

## The Three Kings of Orient

international relations, and so involve serious complications. Still, he was a Christian monarch and bound by his oaths to defend and preserve the faith. The call of the East had come in a three-fold claim—he was not imposing a religion upon these nations against their wishes. What mattered the consequences in any event? God had undoubtedly pointed out his duty—might he not leave the issue with Him?

And yet this was such a new and strange thing for a sovereign to do! He trembled at the possible disaster that might follow if he had made a mistake in all the events of the night! But what other interpretation could be put upon them? By sheer force of will he tried to concentrate all his inherited wisdom and judgment upon the matter.

"God of my fathers," he cried, "give me light, more light, that I may see my way!"

His consciousness seemed to slip from him—he sank down into fathomless darkness, the waters roared in his ears, he clutched at the drifting things that whirled about him.

When he found himself again, he remembered his imperial guest, and was shamed by his own forgetfulness and inhospitality. Sweeping his hand across his eyes as though to make clearer his vision he rose hurriedly to his feet with words of apology upon his lips. But his speech was checked by a startling vision.

In front of him there seemed to be a dark wall with a square aperture in it, and set in the opening was a dazzling Figure. It was clothed all in white and its countenance was curiously like that of the King who bore the Trident. He looked more closely and was fascinated to discover that the face was more like that of the King of the Middle Kingdom. And yet