

CHINA.

The fact that a Missionary from our sister church in the Upper Provinces, is now commencing evangelistic work in China, gives us new interest in that great country, with its vast heathen population. China is now the near neighbour of America, and the churches of the United States and Canada must feel a redoubled responsibility with regard to the 400 millions thus practically waiting to receive the Gospel at our hands. The Chinese were a civilized people when our ancestors were savages wandering in British forests. In some respects they are even yet in advance of Western nations. The country is well organized,—divided into provinces and counties. The cities which are numerous are surrounded with walls from twenty to twenty-five feet high, with an outer face of solid masonry, either hewn stone or brick. The provincial capitals contain on an average about a million of inhabitants each; cities of the second and third classes are correspondingly smaller. All the names found on our larger maps are names of walled cities. The cities alone—seventeen hundred in number—contain a population of 60,000,000. But the great proportion of the inhabitants are found in the innumerable unwalled towns and hamlets which thickly dot the fertile plains. Every thing you see impresses you with the dense population. The canals are full of boats, and the fields of laborers. The roads and byways are filled with pedestrians, with pack mules and donkeys. The streets resound with the din of every variety of busy artisans, and one is hardly ever out of sight of the graves of the dead of past generations. "How many millions have gone down to idolaters' graves without any knowledge of Christ?" This vast population, isolated by their position from the rest of their race, has developed a civilization peculiar to itself. They have a language embracing in all forty thousand characters; an authentic history which dates back more than three thousand years, and a very extensive literature, embracing a great variety of subjects. The character of the people is, perhaps, largely derived from the teachings of Con-

fucius. His five relations of *sovereign to subject*, husband and wife, parent and child—i. e., covering all human relationships; but nothing is taught of any relation to God.

Their spiritual destitution is not exceeded by that of any other race of men. It is even difficult to communicate any ideas of Christianity through the medium of the Chinese language. Having no religious ideas, they have no words to express them.

The American Presbyterian Board of Missions, in their Monthly Statement, say:

"The results of effort during the thirty-four years past," says Hon. S. Wells Williams, "has been only a first sheaf, I am sure, of what the next thirty-four years of the century will exhibit. But it is much, nevertheless. The three or four missionaries then in Canton have been multiplied to over four hundred, besides females—more than a hundred of whom are still living, and in the field. They are working directly upon the masses in more than twenty cities, with many out-stations besides. The single upper room in a hong in Canton, where the Chinese service of Dr. Morrison was held, has expanded to scores of churches and chapels, schools and hospitals, in all of which the truth is made known continually. The converts are few, indeed, compared with the crowds of their Pagan countrymen; yet the three thousand and more who are numbered on the mission records give their witness for the fulfillment of the prophecy, 'These from the land of Sinim.' Three of these have testified with their lives or imprisonment to the truth and the value of the principles they have professed. In printing and disseminating Scriptures and religious books the advance has kept pace with the other branches of the work; so that instead of stealthily bringing in a copy of the Bible at Canton in the bottom of a trunk, thousands of copies are sent from the printing office in Shanghai, printed in four different sizes of type. These have been carried through all the large town of Northern China, and publicly sold by foreigners in the street. In 1866 two men alone sold over twenty thousand New Testaments and other books in their missionary tours—sometimes selling two hundred or twenty-five hundred in a single city.

Much anxiety has been felt for some months on account of the circular of the Chinese Government with respect to missionaries, and their interference with the civil authorities. It was pretty well understood that the whole difficulty arose from the infamous plots and intrigues of the