

Adventure in China

By DR. W. E. MACKLIN

I WOULD like to relate some interesting experiences I had in China years ago, when I was doing missionary work there, about the time the Republic was being formed.

At the time Sun Yat Sen became president of the Chinese Republic, the financiers and monopolists of Shanghai started a campaign of reviling the new Republic and its president. They financed the dictator, Yuen Shi Kai, to crush the Republic.

When Dr. Sun came to China to take over the presidency, I went to Shanghai to meet him. I gave him a number of my translations of English classics into Chinese, including "Progress and Poverty." He was deeply interested. He invited me to visit him when he arrived in Nanking. I had another pleasant visit with him there, and was impressed by his democratic habits. Former rulers of China had compelled ambassadors and visitors to crawl up to the mighty ruler on their hands and knees. When I visited President Sun, he offered me a chair and sat down beside me, and we chatted pleasantly. I had many similar receptions with him.

On one occasion I introduced the head of the Anti-Opium Society to President Sun. I saw that the President was really against the opium traffic so outrageously prevalent then.

Sun Yat Sen had just started a newspaper in English—*Advocate of the Republic*. His editor, Ma Su, a graduate of an English university, was an able man. He sent me a letter saying, "We want you to be a correspondent for our paper. Anything you write for us we will publish." I took advantage of his invitation, and wrote articles attacking the opium gangsters, under the challenging heading, "Are We British Degenerates?" I remarked that we ordinary British did not sell opium, but we elected the gang that conducted the business. (To call the House of Lords and House of Commons a "gang" was certainly inviting opposition.) I said the opium dealers were "degenerate and depraved."

The opium traffickers tried to get me in a libel suit, but evidently it was a just judge who tried the case, so they then brought an injunction suit against the newspaper. The plaintiffs were the Sasoan firm, a group that had become immensely rich from their foul traffic.

I then wrote another article saying that the offended traffickers ought to consider it a compliment to be called "degenerate," as it showed that they had had a better past before they sank so low as to sell opium. I remarked that a "son of Belial" was not necessarily of a different race, but a

degenerate specimen of the same race. I also advised that the opium be not burned (you recall that it was the burning of the opium that brought on the Opium War), but instead that it be saved and carved into a monument manifesting depravity on the one hand and self-restraint on the other.

They were furious, but helpless. And of course, they lost the case. It is noteworthy that I did not appear once at the trial. President Sun's paper took all the responsibility.

My translations of classics into Chinese attracted wide attention. I had writers of great ability working for me. I knew how to render the English into ordinary conversational Chinese, and the writers would set it down in fine choice language. Three of my translations I gave to a leading newspaper publisher. Without hesitation, he ran all three of them serially in his paper.

The leader of the Chinese Communists came to visit me. He was impressed by the translations. When I was visiting Shanghai, he invited me to speak before a national meeting of Communists. I said I would accept, but advised him that I did not believe in many of his principles, including free love and atheism. He was liberal enough about it, and did not object to my reservations.

This Communist leader went to Russia to spend a year with Lenin and Trotsky at the time of the Russian Revolution. On his return to Nanking he was appointed to lecture in the university. He returned disillusioned. On visiting me, he said he now had no use for the Russian experiment, and that at the university he would use my translations as lecture material. These included Henry George's works, biographies of Jefferson, William the Silent, and Gustavus Adolphus, and Green's "Short History of the English People." He calls that Christian Economics.

For years this former Communist and I were fast friends. Later he worked in our own Library of Congress, entrusted with the care of Chinese books, and at one time he was secretary to the United States consul.

My experiences have convinced me that China is a fertile field for the spreading of Henry George's doctrines. There is a new spirit abroad in that land—an appreciation of liberty, an awareness of the land question, and a first-hand encounter with the forces of tyranny and aggression. It is an opportunity that should not be missed.