

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

THE FLOWERY KINGDOM.

If all the people of all the world can be imagined standing abreast, in a single line, so that they should just touch one another, that line would be about 500,000 miles long—long enough to reach around the earth twenty times. And if you could pass in front of that line and look on each face, at least one man in every four you would see would be a Chinaman.

There are eighteen provinces in China proper, each one being about as large as Great Britain, and yet it is very doubtful whether many of the boys and girls who have finished their geographies know so much as the name of any one of these provinces. Americans talk much of their vast country, yet China, with her dependencies, has 300,000 more square miles than are found in all our States and Territories, including Alaska. In each square mile in the United States there are, on an average, ten or eleven persons, while China has at least two hundred and fifty inhabitants for every one of her square miles.

There are from three to four hundred millions of souls in the empire, and though we think a good beginning has been made towards giving them the gospel of Jesus, and many thousands have already learned to love him, there has not yet been sent from all

Christian lands so much as one minister for each million of people. If Christians know more about China and thought more about it, they would surely make more effort to give to its millions the gospel. The Chinese have many names for the land they inhabit. It is from their name Tein or Chin, that

our word China comes. This is very like the name Sini, by which it is supposed China is referred to in the Bible (Isa. xlix. 12). They call it also "The Middle Kingdom," sometimes "The Central Flowery Kingdom," because they suppose it stands in the centre of the earth.

the process of winding silk from the cocoons. The Great Wall was built upon the northern boundaries of the empire two hundred years before the Saviour came to earth. It was designed as a defence against the warlike Tartars, but is now quite useless. It runs from the sea along the northern

Pekin, the capital of this great empire, is one of the largest cities in the world, having an estimated population of a million and a half. It is the seat of governmental administration, and of large commercial enterprises. The streets are generally unpaved, and, according to the state of the weather, are either knee-deep in mud or covered with dust. The houses are chiefly made of brick, one storey high, and often embellished with grotesque carving, and much brilliant painting and gilding.

The street scenes are generally of peculiar animation, from the number of stalls and street buyers and sellers. All manner of trades and industries are conducted in the open air, and the picturesque garb of the natives, which is fast becoming familiar in our Canadian cities, gives colour and variety to the scene.

The large picture on this page shows some of these strange open-air scenes. In the upper group a juggler is performing his conjuring tricks, and making his puppet figures dance. At his right his assistant is playing on a flute, and at the same time on a tambourine and cymbals with his feet, while a gaping crowd look on and admire.

The central part of the picture shows the process of drying and preparing tea over a slow fire, and on either side are Chinese officials. Below is shown



CHINA.