

**CHINESE GORDON:
A SUCCINCT
RECORD OF HIS LIFE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649547180

Chinese Gordon: A Succinct Record of His Life by Archibald Forbes

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BY

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LONDON

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS

BROADWAY, LUDGATE HILL

NEW YORK: 9, LAFAYETTE PLACE

1884

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CHINESE GORDON.

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CHAPTER I.

EARLY DAYS, AND THE CRIMEA.

THE character of Charles George Gordon is unique. As it unfolds itself in its curiously varied, but never contradictory aspects, the student is reminded of the attributes of Sir Lancelot, of Bayard, of Cromwell, of John Nicholson, of Arthur Connolly, of Havelock, of Balfour of Burley, of Livingstone, of Hedley Vicars; but Gordon's individuality stands out in its incomparable blending of masterfulness and tenderness, of strength and sweetness. His high nature is made the more chivalrous by his fervent piety. His absolute trust in God guides him serenely through the sternest difficulties. Because of that he is alone in no solitude, he is depressed in no extremity. The noble character has its complement in a

keen sense of humour. No matter how sombre the situation, if there be a comic side to any incident, Gordon sees it and enjoys it. That he has lived through strain so intense, and toil so arduous, is probably due to the never-failing fountain of blitheness that wells up in his nature. He must be richly endowed with the rare gift of personal magnetism. Without that men have attained to greatness: but never with the scantiness of means at command, that has thrown Gordon back mainly on the resources of his own personality; nor ever with the scrupulousness that has been one of the most strongly marked traits of his career. This may be a plodding and prosaic age; but no age can be so conventionalised that a man of Gordon's attributes may not find his opportunities to perform achievements the lustre of which stirs the astonishment and admiration of peoples who can yet appreciate the gifts that alone render those achievements possible. Gordon's modesty is great, but it would be unnatural and impossible that he should not feel an honest pride in the implicit confidence that leans on his ability to perform, single-handed, the seemingly impossible. This unique una-

nimity of confidence has been earned by deeds, not words; no arts have fostered its growth; it may be said to have come almost in spite of the man in whom it is reposed.

Gordon comes of a race of soldiers. His great-grandfather belonged to "Johnny Cope's" hapless command, as an officer in Lascelles' Regiment (now the 1st Battalion Lancashire Regiment), and was taken prisoner at Prestonpans by Prince Charlie's "highland host," to find a kinsman, Sir William Gordon, of Park, fighting under the Stuart banner. He was paroled through the interposition of the Duke of Cumberland, who was his patron, and the godfather of the son of his who was the grandfather of "Chinese Gordon." That son naturally entered the army, and saw varied and plentiful service. He fought at Minorca, at the siege of Louisburg, in what was then French Canada, and on the Plains of Abraham with the gallant Wolfe. In 1773 he married a Miss Clarke, the sister of a Northumbrian clergyman. By her he had four sons, the third of whom, Henry William, born in 1786, was the father of Charles George Gordon, the subject of this memoir.

Henry William Gordon was a gunner, a fine soldier, a man of the most scrupulous honour, of a temperament better suited, perhaps, for command than for obedience, but a man of remarkable geniality, and possessed of an inexhaustible fund of humour. He lived to be proud of his son, yet it has been told that so high was his ideal of the character of the British officer, that he had no pleasure in learning that his son had accepted the command of an alien and barbarian force, notwithstanding the honour of his selection therefor, and the brilliancy of his achievements in that position. He attained the rank of Lieutenant-General in the service in which he may be said to have been born, and in which he spent a long life. He was well mated in his wife, who had been a Miss Enderby, the daughter of a man of somewhat remarkable character. A London merchant and shipowner, some vessels of his mercantile fleet are historical. Those were two of Samuel Enderby's ships, chartered by the East India Company, and laden with cargoes of tea, that lay at their moorings in Boston Harbour on that evening of 1773, when Charles Adams stood up in the Old South Church and uttered

the words, "This meeting can do nothing more to save the country!" That same night the sham Indians boarded Enderby's ships, hauled on deck the chests of the tea that formed their cargo, broke them up and threw their contents overboard, while the approving citizens crowding the wharf listened in grim silence. When Phillip gave the signal to "the first fleet" to cast anchor in Sydney Cove, of the six transports that had carried the convicts to found the new settlement, some were ships chartered by the Government from Charles Gordon's maternal grandfather. His whalers opened up the fisheries in the Antarctic Ocean, among the Islands of the South Pacific, and in Japanese Waters, and made important geographical discoveries while they were cruising with intent to "fill up" with oil.

Gordon's mother, Mr. Hake, in his "Story of Chinese Gordon," describes as "a remarkable woman. She possessed a perfect temper; she was always cheerful under the most trying circumstances, and she was always thoughtful of others; she contended with difficulty without the slightest display of effort; and she had a genius for making the best of everything. During the Crimean War her anxieties were