically of the authority of the late Empress Dowager Tzu Hsi. That august lady admitted as much herself when thanking him at a private audience after her return to Peking. "To you," she said, "who have ever been our most faithful

servant, we owe the opportunity of making a new beginning." Sir Robert Hart himself had doubts which he guardedly expressed in his work, "These from the Land of Sinim" (1901), as to the wisdom and expediency of permitting the Manchus' return. He realized the necessity for new measures if the ancient Empire was to be saved from itself. But he was already then in his 66th year and long association with the easy-going philosophy of the Orient had taught him many lessons of expediency, and he was swayed above all, as the results proved, by a sentimental devotion to the Chinese Throne and Government which made him instinctively their apologist even when he could not be their reformer. Nothing could shake his unswerving loyalty to the rulers of the country which he had made his home; even the base ingratitude of their treatment of him in 1900, the destruction of his home and personal belongings, never affected him or his attitude in the slightest degree; on the contrary, the articles which he published in English magazines and the whole tenor of the book to which we have referred revealed increasing evidences of sympathy with the Oriental standpoint in politics and philosophy. From 1901 to 1908 he labored in the hope of inducing the Chinese to adopt measures of financial and administrative reform, which he considered indispensable to the future safety of the Empire. In 1905, realizing the dangers to which the country would be exposed as soon as the supremacy of Russia or Japan was determined by the war then proceeding, he urged the Government to set its house in order and submitted an elaborate scheme of internal revenue by the reorganization of the land tax. The Chinese ignored his advice, and the attitude of the Mandarin towards China's most faithful and efficient adviser was well reflected in the contemptuous memorial which the Viceroy Chang Chih-ting thought fit to submit to the Throne with regard to Sir Robert Hart's proposals.

The End of His Career

It was in May, 1906, that Hart received final and convincing proof that, however much his services had been used by the Chinese Government in the past, there was nothing of gratitude or even of consideration in their appreciation of his labors. The one essential factor of the success of the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs Service was the undivided authority of its chief, and the loyalty of the staff who had efficiently served him and China in the collection of her revenue. That factor the Government proceeded to attack by appointing high Chinese officials to be controllers of the Customs under the title of the Chui-Wu-Chu'u. It was not only the nature of the change, which was felt at its full significance by foreign Governments and financiers, but the gross discourtesy shown to the I. G. personally, in the fact that he was neither consulted nor notified in regard to the pending change. Writing to a friend at the time,

in the first flush of natural indignation, he expressed the belief that this was the beginning of the end of the great service which he had built up after long years of labor, and his chagrin was undisguised. But he had learnt from the East a lesson which he was fond of inculcating in the words of a Chinese proverb which says, "When the strong wind blows the tree may break, but the waving grass will bend and recover." In the subsequent pourparlers between the Chinese and the British Governments he took no pronounced part, and expressed no strong opinions; but in the following year he tendered his resignation. Then arose the question of his successor, a question greatly complicated by international jealousy and by the policy of China for the Chinese which inspired the action of the Peking Government. Again as in 1885 (when for a few weeks he accepted the appointment of British Minister in China), the Chinese government declined to accept his recommendations in regard to his successor. The question was eventually settled in the usual Chinese manner by leaving it open. Sir Robert Hart received a year's leave of absence, dating from January, 1908, which leave has since been regularly renewed, while an acting I. G. (Mr. Aglen) carries on the duties of the post without any very definite understanding as to his future position and authority.

Thanks to the complete destruction wrought by the Boxers in 1900, not only in Peking but in the Foreign Settlements at Tientsin, no complete record of the life of Sir Robert Hart on its political and administrative side can ever be written; for the archives which recorded the earlier history of the Customs Service and his many diplomatic measures and negotiations with the Chinese Government were destroyed by fire. Destroyed also were the letters of Chinese Gordon and many other priceless documents. The preservation of his correspondence with Mr. Detring would have enabled future historians to reconstruct the history of the French and Japanese wars from materials which are not to be expected from purely Chinese sources. Only his private diary was rescued in the nick of time from destruction. It is characteristic of the man that, seeing it brought for safety to the British Legation, he expressed regret that it should have been saved, and there is reason to believe that the executors will receive instructions that no use shall be made of its records for biographical or other purposes.

Personal Character

With his remarkable personality and wide range of sympathy, deep learning, and almost poetic imagination, Sir Robert Hart endeared himself to a very wide circle of friends and acquaintances. His character is as complex as his personality was sympathetic. The Spartan training of a Belfast Irishman was tempered through his long residence in the East to a broad and tolerant acceptance of life in all its

phases. Upon the traditions of a Puritan stock was grafted the easy-going philosophy of the East; and the combination of these qualities made up a character that stands out against the background of modern Chinese history as romantic a figure as that of General Gordon, or of Rhodes, or of any other great Englishman overseas. During the siege of the Legations in 1900, when the whole machinery of a life of routine had been so suddenly upset, his character stands at its noblest and best, showing him to be a very gallant gentleman, who, combining the qualities of endurance, courage, and helpful cheerfulness, raised himself in the esteem of his fellow-men more than he could have done by any administrative successes. The autocrat and martinet of the Customs became a simple volunteer in the work of defence. Sir Robert Hart was a philosopher and a poet; he possessed a capacity for friendship to which years of correspondence testified. The sentimental and sympathetic side of his nature undoubtedly developed as his years increased, and led him in the end to view his position and duties in a manner very different from that which distinguished the thorough and energetic nature of his earlier work. His political knowledge was wide, and his instincts generally sound; but they were always liable to be affected at critical moments by the impulsive nature of his sympathies, which outweighed on more than one notable occasion his deliberate judgment.

Sir Robert Hart was the possessor of 13 Grand Crosses bestowed upon him by European sovereigns, privileged to wear the red ribbon of the first order of Chinese officialdom, the Peacock's Feather, the Double Dragon, and many other distinctions which, as he quaintly put it himself, gave him the appearance of a Christmas tree. His life will go down to history as one of the greatest monuments of British administrative capacity and loyalty. His opportunities were undoubtedly great, but the man rose to them, earning golden opinions not only from his own countrymen but from the many men of other races with whom he frequently came into contact in circumstances calling for unusual tact and discrimination. That there were weaknesses and errors in his administration of affairs few will deny; one of the most conspicuous was that quality of autocracy which has left the Customs Service without cohesion or definite policy to face the uncertain future. Taking him all in all, Sir Robert Hart leaves behind him a record as an administrator that has been rarely excelled and an example from which the Chinese in the long run cannot fail to derive guidance and benefit.

Sir Robert Hart was made a K.C.M.G. in 1882, a G.C.M.G. in 1889, and created a baronet in 1893. He married, in 1866, Hester Jane, daughter of Mr. Alexander Bredon, M.D., of Portadown, County Armagh, by whom he had a family.—London Times.

On Growth of Knowledge

At the banquet recently given in connection with the quinquenary celebrations at St. Andrew's University, Mr. Balfour delivered a most interesting speech. He said in part:

"I now have the honor of addressing a great international assembly. Learning is represented in this room from every country boasting Western civilization, and in this we are carrying on, after all, the traditions of the great medieval universities. The medieval universities were an absolutely new product owing nothing, so far as I am aware, to ancient tradition, to ancient organization, to ancient methods of organization; and, from the beginning, they were international in their character. Learning was welcomed from every country in the world, every country that could attend irrespective of national jealousies, irrespective even of national hostilities. In the 13th century, as in the 14th, as in the 15th, when this university was established, the fact that a student even belonged to a hostile country was regarded as being no bar to his having all the advantages which a university could give. There is something, I think, splendid in this idea of a great international task to be carried on in which all the nations of the world are equally interested, in which all sections of humanity to whatever race they may belong, whatever religion they may profess, are all equally concerned, and nothing could illustrate the greatness of this truth or the nobility of that cause than such an assembly as I now see before me. (Cheers.) I hope, and I believe, that, as this common consciousness of a great intellectual task comes more and more home to the peoples of Europe, it will become more and more impossible for them to find themselves divided upon other questions, and that when the next 500 years pass over this university and when the lord rector of that day has to follow in the steps of my noble friend on my right (Lord Rosebery), it will regard international warfare and will speak of international warfare with the same disgust, with the same moral disdain, with which Lord Rosebery speaks of medieval Scotland. (Cheers.)

A Look Into the Future

"What of those 500 years which are to come, as compared with the 500 years which are past? It is very difficult to keep our ideals of temporal perspective in due proportion. I do not venture to prophesy, in fact I believe that the only prophecy that any self-respecting

prophet would venture to make with regard to the coming period—the only prophecy as distinguished from the hope which might be expressed—is of a rather unpleasant kind, namely, that the material resources of the world will by that time, so far as we can judge, have not only diminished materially, but in many parts of the world, not excluding these islands, some of the most important will be exhausted. Just consider how difficult it is to keep this proportion in mind. I have the great honor to be chancellor of Edinburgh University. We regard Edinburgh University as the younger sister of St. Andrews, but after all not so very much younger, but the period that elapsed between the foundation of this university and the foundation of Edinburgh University, that period repeated from the present moment will see our coal supplies of these islands exhausted. Let me turn from that which is not a pleasant reflection to another aspect, perhaps more nearly associated with academic life. What hopes—I venture on no prophecies now—what hopes may we have of the growth of learning? And here I should like, and I venture to strike a more cheerful note. I do not believe that we realize the magnitude of the growth of knowledge that has yet taken place in three generations, in the 60 or 90 years drawing to a conclusion. I do not think we realize how great is that growth compared with previous periods. Our whole view of the world has been revolutionized in that time—our whole view of history, our whole view of science, our whole conception of the material world, our whole knowledge of the growth of progress, of the development of mankind, and of the organic world of which man is but a part. Are we going—can we hope to go—at the same rate of progress during the next 500 years that has marked the growth of knowledge in the last 30, 60 or 90 years? If we can make any such prophecy, if we can entertain any such hope, what will be the position of our great-grandchildren, our remote descendants? How far will they have got on beyond the point which we with difficulty, with labor, but, surely, not without success, have been able to reach at the present time? Will they look back on us not merely in the way that we are justified in looking back to the great men of the Middle Ages? Will they feel progress has been as rapid as it has recently been? The difference between our knowledge and their knowledge in 500

years time will be incomparably greater, without powers of measurement, greater than the difference that separates us from the great schoolmen of the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries. I hope it may be so.

The Probably Growth of Knowledge

"I hope that our knowledge of nature and that our conquests over nature will go on at the same rate of growth as they have gone on in the years which are remembered by many of those whom I am addressing, and if that expectation be carried out then it is impossible for us to form the slightest conjecture of what the world will be 100 years or 150 or 200 years hence. Whether these hopes are destined to fulfillment or whether after a great outburst of physical discovery which has, I believe, exceptionally characterized recent years, whether after that there is to be a pause, a set back, a period of quiescence, no man can tell. But, after all, knowledge breeds knowledge, and the more you pursue your way into the secrets of nature the more instruments are at your command for making yet further advances, and I see no reason to doubt that if, unless mankind mismanages its affairs in the grossest and most scandalous fashion, our descendants will be able to look back upon us as merely beginners and pioneers in the great field of discovery which is open to mankind."

SHAKESPEARE IN 1793

What, we wonder, would happen to the London manager nowadays who should dare to put on the stage such a version of a Shakespearean tragedy as was played in Ireland a hundred years ago? Mrs. Earle in her recent book "Memoirs and Memories" gives a Dublin play bill of 1793, which is well worth quoting.

The play was "the tragedy of Hamlet" originally written and composed by the celebrated Dan Hayes of Limerick and inserted in Shakespeare's works." The title role is taken by a gentleman "who between the acts will perform several solos on the patent bagpipe, which performs two tunes at the same time."—From the University Correspondent.

Settled Him

"Sir," said the haughty American to his ad-hoc tailer, "I object to this boorish dunning. I would have you know that my great-grandfather was one of the early settlers." "And yet," sighed the anxious tradesman, "there are people who believe in heredity."—Tit-Bits.

Queen Consorts

The present Queen Mary is the thirty-sixth queen consort of England since the Conquest. It may be interesting, says the Gentlewoman, to review the long line of her predecessors, which has run through eight centuries of English history, and for which many of the members have exercised immense influence in their time.

It is a little difficult to place the nationalities quite correctly, as several of their homes have ceased to exist as separate dominions, but the doubtful ones may perhaps be classed more correctly as French than anything else. Taking this for granted, we find our queens thus classified:

French, thirteen, namely: Adeline of Louvaine, Matilda of Cologne, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Berengaria of Navarre, Isabel of Angoulême, Eleanor of Provence, Margaret of France, Isabel of France, Isabel (the little) of France, Joan of Navarre, Katharine of France, Margaret of Anjou, Menzetta Maria of France.

English seven: Elizabeth Woodville, Anne Neville, Elizabeth of York, Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour, Katharine Howard, Katharine Parr.

German, six: Anne of Bohemia, Anne of Cleves, Varoline of Ansbach, Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Caroline of Brunswick, Adelaide of Saxe-Meiningen.

Flemish, two: Matilda of Flanders, Philippa of Hainault.

Danish, two: Anne of Denmark, Alexandra of Arragon.

One Scotch, Matilda of Scotland; one Portuguese, Katharine of Portugal; one Italian, Mary of Modena.

Sixteen queens were the mothers of the succeeding sovereigns. And sixteen queens were ancestresses of the present King and of Queen Mary. The English kings as a rule acted on the dictum of Weller pere, "beware of widows," but in one or two cases the crown matrimonial did displace the widow's veil. Eleanor of Aquitaine was, like Anne de Bretagne, a twice crowned queen, though not so reputedly; for it was as a widow Anne wedded her second lord, while Eleanor was divorced by her first husband, Louis VII. of France.

She had the strange hap of receiving as her eldest son's bride the daughter of her first husband by his second marriage; saw two sons on the throne; lived to what in her day was extreme old age—over 70; and did not murder fair Rosamund. Her daughter-in-law, Berengaria, it may here be noted, was the only

queen of England who was never in England. Henry IV. married Joan the widowed Duchesse de Bretagne.

The number of queens left widows is eighteen, nay, if we include Anne of Cleves, nineteen; but as for long years she had been the monarch's "sister" her status is perhaps doubtful. Of these royal ladies five married again—Adeline, Isabel of Angoulême, Isabel (the little queen), Katharine of France and Katharine Parr, who mourned her redoubtable spouse something under three months.

Not all were crowned. The plague deferred Jane Seymour's coronation, and within a few months she was dead. Her three successors, too, were uncrowned. Henrietta Maria declined to participate in a service of the English church, and Charles II., perhaps fearing a similar procedure on his wife's part, made no suggestion thereto. The unhappy story of Caroline of Brunswick is well known.

The great majority became queen on their marriages, but Eleanor of Castile married Edward while he was heir; Mary of Modena was Duchess of York, Caroline of Ansbach, Princess of Wales, as was her granddaughter of Brunswick, and her descendants of Denmark; and Adelaide of Saxe-Meiningen was Duchess of Clarence.

The present queen is the only one who has been wife of the heir apparent and then queen. She is the first Englishwoman to be on the throne for 300 years, and like thirteen of her predecessors is descended from Alfred the Great. The shortest reign of a queen consort was that of Anne of Cleves, not quite four months; while good Queen Charlotte, coming as a bride of 17, occupied her throne fifty-seven years.

Jones—Yes, sir, that boy of mine is a piano-player. Why, he can play with his toes.

Brown—How old is he?

Jones—Fifteen.

Brown—I've got a boy at home who can play with his toes, and he's only one year old.

—Answers.

The poet, Lord Byron, received \$21,375 from his publishers for his poem "Childe Harold."

Tokyo now has a Japanese Young Men's Buddhist Association, modelled after the Young Men's Christian Association of this country.