

THE REV. DR. HART'S MISSIONARY TRAVELS IN WESTERN CHINA.

BY REV. JAMES COOKE SEYMOUR.

III.



THE REIGNING EMPEROR OF
CHINA.

OUR persistent traveller penetrates at last into the very heart and shrine of Buddha worship—the famous Mount Omei. Over 11,000 feet high, it is the centre of natural and artificial wonders hard to equal anywhere on the globe. “On the face of the highest cliff is the famous carved Mil-leh-Buddha, some 360 feet in height. Small trees grow from the head of the colossus. The circumference of the head is one hundred feet, and the breadth of the eyes twenty feet. Whether it be a freak of nature or the work of some waggish priest—

the vegetation on the crown appears so trimmed as to form a perfect head of hair; while creeping plants are pendant from the upper lip, resembling a moustache.

“This is the region of the white wax-trees. They are snow-white from lowest branch to their seven-leaved twigs. One is almost inclined to doubt the reality at first. Surely it has not been snowing in this almost tropical clime! This pure white cotton-looking stuff is on the under and outer sides of the branches, and is about a quarter of an inch thick. There are a few dried up bags of the tung-oil tree leaves hanging to the boughs, otherwise the trees are clean and smooth, with ten or twelve branches well laden with snow-white wax. Lovely, wonderful sight! As far as one can see are rows of this tree. The wax itself is the product of a small insect brought from the distant valley of Kien-Chang, nearly four hundred miles from Omei. With admirable sagacity the Chinese have found out that the breeding of the wax-insect and the production of wax through it are two distinct processes, which cannot be combined in one and the same locality. The little insect lays its eggs in those distant mountains upon the paokeh tree. The egg cocoons are brought in great haste into the Omei region, tied into green tung-oil tree leaves, and hung upon the trees, where they hatch almost immediately. In the eighth month the branches are cut off and