

**OUR ORIENTAL
MISSIONS, VOL. II.
CHINA AND BULGARIA**

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Our oriental missions, Vol. II. China and Bulgaria by Edward Thomson

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EDWARD THOMSON

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CHINA AND BULGARIA**

OUR
ORIENTAL MISSIONS.

VOLUME II.
CHINA AND BULGARIA.

BY
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WITH A
Biographical Sketch of the Author.



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Our Oriental Missions.

I.

PROSPECTS OF CHINA MISSION.

WITHOUT doing injustice to the other mission fields of our Church, I note some of the advantages of China; and,

1. *The character of the country.* The Chinese Empire extends from the ninetieth meridian east from Greenwich to the one hundred and forty-fourth, on that finest belt of the globe, which stretches from the twentieth parallel of north latitude to the fifty-sixth, and embraces about one-third of Asia, and one-tenth of the land surface of the globe. There are but two empires in the world that exceed it in area, namely, the British and the Russian. But neither of these can compare with China, either in fertility of soil, salubrity of climate, or accessibility of

position. Both of those empires have large regions ribbed in perpetual ice, and immense tracts of infertile lands, while the Chinese, taken as a whole, is one of the most fruitful, beautiful, and healthful parts of the earth.

Our particular field is the province of Fokien, which lies, as you know, along the Southern shore, shut off from the rest of the country by mountain ranges. It is well watered by the Min, rendered picturesque by lofty peaks and shaded dells, and is by no means wanting in mineral treasures. It is a fair and flowery region, where three crops may be gathered in one season; where the tea-plant thrives and the peach and the orange grow; where peas adorn the hillsides and wheat the valleys before the vernal equinox; where roses bloom under a January sun; where, beneath the ample shades of the camphor-tree, fragrant shrubs perfume the air, and where one may expect health and long life as reasonably as he may in Virginia or Kentucky.

We have now extended our field to Kiang Si, which, within an area of 27,000 square miles, contains 30,000,000 of people. It is traversed by the high-road from Canton to Peking, and bounded on the north by that great artery, the Yang-tse-kiang, having seventy-eight second and third class, and twelve first-class cities, a better

climate, more fruitful soil, and more industrious people than Fokien. We have even made provision for extending our mission to the capital.

2. *The density of its population.* I need not say that China is the most populous part of the earth. Our province—Fokien—contains, within an area of 59,000 square miles, a population of 15,000,000, and has sixty-three third-class cities and three first-class, of which the largest and the capital—Foo Chow—is the head of our mission. In the prefecture of Foo Chow, although the cultivation is mostly by hand, and the mountain sides, where springs are wanting, are irrigated by artificial means, and every cultivable acre, except what is occupied by graves, receives the culture of a husbandman who leaves the soil as rich when he takes off the crop as when he sows the seed, there is not enough raised for the inhabitants, who rely much upon the beautiful island of Formosa, which lies in the China Sea, a few leagues distant.

3. *The character of the people.* Next to the Caucasian, the Mongolian is, both intellectually and physically, the best variety of the human race, and the Chinese are the best part of the Mongolian family. Strange that so general a prejudice should exist against a people that neither Persian, Macedonian, Egyptian, nor Roman