

Idol temples are to be found in large numbers, and in better repair than those in some of the adjoining provinces.

*Historical Incidents.* This province has occupied a prominent place in the history of China. Some of the people affirm that Honan is the centre of all under Heaven, and the proof adduced is that a stick stuck in the ground at Kai-fung-fu, the capital, gives no shadow (?). Others of the Honanese say that Honan is to China as the heart to the human body, if Honan is corrupted the eighteen provinces of China will suffer. Some writers contend, and the theory is said to be favoured by the Chinese themselves - that the race came into China from the north-west, along the Yellow River valley, settled in Honan, and from thence spread over south-eastern Asia. It is certain that the earliest records of the Chinese frequently refer to this province. Twenty-six dynasties have held sway in China during the past 4,000 years, and the Capital has been changed seventeen times. It has been located in Honan seven times out of the seventeen. An extensive collection of historical records were kept at one time in the Archives of the City of Loh. This city lay near the site of the modern Honan-fu. There is good reason for believing that this region, if thoroughly explored, would furnish many relics of ancient times. Rock-cut temples, and old inscriptions, together with graceful bas-reliefs have already been discovered. The famous Lao Tzu, founder of the Taoist system of religion, was a native of Honan. The city in which he was born stood near the modern Kuei-ti-fu, in the east of the province. At Koo-yang the house in which Lao Tzu is said to have lived is still shown, and his memory is further preserved in the same region by a temple dedicated to his honour. This Lao Tzu was for a time "Keeper of the Archives" under the imperial Court of Chow, in the City of Loh. To this city Confucius wended his way for the purpose of studying there the records of antiquity. While so engaged he had several interviews with the philosophical Lao Tzu, in which China's great sage seems to have been decidedly worsted in argument. Nor was Lao Tzu the only marked man which Honan gave to China. The famous Lze-ma-ts'ien was also a native of this province. His celebrated work - the "Historical Records" was the first attempt at a comprehensive history of China. The book commences with the mythical reign of Huang Ti, and comes down to B. C. 104. As in the case of so many works dealing with the early history of nations, fiction and fact are so blended together in this book as to make their separation somewhat difficult.