

# PUBLIC SUCCESS, PRIVATE SORROW

The Life and Times of Charles Henry Brewitt-Taylor (1857–1938),  
China Customs Commissioner and Pioneer Translator

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## Introduction

This book is the result of a long and unexpected journey. I knew that the surname of my wife's aunt had become 'Brewitt-Taylor' on marriage, and I had also been aware that her father-in-law had spent time in China. I recall Aunt Evelyn pointing out to me the two volumes standing in her bookcase of his translation of some kind of Chinese work, and I had seen the three beautiful gowns that he had brought back for her and her two sisters. But it was only after I became more acquainted with the country, initially through working in Hong Kong and later by having family connections in China, that my curiosity about Charles Henry Brewitt-Taylor began to be kindled.

It was in Hong Kong that I learnt that his name was familiar to specialists in Chinese as the translator of the then only complete English version of one of the most famous Chinese novels: the *San Kuo Chih Yen-i* (in pinyin, *Sanguozhi yanyi*). His *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, published in 1925, was the first full English translation of the work, believed to have been written by Lo Kuan-chung (Luo Guanzhong) in the fourteenth century; until the 1990s it was the only complete version in English.

Later I became conscious of the work's significance for literary history. Before the twentieth century, traditional Chinese literati did not recognize novels as literature, for they were popular stories, appealing to the less well-educated.<sup>1</sup> They were also written not in the literary or classical language, the medium for everything seriously regarded as literature in pre-modern China, but in the vernacular; they were, therefore, considered 'unworthy of serious consideration by traditional scholars'.<sup>2</sup> Poetry was more highly regarded. Many educated Chinese would, however, have been familiar with the major novels. Serious foreign study of traditional Chinese literature began to be undertaken by a remarkable group of Western scholars, initially beckoned to China to work as missionaries, Consular or Customs officers, who became sinologists. While knowledge of Chinese language and literature was becoming slowly known to the West even as early as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,<sup>3</sup> it was especially with the development of the Treaty Ports in the second

half of the nineteenth century that a milieu was created which aided discourse, at least for an interested minority of Westerners. Particularly valuable was the publication of a variety of English-language journals in China devoted to the study of Chinese culture, and the establishment of various societies, including a branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. The very early foreign explorers in sinological scholarship largely confined themselves in their search for understanding Chinese culture and values to the more esteemed study of traditional Chinese literature, that is, the classics, history, philosophy and poetry.<sup>4</sup>

Brewitt-Taylor's (hereafter shown as B-T) work marked a milestone in the history of English translations of Chinese novels. Apart from the *Three Kingdoms*, three other novels are widely highly esteemed: *Dream of the Red Chamber*, *Journey to the West*, and *The Water Margin*; two others, *The Scholars* and *The Golden Lotus*, may be added as strong runners-up. These have been regarded as the six historically important landmarks of Chinese non-classical literature, each breaking new ground.<sup>5</sup> While there had been many excerpts translated from these over the years, none appears to have received a full English translation before that of B-T in 1925.<sup>6</sup> Thus, by his work, B-T pioneered the introduction of full versions of the most famous popular Chinese novels to the English-speaking world. Indeed, as we shall see later, his first complete draft had been entirely destroyed during the Boxer troubles a quarter of a century previously, otherwise the publication date would almost certainly have been considerably earlier.

I read the novel initially culturally cold, without any knowledge of the important position held by the work in Chinese culture. Later, I learnt that what B-T called the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*San Kuo* or *Sanguo* — *Three Kingdoms* — as it is popularly known in China) has been a powerfully influential novel in China. Derived from the historical period known as the Three Kingdoms in the second and third centuries, its incidents and characters have been an important source for storytelling, drama and opera over many generations; this tradition continues to this day. On learning a little of the complexities of the Chinese language, I began to appreciate the level of application that must have been required to acquire sufficient knowledge and literary sensitivity to undertake the task of translating the novel. The work was written very early in the history of the Chinese novel; the attributed author, Lo Kuan-chung, likely lived in the fourteenth century,<sup>7</sup> that is, around the time of Chaucer (1345–1400). The Chinese text B-T used for his translation was probably that compiled by Mao in the 1660s.<sup>8</sup> Though the level of linguistic change that had taken place by the time of B-T's translation was not large, there had been some development; a good translation would not have been straightforward, requiring extra-careful attention.<sup>9</sup>

Translating the *San Kuo* into two massive volumes was a formidable enterprise. B-T must surely have devoted a substantial amount of time, energy and persistence

preparing for and undertaking the work. What kind of person was he, what had brought him to China, how long was he there and what kind of work did he do? Why did he choose the *San Kuo* for translation? Had he published anything else? I began to wonder about the man.

Knowledge of his life is slender. Yet, it seemed that someone who had achieved a certain distinction as the translator of the *San Kuo* deserved some kind of memoir, if only a brief outline of his life. After I retired and returned to Britain from Hong Kong in 1994, this is what I initially intended to write.

Obtaining material on B-T proved obstinately difficult. This should have been a warning, presaging the elusiveness of the man himself. Even the Family Records Centre of the Office of National Statistics initially failed to come up with a record of his birth!<sup>10</sup> Clues often led up cul-de-sacs, and alternative routes had to be found. It was as if the man had drawn a cloak of secrecy over himself. Part of the difficulty lay in the fact that certain family hearsay proved inaccurate, or partially so. The challenges of the investigation were somewhat compounded by the hyphen in his name, which eventually was found to have been adopted by him as an adult, initially inconsistently and only after being in China for some years; this meant having to deal with two surnames when trying to track down details of his life. In part, the difficulties encountered reflected my own ignorance about the limitations and pitfalls in genealogical research, as well as my limited knowledge of the specific problems of researching Chinese history. Further, I had to constantly remind myself of the dangers of trying to reconstruct 'reality' from documents — a well-ploughed academic area.<sup>11</sup> The problems encountered will be familiar to others embarking on biographical discovery, the frustrating gaps as well as the happy moments of serendipity, and especially the way in which the subject takes over and extends itself.

Conducting this research, meant having to, as Strachey put it, 'glean what stubbles remain after the winds of time have taken those who might have thrown more light'. B-T died in 1938. Sadly, one person who would have known more about him, his daughter-in-law, Aunt Evelyn, had already died by the time I embarked on the study. Few members of the family remaining alive had any knowledge of him, mainly a grandson, now ninety, and a granddaughter of over seventy; both were young when he was alive, and their memories of him were scanty.

B-T was a man who revealed little of himself. His grandson, Edward Gordon Brewitt-Taylor, the only grandchild carrying on the surname, and known as Teddy when young, recalls his mother, Evelyn, saying that whenever she asked him questions about his early life, he would give vague, non-committal responses. Early in my research, the impression I gained was of someone who wanted to hide something about his life, something about which he was perhaps embarrassed or felt uncomfortable.

Teddy helpfully provided what material he had, making trips to his attic to try to ferret out answers to my enquiries: a few letters to his mother from her father-in-law (Teddy's grandfather), letters from her husband (Teddy's father), awards to his grandfather for service in China, some old war medals from a great-grandfather and a few photographs. However, Teddy's actual knowledge of the man and his background were rather thin. Teddy was about twenty-one years old when his grandfather died in 1938, not an age when one is likely to ask questions, even if one were so inclined. He thought that B-T had been born in Kingston, near Brighton in Sussex, and that he had gone to China to teach mathematics in some kind of navigation school in Foochow (Fuzhou); his grandfather had also been connected with the Customs, but Teddy had understood that all records of him in China had been destroyed during the Boxer Rebellion. Sussex proved to be annoyingly liberal with its Kingstons. There is a Kingston near Lewes, Brighton, but its local records revealed nothing, similarly with a Kingston near Shoreham, but one at East Preston, near Littlehampton, proved to be the birthplace, and the local Worthing District registry office of the West Sussex County Council was most helpful. Not only did the staff locate B-T's birth certificate, but also those of his siblings, as well as an account in the local paper of B-T's father's dramatic death. This all began to reveal something of his family of origin. Any impression gained of his social origins by the double-barrelled name and a view that was held that his father may have had a commission in the Services was dispelled.

Another grandchild, Joan, was also still alive, living in the United States, and an enthusiastic correspondence ensued between us. She was only fourteen years old when B-T died; she had some impressions of him, but little knowledge. However, she did have a few interesting letters from him to her and her mother (his other daughter-in-law) and some photographs.

An unexpected quarry was much closer to hand. My wife's grandmother, Margaret Ellis (known as Peg in her family), had a tradition of exchanging monthly letters with her brothers and sisters, known as a 'budge',<sup>12</sup> detailing activities over the previous month; these were returned to the original writer, and they were left to my wife by her mother. They have proved an invaluable historical source, extending from 1900 to the Second World War, and they have been well-mined by my wife for other purposes.<sup>13</sup> While only limited information about his career and publications were discovered, the budges uncovered more about B-T's family relationships, certain of his activities and aspects of his personality.

Past advice to students (as well as to myself) on the value of reading footnotes was amply justified when a useful outline of some of the main positions B-T had held in China was found in a footnote in a book on the Chinese Customs.<sup>14</sup> This formed a useful structure for filling out details of his career. Enjoyable discussions with Dr. Frances Wood of the British Library provided further useful sources on



the Customs and expatriate life in China generally, from her extraordinary range of knowledge. But I was not aware at that stage of the volume of academic work on the Customs that was being undertaken.

Fortuitously, around this time two interesting articles in the *London Review of Books* appeared, written by an academic whose father had also been a commissioner in the Chinese Customs.<sup>15</sup> This drew my attention to the existence of a highly important archive in China and the possibility of records relating to B-T being housed there.

From the time that B-T achieved the position of commissioner of Customs, details of his life became fuller. Robert Hart, Inspector General of the Imperial Chinese Maritime Customs, had introduced the practice of requiring regular semi-official reports of the local situation from those occupying the position of commissioner at the Customs posts. These reports, written in English at approximately fortnightly intervals, are a fascinating record of what was happening in all the places in China which had a Customs presence. The Second Republican Historical Archive in Nanking (Nanjing) keep most of the materials on the Customs that have been found in China, including pre-Republican documents. Reputedly, twenty-seven kilometres of Customs materials are held there.

I had announced to the director of the archive my intention to go to Nanking in the autumn of November 1999 with the hope of finding material on B-T. I had already been warned not to expect a reply. Upon my arrival, I found the splendid building in traditional Chinese architectural style most impressive, as well as numerous volumes of reports including ones written by B-T selected for me to use. These included only certain postings: Mengtze (Mengzi), Mukden (now Shenyang) and Chungking (Chongqing). Commissioners working at the headquarters in Peking (Beijing), as B-T did for some years, did not appear to write such reports; some correspondence relating to other postings became available later. Few people were using the archive when I arrived, and the spacious room where one was allowed to peruse material was fairly empty. The archive's opening hours were limited and it was subject to unexpected closure, making time-planning difficult; the occasional user I spoke to complained of the high cost of using the facilities, even for Chinese. Officials also insisted, rather inconveniently, that notes had to be made on paper provided by them and not in the user's own notebook. Hopefully much of this is changing, aided by a project that has been underway drawing on the experience of British sinologists to help local staff modernize the archive.

It was, however, an extraordinary experience to open the volumes, many probably unregarded for a hundred years, and read the reports written or typed in English by the commissioners. And there were B-T's signed reports, with comments written in the margins by Inspector General Robert Hart or Francis Aglen, who became inspector general after Hart's death. A detailed picture of the kinds of

activities in which B-T engaged could be derived from these regular semi-official reports.

Other chance events led to more information. For example, meeting a researcher in the London Public Record Office who had constructed a coastguard database from which I was able to derive information about B-T's parents; happily, I was eventually able to reciprocate with information for her card index. Other clues were found in the archives of the Royal Astronomical Society, of which B-T was a member. As have others who have used archives, contemporary newspapers and official records, they have proved to be endlessly fascinating; fortunately, while it is difficult to restrain one's desire to go on reading them, the exercise is often justified, if only by the unexpected find.

Over the years, other potential sources came to light as I trawled the books, letters and diaries of people who worked in China around the time when B-T was there. Just as I thought that the flow of information was drying up, another source sprang and had to be traced, without knowing whether it would reveal more than a trickle. One exciting example is the stream which flowed from a chance comment in the diary of a friend visiting B-T mentioning a place his wife was; this led to revelations of the nature and extent of her mental illness and rendered important insights into their marital relationship. Thus, the research extended for much longer than had been expected.

Gradually, I was being drawn into a search I had not intended, and into unexpected byways of history, as I began to try to understand the world B-T inhabited. My concern moved from producing a short memoir, essentially a synopsis of his career, to seeing how his private journey was played out in the context of the wider world. In particular, as I discovered more about his life in China it became essential to try seeing his career in relation to what was happening in that historically complex country, for the changes occurring there provided opportunities and challenges for the individuals caught up in them.

Soon I became interested in the relationship between the broad historical events — evidenced in China's relationship with the West, its internal turmoils such as the Taiping and Boxer movements and its attempts at modernization — and the personal impact of these on an individual. I am aware that distilling a complex history into the confines of a few chapters is fraught with the dangers of selection, omission, and distortion, yet it seemed important to try to set out certain major developments crucial for understanding some of the context in which the individual operated. In doing this, I have made more explicit than I have found elsewhere the importance of the interplay between a triangle of forces in China which most impinged on the lives of individual expatriates, providing as they did those twin characteristics of opportunity and danger. These three major forces were foreign domination and trade, internal dissent and modernization. Each of these forces covers huge areas

which cannot be done justice in a book of this kind, though one institution, the Chinese Customs, a fascinating and significant product of the interaction of all three forces, is given special prominence here because of its role in B-T's life.

Some readers may find the attempt to understand China's history through the interplay of these dimensions overly simplistic, and the marriage of the broad analysis to the individual too crude. All I can argue is that this analysis has helped my understanding of the times. But frameworks tend to be fragile, and others who are more knowledgeable may wish to demolish or, more usefully, further refine the framework. Some comfort is drawn from another observation of Strachey, which is that the first requisite of the historian is ignorance — though I would not recommend taking that too far!

Economic or strategic self-interest is the paramount explanation for foreign participation in China, and certainly the activities of those involved generally provided opportunities for financial benefit and social advancement. Often the rewards were considerably higher than those likely to be available to individuals in their home country. For the majority of foreigners who operated in China, this was the major motivation. Further, the predominant view of both Chinese and Western writers over the past half century or so has been that the Western players in the China game were agents, consciously or not, of an imperialist agenda. While not quarrelling with the general validity of this perspective, my contention is that it is by no means the whole story. The private correspondence of some of those involved reveals a contrary picture, a real desire to help China develop. Of course, it could be argued that this was a rationalization, an example of Man needing a comfortable motivation to cloud self-interest, but benevolence, albeit well-paid, should not be dismissed. Among those who went to China's shores out of self-advancement, there were a minority who became attracted, indeed engrossed, by its culture. In the study of China's history, social institutions, customs, philosophy, visual arts, literature and language, there were foreigners who became significant scholars, trying to understand a world alien to them. They communicated with one another largely through learned societies, Western language journals, newspapers and books. Some would argue that even this activity was carrying out an imperialist agenda, albeit unconsciously.<sup>16</sup> But this position underemphasizes the positive contributions of those so engaged, who while following their own interests, also acted as a conduit for bringing knowledge and understanding of China to the West, as well as contributing to China's development. Crudely caricatured, it could be said of some that during their working hours they intruded the West into China, but in their leisure they were the means of introducing Chinese thought and achievements to the West. Their disinterestedness should not be overstated, but neither should it go unrecognized. The motivation was sometimes dual: the strands of self-interest and altruism often interweave, sometimes too finely to tease out fully. If personal ambition led some

to become, for example, expert sinologues, they did so out of self-interest, not as imperialist agents.

Most of these foreigners did not withdraw from their own culture, remaining embedded in their various European cultures and lifestyles, though their perceptions of these may well have been modified by bestriding two cultures. B-T is centre-stage here, but his life was peopled by expatriates with deep interest in China, including Robert Hart and other Customs colleagues, H. A. Giles, Alexander Michie, Sr., G. E. Morrison and Evangeline Dora Edwards, among others.

This, then, is the product of various avenues of enquiry. Specialists in China's diverse and complex history of the late Ch'ing (Qing) period should find some interest in the slivers of detail and knowledge about certain people prominent on the China scene; they are less likely to find much of the broader canvas that is especially new. Those less familiar with China's history will be introduced to certain significant events, such as the Taiping, the Self-Strengthening movement, the Boxers, and especially the significance of the Chinese Customs, a Chinese organization that was Western led. These all had an impact on China and on China's relationship with the West. They are essentially windows into aspects of China's development, brief sketches to help illumine the context of the life of a foreigner abroad. I have tried to discover more about all of B-T's writings, but though the opinion of sinologues has been sought, there is no serious attempt here to evaluate B-T as a translator.

My central concern in relation to the subject has been the reconstruction of a life and how China provided opportunity for an individual. Historical interpretation is bounded by context, and much interpretation of modern China's history has emphasized the role of China as 'Europe's victim'.<sup>17</sup> Many Chinese and Western historians have stressed this interpretation, but there were actors on the scene who would have argued otherwise. The Customs Service, where B-T spent most of his career, richly exemplifies both viewpoints, being seen by some as a tool for imperialists, by others as a major force in China's modernization. By pointing up the activities of B-T and some of his circle, this study hopefully makes a modest contribution to the history of Britain in China. It also demonstrates that not all foreigners in China only focused on maximizing reward; there were also those who became interested in Chinese culture and helped to extend knowledge of China in the West.

Currently we are witnessing a rediscovery of China. The strong Western presence in China from around the Opium Wars in the 1840s to the early twentieth century enabled many outside China to gain some insight into China's culture: 'things Chinese' entered the popular imagination,<sup>18</sup> albeit frequently with distortion. Following the Second World War and the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the country became for a time rather impenetrable again. Now, with the opening up of China and its position as a world power, knowledge of and interest in

China is deepening. Much of the recent interest and writing has focused on the period following 1949, and especially the role of Mao Tse-tung and the Gang of Four, and the effects of policies such as the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. Along with the current economic resurgence, interest is broadening more positively to include China's cultural achievements (witness the major exhibitions being held, films shown and literature published) and pre-1949 history, including the lives of Westerners in China.

A life of achievement is almost its own celebration, but few lives are untouched by sadness. As will become apparent, B-T, despite his modest career success and the wide recognition of his scholarship, was shadowed by a great deal of personal grief. He appeared to shoulder this with stoicism, perhaps as a defence. His was a life which, especially given his unobtrusive and somewhat secretive personality, could easily fade into obscurity. Perhaps he would not have given thanks to anyone for rescuing him from such a fate, by revealing aspects of his life which he might have preferred to have remained hidden. Whether or not one should embark on such an undertaking is a moral problem which frequently besets the biographer. The writer tends to follow where his or her inclination leads and weave his or her own rationale for decisions on what to include. B-T's achievement in the face of difficult circumstances seems to justify some kind of record.

For me, there has been a triple bonus: first, the research became a focus for becoming much more familiar with China's turbulent, extraordinarily complex and endlessly fascinating history; second, it introduced me to unfamiliar sources and the delights of using rich though little-used archives; third, and by no means least, this research has brought me in touch with a wide range of people, many well-versed in various aspects of China, providing new friendships and acquaintances.

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## Retirement and Publication of the *Romance*

At the end of December 1920, at the age of sixty-three, B-T returned to Britain to join his wife in her house in Earlsferry, Elie, Fifeshire, Scotland;<sup>1</sup> there he lived throughout his retirement, though according to his will never really regarding it the place he would have chosen to live. He made frequent trips south, about four times a year according to his wife, to see friends and relatives. He went mainly to London, Bournemouth, as well as Portsmouth, and usually on his own.<sup>2</sup> Peg Ellis's letters reveal his movements and the close contact he was pleased to maintain with his deceased son's family, providing as they did a rare source of personal warmth and welcome.

He travelled south to visit the Ellises in February, very shortly after his return, and would have stayed longer if he had not promised his wife that he would return by a given date. At Easter, Evelyn and Teddy were due to see B-T in Scotland, the first of what became regular yearly trips to be with him around that time. But they had to keep putting off going that year, as Ann had had a 'very bad turn lately' and then had to go into a home in Edinburgh for a 'rest cure'.<sup>3</sup> In September 1921, Peg writes to her daughter Winnie that Evelyn, staying at the Earlsferry house 'Cathay', is 'having rather a rough time, I fear. Mrs. B-T is not allowed to see women and children.'<sup>4</sup> The sight of women and their children seemed to have triggered unhappy memories for Ann of the loss of her babies and allegedly destabilized her. Ann spent another three months in the Edinburgh Asylum then was discharged without improvement, still having hallucinations and delusions.

The following year, in February 1922, Ann had recovered sufficiently to join B-T on a visit to London:

Grandpa B-T came to town for a week *with his wife*, who was unusually well. I went to tea with them . . . Grandma was most amiable and nobody would have guessed how dreadful she can be.<sup>5</sup>

Later that summer, Ann was in the asylum again. According to the hospital notes, she was being more frequently violent towards B-T, suffering outbursts of

temper at night, battering doors and screaming; this continued throughout her two-month stay in hospital.

At that time, Peg and her two daughters were still living in Inglefield, which was proving difficult to sell. In this post-war period, people were reluctant to take on large houses, as servants were increasingly hard to find and expensive. They had first looked for a smaller house near Peg's daughter Daisy, then in Whetstone, Middlesex. They then decided to move to Bournemouth to be near one of Peg's sisters married to a Unitarian minister there, Rev. Henry Shaen Solly, whose father was referred to earlier, regarding the First Opium War. They found a suitable house, Branksome Lodge, far smaller than Inglefield, but still substantial, to which they moved that autumn, 1922.

During May of that year, Evelyn and Teddy went to tea with B-T at the Kingsley Hotel,<sup>6</sup> which he frequented on his trips to London:

It was to meet a Miss Edwards, a professor of Chinese at the School of Oriental Languages, a friend of Grandpa's. Not very amusing for Teddy on the whole.<sup>7</sup>

Evangeline Dora Edwards had only recently become a lecturer at the school, in 1921. B-T had continued contact with her after their friendship began in Mukden and was obviously keen to introduce her to his intimate family. Teddy was only four years old then, but he does remember meeting her when he was around sixteen. Given that his memories of the whole of that period are rare, especially over details, it is surprising that he remembers her and readily recalled the name 'Dr. Edwards'. For that name to have registered, either he met her several times or he might have heard references made about her by the adults around him; perhaps something was said that caused the name to be significant to the teenager Teddy.

On the same trip, B-T spent the whole day in the garden at Inglefield and returned the following day. He clearly found the family's welcome, in particular that of Peg, as congenial as had his sons just twenty years before. Now, he had the additional interest of a grandson. In October, soon after the move to Bournemouth, he visited them both before and after going to France to visit Raymond's grave. At Christmas he went again, taking a meccano construction set for Teddy. 'I think he likes Bournemouth', Peg wrote of B-T.<sup>8</sup>

The following year, May 1923, he again went to France, this time with Evelyn, to visit the graves, not only of Raymond but also of Evelyn's brothers, Edward and Bernard. B-T's knee was presenting a problem, so they could not walk enough to get warm — 'it seems to be sinovitis' (appropriate enough for a sinologist!), an inflammation of the knee.

That Christmas a slight disapproval was expressed by Peg, ever critical of indulgence, when Grandpa B-T insisted on presenting Teddy, whose birthday was

around that time, 'a sugared cake'; later, she speaks of his spoiling Teddy more than she does, then tries to excuse him: 'perhaps he would not . . . if he were with him more'.<sup>9</sup> She had been more approving of B-T's brother,<sup>10</sup> who had given a box of Anchor building bricks to Teddy; they were popular with the boy, being 'brought out daily', but the approval was largely because they were made in Germany. Peg's social concern overcame any possible anti-German prejudice that might have remained from the level of family bereavement suffered in the war: she felt that the misery experienced by post-war Germany should be alleviated not just by sending cash relief, but by trade between the countries. 'Surely it is better to encourage commerce', she commented.

When Evelyn and Teddy next went to Elie, they were unable to stay in the house because of the condition of B-T's wife, and he arranged rooms for them and for Leonard and his wife who were due to come on leave from Siam:

He cannot safely have them at his wife's house, she would become distraught by the prospect, probably. So a family party will be achieved this way.<sup>11</sup>

They went on 5 June, 'when the doctor pronounced all safe'.

B-T continued to make frequent trips to Bournemouth, where he could spend more time with his grandson: 'Teddy and he are excellent friends, birds of a feather.'<sup>12</sup> Teddy was also shy, sensitive and undemanding. References to Evelyn visiting B-T in London are frequent. They went to concerts and enjoyed meals together: 'salmon and chicken are luxuries we never taste . . . except when Grandpa B-T takes them to lunch anywhere', writes Peg.<sup>13</sup> Frugal over food, Peg ensured that in the Ellis household food was something to be eaten not fussed over, and rarely even discussed.

There is a curious allusion to B-T's having sailed for China at the beginning of May 1924, for when Evelyn went to Elie in early June she saw him everyday. He certainly could not have 'sailed'; that would have taken far too long: the direct route by steamer taking about thirty-two days in the mid-1930s, and if via Canada somewhere between twenty-nine and thirty-four days. Long-distance air flights to the Far East did not really develop until the 1930s, with refuelling stops every five hundred miles; flying would have been so rare to surely have been remarked on by Peg.<sup>14</sup> So in 1924, the trans-Siberian train route would have been the most probable mode of travelling quickly if not very comfortably; this is the way mail would have been sent. Even if B-T had gone then, it would have been an extremely brief visit, perhaps in connection with the *San Kuo* publication which was to come out the following year. More likely, he may have intended to go but cancelled the trip because of his wife's illness.

Something of B-T's feelings of sadness and frustration is occasionally expressed in family letters; after Evelyn and Teddy's Easter 1926 visit to Earlsferry,



Evelyn, who was fond of B-T, was 'loth to leave the lonely Grandpa'.<sup>15</sup> When later that year she went up to London in order to spend a few days with him there, he was irritatingly summoned back to his wife. 'Quite unnecessarily',<sup>16</sup> Peg asserts dismissively.

### **The Romance of the Three Kingdoms**

Five years into B-T's retirement, in December 1925, his translation of the *San Kuo Chih Yen-I* as *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* was published in Shanghai by Kelly and Walsh. We have seen that various other works of his had been published well before this, his last being the revised edition of *Textbook of Modern Documentary Chinese*, Volume 1 in 1909, and Volume 2 in 1910. Apart from his *Chats in Chinese*, there is no evidence of other writings since the destruction of the complete draft of the *San Kuo* during the Boxer troubles, so for fifteen years he seems not to have published.

The long delay in publication given the speed at which the first draft was produced could be attributed to a number of factors. The shock of losing the first draft after so much effort might have caused at least the temporary abandonment of the endeavour by a lesser man, but this does not quite fit with what we know of B-T's stolid single-mindedness. He had obviously been keen to revise the *Textbook* — as we have seen he put himself forward for that task. He probably saw this book as being more relevant and beneficial to his career than redoing the *Romance*. Career progression to commissioner rank took place immediately following the Boxer episode, and his new responsibilities, in which he would have wanted to excel, may well have led to writing taking less of a priority. Every job change, and there were several in the years before his retirement, meant getting to know a new area and new colleagues within and beyond the Customs, learning to deal with new authorities and local powerful figures and generally establishing a social presence; these were all in their different ways time-consuming. Then there were family concerns, especially the demanding burdens of his wife's disorder, which must have been extremely disturbing until he learnt to adjust, working out strategies for survival by a combination of judicious handling and withdrawal.

In October 1926 Peg informed her siblings that B-T had sent copies of his capacious translation to the family:

Grandpa B-T has sent Evelyn his two volumes of translation of an old Chinese romance, historical. He has had it published in China.

He dedicated the work 'To the memory of my son Raymond'.

The first edition's first printing carried the statement that it had been 'Especially prepared for the use and education of the Chinese People'; thus, the initial perception

of the publisher was that the level of English literacy among Chinese at the time was sufficiently high to aim at the Chinese market. Within four years of the book's publication, the same publisher decided to bring out a cheap edition of the work, noting:

The Standard edition of this translation of China's most famous historical novel . . . is fast becoming out of print. The price of this Standard edition, it was realised, was above the purchasing capacity of the average Chinese reader, and therefore, in view of the ever-increasing desire on the part of the latter to embrace Western learning, it was thought that a cheaper edition might meet with the support of Chinese friends who would be interested in reading in English what most of them have already read in their mother tongue.<sup>17</sup>

Conceivably, the unintended delay in publishing the work had provided an opportunity to tap a new audience. For following the May Fourth movement, a more positive attitude to popular culture emerged; it came to be seen as more creative and vital than the sterile classical works of 'high culture'. Though the translation seemingly ran counter to the Chauvinistic strand of the movement, the publisher may have thought that the widened interest in traditional vernacular novels could attract Chinese who also enjoyed reading English.

B-T's translation was the first attempt at a complete translated version of the *San Kuo*, written some six hundred years previously and attributed Lo Kuan-chung (1330–1400) but probably extensively revised by many hands and voices.<sup>18</sup> By producing the first full version in English of any of the major Chinese traditional novels, B-T pioneered the introduction of China's popular traditional novels to the English-speaking world.

B-T was well aware of the limited view of fiction as literature held by Chinese traditionally, and he quoted from another foreign scholar right from the beginning of his preface to justify his translation:

A. Wylie,<sup>19</sup> in his invaluable *Notes on Chinese Literature*, says, 'Works of fiction *par excellence* are not admitted by the Chinese to form a part of their national literature. Those who have imbibed European ideas on the subject, however, will feel that the novels and romances are too important as a class to be overlooked. The insight they give in the national manners and customs of various ages, the specimens which they furnish of an ever-changing language, the fact of this being the only channel through which a large portion of the people gain their knowledge of history, and the influence which they must consequently exercise in the formation of character, are reasons too weighty to be left out of account, notwithstanding the prejudices of scholars on the subject. Foremost among these in popular estimation is the *San Kuo Chih Yen-i*.'<sup>20</sup>

The quotation goes on with a description of the novel. While laudable to quote another authority at length to justify oneself, this practice also seems characteristically self-effacing of B-T. More important, the reference gives a major clue to why B-T undertook the translation: to provide a complete example of a neglected genre to the English-speaking world, a genre that was generally more accessible than was classical literature, which had been the focus of the early sinologists. By his work, B-T was in the vanguard of the second wave of expatriate sinological pioneers.

So this was B-T's major explicit justification: novels and romances were too important a class to be overlooked. One can only speculate why he chose the *San Kuo*. Perhaps he did so because it was the most influential of the major novels; the possible urging by Giles would have helped; and the language of the edition he used for his translation would have been an additional challenge, a successful translation likely to enhance his reputation as a scholar (he would not have originally anticipated such a long haul to publication). One wonders, too, whether within the seemingly gentle translator there lay a yearning for adventure, expressed in the battles of the *San Kuo*, and, indeed, in his initial decision to go to China.

The importance of the *San Kuo* has frequently been emphasized. A recent edition regards the *Romance* to be 'China's greatest classical novel . . . fundamentally about people [in it, we] see our own strengths, weaknesses, wisdom, folly'.<sup>21</sup> Another edition of the translation has an introduction by Roy Andrew Miller, which summarizes the work as a popularization of events which took place in the period from AD 220 to 265. The main outline, he asserts, is historically correct, with real chief characters but with most of the incidents and anecdotes, fictional elements result from centuries of accretion:

The book is . . . a historical romance of major proportions, a fascinating novel, whose chief theme is the nature of human ambition.<sup>22</sup>

Numerous other attempts to distil its essence have been made. One in particular lays emphasis on the concern with righteousness expressed in different ways. The novel's glorification of traditional behaviour, friendship, brotherhood and loyalty has had an immense exemplifying influence on Chinese secret societies still prevalent today.<sup>23</sup>

A recent contemporary novel has another take on the *Romance*:

There is a saying, 'If you are old, you don't read The Three Kingdoms. If you are young, you don't read The Dream' . . . Because the Three Kingdoms is all about plotting and scheming. Old men are already shrewd, they don't need to read something that makes them even more so. The Dream is all about romance and when you are young you are already romantic enough.<sup>24</sup>

Several book reviews of B-T's translation have been effusive in their praise. The earliest found was by an A. J. Bowen:

Mr. Brewitt-Taylor, formerly of the Chinese Customs Service, has placed the West under great obligation by this translation of a very distinctively Eastern work. Throughout the entire Orient, 'The Three Kingdoms' is widely-known, not only by scholars and general readers, but also by the illiterate, for its marvellous adventures and stirring battles have been told in countless tea shops and way-side inns by matchless storytellers from the time of our own great story teller, Chaucer, to the present day . . . The San Kuo is undoubtedly the most popular of all of China's many novels. . .

The translator has done a most excellent piece of work. It is a real translation, and not an extended summary. It gives you the author's exact words, in so far as they can be expressed in idiomatic English. But better still, the way of saying it in English preserves very well indeed the tone and spirit and the movement of the original — a task by no means easy of accomplishment, a success which few translators of Chinese achieve.<sup>25</sup>

Another review, in the *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, appeared under the initials 'E. M.' The only member of the society then with those initials was E. Mengel, who around that time was Superintendent of Chinese Telegraphs in Yunnan. The piece contains the following:

The English reader will be furnished with all that is necessary to understand the thrilling events of this most interesting period in Chinese history. To be unacquainted with these events is really to lose much of the materials that go to fill the popular mind with the romance of the country. The tales from this period supply the storytellers with their stock in trade. It is known how they keep an audience attentively listening, in some busy corner, for a long time with recounting the valiant deeds of a leading actor in these times long vanished. Many of the popular plays in the theatres are founded on some episode from the San Kuo Chi . . .

At the same time he [the reader] will be getting acquainted with some solid facts of Chinese history, the knowledge of which will help him to understand many allusions in Chinese books. The romance is founded on fact. But in the romance there is much extension of fact . . .

The volume before us contains a wealth of material not only of descriptive history, but of ample stuff to help the humanitarian, the psychologist, and the pathologist of the human passions to enlarge the subject of their studies . . . we are introduced to the inner working of the human mind in its plans and schemes! How it is often governed by selfish ambition and directed by subtle and crafty policy to gain personal satisfaction. At the same time we are made to feel that the finer emotions of love and self-denial are the common heritage of ancient folk as well as the modern man . . .

Mr. C. H. Brewitt-Taylor undertook a great task. We are glad that its magnitude did not daunt him but that he has brought it to a completion. The work is magnificently done.

Then, almost sounding as though the reviewer expected the public to do penance for B-T's herculean labours, he wrote:

The public should show its appreciation of the noble effort by reading the results of so many years labours, and thus not only show its gratitude but at the same time enrich their own minds with this wealth of Chinese lore.<sup>26</sup>

The reviews acknowledge B-T's qualities of hard work and meticulous persistence; even more, they are a tribute to his scholarship and feel for language. Others have rated his translation as 'brilliant' and 'masterly'. He must have been well-satisfied by all the acclaim.

### Writings Post-*San Kuo* Publication

Few other writings by B-T have been found since the publication of the *San Kuo*. It seems difficult to believe that the known withdrawals to his den in Earlsferry produced nothing further, but it could well be that retirement with his wife was highly stressful, never knowing when she might erupt.

The year of his death was to see the publication of *The Dragon Book*, an anthology of Chinese literature by Evangeline Dora Edwards. This book was designed to recall 'the ancient spirit of old beauty and serene detachment' of old China, and it contains a number of quotations from B-T's translation of the *San Kuo*. Evangeline also records her thanks to B-T for suggesting a romantic poem with a light humorous touch: 'The Small-Footed Maid', possibly written by a Mr. E. C. Baker. The poem is something of a spoof and must have amused B-T and Evangeline. The following couplets indicate the flavour of the piece:

But fairer by far was the small-footed maid  
     Who sat by my side in the sandal-wood shade, ...  
 And dearest I thought her of maids in Peking,  
     As from the pagoda she bade me chin-chin. ...  
 And soon the most beautiful girl in Peking  
     Fell asleep in the arms of her own mandarin.<sup>27</sup>

It has been suggested to me that the poem does not strictly belong in a serious anthology, and perhaps it was seen by them as a rather naughty inclusion, suggesting perhaps a little frisson or private joke between them; though it should be noted that there are other light-hearted pieces in the anthology, for example, one in pidgin English by H. A. Giles.

In terms of major work, the *San Kuo* was B-T's apotheosis, and it may be that he felt anything else he produced would do little to enhance further his reputation or, more particularly, his personal satisfaction. After a demanding life, and a trying wife, he was emotionally drained and tiring, feeling his years as he approached seventy.

### Additional Translations of the *San Kuo*

Following B-T's rendering of the *San Kuo* into English, translations into other European languages appeared: German in 1953, Russian in 1954 and French in the early 1960s.<sup>28</sup> There had already been translations into Far Eastern languages: Manchu, Japanese and Siamese.<sup>29</sup>

But for seventy years, the only full translation of the *San Kuo* into English was that of B-T. There have been numerous editions since it was first published in 1925. One in 1959 by the Charles E. Tuttle Company in Rutland, Vermont, has had multiple reprints, the most recent in 2003. Likewise, another publisher, Graham Brash in Singapore, published the work in 1985 and has found it sufficiently popular to have repeated reprints since.

In 1991, a new, complete English translation of the *San Kuo*, undertaken by the American sinologue Professor Moss Roberts, was published. The only acknowledgement to B-T made by the author is brief:

A word of recognition is also due to C. H. Brewitt-Taylor, whose 1925 translation of *Three Kingdoms* I read long before gathering enough Chinese to confront the original.

The only other reference is to his disagreement over the interpretation of the *yanyi* in the title, which B-T translates as 'romance'; Roberts deliberately does not use this 'because it denotes a world removed from reality', preferring 'historical novel'.<sup>30</sup>

Roberts argues that the *San Kuo* has two aspects: the historical is Han; its literary aspect, Ming. Others have also pointed out that in the Confucian tradition, history and literature are not generally seen as separate fields:

The historical novel *Three Kingdoms* . . . has shaped the thinking of the Chinese people about the issues of war, politics, and history, perhaps more than any other single work. It is also a major literary masterpiece that influenced the development of drama as well as the novel in China.<sup>31</sup>

B-T was well aware of the difficulty of how to describe the work, for a review he wrote in the 1880s contains a full discussion of the very point Roberts takes issue

with.<sup>32</sup> B-T argued in some detail a century earlier that it is neither a romance nor a novel, not even an historical one; he preferred to call it an ‘historical drama not written for the stage’,<sup>33</sup> a clumsy description he was to jettison in favour of the more simple ‘romance’. He does not justify his choice of title when the book is eventually published thirty-five years after the review. Chinese speakers I have discussed this issue with are of the view that ‘romance’ is an acceptable translation of *yen-i*.<sup>34</sup>

The publisher’s blurb to Roberts’s new translation refers to its being a ‘readable translation . . . the early English version [being] turgid’. A review of Roberts’s translation avers the novel’s ‘indelible position in the Chinese heritage’ and goes on to describe B-T’s translation as complete but faulty. The reviewer states that Roberts provides in his 1991 edition a complete and authoritative translation which ‘perfectly captures the feeling of the original text’.<sup>35</sup>

Not all sinologues share these views. A contrasting view has been presented by John Minford:

*The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is, to me best translated by C. H. Brewitt-Taylor, though there is a recent one by Moss Roberts.<sup>36</sup>

He and another British sinologue who had compared the two translations and were familiar with the Chinese version were asked separately how they thought they compared. Their verbal assessments coincided: their view was that Roberts’s version was both more complete (‘everything was there’) and more scholarly, with very useful annotations, but they considered that B-T’s translation better captured the flavour of the original and was more concise and stylistically superior; B-T caught the essence more. The verdict of each was the same: ‘he has not been superseded’.

# Notes

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## Chapter 1

1. Preface by Arthur Waley to the abridged 1929 edition of *Dream of the Red Chamber*, translated by Wang Chi-chen.
2. Dawson, *The Chinese Experience*, pp. 236–7.
3. See Spence, *The Chan's Great Continent*, pp. 20–32.
4. One of the most influential foreign explorers was James Legge (1815–97), who went to China as a missionary, became a major sinologist and later the first professor of Chinese at Oxford University. His eight volumes of the *Chinese Classics* were published between 1861 and 1872, and his six volumes of the *Sacred Books* between 1879 and 1891 (Girardot, *The Victorian Translation of China*, pp. 6–13).
5. Hsia, *The Classic Chinese Novel*. Chinese official attitudes towards these six novels underwent change during the twentieth century. Prior to the Cultural Revolution, they had been proclaimed as national classics but were thereafter dismissed as ‘relics of the feudal past totally incompatible with the thought of Mao-Tse-tung.’ Though officially repudiated, the earlier status ‘still claims the silent allegiance of mainland scholars seriously concerned with the nation’s literary heritage’ (Hsia, *The Classic Chinese Novel*, preface to the 1996 edition, p. xi). Later, however, the six novels were re-accorded an enhanced prestige, and the ‘new designation for traditional novels, “the classic novel”, signalizes conclusively a change of national attitude’ (Hsia, *The Classic Chinese Novel*, p. 2).
6. The following dates for full translations into English are derived from Nienhauser, *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, pp. 668–70, and Davidson, *List of Published Translations from the Chinese into English, French and German*, pp. 12ff: *The Water Margin* (also known as *All Men Are Brothers*), 1933; *The Golden Lotus*, 1939; *Journey to the West* (*Monkey*), 1942; *The Scholars*, 1957; *Dream of the Red Chamber*, 1958.
7. Roberts, *Three Kingdoms*, p. 412, discusses Lo’s possible dates.
8. Roberts, *Three Kingdoms*, p. 454. Moss Roberts states that the Mao Chinese text of the mid-1660s was the one used for all translations that have been made of the novel.
9. I am indebted to Dr. Bernard Fuehrer of SOAS for this point.
10. Later, I discovered the reason for the elusiveness of the record: it was not the centre’s fault but my ignorance of the quirks of documentation. Registration of birth had to



take place within six weeks; sickness or superstition frequently led to registration being delayed as long as possible. In B-T's case, his birth appeared in the register for January–March 1858, not in the expected register for his birth month, the preceding December.

11. See e.g. Plummer, *Documents of Life*.
12. The word probably derived from one definition of 'budget' as a quantity of written or printed material and seems to have been used in the nineteenth century to mean a domestic report (e.g. see Porter, *From Belfast to Peking*, p. 66).
13. Readers interested in the use of letters for historical purposes might find the following article useful: Charmian Cannon, 'Ladies of Leisure? The Everyday Life of an Edwardian Mother and Her Daughters', *Women's History Magazine* 43 (March 2003).
14. Wright, *Hart and the Chinese Customs*, p. 866. One erudite history of footnotes is found in Grafton, A., *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Faber and Faber, 2003).
15. Anderson, 'A Belated Encounter'.
16. Argument about imperialism in China has been diverse and wide-ranging. Nineteenth-century imperialists cloaked their political or commercial activities with a moral imperative, and the post-Second World War anti-colonial climate tended to produce overly simplistic views; recent writings as we shall see, have been more sophisticated and nuanced.
17. Ferro, *The Use and Abuse of History*, p. 274.
18. Bickers, *Britain in China*, see especially Chap. 2.

## Chapter 2

1. Webb, *Coastguard!* p. 13.
2. Webb, *Coastguard!* pp. 32–6.
3. Hobsbawm, *Uncommon People*, p. 24.
4. Webb, *Coastguard!* p. 50.
5. WSG, 22 October 1868.
6. Burnett, *Plenty and Want*, p. 94.
7. Cole and Postgate, *The Common People, 1746–1946*, p. 354; see also Jay, *Sterling: Its Use and Misuse*, for a valuable analysis of the incidence and problems of measuring changes in the value of money over the period from 1451 to 1983.
8. According to the curator of the Littlehampton Museum, there were forty-one private schools in the area, for there was no state school until after the 1870 Education Act.

## Chapter 3

1. The 1881 Census showed Herbert working as a 'boy writer', i.e. a clerk, in the Chatham Naval Dockyard. He thus continued a familial maritime connection, possibly as a budding civil servant. He resided near his work, in 13 Mills Terrace, Chatham, living there with his mother and sister Edith Elizabeth, who was learning needlework in the School of Art. They were no longer at that address in 1891, and I could not ascertain whether the mother had died by then.

2. *Royal Hospital School Prospectus*, p. 2. The objects of the charter were to erect and found an Hospital within Our Mannor of East Greenwich in Our County of Kent for the reliefe and support of Seamen serving on board the Shippes or Vessels belonging to the Navy Royall . . . And for the Sustentation of the Widows and the Maintenance and Education of the Children of Seamen happening to be slain or disabled . . . Also for the further reliefe and Encouragement of Seamen and Improvement of Navigation.  
The bricks for the building were supplied by a Mr. Foe, a general merchant who owned a brickyard in Essex, he became better known as Daniel Defoe, the author of *Robinson Crusoe*. From 1821 to 1841 the school was co-educational, but it reverted to being boys only afterwards, on the grounds of ‘evil communication’! There was also the problem of cheating — girls finding ways of hiding in their hair answers to examination questions. For a history of the School see Macleod, *History of the Royal Hospital School*, pp. 182–202.
3. University of Cambridge, Department of Manuscripts, MSS.RGO7, item 8.
4. The property used by the Royal Naval School was sold to the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, and the buildings were reopened in 1891 as the Goldsmith’s Company’s Technical and Recreative Institution, the precursor of Goldsmiths’ College, now part of the University of London (Firth, *Goldsmiths’ College*, pp. 13, 25).
5. PRO Admiralty ADM12, 967, 71–22a. See also MacLeod, ‘History of the Royal Hospital School’, pp. 193, 196. It is conceivable that the reference is to a different Taylor, but the name and age suggest our man.
6. With the help of the Archivist of the HSBC where B-T banked an effort was made to see whether there was any evidence of monetary transmissions to his family, but none of the statements found revealed anything.
7. Wright, *Hart and the Chinese Customs*, p. 866.

## Chapter 4

1. Slack, *Opium, State and Society*, pp. 1–3.
2. Throughout the nineteenth century, opium was widely used despite many edicts against it. One traveller in China in 1894, later to become resident China correspondent of *The Times* (of London), was highly sceptical of the edicts:  
They are drawn up by Chinese philanthropists over a quiet pipe of opium, signed by opium-smoking officials, whose revenues are derived from the poppy, and posted near fields of poppy by the opium-smoking magistrates who own them. (Morrison, *An Australian in China*, p. 48)
3. Lin sent a courteous but firm appeal to Queen Victoria asking that the British desist from selling opium to China and complaining that China sends useful things such as tea, rhubarb, ginger, silk and textiles while foreigners send to China toys and opium — an evil that is not allowed in Britain, so why sell it in China? (‘Lin Tse-hsu’s Moral Advice to Queen Victoria’; see Teng and Fairbank, *China’s Response to the West*, p. 24)
4. Morse, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, Vol. 3, p. 445.

5. The treaty system has also been seen to have value from China's perspective, as it 'supplemented the tribute system as a device for incorporating the foreigner' (Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast*, p. 464).
6. *The Times*, 18 July 1842.
7. ILN, 4 June 1842. Opposition in Britain to the opium trade became more prominent after the 1860 Second Anglo-Chinese War (also known as the Second Opium War): missionaries felt their attempts at conversion were being frustrated by perceptions that the trade demonstrated the immorality of Christians; further, prohibition was backed by the temperance movement; see Brook and Wakabayashi, *Opium Regimes*, pp. 37–45; Slack, *Opium, State and Society*, p. 4.
8. Solly, *These Eighty Years*, Vol. 1, p. 434. Solly fathered a minister son, Henry Shaen Solly, who, as will be seen later, married into the family which became very significant in B-T's personal life.
9. Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, p. 141.
10. Wood, *No Dogs and Not Many Chinese*, p. 2. Extraterritoriality was abolished in a Sino-British treaty signed in Chungking, China's wartime capital, in 1943, Wood, p. 296.
11. PRO, FO671/282, January 1904.
12. PRO, FO 671/275, August 1903.
13. Bickers, *Britain in China*, pp. 122–37.
14. See, for example, Wood, *No Dogs and Not Many Chinese*; Bickers, *Britain in China*; Maugham, *On a Chinese Screen*.
15. Morse, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, Vol. 2.
16. Morse, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, Vol. 3, pp. 55–6; Wright, *The Chinese Steam Navy, 1862–1945*, p. 111. The United States was more preoccupied with establishing itself in the Pacific through its war with Spain and the annexation of the Philippines.
17. Morse, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, Vol. 3, Chap. 5.
18. Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China*, p. 383.
19. Morse, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, Vol. 3, pp. 128–55.
20. China then became mostly free of foreigners until the decade of the 1950s, when Russian aid brought technocrats and other advisers (Spence, *To Change China*, pp. 282–5). For changes in the British experience, see Bickers, *Britain in China*, especially Chaps. 5, 6.
21. Cohen, *History in Three Keys*, p. 14.
22. For a general account of the Taiping, see Spence, *God's Chinese Son*. A summary can also be found in Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China*, pp. 233–6.
23. Girardot, *The Victorian Translation of China*, p. 49. Links between the Taiping and some missionaries is explored in Smith, 'Notes on Friends and Relatives of Taiping Leaders', pp. 117ff.
24. MacNair, *Modern Chinese History*, pp. 348–50. Hung's early Christian mentor, Rev. I. J. Roberts, was disgusted with what he saw during his long sojourn in Nanking and considered Hung not to be 'soundly rational about anything'.
25. Eventually, Captain C. G. Gordon ('Chinese Gordon', who later secured fame as 'Gordon of Khartoum') of the British Royal Engineers was appointed to head what had become

- known as the ‘Ever-Victorious Army’. It became the model for the less-publicized Franco-Chinese Ever-Triumphant Army, under Prosper Giquel, which participated in the final campaigns ending the civil war. See Leibo, *A Journal of the Chinese Civil War 1864 by Prosper Giquel and Transferring Technology to China*, pp. 26, 59; Giquel, *The Foochow Arsenal and Its Results*, p. 3.
26. Morse, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, Vol. 2, p. 113; Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, pp. 183–8; CHC, Vol. 10, Part 1, pp. 456–77.
  27. Horowitz, ‘Power, Politics and the Chinese Maritime Customs’, p. 552.
  28. McAleavy, *The Modern History of China*, p. 100. A few years later, in 1869, Kung was to declare to Alcock, the British minister in Peking, ‘Take away your opium and your missionaries, and you will be welcome’ (Morse, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, Vol. 1, p. 220).
  29. Wright, *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism*, p. 14.
  30. Li was to express the view in 1872 that under ideal conditions it would take a century before China could challenge the West militarily; see David Pong’s article in Chu and Liu, *Li Hung-chang and China’s Early Modernization*, p. 87. Li had been one of the small band of reformers who helped the dynasty reassert itself in the period known as the ‘T’ung-chih Restoration’ (CHC, Vol. 10, Part 1, p. 477).
  31. McAleavy, *The Modern History of China*, p. 116.
  32. Morse, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, Vol. 2, p. 209. Kung’s earlier critical view of ‘the foreigner’ did undergo change.
  33. Chu and Liu, *Li Hung-chang and China’s Early Modernization*, p. 7.
  34. The term *tzu-ch’iang*, or ‘make ourselves strong’, was probably first used by Feng Kueifen (see Teng and Fairbank, *China’s Response to the West*, p. 50; Leibo, *Transferring Technology to China: Prosper Giquel and the Self-Strengthening Movement*, p. 60).
  35. Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China*, pp. 282ff. Some historians regard these stages as too neat to be convincing. It is also worth noting that there were different views of the effectiveness of innovation. Yen Fu, in his reformist period, said of the earlier Self-Strengthening innovations that they
 

were like a good orange tree . . . which . . . after it was transplanted produced thick-skinned oranges. The tree looks as if mid-way between life and death and we do not get the fruit we sought. (Teng and Fairbank, *China’s Response to the West*, p. 150)

 But there were also positive assessments; ‘the remarkable progress’ made in military reform is recognized as an example (Wright, *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism*, pp. 196–220).
  36. Van de Ven, ‘The Onrush of Modern Globalization in China’, especially pp. 167–76. However, industrialization remained a relatively small part of the economy: by 1911, manufacturing, mining and railways together represented only six to seven per cent of capital invested in agriculture (CHC, Vol. 11, Part 2, pp. 416–7).
  37. Bickers, *Empire Made Me*, p. 11. This detailed study of a policeman in Shanghai is a rare example of the story of a less successful ‘servant of empire’ whose history, racism and violent personality contrast vividly with that of the gentle, scholarly B-T.

**Chapter 5**

1. Governors overlooked one province; originally, governors-general, or viceroys, overlooked a larger area.
2. Biggerstaff, *The Earliest Modern Government Schools in China*, pp. 202–3.
3. Giquel, *The Foochow Arsenal and Its Results*, p. 10.
4. Roche and Cowen, *The French at Foochow*, p. 7. A description of the dockyard is also given in this book.
5. Giquel, *The Foochow Arsenal and Its Results*, p. 36.
6. Leibo, *Transferring Technology to China*, p. 85, suggests Hart was suspicious of French control.
7. Leibo, *Transferring Technology to China*, pp. 17, 26, 90.
8. Wright, *The Chinese Steam Navy, 1862–1945*, pp. 30–31.
9. The Royal Naval College had originally been established as the Royal Naval Academy in Portsmouth; it transferred to Greenwich in 1873, occupying premises of the Royal Greenwich Hospital. The transfer was not finally settled until 1876, and for a time the college was still known, confusingly, as the Portsmouth College.
10. Leibo, p. 116; Biggerstaff, *The Earliest Modern Government Schools in China*, p. 223.
11. Wright, *The Chinese Steam Navy, 1862–1945*, pp. 22, 30.
12. Biggerstaff, *The Earliest Modern Government Schools in China*, p. 252.
13. An account of Yen Fu can be found in Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power*. For a history of translation in China, see Hung and Pollard, 'Chinese Tradition'.
14. Wang, *Chinese Intellectuals and the West, 1872–1949*, p. 194.
15. Teng and Fairbank, *China's Response to the West*, pp. 149–50.
16. Wild animals continued to be reported there even as late as 1917, according to that year's *Directory and Chronicle*.
17. NCH, 20 June 1890.
18. Coates, *The China Consuls*, p. 210.
19. In Shanghai, 'the bulk of people in the treaty port service trades were working-class, or lower middle-class' (Bickers, *Britain in China*, p. 70). See also Maugham, *On a Chinese Screen*, p. 207.
20. Bickers, *Britain in China*, p. 78.
21. Coates, *The China Consuls*, p. 160.
22. Coates, *The China Consuls*, p. 35.
23. See, for example, Power, *The Ford of Heaven*.
24. Wood, *No Dogs and Not Many Chinese*, pp. 134–5.
25. The six might have included stillbirths or known miscarriages.
26. Wright, *The Chinese Steam Navy, 1862–1945*, p. 61.
27. Fairbank, Bruner and Matheson, *The I.G. in Peking*, Letter 490, n. 3.
28. ILN, 30 August 1884.
29. Eastman, *Throne and Mandarins*, p. 152.
30. Leibo, *Transferring Technology to China*, pp. 142–9.
31. Wright, *The Chinese Steam Navy, 1862–1945*, p. 24.
32. Royal Astronomical Society, *Monthly Notices*, 1938.
33. CRcdr., 1890, pp. 96, 242.

34. Conditions of service in the dockyard were attractive. Financial rewards were good, especially for those serving full five-year contracts; free, commodious accommodation was provided, and to boost morale and help retain staff, brevet rankings were given (Pong, 'Li Hung-chang and Shen Pao-chen', p. 191).
35. *Sien-shang* (*xiansheng* in pinyin), literally meaning 'first-born', is also used for a respected elder, sir or teacher.
36. Porter, *From Belfast to Peking*, p. 58. Porter was examined in Chinese for three days in the most august presence of Robert Hart, head of the Chinese Customs, a Chinese scholar who had taught Wade (who at that time was the Chinese secretary and chief secretary of the Legation), and Sir Rutherford Alcock, the British Minister in Peking (Porter, *From Belfast to Peking*, pp. 11–12). Another account of learning Chinese by a student-interpreter can be found in Cranmer-Byng, *The Old British Legation at Peking, 1860–1959*, p. 76.
37. Poole, *A Diary in Peking*, 22 May 1900.
38. Yule and Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson*, p. 581.
39. Giles, H. A., 'Two Romances', in *The Chinese Student*, Giles speaks of B-T as earning himself an important niche among those Chinese scholars of the age who will be remembered.
40. This was the view of Sir Robert Scott of the Consular Service (Giles, *The Siege of the Peking Legations*, p. xix).
41. Wood, *No Dogs and Not Many Chinese*, p. xiii. As will be seen in the next chapter, Wade was also involved in the Customs Service.
42. Aylmer, 'The Memoirs of H. A. Giles,' p. 79.
43. Aylmer, 'The Memoirs of H. A. Giles,' p. 70.
44. Aylmer, 'The Memoirs of H. A. Giles,' p. 22.
45. Bickers, *Britain in China*, p. 83.
46. Bickers, *Britain in China*, p. 83, and n. 45 on p. 110.
47. B-T's second wife was to make reference to Masons in her fantasies (see Appendix II).
48. Giles, *The Siege of the Peking Legations*, p. xx.
49. Aylmer, 'The Memoirs of H. A. Giles,' p. 27.
50. The Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society gave regular lists of members. The London RAS was established in 1823, and a Hong Kong Branch was set up very early in the life of the colony, in 1847. It closed in 1859 when the North China Branch of the RAS took over its role in that part of the world. The RAS in China ceased to function in 1949 with the founding of the PRC. The Hong Kong Branch was re-established in 1959; it is still active and publishes a journal. (See the introduction to the *Catalogue of Books on China and Hong Kong* in the RAS [Hong Kong Branch] Collection, November 1987.)
51. JNCBRAS (1885):pp. 81–86.
52. Maugham, *On a Chinese Screen*, p. 22.
53. Elder, *China's Treaty Ports*, p. 48.
54. Trevor-Roper, *The Hermit of Peking*, p. 266.
55. Lin, *Flowers in the Mirror*.
56. Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, p. 473.
57. JNCBRAS (1885): 200. This is where B-T uses the hyphen for the first time.

58. JNCBRAS (1885): 286.
59. NCH, 26 May 1886.
60. E.g. 'Deposing an Emperor — A Chinese Cromwell', CR, 1888–89, Vol. 17, No. 6, pp. 359–60, plus several brief notes in the same issue.
61. See Appendix III; CR, 1888–89, Vol. 17, No. 6, pp. 357–9. There are also a few short notes on page 359 of the same issue, recorded in Cordier, *Bibliotheca Sinica*, pp. 1853, 1854, 1873.
62. CR, 1889–90, Vol. 18, No. 3, pp. 147–51.
63. CR, 1890–91, Vol. 19, No. 2, pp. 126–8.
64. See Appendix III; also, CR, 1890–91, Vol. 19, No. 3, pp. 168–78.
65. CR, 1892–93, Vol. 20, No. 1, pp. 33–5.
66. This suggestion was made tentatively to the author by a sinologist who doesn't wish to be named.
67. Aylmer, 'The Memoirs of H. A. Giles', p. 33. The dictionary was published in 1892. It would be surprising if B-T, having written a lengthy review, would not have tried publishing elsewhere, but no such publication yet been found. Giles, in his preface to *A Chinese Biographical Dictionary* (Quaritch and Kelly and Walsh, 1898), thanks B-T for several notes on the warriors of the Three Kingdoms.

## Chapter 6

1. Hong Kong Museum of Art, *Gateways to China*, pp. 52, 99, 101; Wood, *No Dogs and Not Many Chinese*, p. 67.
2. Cranmer-Byng, *The Old British Legation at Peking*, p. 47, quoting the 1861 Kung memorandum arguing for the establishment of the Tsungli Yamen, an office for managing relationships with foreign countries. The supporting argument drew parallels with an episode from the *Three Kingdoms* — another example of the significance of the *Three Kingdoms* in Chinese culture.
3. Wright, *Origin and Development*, pp. 7–12. There were multiple incentives for the Customs officials to undercollect: the prospect of receiving 'squeeze', the inconvenience of official collection (recording and storing the payment) and the desirability of not raising government expectations for future levels of Customs income. One view concluded:
 

The natural desire of the smuggler to pay as little as possible was matched by the desire of the collector to receive as little as possible. (Hutcheon, *Shanghai Customs*, pp. 87–8)
4. Morse, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, Vol. 2, Chap. 1; also Van de Ven, 'The Onrush of Modern Globalization in China', p. 177. An interesting and detailed account of the sequence of events is to be found in Michie, *An Englishman in China*, pp. 143–54.
5. Wright, *Origin and Development*, p. 14. A useful concise account of the history of the Service is in Foster-Hall, *The Chinese Maritime Customs*.
6. Wade later became the first professor of Chinese at Cambridge from 1888 to 1895. Wood, *No Dogs and Not Many Chinese*, p. 68.

7. Following the 1860 Convention of Peking, the Tsungli Yamen, an office dealing with foreigners, in effect an embryonic foreign ministry, was established in 1861. Until this point, China had resisted setting up such an office, disdaining the formal recognition of equality which negotiating with foreign governments would have implied. The Tsungli Yamen became the arm of government responsible for a geographically widened Customs Service, which was now established as the Imperial Chinese Maritime Customs.
8. Horowitz, *Mandarins and Customs Inspectors*, pp. 43–7. Lay did, however, appear to have a broader vision for the Service than just dealing with revenues. He believed that China needed the assistance of foreigners and encouraged his inspectors (later called commissioners) to find ways of making themselves appreciated, acquiring influence that could later be used for China's modernization (Leibo, *Transferring Technology to China*, p. 17).
9. Wright, *The Chinese Steam Navy, 1862–1945*, p. 190.
10. Drage, *Servants of the Dragon Throne*, p. 258.
11. Wright, *Origin and Development of the Chinese Customs Service, 1843–1911*, pp. 1–6.
12. Fairbank, Bruner and Matheson, *The I.G. in Peking*, p. 22.
13. Morse, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, Vol. 3, p. 36.
14. Wright, *Hart and the Chinese Customs*, pp. 2–3, 330–2.
15. Cheng, *Postal Communication in China and Its Modernization, 1860–1896*; see Fairbank's introduction to *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast*.
16. Although foreign loan repayments were guaranteed by the Service, they were usually repaid from other sources (Horowitz, *Mandarins and Customs Inspectors*, p. 52).
17. Van de Ven, 'Robert Hart and Gustav Detring during the Boxer Rebellion', p. 546.
18. Van de Ven, 'The Onrush of Modern Globalization in China', p. 180.
19. CHC, Vol. 12, p. 178.
20. Circular 8, 21 June 1864, in Chinese Maritime Customs, *Documents Illustrative of the Origin, Development, and Activities of the Chinese Customs Service*, Vol. 1, pp. 36–47; also reproduced in Morse, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, Vol. 3, Appendix D, p. 453, and MacNair, *Modern Chinese History*, pp. 384ff.
21. Chinese Maritime Customs, *Documents Illustrative of the Origin, Development, and Activities of the Chinese Customs Service*, Vol. 1, p. 37.
22. Horowitz, 'Power, Politics and the Chinese Maritime Customs', pp. 565ff, discusses the political context of Circular 8.
23. SOAS Archives, Aglen Letters, 28 March 1910. Much later, in criticizing Aglen's policy in a letter to Paul King, Maze, who replaced Aglen as I-G cites Hart:

The Principles which Hart's unparalleled knowledge of Chinese psychology induced him to lay down in the early days, that the Customs must act with and assist and not ignore or displace Chinese authority, are as true today as when he first circularized them . . . Attempts to develop the service into a sort of imperium in imperio, apart from the stupidity of such a policy, can only have one culmination — humiliation and defeat. (SOAS, Maze PPMS 2, Vol. V, p. 399, 18 April 1931.)

Aglen, a Hart protégé, was unwise to neglect his master's advice and was dismissed from his post.



24. SOAS, Aglen, PPMS 211355, letters, 14 September 1911.
25. Coates, *The China Consuls*, Appendix II. See also Porter, *From Belfast to Peking*.
26. Horowitz, 'Power, Politics and the Chinese Maritime Customs', pp. 551–81, gives a more nuanced account of the relationship among the Tsungli Yamen, Hart and the West; and Bickers, 'Purloined Letters: History and the Chinese Maritime Customs Service', pp. 691–720, considers 'the Hart project' an historiographical attempt to ensure a positive perception of Hart's role for China. See also Horowitz, *Mandarins and Customs Inspectors*, pp. 41–57.
27. Wright, *Hart and the Chinese Customs*, p. iii.
28. Preston, *Besieged in Peking*, p. 42.
29. Wright, *Hart and the Chinese Customs*, p. 829.
30. Fairbank, Bruner and Matheson, *The I.G. in Peking*, 342. It has been suggested that Hart was not above lying, even to Campbell. This may not have been consciously deliberate: Hart had the kind of subtlety which caused his statements and activities to be variously interpreted — perhaps even by himself.
31. Chen and Han, *Archives of China's Imperial Maritime Customs*, p. xiv.
32. Morse, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, Vol. 2, Chap. 18, pp. 369–72. Hart had wanted his brother James to succeed him as inspector general as he thought he would be able to influence James; when it became clear that Detring, a very strong, independently minded Customs commissioner, was being backed by the powerful Li Huang-chang, Hart changed his mind and decided to resign the appointment.
33. PRO, FO671/275, provides an example of this when, because of long delays, the British Minister requested on 15 October 1903 that the imperial highness transfer the authority for issuing certificates from a Chinese body, the Taotai, to the ICMC. The request was granted.
34. Lam, *Memoirs of 35-Year Service in the Chinese Maritime Customs*, p. 75. Lam's *Memoirs* also contains a picture of the kinds of activities undertaken in a Customs office.
35. Fairbank, Bruner and Matheson, *The I.G. in Peking*, 53.
36. Elder, *China's Treaty Ports*, 'A Career in the Customs', p. 46.
37. Aitcheson, *The Chinese Maritime Service in the Transition from the Ch'ing to the Nationalist Era*, p. 176.
38. Porter, *From Belfast to Peking*, pp. 67–70.
39. Smith, Fairbank and Bruner, *Robert Hart and China's Early Modernization*, p. 128. The Belfast archive of Hart's papers contains many letters from young girls and women, some of whom sent him little presents or requested photographs of him. One Customs recruit, Alexander Michie, Jr., future brother-in-law to B-T, testifies to Hart's sensuality: a few months into his first posting, Michie is recalled to Peking and is surprised by Hart's initial greeting: 'Your lips are redder, I think, than they were! Have you been kissing many pretty girls down South?' 'Not too many, sir' came the speedy reply, as Michie was wondering what was to come next. Hart then informs him that he is to be promoted to being Hart's private secretary (Michie, 'Sir Robert Hart', p. 627).
40. Coates, *The China Consuls*, p. 100.
41. Coates, *The China Consuls*, p. 60.
42. Chen and Han, *Archives of China's Imperial Maritime Customs*, Vol. 4, Chronology, 1858–1865.

43. Smith, Fairbank and Bruner, *Robert Hart and China's Early Modernization*, p. 363.
44. Lan and Wildy, 'Declaration Made by Robert Hart on His Domestic Life.' See also Chen and Han, *Archives of China's Imperial Maritime Customs*, Vol. 4, Chronology, 1866–1879.
45. Smith, Fairbank and Bruner, *Robert Hart and China's Early Modernization*, p. 522.
46. While on leave he also undertook to give guidance to a Chinese informal mission to Europe to learn about Western practices. But the observations of the group were, disappointingly, mainly confined to what particularly intrigued them, such as tall buildings, gaslight, elevators, etc. (see CHC, Vol. 2, p. 73).
47. Chen and Han, *Archives of China's Imperial Maritime Customs*, Vol. 4, Chronology, 1866–1879.
48. Smith, Fairbank and Bruner, *Robert Hart and China's Early Modernization*, p. 363; also Chen and Han, *Archives of China's Imperial Maritime Customs*, Vol. 4, p. 552. But see Fairbank, Bruner and Matheson, *The I.G. in Peking*, p. 23, where Little's introduction suggests that his wife did return for rare, brief visits and that the longest time during which they did not see each other may have been seventeen years.
49. University of Hong Kong, Special Collection of Robert Hart material, Letter dated 11 June 1905.
50. SOAS, Aglen, PPMS 211355, letters, April 1896.
51. Fairbank, Bruner and Matheson, *The I.G. in Peking*, p. 13. This understanding was not one that Hart approved, holding the view that this position gave the post a political character that 'I had always divested it of'. Similarly, he disapproved of the demands of the China Association and the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce that the commissioner there be British (Fairbank, Bruner and Matheson, *The I.G. in Peking*, 1279, 1281).
52. SOAS Archives, Aglen Letters, 7 November 1905.
53. PRO, FO 676/196.
54. Aitcheson, *The Chinese Maritime Service in the Transition from the Ch'ing to the Nationalist Era*, p. 225.
55. King, *In the Chinese Customs Service*, pp. 48–9.
56. SOAS, Aglen, PPMS 211355, letters, 13 October 1910.
57. SOAS Archives, Aglen Letters, 7 April 1911.
58. King, *In the Chinese Customs Service*, p. 227.
59. PRO, FO371/1089. G. E. Morrison writes in a similar vein to another journalist about the prospect of a return by Hart; see Lo Hui-min, *The Correspondence of G. E. Morrison*, p. 593.
60. SOAS, Aglen, PPMS 211355, letters, 14 September 1911. Hart died a wealthy man, his estate being valued at over £140,000, worth at the very least sixty times that at today's values.
61. NCH, Special Supplement, 11 May 1906, p. 233.
62. PRO, FO 631/4705; see also 15707 and 21503. By this time, the Foreign Office clearly sees Hart as a 'very slippery customer' and believes he is privately playing for Bredon's appointment by delaying his return to China. Bredon wrote a long memorandum, pleading to be appointed Inspector General and threatening to make a fuss if he is not. While Hart probably was fairly slippery, ambiguity doubtless an aid to survival, this view of Hart's motivation is somewhat contrary to the tenor of his letters to Aglen though he could conceivably have been riding two horses.

63. Foster-Hall, *The Chinese Maritime Customs*, p. iii.
64. Morrison, *An Australian in China*, pp. 36–7. He became the first permanent correspondent of *The Times* in March 1897, and Peking was his base for over twenty years. Journeying long distances across difficult terrain, often by foot, was one of his joys, and he travelled extensively in Australia and the Far East, especially China.
65. Wright, *Hart and the Chinese Customs*, p. 897. The first Chinese to be appointed acting commissioner was in 1925, and Chinese full commissioners were appointed for the first time in 1929, when two Chinese staff members became heads at Hangchow and Soochow (CY, 1935–36, p. 1264). If a claim made by Maze is correct he must have made the promotions as soon as he became Inspector General in 1929. For in a letter to Hippley (another commissioner), he claimed to have introduced equality of opportunity for qualified Chinese staff. Maze said that Merrill (another commissioner) suggested to Aglen in 1912, when Aglen was I-G
- that Chinese ought to be made eligible for positions of greater responsibility in the Service, but unfortunately his sagacious advice fell upon deaf ears, and it was left to me at the eleventh hour to institute this highly essential reform.
- At the time Maze wrote this, he was bitter in his criticisms of Aglen, whom he replaced as substantive I-G after a short interregnum by an acting appointment (SOAS, Maze, PPMS 2, Vol. VII, 1 April 1932). See also Lam (*Memoirs of 35-Year Service in the Chinese Maritime Customs*, pp. 128–9), who confirms that Maze had an important role in the sinification of the Service. According to an informant in the Second Republican Historical Archives, the first Chinese deputy inspector general was Ting Kweitung, who was appointed in 1942; Ting was one of the second batch of graduates of the Customs College in 1913 and therefore a student when B-T was co-director of the College.
66. CHC, Vol. 12, p. 183. The first Chinese appointed to the various rungs of assistant commissioner were indeed non-Manchu.
67. Aitchison, *The Chinese Maritime Service in the Transition from the Ch'ing to the Nationalist Era*, p. 235.
68. Fairbank, Bruner and Matheson, *The I.G. in Peking*, 906 and n. 2 which states that Michie's appointment does not appear in the Service Lists and may have been only for a few months.
69. See Michie, 'Sir Robert Hart', pp. 625–39. As will be seen later, it would appear that Michie, Jr., had been an alcoholic and also experienced mental health problems; the kindnesses may have related to Hart's tolerance and support.
70. SOAS, Maze, PPMS, Vol. XX, 26 July 1925.
71. King, *The History of the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation*, p. 28.
72. SOAS, Addis, PPMS 14/67, item 184, 28 December 1900.
73. SOAS, Addis, PPMS 14/67, item 74, 6 January 1901.
74. See Bickers, 'Purloined Letters'; Horowitz, 'Power, Politics and the Chinese Maritime Customs'; Van de Ven, 'Robert Hart and Gustav Detring during the Boxer Rebellion.'
75. Smith, Fairbank and Bruner, *Robert Hart and China's Early Modernization*; see especially pp. 5–22.
76. Morse, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, Vol. 3, pp. 401–2.

77. Foster-Hall, *The Chinese Maritime Customs*, p. 35.
78. Bickers, *Britain in China*, p. 121.
79. SOAS, Maze, Vol. V, p. 399, 18 April 1931.
80. Atkins, *Informal Empire in Crisis*, p. 106.
81. See Foster-Hall, *The Chinese Maritime Customs*.
82. PRO, FO671/276.
83. Until 1929, the proportion of Maritime and Native Customs' net revenue paid towards foreign loans and indemnities remained high especially in the period following the Boxer episode, e.g. 80 per cent in 1912, but it fell to 42 per cent in 1929, and to 28 per cent in 1934 (CY, 1935–36, p. 1284).
84. Kwong, 'The Chinese Maritime Customs Remembered', p. 23.
85. Lam, *Memoirs of 35-Year Service in the Chinese Maritime Customs*, pp. 139–40.
86. Teng and Fairbank, *China's Response to the West*, p. 199.

## Chapter 7

1. Brunero, *Britain's Imperial Cornerstone in China*, p. 53.
2. CHC, Vol. 12, pp. 182–3. A list of official ranks is to be found in Chen and Han, *Archives of China's Imperial Maritime Customs*, Vol. 4, p. 555. Another listing is in Fairbank, Bruner and Matheson, *The I.G. in Peking*, pp. xxiv–xxvi.
3. Aitcheson, *The Chinese Maritime Service in the Transition from the Ch'ing to the Nationalist Era*, p. 101. The Marine Branch was part of the Outdoor Staff, who were more likely to be working class in background.
4. Wood, *No Dogs and Not Many Chinese*, p. 99.
5. Bickers, *Britain in China*, p. 137.
6. Fairbank, Bruner and Matheson, *The I.G. in Peking*, 1052. Though, it should be said that Michie speaks of Hart's 'rigorous self-sustained intellect that has moulded and still controls [the Customs]' (Michie *An Englishman in China during the Victorian Era*, Vol. 2, p. 156).
7. Fairbank, Bruner and Matheson, *The I.G. in Peking*, 906.
8. For examples of works by Michie, Jr., see citations in Bibliography.
9. I was informed by Sun Xifu, formerly of the Second Republican Historical Archive, that the Service List in the archive indicates that Michie's top rank was First Assistant A, his last posting being assistant-in-charge of Szemao (Simao) Customs House in southern Yunnan, for about twenty months starting 12 August 1913. Addis once recorded in his diary, 'Young Michie has finished his drinking bout. It was time for he was "seeing things" and could not sleep' (SOAS, Addis, PPMS 14/10, Diary for 1898, 22 August). Michie retired early from the Customs and in 1925 wrote to Maze, then still a commissioner and an old buddy, that he had given up a clerkship in London and had been in a low state of mental health (SOAS, Maze, PPMS 2, Vol. XX, p. 45, 26 July 1925). Though Michie appears to have given up drinking, he still suffered from mental problems and was likely to have been manic-depressive for thirty years, according to the records of the Royal Bethlem Hospital where he was a voluntary boarder from 26 December 1926 to 15 June 1927 (overlapping a period when his sister was also in a mental hospital, see

Appendix II). Like his sister, Michie too had sexual difficulties: he has been recorded as having suffered from syphilis before marriage and had been known to ‘offend women’; he and his sister probably also shared a rather loveless childhood, motherless, separated and with an absent, often far-off, father (see Appendix I). Against the pleas of Michie’s wife and their general practitioner, who feared that having entered Bethlem in deep depression, Michie was about to enter a manic phase, the hospital curtly stated that as a voluntary patient recovered from his depression they could not detain him and so he left the hospital. The records describe his mother’s side of the family as being artistic and ‘highly strung’; he was certainly talented, a competent linguist (while in China he had also acted as Chinese interpreter to the Italian legation), and painted and sketched while in hospital.

10. Registers of Scotland, Registers of Sasines, December 1889.
11. SOAS, *Catalogue of the Papers of Sir Charles Addis*, p. ix. Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism, 1868–2000*, pp. 598–9, also gives something of Addis’ important activities.
12. SOAS, Addis, PPMS 14/67, item 47, 8 April 1893.
13. Various indexed letters about Michie in the 1890s appear in Chen and Han, *Archives of China’s Imperial Maritime Customs*.
14. NCH, 6 April 1894.
15. SOAS, Addis, PPMS 14/137, 3 March 1895.
16. CT, 28 January 1888, 23 February 1889, 31 May 1890.
17. PTT, 16 June 1894. Ann was known by intimates as ‘Birdie’, probably because of her singing (SOAS, Addis, PPMS 14/10–item 21, 20 June 1898).
18. King, *In the Chinese Customs Service*, pp. 28–9. Today, we would wonder why the expatriates did not eat more Chinese food rather than rely on tinned European foods.
19. PTT, May 1896.
20. *Celebrations of the Seventieth Birthday of Li Hung-chang at Tientsin, Feb. 1892*.
21. Detring vied with Hart in wanting to be confidential guide to the Chinese government, and with Li Huang-chang’s backing he might well have replaced Hart as inspector general in 1885 when Hart was offered the post of British Minister. For Hart’s many comments on Detring, see the index to Fairbank, Bruner and Matheson, *The I.G. in Peking*; 3, n. 2, gives an outline of Detring’s career. See also Van de Ven, ‘Robert Hart and Gustav Detring during the Boxer Rebellion.’
22. Wang, *Chinese Intellectuals and the West, 1872–1949*, p. 194.
23. CHC, Vol. 13, p. 796.
24. Fairbank, Coolidge and Smith, *H. B. Morse*, p. 224.
25. SOAS, Aglen, April 1896.
26. Addis notes in his diary for that day:
 

Birdie Michie now Mrs. Brewitt Taylor and her husband at dinner . . . It was like old times. Birdie seems to have recovered a good deal of her lost health, and was in excellent spirits. They are on their way to Peking where Taylor is to act as assistant Chinese Secretary. (SOAS, Addis, PPMS 14/10 item 21)
27. Wood, *No Dogs and Not Many Chinese*, p. 217.

28. The UCS was linked with the secular University College London, the ‘godless institution of Gower Street’ (Usher, Black-Hawkins and Carrick, *An Angel without Wings*, p. 7).
29. For one fictionalized account of this, see *Old Filth* by Jane Gardham (Abacus, 2004).
30. See Appendix II.

## Chapter 8

1. Brewitt-Taylor, *Economic Policy*. The booklet was found in the British Library and my thanks are due to Dr. Frances Wood for the translation.
2. Fairbank, Coolidge and Smith, *H. B. Morse*, p. 19.
3. Fairbank, Coolidge and Smith, *H. B. Morse*, p. 98. See also Brunero, who also states that commissioner appointments generally came after around twenty years of service, *Britain’s Imperial Cornerstone in China*, p. 23.
4. King, *In the Chinese Customs Service*, p. 190.
5. Smith, Fairbank and Bruner, *Robert Hart and China’s Early Modernization*, p. 118.
6. Fairbank, Bruner and Matheson, *The I.G. in Peking*, 1056, 1217.
7. Preston, *Besieged in Peking*, p. 100, gives this date, while the Roll of Honour for the civilian volunteers gives the starting date as 20 June (PRO, FO17/1720). Both sources agree with 14 August as the date the siege was lifted.
8. Wright, *Origin and Development of the Chinese Customs Service*, p. 101.
9. Morse, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, Vol. 2, Chap. 11, discusses the reasons for hostility toward missionaries, including their potential for dividing families by undermining traditional belief systems; see especially pp. 220–2.
10. CHC, Vol. 10, Part 1, p. 573; see especially Paul Cohen’s Chap. 11 on Christian missionaries and their impact to 1900; also see his account of the Boxers, *History in Three Keys*.
11. NCH, 14 February 1900.
12. NCH, 30 May 1900.
13. MacDonald, *The Siege of the Peking Embassy*, p. 109; Morse, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, Vol. 3, pp. 227–32.
14. See the memorial of Hsu Ching-cheng and Yuan Ch’ang, who pleaded during the siege that certain named officials supporting the Boxers be killed:
 

Then your Majesty can kill us to redress the imbalance in the deaths . . . [of several ministers] . . . We cannot help shedding tears in preparing this memorial and we cannot overcome our extreme grief and anxiety.

They were executed shortly after presenting their memorial (Teng and Fairbank, *China’s Response to the West*, pp. 190–3).
15. University of Hong Kong, Special Collection of Robert Hart, 3 June 1900.
16. Fairbank, Bruner and Matheson, *The I.G. in Peking*, 1141.
17. Fairbank Bruner and Matheson, *The I.G. in Peking*, 1142.
18. University of Hong Kong, Special Collection of Robert Hart, 10 June 1900. Most of the Customs personnel were allocated a small, inferior house, which some noted as ‘another example of Legation jealousy of Customs power’ (Fairbank, Bruner and Matheson, *The I.G. in Peking*, note to 1173, the last of Hart’s letters to Campbell before the siege).

19. British Library, Morrison G. E. Diaries, BL Mic., A19829, 26 July 1900.
20. Hoe, *Women at the Siege*, pp. 190–2.
21. Cranmer-Byng, *The Old British Legation at Peking*, p. 78.
22. Preston, *Besieged in Peking*, pp. 100–1.
23. Mateer, *Siege Days*, pp. 228–9.
24. Preston, *Besieged in Peking*, pp. 62–3, 188. See also Fairbank, Bruner and Matheson, *The I.G. in Peking*, 1173, n. 3.
25. Hoe, *Women at the Siege*, p. 237.
26. Preston, *Besieged in Peking*, p. 153.
27. Wright, *Origin and Development*, pp. 105–6.
28. Poole, *A Diary in Peking*, 1 August 1900. National character as seen from the behaviour of those wounded in the siege parallels this perception of the Japanese; see Ransome, *The Story of the Siege Hospital in Peking*, p. 20.
29. University of Hong Kong, Special Collection of Robert Hart, 4 August 1900.
30. Preston, *Besieged in Peking*, p. 248.
31. NCH, 9 January 1901.
32. Giles, *The Siege of the Peking Legations*, p. 112. Customs staff often lived inside or close to the legations quarter, usually in the Customs compound (see Moser and Moser, *Foreigners within the Gates*, p. 122).
33. Allen, *The Siege of the Peking Legations, Beijing*, pp. 81–2. The fact that B-T's 'Boy', who might have been an adult, made the precarious way into the compound could reflect a strong sense of loyalty — or merely hope of reward, though this seems less likely given the danger involved.
34. Wright, *Hart and the Chinese Customs*, p. 866, n. 8. Also see B-T's obituary in the *Monthly Notices* of the Royal Astronomical Society, which states that the translation of the long novel had to be rewritten, and H. A. Giles noted the destruction of the work in *Two Romances* in *The Chinese Student*.
35. Cohen, *History in Three Keys*, p. 106.
36. Fairbank, Bruner and Matheson, *The I.G. in Peking*, 1173, Note. (There is no number for this special Note)
37. *The Times*, 17 July 1900, p. 4. Morrison was able later to cite the eulogistic obituary to claim a higher salary!
38. SOAS, Addis, PPMS14/144, obituary. Addis also said that Michie had been engaged on writing his book on Alcock at the time of the Siege, and this had been a boon to him as he was heart-broken at the supposed loss of his daughter, SOAS, Addis, PPMS 14/232, 27 May, 1901.
39. MacDonald, *The Siege of the Peking Embassy*, see also *The Times*, 11 December 1900, p. 10:
 

Of the volunteers belonging to the Imperial Maritime Customs, Messrs Brazier and Brewitt-Taylor came under my eye as doing special good work.
40. PRO, FO17/1721.
41. NCH, 21 January 1903.
42. Hevia, *English Lessons*, pp. 90ff.
43. Preston, *Besieged in Peking*, p. 219.

44. Trevor-Roper, *The Hermit of Peking*, p. 52.
45. Giles, *The Siege of the Peking Legations*, p. 178.
46. SOAS, Hart, Letters to Aglen, November 1900.
47. Preston, *Besieged in Peking*, p. 221. Addis alleged that Chinese converts were allowed two days looting by the Bishop and asks ‘How do the missionaries reconcile this with the gospel?’ SOAS, Addis, PPMS 14, leaves from a diary, 21 December, 1900.
48. Needham, *Paper and Printing*, p. 174.
49. There is uncertainty over whether one or two copies were made in addition to the original: Couling, *Encyclopaedia Sinica*, suggests one, but Needham states two. It has been suggested that the original may have been destroyed by a succeeding dynastic emperor or been buried with the last Ming emperor. The interesting point has also been made that no two copies of the same *chüan* have yet been found. Trevor-Roper, *The Hermit of Peking*, p. 378, holds the view that the original and a copy were destroyed by fire in the eighteenth century but offers no source for the statement; he also suggests that ‘the greater part of it had already escaped into private hands’ even before the fire. The Hanlin was regarded as the highest seat of learning in China, a national academy. The locations of all known *chüan* in Britain are listed in Helliwell, ‘Holdings of *Yongle dadian* in United Kingdom Libraries’.
50. Allen, *The Siege of the Peking Legations, Beijing*, pp. 125–8.
51. Poole, *A Diary in Peking*, pp. 23–6.
52. Preston, *Besieged in Peking*, pp. 232–3.
53. CSPSR, 1927. One example resulting from this was the setting up of the UK Universities China Committee, which was founded in 1926 and endowed by the British government in 1931 with £200,000 from the Boxer indemnity (Aylmer, ‘The Memoirs of H. A. Giles’, p. 71).
54. King, ‘The Boxer Indemnity — “Nothing But Bad”’, pp. 663–89.

## Chapter 9

1. Wood, *No Dogs and Not Many Chinese*, pp. 96, 127.
2. Johnston and Erh, *The Last Colonies*, p. 86.
3. Bickers, *Britain in China*, p. 91.
4. Queens University, Belfast, Robert Hart Special Collections, MS 15/2, 7 April 1908.
5. Aitcheson, *The Chinese Maritime Service in the Transition from the Ch’ing to the Nationalist Era*, p. 142.
6. Johnston and Erh, *The Last Colonies*, p. 95.
7. B-T’s comments are from the SHAC Maritime Customs Service 679(1), 32363, ‘Swatow Semi-Official Correspondence, 1900–03’. The letters quoted date from 21 September 1900 to 23 April 1901; in addition to the SHAC archives in China they can be found at University of Bristol, Maritime Customs Service Archive, Unit 3, Reel 135.
8. SOAS, Addis, PPMS 14/137, 24 March 1901.
9. Brewitt-Taylor, preface to *Chats in Chinese*.
10. B-T, Letter to his son Leonard’s widow, Elizabeth, 23 January 1934.
11. SOAS Addis, PPMS 14/137, 17 January 1902. The three critical periods would have been the two difficult pregnancies and the Peking siege. Thus, of B-T’s six children



known to have been born alive, four of them died as babies, with only two surviving into adulthood. Both of Ann's dead babies were girls; all of Alice's four births were boys.

12. Queens University, Belfast, Robert Hart Special Collections, MS15/2, 20 February 1901. I was initially thrown by the date of the letter, as this would have placed the episode while the Brewitt-Taylors were still in Swatow and would make the cheerful tone of Michie's letter to Addis around then surprising. Probably the newness of the year caused the error of writing the year as 1901 rather than the correct 1902; this would also be more consistent with the letters from Michie to Addis and B-T to Hart. The 1896 reference was to the loss of the baby who was born alive in Tientsin but died shortly after birth. Kathleen, the author of the letter, has been described as a 'nice, pretty girl', probably the kind of girl Hart found attractive.
13. Queens University, Belfast, Robert Hart Special Collections, MS.15.2, 7 March 1902. B-T was then staying at 63 Harley Street, which was the home of his wife's uncle, Dr. George Thin, his wife, a cousin, and three live-in servants (according to the 1901 Census). On receipt of B-T's letter, Hart wrote to Ann via the London Office on 24 March 1902, probably regarding her health (Fairbank, Bruner, and Matheson, *The I.G. in Peking*, 1235).
14. See Appendix II.
15. The Register of Sassinnes for 1889, Fife public records p. 5934, refers to the disposition of a tenement of land, with Yard thereof, bounded on the south by the common Street and on the north by the Links, in Burgh of Earlsferry, and Piece of Garden ground at the north end adjoining the Links, with access to Well.  
  
It would appear that the 'common Street' was the High Street, where Michie's mother and stepfather lived, bequeathing the house to their sons when they died in the early 1880s. The house they lived in with its long piece of ground to the Links is called West Court, and 'Cathay' was built by Ann at the end of the garden in what is now 6 Links Road. Ann appears to have owned both houses.
16. There is a hint of a weakness, unspecified, in a letter from Michie to his friend Addis, in which he refers to her health, adding: 'My daughter has never been very bright' (SOAS, Addis, PPMS 14/137, 2 February 1898).
17. Plans for the substantial villa were shown to me by David Thomson, chairman of the Elie and Earlsferry History Society, Fife. The plans were submitted in November 1902 and were approved early in 1903, though the house does not appear to have been built until around 1907 or 1908, as it is not listed in the Valuation Rolls until 1908–09. Ann may well have used part of the legacy she was left by her father to finance the villa.
18. Queens University, Belfast, Robert Hart Special Collections, MS.15.2, 12 August 1902. The Brewitt-Taylors were staying in Hazeldene, Ashley Road, in north London.
19. Queens University, Belfast, Robert Hart Special Collections, MS.15.2, 30 January 1903.
20. Peg, 31 December 1902.
21. CHC, Vol. 12, p. 188.
22. Cheng, *Postal Communication in China and Its Modernization, 1860–1896*, p. 104.
23. NCH, 18 August 1905, p. 363.

24. NCH, 18 August 1905, p. 397.
25. SHAC, 137.1802–8, private letter from B-T to Piry, 9 April 1903. For these references to postal correspondence, I am indebted to Lane J. Harris, a doctoral student at the University of Illinois working on the Chinese Postal Service. Lane kindly sent me some impressions he formed of B-T:

I find Brewitt-Taylor to have been a fairly conscientious postmaster despite his complaints about social rank and position vis-à-vis Commissioner Hobson [The Shanghai Customs Commissioner] . . . He seems to have taken his job very seriously. He engaged with the Postal Secretary on a wide variety of postal questions making useful, if not always innovative, suggestions . . . Brewitt-Taylor's success as Postmaster is to be expected as being appointed to Shanghai, the Imperial Post Office's busiest district, already implies the value Piry saw in Brewitt-Taylor. Additionally . . . Piry was using Brewitt-Taylor to create administrative space between the Posts and Customs — not an enviable task for anyone. His Semi-Officials run on for pages, 3–5 pages for a single letter are not uncommon, while most other Postmasters wrote a page or two.

These impressions confirm the view of B-T as sensible rather than exciting — a safe pair of hands.

26. Responding to Piry's appeal to create space with the Customs should not be read as disloyalty by B-T to his main Service. First, Customs staff were themselves ambivalent about being bedfellows with the Post; second, Hart himself recognized that the Post would become independent, for at about the time B-T was seconded, Hart wrote that 'Our Postal work extends rapidly . . . The Postal will be a far bigger Service than the Customs . . . [once it] . . . spreads its wings and takes flight on its own account' (Fairbank, Bruner and Matheson, *The I.G. in Peking*, 1276); and third, B-T would always tend to see himself working in the best interest of the job in hand, and he was likely to follow the lead of his immediate boss.
27. SHAC, 137.1802–8, private letters from B-T to Piry, 18 April 1903, and an undated one apparently just before this date.
28. SHAC, 137.1813–2, Canton Incoming, 1897–1905, Semi-Official from Mayers to Piry, 20 March 1905.
29. SHAC, 137.1762, Special File 36, Memorandum, 19 August 1905.
30. PRO, FO671/282.
31. Bickers, *Britain in China*, pp. 124–5.
32. PRO, FO 671/275, 276 . This is another clear example of the pedagogy of imperialism; see Hevia, *English Lessons*.
33. Murphey, *Shanghai: Key to Modern China*, pp. 7, 22.

## Chapter 10

1. NCH, 11 May 1906, p. 233.
2. *Directory and Chronicle for China*, 1917, p. 1010. See also Smith, *European Settlements in the Far East*, p. 171. The Customs house is now a museum and displays a plaque

with the names of the Customs commissioners who held posts there; B-T's name is included.

3. Biggs, '*Chinese*' *Wilson*, pp. 15–8. Wilson then had to journey another seventeen days to reach Henry, and all the latter possessed about the location of the tree was a scrap of paper on which a map had been drawn of an area straddling Hubei and Sichuan Provinces covering twenty thousand square miles. So, he had to return to Hong Kong by the same route, whence he sent off numerous specimens of interesting plants, and start his journey again. His persistence was justified: he eventually found the tree.
4. B-T mentions this in a letter to Hart, written on his way to Mengtze, referring to a meeting in the border town of Laokai regarding a proposal for a joint customs house with the French, about which he expressed misgivings.
5. NCH, 30 March 1906, p. 706.
6. Snow, *Journey South of the Clouds*, pp. 142–4.
7. Anderson, 'A Belated Encounter', 30 July 1998, p. 8.
8. Stella Benson, *Diaries 1902–1933*, reel 7, Oct. 1921–Oct. 1925, British Library, Mic.A 20024, October 23, 1922.
9. Grant, *Stella Benson*, p. 196.
10. Stella Benson, *Diaries*, October 24, 1922.
11. Wood, *No Dogs and Not Many Chinese*, p. 225.
12. NCH, 30 June 1906.
13. SHAC, Customs Service Archive 679(1), Mengtze 32596, 6 April 1906.
14. PRO, FO372/47, 24847, 1907. As was customary, Mrs. Brewitt-Taylor applied to the British Crown for permission to wear the decoration on formal occasions. She requests the King's permission, via the Lord Chamberlain's Office in Buckingham Palace, to 'accept and wear' the decoration, 'Brevett de Kim Bai,' awarded by the Empress of Annam, a French protectorate. But as it was not a 'recognized order of International Chivalry', the request could not be granted. There is a note stating that she did not need permission, but she does not appear to have been informed of this; 'send usual answer' was the only instruction. There is also a note that the native ruler of Annam was declared insane the previous October, which suggests this may also have affected the status of the Empress! Ann probably did wear the decoration — the more one could display on the breast on formal occasions, the better.
15. See Appendix II and the Edinburgh University Library, Special Collections, Lothian Health Services Archive, Letter of 21 December 1914.
16. SHAC, 2 June 1906. (It is possible that it was Sir Robert Bredon that he was addressing if Bredon, as Deputy I.-G. had been delegated to receive reports then.)
17. Fairbank, Bruner and Matheson, *The I.G. in Peking* 1049, n. 2.
18. Fairbank and Teng, 'On the Types and Uses of Ch'ing Documents', p. 38; the others were by T. F. Wade and Hirth (the first edition of the textbook).
19. Brewitt-Taylor, *Textbook of Modern Documentary Chinese for the Special Use of the Chinese Customs Service*, Vol. 1. The fact that B-T volunteered to undertake the task, and the accolade so accorded, clearly was not quite sufficient reward in itself. For, a few years later, after giving the matter some thought and with some diffidence, B-T wrote to Aglen, the new inspector General, requesting some form of recognition for the task of editing the volumes. He points out:

The work on the new edition was not done in office hours but leisure was found by rising early in the morning . . . I venture to think that a special piece of work of this kind undertaken at the desire of the I.G. . . . might be recognized in some special form. . . . I have heard that Dr. Hirth, who prepared the first edition, was given special facilities for the work by being appointed to the Statistical Department and received a special grant in addition. (SHAC file 679, 22 April 1913)

Clearly, some hope for reward had been on his mind for some time, but he was unwilling to ask for it while Hart was alive. (The reference to the Statistical Department post is odd given that B-T had expressed his reluctance to take such a post.)

20. Even until recently, there was a French coffee shop in Kunming which my wife and I visited, selling a range of patisserie-derived pastries and a kind of croissant; this was a survival from the earlier era of French influence in this part of southern China.
21. SHAC, 19 April 1906. There had been attempts at stricter controls following the Sino-Japanese War, when Confucian scholars attacked opium for contributing to moral decay, but raising revenue became especially important when indemnities were imposed after the Boxer episode (Dikother, Lamaan and Zhou, *Narcotic Culture*, pp. 107–8).
22. SHAC, 2 August 1906. See also Slack, *Opium, State and Society*, pp. 2–4. The years 1905 and 1906 had witnessed the height of domestic cultivation of opium, when China is estimated to have produced seven-eighths of total world output; the new rules B-T refers to would probably have been the plan to reduce the acreage under poppy cultivation. Other observers have stressed that poppy production in poorer areas created a golden opportunity for peasant farmers. Poppy production and distribution facilitated capital accumulation and helped to knit internal trade networks, as well as redistributing wealth away from the coast (Brook and Wakabayashi, *Opium Regimes*, p. 9). Opium had different meanings for different people — recreational, medicinal and, importantly, economic — which was why it eluded control, Brook and Wakabayashi, *Opium Regimes*, p. 25.
23. SHAC, 28 August 1907.
24. NCH, 30 March 1906.
25. SHAC, 5 June 1906.
26. SHAC, 14 May 1906.
27. Symonds and Grant, Introduction to *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*, p. 19.
28. Symonds and Grant, *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*, p. 504. The *Chambers Biographical Dictionary*, 1990 ed., p. 368, states that Crowley was English. He was born in Leamington, but he claimed that his family had settled in England, having moved from Ireland, during the time of the Tudors (Symonds and Grant, *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*, p. 35).
29. Symonds and Grant, *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*, p. 496.
30. SHAC, May 1907.
31. Wood, *No Dogs and Not Many Chinese*, p. 225.
32. SHAC, 9 July 1906.
33. Smith, *European Settlements in the Far East*, pp. 79–81.
34. PTT, 21 March 1896.

35. PTT, 13 October 1900.
36. PRO, FO678/1144/5.
37. SHAC, 8 December 1905.
38. SHAC, 2 August 1906.
39. Queens University, Belfast, Robert Hart Special Collections, 7 August 1906. The letter also suggests that she, or perhaps she and her father or husband, had owned a property in Peitaiho, some time before B-T made his purchases of land there in January:

I wonder how Peitaiho is looking this year! I thought that I could never again be happy in being absent a summer from my dear little home on the hill by the sea — but a Kind Providence rules these things always for the best even if we cannot see it at the moment, and certainly we neither of us can complain of our lot here.

40. SHAC, 29 December 1906.
41. For example, Wood, *No Dogs and Not Many Chinese*, p. 137.
42. Fairbank, Coolidge and Smith, *H. B. Morse*, pp. 183–232.
43. See Appendix II. Saker had relatively recently joined the Customs. He was one of a batch of six new recruits who had arrived in Shanghai in November 1903. Hart commented on their general calibre: ‘I cannot say I consider their personal statements very promising’; Saker had come fifth in the examination results of the six (Chen and Han, *Archives of China’s Imperial Maritime Customs*, Letter 3206; Fairbank, Bruner and Matheson, *The I.G. in Peking*, 1303).
44. Information provided via email by Professor Robert Bickers, Bristol University, from the SHAC records.
45. Perhaps Saker had read the ironically humorous ‘Open Letter to a Fourth Assistant B’, which had appeared in 1896, and had heeded its advice overenthusiastically:

First of all you must bow your knee to your Commissioner’s wife, for in her goodwill are comfort and furlough and good sport. (Elder, *China’s Treaty Ports*, p. 50)
46. Appendix II contains excerpts from her and others’ accounts, as well as a record of Ann’s all known mental hospitalizations.
47. SHAC, 30 December 1907.

## Chapter 11

1. See Blyth, *Life of William Ellis*, which contains the following splendid dedication:

To the pupils of William Ellis, from those of imperial and royal rank to humble toilers for their daily bread, who have received from him or through his life-long labours guidance as to their conduct in daily life: To the fortunate possessors of wealth who have derived from his teaching the knowledge of their moral duty in its use: And to all who have learned from him how best to improve the condition of their less fortunate fellow-citizens, and to help to diminish destitution, vice, and crime, by removing their chief cause: I dedicate this record of his life-history.

- Ellis founded a number of schools in London and elsewhere, and he tutored the royal children in social science, itself a novel area at the time (whether this was paid for or not is not known, but in recognition of his work Queen Victoria gave him a book on the Prince Consort autographed by her). One of the schools he founded still flourishes as the William Ellis School, in Parliament Hill Fields, Highgate, London. Ellis was also interested in a wide range of social issues and was active in the movement for the abolition of slavery. Several leading reformers of the day, such as John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham, were numbered among his friends; Ellis describes walking from his home in Croydon to the city, a distance of some nine to ten miles, to have regular discussion breakfasts with them before starting the day's work.
2. Stewart and McCann, *The Educational Innovators*, p. 297. This work also contains assessments of the educational contributions of both Ellis and Morley, see Vol. 1, sections 16 and 20.
  3. Peg, October 1902.
  4. Peg, March 1903.
  5. *The Gower*, July 1906. The title derived from Gower Street, London, where the school was originally located.
  6. PRO, FO 69/268.
  7. Daisy's diary, 21 November 1904.
  8. Peg, November 1905.

## Chapter 12

1. See Appendix II.
2. The other co-director, a customary parallel Chinese government appointment, was Chan Lun, an official; see Chinese Maritime Customs, *Documents Illustrative of the Origin, Development, and Activities of the Chinese Customs Service*, Vol. 2, Circular 1501, p. 615.
3. CHC, Vol. 12, p. 183.
4. Chinese Maritime Customs, *Documents Illustrative of the Origin, Development, and Activities of the Chinese Customs Service*, Vol. 3, Circular 2001, p. 93.
5. SOAS, Bowra, PPMS 69, Vol. 2, p. 248.
6. Chinese Maritime Customs, *Documents Illustrative of the Origin, Development, and Activities of the Chinese Customs Service*, Vol. 2, pp. 61–6.
7. Wright, *Hart and the Chinese Customs*, p. 841.
8. Queens University, Belfast, Robert Hart Special Collections, Box 10, 18 July 1909.
9. CHC, Vol. 11, Part 2, pp. 437–8.
10. The subtitle of Hevia's *English Lessons*.
11. Johnston and Erh, *Near to Heaven*.
12. Raymond Brewitt-Taylor, Letter to Evelyn, 9 August 1908 (hereafter cited simply 'Ray' followed by the date).
13. Ray, 13 September 1908.
14. Ray, 13 September 1908.
15. SOAS, Bowra, PPMS 69, Vol. 2, p. 227.
16. SOAS, Bowra, PPMS 69, Vol. 2, Item 19, pp. 272, 303.

17. Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China*, p. 475.
18. Wood, *No Dogs and Not Many Chinese*, p. 173. One important result of the revolution for the Customs was that the Service took over the actual collection as well as the assessment of duties.
19. Chinese Maritime Customs, *Documents Illustrative of the Origin, Development, and Activities of the Chinese Customs Service*, Vol. 7, p. 235. The official title of the Service changed from Imperial Maritime Customs Service to Chinese Maritime Customs Service.
20. Snow, *Journey South of the Clouds*, p. 113, quoting Sun Yat-sen's will.
21. Chinese Maritime Customs, *Documents Illustrative of the Origin, Development, and Activities of the Chinese Customs Service*, Vol. 3, p. 91.
22. SOAS, Bowra, Vol. 2, p. 248.
23. Ray, 16 January 1913.
24. Peg, 1 June 1913.
25. Ray, 22 July 1913.
26. Ray, 24 July 1913.
27. Peg, September 1913. The sight of three young ladies dressed in splendid Chinese robes was not as outrageous as it might seem, eighteenth-century chinoiserie had left its mark, to be resuscitated in the British Empire Wembley Exhibition of 1924–25 (Bickers, *Britain in China*, p. 50).
28. Peg, December 1913.
29. Peg, January 1914.
30. Peg, March 1914.
31. No comment is made on B-T's having met with the father of the family, Henry Ellis, and if so how they got on together. They must have met, as Henry, then spending part of his time in Lyme Regis and part at Inglefield, Potter's Bar, is recorded in Evelyn's diaries as 'coming home from Lyme' on 20 March, the day before B-T's visit. They shared a strong common interest in astronomy, both being members of the Royal Astronomical Society.
32. Evelyn's diary, 28 May 1914.
33. Evelyn's diary, 7 August 1914.
34. Appendix II.

### Chapter 13

1. University of Bristol, Maritime Customs Services Archive, 679(1) 33229, Foochow, 19 March 1915.
2. Johnston, *Twilight in the Forbidden City*, p. 128.
3. CHC, Vol. 12 (Ernest Young's 'Era of Yuan Shih-k'ai, 1912–16'), refers to the 'revival of mandarin airs' around 1914, with the introduction of traditional political ceremonies and symbols (pp. 240–8).
4. Coates, *The China Consuls*, p. 410.
5. King, *In the Chinese Customs Service*, p. 283.
6. SOAS, Bowra, PPMS 69, Vol. 1, p. 178.
7. Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, p. 222

8. CHC, Vol. 12, p. 164.
9. Wood, *No Dogs and Not Many Chinese*, p. 171.
10. SOAS, Bowra, PPMS 69, Vol. 1, p. 180. Mukden was also the location for the famous Mukden Incident of 1931, when a Japanese bomb was said to have helped set the scene for the war in Asia.
11. SOAS, Bowra, PPMS 69, Vol. 1, p.181. I understand that the Customs building was destroyed in recent years.
12. SOAS, Bowra, PPMS 69, Vol. 2, p. 182.
13. State Reference Library of New South Wales, G. E. Morrison Archive, MSS.312/35–108, Vol. 88, 10 July 1916. Morrison, a very long-distance hiker, was unlikely to have been particularly concerned with limited comfort. Until that year, he had been appointed by President Yuan (who died in the previous month, June 1916) as government advisor, a well-paid post which he had accepted in 1912. He was later to help China's submission to the 1919 Peace Treaty, in Versailles. Becoming very ill about that time, Morrison left for England and died in May 1920 at Sidmouth, Devon (*Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 1891–1939).
14. British Library, Morrison G. E. Diaries, reel 16. See Appendix II.
15. SHAC, Customs Service Archive 679(1), Mukden 31910, 14 September 1916.
16. SHAC, 9 November 1916.
17. SHAC, 14 November 1916.
18. SHAC, April 1916.
19. SHAC, 14 September 1916.
20. CHC, Vol. 12, p. 186.
21. It is not certain who the 'Redbeards' were, but Professor Elizabeth Sinn of the University of Hong Kong suggests that it is a likely ascription for the Russians. There had been bandits known as 'Redbeards', part of the Nien movement (the name derived partly from that of unemployed former Ch'ing mercenaries), but these were said to have been crushed in northern China by the late 1860s (CHC, Vol. 10, Part 1, pp. 310, 315–6, 476).
22. SHAC, 7 January 1917.
23. SHAC, 31 March 1917. The report encloses the resignation letter from the teacher, Dr. Fulton.
24. SHAC, 19 April 1917.
25. SHAC, 27 July 1917.
26. SHAC, 7 September 1917.
27. SHAC, 28 March 1918.
28. SHAC, 20 November 1918.

## Chapter 14

1. *Directory and Chronicle for China and the Far East*, 1915.
2. Joan Leaf (daughter of Leonard and therefore B-T's granddaughter), Letter to author, March 2000. Joan possesses a photograph of Leonard in uniform, which neither the Imperial War Museum nor the National Army Museum was able to identify; it might have indicated some kind of volunteer cadetship.



3. Evelyn's diary, 15 August 1914; Peg's budge for that month.
4. The only part of B-T's family of origin invited to Ray's wedding was B-T's brother in Wallington, Surrey, but illness prevented him from attending. Evelyn had already been taken by Ray to meet the family at the end of 1915, but he disliked his boy cousins and was relieved to return home (according to Peg's budges).
5. B-T letter to Evelyn, 1 July 1917.
6. Peg, 27 December 1917.
7. Correspondence between Evelyn and Ray. Daisy had married Roy Suttill late in 1915. B-T, who was fond of Daisy, sent a rather special silver tea service for their wedding.
8. Details on all three deaths are from the obituaries in the University College School's Roll of Honour.
9. B-T to Ray, 4 August, probably 1915.
10. State Reference Library of New South Wales, G. E. Morrison Letters, MSS.312/35-108, Vol. 100, pp. 451–2, 21 September 1918.
11. B-T to Evelyn, 5 December 1918.
12. Burnett, *A History of the Cost of Living*, pp. 298–300.
13. Cannon, 'The Social Situation of the Skilled Worker', pp. 103, 128.
14. Burnett, *A Social History of Housing, 1815–1970*, pp. 246–8.
15. Notice in *The Times* (of London) 4 February 1919.
16. Joan Leaf, Letter to author, 18 June 1999. For an account of American 'low life' activity in Shanghai (gambling casinos, prostitution and drinking bars), see Scully, 'The Low Road to Sino-American Relations', pp. 62–85. Of the estimated forty thousand female sex workers in the city in 1900, two thousand were foreign. Later, apparently, 'Californian' or 'American' girls dominated the demand for foreign prostitutes. Though relatively small in number, they were an obvious group, especially as the successful brothel madams prominently flaunted their success.
17. Peg, 1 February 1919.

## Chapter 15

1. This was a body that had been set up both for amateurs and for women astronomers, who were excluded from becoming 'fellows' of the RAS.
2. Evelyn Brewitt-Taylor, Letter to her mother and Win, 6 September 1919. It is not entirely surprising of the man that he should withdraw even during his daughter-in-law and grandson's visit; either he was engaged on urgent business or he wished to avoid confrontation with his wife.
3. Peg, October 1919.
4. The letter was marked in a register as Despatch 3115, and it should have been in SHAC, File 679 (3) 851, Chungking Despatches, Nos. 3110–3326, 1920–22, but despite efforts by Professor Bickers and his team, it could not be found.
5. CMC, Circular 3001, 26 February 1920, in Vol. 3, p. 546.
6. King, *In the Chinese Customs Service*, p. 296.
7. Wood, *No Dogs and Not Many Chinese*, p. 220.
8. Coates, *The China Consuls*, p. 307.
9. Aitcheson, *The Chinese Maritime Service in the Transition from the Ch'ing to the Nationalist Era*, p. 280.

10. SHAC, Customs Service Archive 679(1), Chungking 32045, 6 August 1920.
11. SHAC, 20 August 1920.
12. SHAC, 4 September 1920. The warlords needed the money to finance their military activities, and in the years following the death of President Yuan, opium activity considerably increased (Brook and Wakabayashi, *Opium Regimes*, p. 293).
13. SHAC, 4 October 1920.
14. King, *In the Chinese Customs Service*, p. 252.
15. SHAC, 14 October 1920.
16. SHAC, 27 October 1920.
17. *Women, Writing and Travel, Diaries of Stella Benson 1902–1933* from Cambridge University Library, Mic. A, reel 6, 2 October, 1920. Also available in the BL.
18. SHAC, 15 November 1920.

## Chapter 16

1. The villages of Earlsferry and Elie merge into each other; whichever name is used here follows that used in the reference.
2. Ann refers to his trips: ‘They have been disagreeable epoques for me, but last time I was better on [my] own.’ See Appendix II.
3. Peg, July 1921.
4. Peg, letter to Winnie Ellis, 9 September 1921.
5. Peg, February 1922.
6. The Kingsley Hotel in Bloomsbury Square was a temperance hotel frequented by expatriates, not only non-drinkers. It advertised in the *Directory for China and the Far East*.
7. Peg, 1 June 1922.
8. Peg, December 1922.
9. Peg, 1 January 1925.
10. Peg, 31 December 1923. As B-T is the only grandfather referred to as ‘Grandpa’ this must have referred to Herbert William with whom we know there was contact. B-T’s visits to Portsmouth mentioned by his wife would have been to his sister. This is further evidence of maintained contact with his birth family.
11. Peg, 31 January 1924.
12. Peg, 31 May 1924.
13. Peg, 30 June 1925.
14. Meales, *Highways of the Air*, p. 37. Also see Higham, *Britain’s Imperial Air Routes*, pp. 226–7. Not until late 1928 or early 1929 did a Royal Air Force flying boat land in Hong Kong, but no regular British air service followed. In 1931 Deutsche Lufthansa signed an agreement with the Chinese government to operate a route from Berlin to Nanking and Shanghai; in the following year, French Air Orient began an extension of its Saigon service to Hong Kong and Canton. Not until 1936 did a British spur from Penang to Hong Kong place the latter within ten days of London, and in the same year Pan American landed its first clipper in Hong Kong.
15. Peg, 2 June 1926.
16. Peg, 31 October 1926.

17. Publisher's note to the cheap edition, published by Kelly and Walsh in 1929. Kelly and Walsh was a Shanghai-based firm which still survives in that name, no longer as a publisher but as a well-known bookseller in Hong Kong. See also CHC, Vol. 12, Section 8: Benjamin I. Schwartz, 'Themes in Intellectual History: May Fourth and After', p. 435ff.
18. Mair, *The Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature*, p. 946.
19. Alexander Wylie was a sinologist, 'one of the oldest and most distinguished of the hyphenated missionary-scholars' (Girardot, *The Victorian Translation of China*, p. 234 and several other citations). He had an extensive private library, of which over seven hundred volumes on Chinese culture and geography formed the basis for the library of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (Danielson, 'Shanghai's Lost Libraries Rediscovered', p. 85).
20. Brewitt-Taylor, Preface to *San Kuo, or Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.
21. Edition published by Graham Brash, Singapore, 1985.
22. Edition published by Charles E. Tuttle, 1959.
23. Nienhauser, *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, pp. 668–70.
24. Liu, *Startling Moon*, p. 99. *The Dream of the Red Chamber* is another major Chinese traditional novel, written in the eighteenth century.
25. CJSA, July 1926, p. 18.
26. JNCBRAS 57 (1926): 205–7.
27. Edwards, *The Dragon Book*, The 'Small-Footed Maid' is on pp. 126ff. B-T's quotations from the *San Kuo* are to be found on pp. 47, 155–6, 192–3, 216–8, 256–7, 272–3, 278–9.
28. Goodrich and Fang, *Dictionary of Ming Biography*, Vol. 1, p. 980.
29. Brewitt-Taylor, Preface to *San Kuo, or Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.
30. Roberts, *Three Kingdoms*, 1999 ed., p. 413.
31. Mair, *The Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature*, p. 946.
32. CR 19.3 (1890–91): 168–78.
33. B-T does state in his preface that, despite being widely read and though 'not written for the stage', the *San Kuo* is perhaps better known through stage performances than actual reading.
34. 'Saga' would be another possible rendering, especially given the book's essentially oral tradition: something said, a prose narrative, encompassing actual history, biography and legend, akin to the Icelandic and Norwegian sagas.
35. CLEAR 17 (December 1995): 157–8.
36. Internet discussion on China the Beautiful website, available at <http://www.chinapage.com/china.html> (accessed January 2000).

## Chapter 17

1. SOAS, Maze, Vol. VI, PPMS 2, p. 442, 15 May 1931. MacDonald's response to Maze was to thank him for letting him see the material, praising his great service to China and to the Service. Demonstrating that fellow expatriates did not always share the same views, he added:

The Shanghai Club diehards will die. Their representatives of forty and fifty years before drank ‘To hell with Hart and d-n the Customs’ . . . Hart never forgot the Lay experience.

(Lay, Hart’s predecessor, had also tried to act independently of the government and was forced out of office.)

2. SOAS, Maze, PPMS2, Vol. VI, pp. 55–58, 14 June 1931. Maze responded with further argument to support his view that Aglen had presented other examples of ignoring the de facto government with dangerous results (SOAS, Maze, PPMS2, Vol. VI, pp. 51–54, 21 July 1931). Given the way Maze castigates Aglen with descriptions such as ‘stupid’ and ‘senile’, it is worth quoting Aglen’s fulsome expression of faith in Maze when he appointed Maze Commissioner in Canton at the time of the Revolution in 1911:

I had complete confidence in both your loyalty and your judgement — [you] more than justified my selection. I always knew you would rise to the occasion but you have developed qualities of tact, diplomacy, and administrative ability of a high order which I didn’t give you credit for, latent talents which it required unusual circumstances of heat and difficulty to bring out. (SOAS, Aglen, PPMS211355, 2 February 1913)

The strength of Maze’s attack is another example of a successor tending to do down his predecessor.

3. B-T’s brother-in-law Michie (with whom he continued to correspond) knew Maze well from their early days in the Service; he also continued to correspond with Maze intermittently, writing with familiarity to ‘My old mess-mate Freddie Maze’ (SOAS, Maze, PPMS2, Vol. VI, pp. 67–9, 5 January 1930).
4. Peg, February 1930.
5. Peg, 3 June 1933.
6. Peg, 3 August 1933.
7. PRO, FO678/1144, 1145. Lot 1 of FO678/1144 was not sold.
8. British Library Archives, OR 5896, p. 34.
9. BL OR 11127/2/3/4. The volumes contain the following *chüan* of the encyclopaedia: 8268–9, 8275, and 18244.
10. BL Archives, Donation Reports, 12 January 1931.
11. BL Archives, Official Letters, Private Correspondence, 4 January 1931.
12. Peg, 2 February 1930.
13. Peg, 29 March 1932.
14. B-T, Letter to Elizabeth, 23 January 1934.
15. Daisy’s budge dated 2 March for February 1934. The family would certainly have possessed a telephone, so he could have phoned.
16. Peg, 1 December 1934.
17. Peg, 31 March 1935.
18. Peg, 31 December 1933.
19. B-T, letter to Joan. The letter is simply dated ‘30 Oct’, with no year, but was probably written in the early to mid-1930s.
20. Evelyn, letter to Peg, 1 April 1937. Elizabeth and her daughters probably made their annual visit in the summer.

21. Peg, 31 March 1938.
22. Royal Astronomical Society, *Monthly Notices*, Vol. 99, p. 300. The obituary contains a couple of minor errors: B-T's first wife died in 1890 not 1891, and he was survived by two daughters-in-law not daughters, though he did have had strong affection for them.
23. The National Archives of Scotland, SC70/7/420, Probate, 1 June 1938.
24. Nevill, *London Clubs*, p. 273. B-T joined early in the life of the club, having been a member since 1899 according to the Royal Societies Club's booklet 'Foundation and Objects, Rules, and By-laws and List of Members, 1914'. The same publication lists his son Leonard as having joined the club in 1912, seemingly through being a member of the Siam Society.
25. *Survey of London*, p. 472:
 

No description can give a true idea of the ingenuity and perverted taste displayed in this extraordinary front, which looks rather like a late Victorian music-hall . . . although the vulgarity is redeemed by the use of Portland stone throughout.
26. According to the 1901 Census, when the Taylors were already living in Carew Lodge, Herbert had five children: the two daughters, Dorothy and Marjorie, and three sons, Herbert Lionel, who later died of tuberculosis; Douglas, who was killed in the First World War; and Reginald, who was probably established in his career by the time B-T drew up his will. Herbert, who is known to have become a civil servant, is described as a 'gold and silver refiner'; this was initially thought to be an enumerator error, frequent at the time, but a recently discovered family tree clearly records him as a jeweller, so he must have changed career. In the same census, his mother could not be found (she would have been around seventy-four by then, so could well have already died), nor could two of B-T's sisters, the only one recorded in the census being Rebecca Barber, who B-T's first wife, Alice, stayed with in Southsea; Rebecca's son, Charles H., was an eighteen-year-old ironmonger's assistant. The parents of B-T's first wife, Alice, George and Emma Vale, were still alive and living in Lambeth. Ann refers to communicating with one of B-T's sisters living in Southsea (near Portsmouth) in 1916, alleging that the sister had commented that B-T did not know how to treat Ann and also that B-T paid regular trips to Portsmouth (see Appendix II).
27. FO917/3748. The value of the whole of B-T's property in China was sworn for probate at £2,511; of this amount, the Peitaiho property was valued at Ch.\$5,390, which at the prevailing exchange of just over 8d.:Ch.\$, was worth around £450, about the price of a modest suburban semi-detached house in Britain at the time.
28. Though adoption had become legal in 1926, there was no right to equal inheritance until 1949; J. P. Triselcotis, *Evaluation of Adoption Policy and Practice*, pp. 8ff.
29. See Appendix II.
30. Unlike the case for B-T, there was an announcement of her death in *The Times*, 1 May 1947.
31. Telephone conversation with John Linton, now a resident of Elie, adjacent to Earlsferry.
32. National Archives of Scotland, JC 20/56//69, ff1055; JC20/50/177, ff3115–118.
33. Letter from Dr. K. Bhanthumnaviv to Frances Brewitt-Taylor, 12 February 1995.

34. *SOAS Annual Report*, 1955–56, p. 123. Also see Helliwell, ‘Holdings of *Yongle dadian* in United Kingdom Libraries’. The *chiian* is 10115–6.
35. *SOAS Bulletin*, 1958.
36. Bickers, ‘Coolie Work’, pp. 396–9.
37. *SOAS*, Evangeline Dora Edwards, pp. 38–40.

## Chapter 18

1. The concepts of ‘marginality’ and the ‘marginal man’ have wide currency in the social sciences, where numerous studies have noted how marginality may confer the ability to bestride two cultures. See, for example, Gould and Kolb, *A Dictionary of the Social Sciences*, pp. 406–7.
2. *CHC*, Vol. 12, p. 183.
3. Wright, *Hart and the Chinese Customs*, p. 866.
4. *SHAC*, 27 September 1918.
5. See Appendix II.
6. See Appendix II.
7. Any interpretation of passivity would be false, for several examples of strongly expressed views can be found: his criticism of the naivety of the novice expatriate thinking he can change an ancient culture in ‘A Handful of Cash’; concern over his status in Shanghai; his defence of Aglen against Maze’s criticism; various expressions of bitterness relating to his wife’s mental illness; and his general detachment being severely tested by suspicion of his wife’s infidelity.
8. Much of his life was associated with the sea. He was born and brought up in the home of a coastguard on the south coast of Britain, and he retired and died in a seaside village in Scotland. His life was strongly marine-oriented: first through his early maritime-related education in the Royal Hospital School, then his teaching in a naval college in China, publishing a book on navigation and his main career in the Chinese Maritime Customs. In China he also owned a holiday home and other property at a popular seaside resort. Travel between postings and his regular journeys back to Britain on long leave were mainly by ship. So, B-T’s work and domestic life were both strongly flavoured by maritime connections.
9. Bickers, *Britain in China*, p. 14.
10. Appendix III, Number 2.
11. Unusual perhaps but not absent, for friendships were by no means unknown; one description of a departure of an expatriate refers to it as a sad moment for ‘there were many friends, both Chinese and foreign, whom I shall be sorry to leave’ (Williams, *Chinese Tribute*, p. 181). There were sexual relationships, but marriage was rare and only much later would become socially more acceptable. However, relationships were often close between expatriate child and amah servant.
12. The term is derived from an as yet unpublished lecture given by Professor Peter Newmark, the translation theorist, who speaks of ‘genteel anti-semitism’.
13. I am indebted to Chung Yuehtsen for noting this from a Customs circular.
14. *SHAC*, 8 August 1907.

15. Evidence of this is provided through his correspondence with Maze (see chapter Final Years).
16. One could speculate whether these and especially the sinologists among them would have formed a conscious ‘brotherhood’, another kind of freemasonry bound by their knowledge of China and their experience of the Customs. In particular, those who shared the experience of the Siege of the Legations must have felt a special kind of camaraderie, honed by knowledge of one another’s behaviour under pressure.
17. See, for example, Hevia, *English Lessons*.

## Appendices

1. Letter from Ann Brewitt-Taylor to G. E. Morrison, State Reference Library of New South Wales, MSS. 312, vol. 62, pp. 455–7, undated, but circa Dec. 1911. In her letter Ann notes that she had been in contact with an American grandchild of her errant grandfather, a Miss Fox, but had lost her address.
2. The obituary in the *East Fife Record*, 22/8/1902 refers to the Thins as half-brothers to Michie. The DNB for Michie (Supplement 1901–1911 and later) describes them as step-brothers. I first thought that without knowing the year of the second marriage we couldn’t be sure about the degree of brotherhood, but the Old Parish Register for Kilconquhar clearly show that George and Robert were parented by George Thin and his wife Ann Laing, so they were Michie’s half-brothers. The records also reveal that Michie was illegitimate, though he did take the name of his natural father; whether the parents later married (as Ann B-T suggests) couldn’t be established, though it seems unlikely; the records use Michie’s mother’s maiden name, Laing, not Michie. Census data on the Thin births was also misleading, however the Parish records show George was born in November 1838 and Robert in December 1843; when Robert died in 1867 he was 23 (NCH, 22/4/1867, p. 26) not 17 as stated in the *East Fife Record*.
3. Alexander Michie, DNB, 1912; 1851 Census for Scotland, Earlsferry, Parish of Kilconquhar; and *East Fife Record*, 15/8/02, p. 4.
4. Lane-Poole, vol. I, pp. 417 and 422. There’s a nice story related by Michie to Lane Poole about Sir Harry Parkes who visited a Taiping prince about stationing a gunboat to protect the river factories at Nanking. The prince had to refer the decision to his chief, the Heavenly King, who communicated directly with the Almighty. The Heavenly King received a vision saying no foreign ship could stay near Nanking. When this was relayed to Parkes, he displayed anger and replied, ‘Tut, tut, tut! Won’t do at all, he must have another vision.’ The first vision was duly amended by another, more acceptable one.
5. Haan, p. 64.
6. Michie, A., 1864, pp. 357 and 369.
7. From Office of National Statistics records.
8. Baptismal records held in the Lambeth Palace Library.
9. SOAS, Addis, PPMS/14/144. An obituary of Michie in the *Peking and Tientsin Times* for 23/8/02, refers to 1868 as the year that his ‘accomplished wife’ died; the death was recorded by the local Shanghai newspaper (NCH, 14/3/1868, p.110). She, was believed to have had a drink problem, as was seen earlier her son had too (Addis, PPMS 14/10-21, Diary for 1898, 22 Aug.).

10. George Thin died in Nice on 27/12/1903. *The Lancet* records that it was in China that he gained an extensive experience in all forms of tropical disease, an experience which with ripened judgment in after years brought him considerable fame.  
Both Thins were Registered Non-Residents in the *UK Medical Directories* during their years in China. Obituaries of George are in the *British Medical Journal*, 23/1/1904, p. 221 and *The Lancet*, 13/2/1904, p. 74.
11. SOAS, Addis, PPMS 14/67, 17 April 1892.
12. Fairbank, et al, 1975, 1215.
13. DNB, Listing for Michie, vol. II, 1912. There is a memorial to Robert Thin as well as to other members of the Thin family in the cemetery of the parish church, Kilconquhar, Fife.
14. Keppel, vol. iii, p. 238. British merchants were interested in opening up new treaty ports. Sir Rutherford Alcock had selected for the expedition Swinhoe, the late Consul to Taiwan and a scholar, linguist, and naturalist. Swinhoe and Michie were accompanied by a Mr. Francis, another Shanghai merchant. They were taken there by gunboat. Apparently no important developments followed. Blue, p. 118.
15. Noted in various reports of meetings recorded in the NCH over the period.
16. Office of National Statistics and DNB listing for Michie.
17. PTT, Obit, 23/8/1902, p. 4. I have not been able to find any information about this Agency.
18. King, Frank H. H., 1987, Vol. I, p. 322.
19. *Chinese Times*, 6/11/1886.
20. CT, 20/7/1889. It should be said that a propensity to dissimulate could sometimes be a function of courteousness, telling people what they would like to hear rather than possibly causing offence by being frank. Making this finer distinction would not have been Michie's style.
21. CT, 28/3/1891.
22. Frank King and Prescott-Clarke, p. 98. The authors say that there was some uncertainty about who financed the paper, but also comments appreciatively:  
It appears to have had the facts, to have thought the matter out carefully before advising the foreign community, the Chinese and Japanese governments, and the world at large on the best course of action.  
(This publication p.137 refers to Michie dying in 1891, in fact he died in 1902.) The leader in the *Peking and Tientsin Times* announcing Michie's death also states that 'Competent judges pronounced this paper [*Chinese Times*] to be the best ever produced in the East.' (P&TT, 23/8/1902, p. 2.)
23. King, P. pp. 83–4.
24. Chen and Han, 2680, letter from Campbell. Detring was also at the meeting which included M.P.s from both sides of the House. This was another momentous period in China's history when major reforms were attempted, but in the struggle between conservative and progressive forces, the would-be Chinese reformers lost out and were severely dealt with by the Empress Dowager, who proved more powerful than the reform-sympathetic Emperor. The M.P.s could well have been getting advice about policy over China.



25. SOAS, Addis, PPMS14/130-144, Box 18, 144 contains a copy of an obituary notice for Michie, but without noting the source.
26. Clearly Li Hung-chang and Michie got on well and the latter wrote a long article on Li Hung-chang when he died, aged 78, in November 1901. Michie, 'Li Hung-chang', *Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine*, MXXXIV, Dec. 1901, vol. CLXX, pp. 838–51. When Michie was editing the *Chinese Times*, a leader lauded Li as one of the leading powers in China:

The collective weight of [all the provincial governors and viceroys] falls short of Li Hung-chang alone ... Beyond the arena of palace intrigue, the malice of discontented placemen, the happy hunting grounds of eunuchs and concubines, there is really in China, a weather-beaten old pilot who, according to the light that is in him, has done his best to keep the ship off the breakers, and even to make it appear that she was really heading for some destination, without whom the most utter shipwreck would have been effected many times – and that is Li Hung-chang. The China which is known to the West is in fact the China of Li Hung-chang. (CT, 4/1/90, pp. 2–3.)

Michie had also attended the celebrations in Tientsin in February, 1892 for Li's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, where the banquet provided by Li for foreign residents consisted of alternating English and Chinese dishes. Brewitt-Taylor, *Celebration of the Seventieth Birthday of Li Hung-chang*.

27. *The Times* 12/8/1902. A somewhat more critical comment on his biography of Alcock is to be found in Fairbank, Coolidge, Smith, 220:

Using Alcock's career as a thread, Michie surveyed the events of Anglo-Chinese relations as a British success story meriting high praise. It is a distinctly Shanghai-minded narrative ... Michie offered few footnotes but a good deal of the conventional wisdom of the day.

Michie's death is noted in the *Dictionary of National Biography* (Second Supplement, vol. II, 1912), and in addition to *The Times* and the P&TT leader and obituary, other obituaries appeared in the local *East Fife Record* (15/8/1902, p. 4 and also 22/8/1902), and a very brief one in *The Graphic* (16/8/1902, p. 218), which includes the only known portrait of him. The source of this was a letter dated 4/11/1911 from Michie's daughter Ann to G.E. Morrison when the latter was China Correspondent for *The Times*; she also refers without giving details to other death notices, including German newspapers (State Reference Library of New South Wales, vol. 27–31, 1911). Some of Michie's writings will be found in the Bibliography.

28. P&TT, 23/8/1902, p. 2.
29. SOAS, Addis, PPMS 14/67, item 163, 13/8/1902.
30. SOAS, Addis, PPMS 14/67, 21 March, 1893.
31. The grave number is 34786.
32. Ann may well have suffered mental disturbances when her first baby had died in Tientsin in 1896, but no details of this could be found.
33. Dr. George Matthew Robertson was well-regarded internationally. He combined the post of Physician-Superintendent at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital for Mental and Nervous

Disorders with the Chair of Psychiatry at the University of Edinburgh. He was active in the movement for treating mental disorders on similar lines to physical ones, and was a proponent of the hospitalization of asylum treatment. See Obituary, *British Medical Journal*, 9/4/1932, pp. 688–9.

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