

THE STORY OF THE NATIONS

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The Story of the Nations.

CHINA



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IDOL AT THE RACE-COURSE, AMOY.

CHINA

BY

PROFESSOR ROBERT K. DOUGLAS

THIRD EDITION

WITH A NEW PREFACE AND A CHAPTER ON RECENT EVENTS

London

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

THE sudden and important developments which have recently been brought about in China have rendered it advisable to add a chapter to the first edition of this work, bringing up the record of events to the present time (June 30).

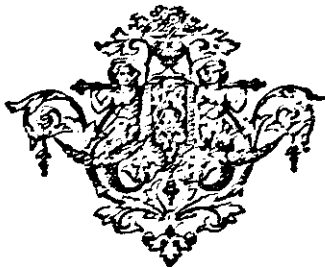
It is difficult to forecast the course which matters may take in China in the immediate future, but one thing is certain. The Foreign Powers having collectively intervened in the affairs of the State are bound in honour to take under their protection the new government, under whatever ruler, which will, with their approval, be set up in place of the present maladministration. This may mean the occupation for a time of Peking, and the country between that capital and the sea, but the Powers having put their hand to the plough cannot turn back, nor need their task be one which is impossible of accomplishment.

There is throughout China a large body of men, strong both unitedly and individually, whose representatives might fairly be constituted into a Council of State. Such men would not necessarily be of pronounced pro-foreign views, and all the more

therefore would they be welcomed by the immense mass of the people who hold neither with the Manchu party nor with the extreme reformers. Such men fully recognise the backward condition of their country, and are prepared by the introduction of moderate reforms to improve the fiscal system of the Empire, and to raise the position of the people, while at the same time they would add strength to the nation by the adoption of modern arms and appliances. A Council formed on these lines would save the Empire both from the excesses of the Empress and her clique, and from the crude vagaries of K'ang Yuwei and his friends.

ROBERT K. DOUGLAS.

June 30, 1900.





PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THE antiquity of China is so great, and the history of the Empire covers so vast a period that it was plainly impossible to compress the whole subject within the limits of a single volume of this series. It was determined, therefore, to limit the record, in the present instance, to the annals of the Empire from the time of Marco Polo to the present day, leaving the earlier history of the country to appear later.

As is well known, the Chinese possess histories of their various dynasties, and they attempt to insure that these should be truthful records by ruling that the events of each dynasty should not be described by contemporary historians but by authors under the succeeding *régime*. It might be supposed that this system would entail the compilation of biased and *ex parte* chronicles. But happily Chinese historians, like the rest of their countrymen, are so entirely devoid of patriotism that they have no inducement to pervert facts, or to trim their sails to the necessities of party feeling.

Generally truthful as these historians are, however, their works yet labour under the defect common to

all Oriental histories of being records of the Court and camp rather than of the life of the people ; and it is only by reference to miscellaneous works that it is possible to obtain the side-lights necessary to illustrate the true progress of the nation.

Among the authorities I have consulted are the following :—The native dynastic histories ; the *Shêng Wu Ki*, or the wars of the present dynasty, by Wei Yuen ; various native biographical works ; the *Peking Gazette* ; the Parliamentary Blue Books ; the Histories of Wells Williams, Boulger, and Macgowan ; “The Jesuits in China,” by R. Jenkins ; “A Narrative of Events in China,” by Lord Loch ; “The Ever Victorious Army,” by Andrew Wilson, &c.

ROBERT K. DOUGLAS.

January, 1899.





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