

Amoy or Hia Mun (the harbour or gate of Hia) is situated in latitude  $24^{\circ} 40'$  N., and longitude  $118^{\circ} 20'$  E., upon the south-western corner of the island of Amoy, at the mouth of the Dragon river. At the beginning of the 18th century it was the seat of a large foreign commerce. It contains about 180,000 inhabitants. The two districts in which this dialect is spoken, contain two or three millions. The Chinese population of the island of Tai Wan or Formosa, estimated at two and a half millions, speak, for the most part, this dialect. So that within the limits of China proper it is the language of four or five millions.

But this dialect is not limited by the bounds of the Chinese Empire. The emigration from China to the islands of the Archipelago and to the south-eastern peninsula of Asia is composed of men from the districts where this dialect is spoken. The Fuh Kien men have been for centuries known as the mariners of China. Their junks have visited Bangkok, Malacca, Sumatra, Java, Borneo, and many of the islands. These junks are almost all of them owned in Amoy. The inhabitants of this region know that within eight or ten days sail of Amoy, there lie large, fertile, unsettled regions, where starvation is unknown. Tens of thousands, finding themselves unable to obtain subsistence in the midst of a dense population, leave their country to seek their fortunes in less densely peopled and more fertile lands. They have carried with them their language, and thus the Amoy dialect is spoken by hundreds of thousands of Chinese emigrants in Bangkok, Batavia, Borneo, and Singapore.

Hence the estimate does not seem extravagant that this language is spoken by five millions of people in these several regions.

*A Spoken, and not a Written Language.*

In China there is but one written language and this is identical in all parts of the Empire. This written language is not spoken, nor can it ever become a spoken language. It can not even be read aloud so as to be intelligible to an audience of cultivated men. The written language addresses itself to the eye and not to the ear. On the other hand, the spoken languages being unwritten, address themselves to the ear alone. Their range or area, unlike that of the written language, is very narrow, embracing only a few hundred square miles, and being used by only a few millions of people. It is not known how many distinct dialects exist within the limits of the eighteen