

Britain have had ample means of testing his accuracy, and their secretaries have given him many kind marks of confidence. He does not of course say that they concur in this specific statement.

It seems that it would have been more desirable that the author should have furnished the details of the evidence before he announced his conclusions and made them the bases of an appeal, or at least set them forth as an incentive to Christian effort.

Instead of following the course he proposes, the reader will most probably hold the statement in suspense or decide from such data as may be at his command as to its credibility, while many will question if even such tolerable accuracy can ever be obtained in the estimate, as to bring it within the range of practical missionary thought. It is difficult to say what is the population of China even in our own day, and there is little hope of establishing any but questionable inferential proof of what it was a hundred years ago. Whoever has made a close study of the "Table of the Different Censuses of the Eighteen Provinces," and other carefully made estimates as quoted by Dr. Williams, and his elaborate discussion of the entire subject of the past and present population of the Chinese Empire ("Middle Kingdom," vol. i. pp. 206-240), will readily understand that there is no credible statistical data on which to formulate anything approaching exact statements, such as we have become accustomed to for a comparatively few years past, in the Western world; and inferences, deductions and "guesses" have been always easily matched by counter inferences, deductions and "guesses."\* One becomes curious to know what fresh sources for reliable statement or argument are to be brought to light, to prove what the population of China was a century ago.

Dr. Williams estimated the population in 1876 to be less than it was in 1812, because the Taiping rebellion probably destroyed twenty millions of human beings during eighteen years of carnage in the fifteen provinces to which it reached. For twenty years prior to that the increase of the population was estimated at less than one per cent. per annum, and this renders Dr. Williams's statement probable. We put emphasis on China, because it popularly is supposed to contain about one-third of the population of the globe, and if no basis of calculation approaching accuracy can be had here, it would cause serious defect in the total result.

It may not be quite fair to allude to Africa, as that may be included in the two or three hundred millions which Mr. Johnston so generously deducts as peoples which have come to our knowledge within the century. But suppose these three hundred millions of newly discovered people have been numerically *reduced* within the century, what then? Whether the populations of these nations newly added to the world's census are more or less than they were a century ago, cannot be now

\* See International Department for discussion of the latest Returns.