

**THE CROSS AND THE DRAGON; OR, THE  
FORTUNES OF CHRISTIANITY IN CHINA:  
WITH NOTICES OF  
THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONS AND  
MISSIONARIES, AND SOME ACCOUNT  
OF THE CHINESE SECRET SOCIETIES**

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The Cross and the Dragon; Or, The Fortunes of Christianity in China: With Notices of the Christian Missions and Missionaries, and Some Account of the Chinese Secret Societies by John Kesson

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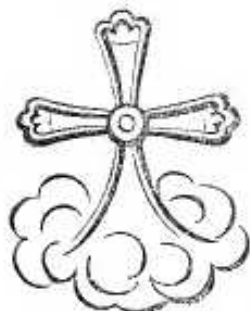
**JOHN KESSON**

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BY  
JOHN KESSON,  
OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.



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## P R E F A C E.

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THE subject treated in the following pages resolves itself into five distinct heads.

Under the first, notice is taken of the legends of the introduction of Christianity into China by the Apostle Thomas and his disciples. Under the second head, some space is devoted to the history of the Nestorian Christians in China, in the seventh century, with their leader, Olo-puen, the first apostle. The third head comprises the missions of the Dominicans and Franciscans in the fourteenth century; the chief actor being John of Monte Corvin, the second Chinese Apostle. This mission was speedily extinguished, and no farther attempts were made to introduce a knowledge of Christianity into China until the sixteenth century, when the Jesuit mission was founded by the celebrated Matteo Ricci. The labours of

the Jesuits form the subject of the fourth head; and the fifth is devoted to a notice of the Protestant missions of the present century.

Under these various heads, the writer has endeavoured to bring together a series of interesting facts, scattered about in different histories; and his book has this merit, if it has no other, — the construction of a whole from the several parts.

In common with the general public, he read of an insurrection in China with some surprise, especially when to this it was added that the movement was a religious one, having Christianity for its basis, and not only Christianity, but Protestant Christianity! His inquiries have led him to the conclusion, that here there must be a mistake, and that the rebellion is but feebly charged with the spiritual element. He has, indeed, great doubts whether there exists in China much that is deserving of the name of Christianity at all. It may appear presumptuous to doubt, in the face of so much general belief, and so many sanguine expectations of the future; but the doubt cannot be avoided. It must be recollected that Protestant missions in China do not yet number an existence of fifty years; and that, until within the last ten years, Canton was the



only spot in all the vast empire where the missionary could teach, or circulate the religious tract. With the sole exception of Gützlaff, no Protestant missionary has yet penetrated into the centre of the empire.

In saying this much, the writer is far from wishing to depreciate the value of Christian missions in China, or to discourage their supporters. It will be found that he has done full justice to the valiant and honourable men, both Catholic and Protestant, who have gone forth as labourers in this vineyard. But too much immediate gain must not be expected from their labours. Ripe clusters must not be expected where the buds have scarcely made their appearance. The works of Deity are of slow growth.

Our accounts of the origin and progress of the rebellion in China are still very imperfect; but such as they are, they lead the writer to believe that its motives are entirely political, and that it is fomented by the secret societies which abound throughout the empire, especially in the southern provinces. In this opinion he is confirmed by the latest accounts, which inform us that the city of Shanghai was taken by rebels belonging to the Short Sword Society. This is no doubt a rami-

fication of the grand triad society, called the Brotherhood of Heaven and Earth. Of this society, and of its constitution and objects, some account will be found at the close of the book.

The Chinese are still a mysterious people to Europeans. We barely know them externally, and have yet to gain a knowledge of their inner life. Let us hope that the time is approaching when, either through a successful rebellion, or through the sure and silent strength of commerce, a door will be opened to Europeans, admitting them to observe the kingdom throughout its length and breadth; when we shall get rid of many historical fables and travellers' tales, and when there will be increased facilities for missionary labour. The thorough evangelisation of China will take place, as a matter of course; but the process must be a slow one, and the attempt often discouraging. It is many centuries since Augustine first preached in England, and yet we cannot flatter ourselves that Paganism has been thoroughly rooted out of the land. Give China time.

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