

### CHINA AND CHINESE MISSIONS.

The great empire of China is one among the nations of the earth in which our Church from this time forward is called upon to take a special interest. Our recently ordained missionary, now on his way to the important field of labor allotted to him in that distant land, should form a link to bind our sympathies with all Christian effort put forth for the evangelization of China. The aim of this article is to give a brief sketch of China and the progress of the Gospel there, so that the interest taken by the members of our Church, who have not leisure or opportunity to study the subject more at large, in the new mission, may be at once intelligent and comprehensive.

The whole of the British possessions in North America are computed to contain about four million square miles, or as large an extent of territory as the continent of Europe: but the Chinese Empire contains five millions. While British America has a population of little more than one person to every square mile, Europe fills the same area with seventy: but China's proportion is higher still; for the subjects of the celestial emperor number about four hundred millions. In British America we count our Protestant ministers and religious teachers by the thousand: but China has barely one hundred Protestant missionaries to minister to her four hundred millions. Imagine the whole population of Canada looking to one man for the knowledge of the true God, and we may have some slight conception of the Macedonian cry which is falling upon Christian ears in the east and west, and to which we as a Church have given our first feeble response.

The Chinese make great pretensions to antiquity. Bailly, the astronomer, imagined from certain astronomical data, that the Chinese had better means of knowing the time of the world's creation and that of man, than the ignorant inhabitants of Europe or Western Asia. The former creation the Chinese fixed at 64,800 years, and the latter at 6,158 years, before Christ. More moderate views, and views less hostile to the truth of revelation, now prevail in regard to the antiquity of the Chinese people than those which took them back to the world's birthday. It is now asserted that the Flowery Land was peopled, or at any rate the most westerly part of it, 2,953 years before the Christian era, when Fohi, who is supposed to be Noah, journeyed eastward from mount Ararat, and became the first king of the Chinese. The historians from whose writings the Rev. Charles Gutzlaff compiled his sketch of Chinese history, commenced with the Heu dynasty, which began to reign in 2207, B.C. A people not at all unlike the Chinese, are represented on Egyptian monuments that date from before the Exodus of Israel; but the Chinese bottles found in Egyptian tombs are clearly proved to have been brought by Arab traders about the time of the Crusades. The ancient traditions of Persia and India speak of the Chin as a powerful people long before Cyrus. We have no true evidence, however, that a civilized race existed in China until about the time that the ten tribes of Israel were carried into captivity, or between seven and eight hundred years before the birth of our Lord. Even then there does not seem to have been anything like a settled political condition of the country. An interesting passage in the forty-ninth chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah, who prophesied B.C. 700, has been considered by the majority of recent commentators to refer to China: "Behold these," says the prophet, "shall come from far (the south); and lo these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim." After Alexander the Great,