

brought from Ta-cin (Judea or Syria), and promulgated in China.' The principal inscription is in Chinese characters, and consists of twenty-eight columns, each containing sixty-two words. It first states the fundamental principles of Christianity, and then recounts the arrival of missionaries in 636, their gracious reception by the King, Tae-tsung, their labors and success, and the principal events of the mission for 144 years, or till 780." There were two persecutions, which the Christians shared with the Buddhists; one in 699, three years after Olopuen, the chief of the Nestorian missionaries, arrived; and the other in 713. On either side of the main inscription and at the foot are subordinate epigraphs, one in Chinese, and the other, occupying the side and base, in Estrangelo-Syrian characters, giving catalogues of the presbyters and deacons in the Chinese Church." "The tablet purports to have been erected in 781, in the second year of Kienchung, the ninth emperor of the Tang dynasty; Kingsing, a priest from the church in Tatsing (India), being the author of the preface to the proclamation issued by the Emperor Taetsung in favor of Christianity. The proclamation is dated in the 12th year of his reign, corresponding to the year of Our Lord 639. Making all due allowance for the inflated language of this document it seems probable that there were at this time Christian churches in the chief cities of the Empire. A translation of the scriptures is said to have been in the library of the palace." One or two things in the inscription excite suspicion. "The statements respecting India are glaringly incorrect. The Nestorians are represented as using images and praying for the dead—whereas they abhor image worship; and Christ is spoken of as having succoured the confined spirits." It is possible, however, that the word images is a mistranslation of the original; although the persecuting emperors issued edicts against the image worshippers, a term that seems to have included the Christians with the disciples of Buddha. Whatever the value of this inscription may be, it seems beyond doubt that Christians of the Nestorian communion were in China in the 8th century. We have already seen in a previous article that two Arabian travellers of the 9th century mention the massacre of Christians, together with Mahomedans, Parsees, and Jews in 877. In the year 845 Wutsung ordered 3,000 priests from Tatsing (India) to retire into private life; but these in all probability were priests of Buddha. Indeed Buddhism is so like a corrupt Christianity that the emperors sometimes confounded the two. About the year 1000, a famous Khan, of Chinese Tartary, was converted by the Nestorian missionaries to the Christian faith, and all his subjects, who do not seem to have numbered more than a quarter of a million, professed the same. After his baptism he received the name of Prester or Presbyter John. We have already had an instance of a Nestorian ruler in the Christian King of Malabar, whom Vasco da Gama saw at a later period. This Christian State flourished until the year 1202, when Zenghis Khan, the chief of a Mongol horde, married the daughter of Un-Khan, the last of the Tartar Khans, who was known by the name of Prester John, and quarreling with his father-in-law, put him to death, annexed his dominions, and began a career of conquest. Within a short time the whole of northern China, or Cathay, Chinese and Independent Tartary, the north of Persia, and the Russian Province of Astrachan fell under the sway of the Mongol, who was equally indifferent to all religions, regarding himself and his sword, which was perpetually bathed in blood, as chief divinities. He and his successors, Oktai Khan, and Kublai Khan, who overthrew the Mohamedan Empire in Persia and