

The Listener

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By courtesy of 'Fortune'. Photograph: Carl Mydans

Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, leader of modern China

The Greatness of China. By the Rev. Harold B. Rattenbury

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The Greatness of China

By the Rev. HAROLD B. RATTENBURY

WHEN I first went to China she was a land of mystery, old and unchanging. Everything seemed so strange, so different, so un-English and therefore so wrong. I saw the mandarins in their gorgeous robes being rushed along the streets in their eight-bearer chairs. I watched the heavy-laden coolies crouching under their burdens, chanting and jostling one another, trotted their way along the crowded streets. I heard the boys shouting at their lessons. Their schools were without books or map, and education seemed to consist of learning things by heart and then of writing essays, in a style that no one but a native could understand, and on subjects in which no one was particularly interested. It seemed a weird country and I was an outsider, feeling that I was just as strange and funny to the Chinese as they were to me. I was a sort of bogey-man from whom mothers hid their children's faces, in fear lest my mere passing should do them

harm. A long time ago. I have spent a lifetime in China since, and a long time there have been two big revolutions and innumerable

little wars. I have learned the language and got to know the people. Some of my best and most intimate friends are Chinese. There are many at whose feet I sit in reverence. The mystery of the first contact has gone, of course. In its place I realise that it has been my good fortune to spend my days among perhaps the greatest race on the face of the earth.

It is my conviction that China could prove a greater strength to the Allies than Japan, with all her military aggression, can be to the Axis. It is important for us to know that China, in her greatness and in her ability to resist aggression, has great help to give to us. China is not a tool to be used by us in our war. She is a great nation and comrade-in-arms. The Chinese race and nation stretch from Siberia to the borders of Burma and Tibet, and from India and Russia to the waters of the Pacific. Just think for a moment of these great distances. With a population of four hundred and sixty millions they represent a quarter of the human race. Think of those endless numbers. Within the Christian era China has had her ups and downs, her invasions and civil and foreign wars, her expansions and contractions, her tyrants,

A Map of Verona

A map of Verona is open, the small strange city ;
With its river running round and through, it is river-embraced,
And with this city for a whole-long winter season,
With streets on a map, my thoughts have been interlaced.

Across the river there is a wandering suburb,
An unsolved smile on a now familiar mouth ;
Some enchantments of earlier towns are about you ;
Once I was drawn to Naples in the south.

Naples I know now, street and hovel and garden,
The look of the islands from the avenue,
Capri and Ischia, like approaching drum-beats—
Oh my youthful Naples, how I remember you !

You were an early chapter, a practice in sorrow,
Your shadows fell, but were only a token of pain,
A sketch in tenderness, lust, and sudden parting,
And I shall not need to trouble with you again.

But I remember, once your map lay open,
As now Verona's, under the still lamp-light.
I thought, are these the streets for walking in in the mornings,
Are these the gardens to linger in at night ?

And all was useless that I thought I learned :
Maps are of place, not time, nor can they say
The surprising height and colour of a building,
Nor where the groups of people bar the way.

It is strange to remember those thoughts and to try to catch
The underground whispers of music beneath the years,
The forgotten conjectures, the clouded, forgotten vision,
Which only in vanishing phrases reappears.

Again, it is strange to lead a conversation
Round to a name, to a cautious questioning
Of travellers, who talk of parasols and fountains
And a shining smile of snowfall, late in Spring,
Their memories calm this winter of expectation,
Their talk restrains me, for I cannot flow
Like your impetuous river to embrace you ;
Yet you are there, and one day I shall go.

The train will bring me perhaps in utter darkness
And drop me where you are blooming, unaware
That a stranger has entered your gates, and a new devotion
Is about to attend and haunt you everywhere.

The flutes are warm : in tomorrow's cave the music
Trembles and forms inside the musician's mind.
The lights begin, and the shifting crowds in the causeways
Are discerned through the dusk, and the rolling river behind.

Ah ! in what hour of beauty, in what good arms,
Shall I those regions and that city attain
From whence my dreams and slightest movements rise ?

And what good Arms shall take them away again ?

HENRY REED

If Invasion Comes

(Continued from page 327)

It's a funny sensation seeing these chaps dropping on you, rather
that nervy feeling you get when you are playing the first ball from
fast bowler. We fired all we could at them and some died horribly
mid-air as our bullets exploded grenades tied to their belts. Long
gliders containing machine-guns were also floating down on red
parachutes. The men dropped one by one into the olive grove, and
top of our dug-outs, and all around us.

Afterwards men landed in gliders and troop-carriers. The gliders
were not much good, but the troop-carriers succeeded, at a terrific cost.
was at Maleme aerodrome that the Germans first got their real footing
on Crete. A wave of five planes, carrying a company, crash-landed
and were nearly all wiped out by our guns. A few crawled out alive,
however, and at once started clearing away the wreckage for fresh
scents. More landed, more were wiped out, but each time there were
few survivors. The slaughter went on, but the German numbers
mounted after each crash-landing until there were enough troops to
mount the spearhead for an attack. In the end, after they had got control
of Maleme aerodrome, they landed nearly 30,000 men in Crete by air.

What Might Happen Here

By LIEUT.-COLONEL CARRINGTON

THE THING ON WHICH we shall all agree is to praise the courage of
men like Lashmar in Crete. Though they were few in numbers and could
not do much, their little help from the other services they made the Germans
pay a heavy price. And they did something else for us too. They gave
us the chance to learn what we can do if the Germans ever try an
airborne invasion here. Crete was an experiment, the first attempt at
airborne warfare on a large scale, and we learned our lesson from it too.
One big mistake the Germans made was to plump down their para-
chutists in broad daylight, right on top of our defences. I think they will
do better than that next time. Suppose the parachutists came over
in the small hours and were dropped at dawn. Or worse still, suppose
they came at dusk and lay up in woods a mile or two from their
objective quietly resting and getting ready to attack at dawn. That
might take us by surprise. But then again it might not. Fighter Com-

mand knows whenever a German aeroplane flies over this country ;
we have many devices they did not have in Crete. And I think we
shall get some warning. Then there's another point. They did not
make much headway in Crete until they had seized an aerodrome and
were able to bring in troop-carrying aircraft to land on it. I suppose
it's possible they might seize an aerodrome with parachutists here, but
it's hard to see how they could bring in their troop-carriers, even then,
so long as our fighters had command of the air.

So we have two things to think of here. We shall count on the
fighter-boys to keep the air, and make it very risky for flying armadas
of slow-going Ju 52s to come over this country ; and we shall count
on our own vigilance to deal with parachutists who try to seize a
landing-ground for them. Spot them coming and mop them up before
they get going is the plan.

The comic papers used to be full of jokes about fat funny Boches
coming down disguised as nuns or clergymen, but they won't be like
that. They will be the flower of the German Army and a vile ugly
breed too, tough gunmen who come here to kill and to kill you, trained
and tutored in massacre—no joke at all. But like the rest of us they
have their weak moment and it's when they have just arrived. Half
their comrades shot down on the way across and themselves dumped,
rather shaken, in unknown country. That's your chance, because the
country's not unknown to you.

If the enemy are seen in time they can be stalked and sniped and
kept busy by a very small party of men who know their countryside
and their fieldcraft. Remember the Germans are never very dangerous
by night. That is the time to be dangerous to them. And in fighting
parachutists there are no Queensberry rules. They come to kill and
destroy or to be killed and destroyed. If you take a parachutist prisoner,
regard him with the deepest suspicion and remember that another batch
may come down from the sky at any minute to set him free.

And there's another danger about airborne troops. They often crash-
land their aircraft intentionally with the hope that most of the passengers
will get out unhurt. There have been cases of our soldiers running
up to help in what they thought was an accident and being shot by
Germans who had crash-landed on purpose. You can't be too careful.
But don't shoot if you are not sure they are Germans. And as for para-
chutists, if there are less than eight they may be one of our own crews
baling out and should have the benefit of the doubt.—Forces