

PREFACE.

THE Continent of Asia is waking up from the sleep of ages. Japan is thrilled by the dawning light of Western civilization. China is learning that the world moves, and she must shake off the lethargy of centuries and take her place in the grand march of nations. Corea is suddenly stirred with a new life and becomes a central figure in the great drama of the Orient.

Public interest in America and Europe is aroused, and all intelligent persons are eager to obtain information concerning these Oriental countries from the most reliable sources. This information is contained in this volume.

BOOK I treats of the HISTORY OF CHINA FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE PRESENT DAY. Dating back to the earliest dawn of history, China has outlived all the great nations of ancient times, and is a living Empire to-day. No other nation in the world has such a record. Against the flood that has swept mighty kingdoms into oblivion, China has stood like an immovable rock. She is the wonder and the miracle among the august Empires of the East.

The reader traces her surprising growth, her conquests and her power at a period when "time was young." He sees the rise and fall of brilliant dynasties, while one Emperor after another appears upon the checkered scene, each of whom is invested with the proud title of "The Son of Heaven." He reads the graphic story of the Han Rulers, who, in arms and conquests, are worthy to be ranked with Roman Cæsars. He learns why, for more than 2000 years, the Chinese have been proud to call themselves the "Children of Han."

Then comes the Mongolian conquest. With tramping legions, with dashing steeds and gleaming spears, the Northern hordes sweep down upon the plains of the "Flowery Kingdom." The panorama of startling events moves on, and we are brought to the dynasty by which China is governed at the present time. The Manchus ascended the "Dragon Throne," and still sway their sceptre over nearly 400,000,000 of the human race.

The History of China within the present century is read with eager interest. With the record of other great crises, a masterly and thrilling account is given of the famous Taiping Rebellion. Suddenly a young English officer appears upon the scene. The world knows him now as the celebrated "Chinese Gordon," who performed miracles of valor and conquest. Fertile in resources, brave and magnetic, silent and stern, unyielding as granite, his story reads like that of the renowned old heroes of classic fable. All lands are filled with his dazzling fame.

This is followed by an account of Prince Kung and the Regency, and the history closes with the reign of the present Emperor.

Then comes a full description of China and its people. The gorgeous splendors of

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