

framework of a recess of the room where the services were to be held. Soon after the company had assembled loud weeping was heard, and immediately Mr. Ahok and his two adopted sons, together with several other male relatives, slowly entered the recess from another room, bearing the body, encased in elegant silk, and laid it in the coffin. The weeping continued while the unoccupied space in the coffin was being filled with the pith of a certain plant, and with bits of paper rolled into small balls. After this, the assembled friends viewed the face of the deceased, when we were requested to proceed with the services. These consisted of the singing of a hymn, prayer, a short address from the words, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord," etc., followed by another hymn and the benediction—all, of course, being in Chinese. During the services Mr. Ahok sat on a piece of matting on the floor, near the head of the coffin. When the benediction was pronounced, the friends quickly dispersed, leaving the sorrowing relatives alone with their dead. In a short time the coffin was closed and hermetically sealed; but it has been decided that the interment will not take place until the forty-ninth day after the death. In this part of China the wealthy families, and many of the middle classes, begin on the seventh day after a death a series of "meritorious" ceremonies for the repose and general benefit of the soul of the departed, or the three souls, according to the heathen notion. In one form or another these ceremonies are repeated every seventh day from that of the death, some continuing until the forty-ninth day. Buddhist or Taoist priests are hired to manage these exercises, which are described in that painstaking work, "Social Life of the Chinese," by Rev. Justus Doolittle, for fourteen years a missionary here at Foochow.

Mr. Ahok is following the custom of having his friends and relatives meet every seventh

day until the burial; but, instead of having senseless heathen ceremonies, social religious meetings are held, and the gospel is preached. Thus our Chinese Christians adhere to harmless native customs, only substituting Christian for heathen worship.

We are informed that about five years ago Mr. Ahok's mother had quite a protracted struggle, deciding whether she would become a Christian or remain a Buddhist. Since his conversion, Mr. Ahok has had preaching Sunday afternoons at his residence, as well as mid-week social meetings and family prayers. His mother used to alternate between these services and the worship of the idol, which had for so many years deluded her. While continuing this practice she had a good opportunity to compare the two religions. One day, after attending Christian worship, she said to her friends: "You may take my idol away; hereafter your God shall be my God, and your Saviour my Saviour." And the joy which shone in her countenance showed that she had indeed found him of whom Moses and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth. The idol was presented to Bishop Merrill when he was here in 1883. From the time of her conversion, this aged Chinese lady had a bright evidence of acceptance with God, and became more and more firmly established in the faith during her few remaining years. Through her influence Mrs. Ahok's mother, who still survives, was also constrained to turn from idols to the true and living God.

How encouraging all this to the missionary of the cross, who, in such a benighted land, is oftentimes depressed by the mass of heathenism, which, like a moral miasma, environs him as does the very atmosphere! What proofs the conversion of these aged ones that in China, as elsewhere, the gospel of Christ is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth"! Our millions of dear brothers and sisters in America, who, by their prayers and money, are advancing God's cause in heathen lands, may well rejoice with us over all such triumphs of grace.

V.—THE MONTHLY CONCERT OF MISSIONS.

BY A. T. PIERSON, D.D.

GENERAL SURVEY.

OUR intention is during the twelve-month to turn the whole wheel round and bring successively to view every part of the world-wide circle of missionary labor. We give the scheme for the year, and as far as may be the structure of THE REVIEW will conform throughout to this plan:

JANUARY: General Outlook. Survey of the World.

FEBRUARY: China and Confucianism. Thibet.

MARCH: Mexico, Central America. City Evangelization.

APRIL: India and Ceylon. Brahmanism.

MAY: Burmah, Siam and Laos. Buddhism.

JUNE: Africa. Freedmen in North America.

JULY: Islands of the Sea. Utah. North American Indians.

AUGUST: Italy, France, and Papal Europe.