PREFACE.

During the thirty-five years which have elapsed since the first edition of this work was issued, a greater advance has probably been made in the political and intellectual development of China than within any previous century of her history. While neither the social habits nor principles of government have so far altered as to necessitate a complete rewriting of these pages, it will be found, nevertheless, that the present volumes treat of a reformed and in many respects modern nation. Under the new régime the central administration has radically increased its authority among the provincial rulers, and more than ever in former years has managed to maintain control over their pretentions. The Empire has, moreover, established its foreign relations on a well-understood basis by accredited envoys; this will soon affect the mass of the people by the greater facilities of trade, the presence of travellers, diffusion of education, and other agencies which are awaking the people from their lethargy. Already the influences which will gradually transform the face of society are mightily operating.

The changes which have been made in the book comprise such alterations and additions as were necessary to describe the country under its new aspects. In the constant desire to preserve a convenient size, every doubtful or superfluous sentence has been erased, while the new matter incorporated has increased
the bulk of the present edition about one-third. The arrangement of chapters is the same. The first four, treating of the geography, combine as many and accurate details of recent explorers or residents as the proportions of this section will permit. The extra-provincial regions are described from the researches of Russian, English, and Indian travellers of the last twenty years. It is a waste, mountainous territory for the most part, and can never support a large population. Great pains have been taken by the cartographer, Jacob Wells, to consult the most authentic charts in the construction of the map of the Empire. By collating and reducing to scale the surveys and route charts of reliable travellers throughout the colonies, he has produced in all respects as accurate a map of Central Asia as is at this date possible. The Eighteen Provinces are in the main the same as in my former map.

The chapter on the census remains for the most part without alteration, for until there has been a methodical inspection of the Empire, important questions concerning its population must be held in abeyance. It is worth noticing how generally the estimates in this chapter—or much larger figures—have since its first publication been accepted for the population of China. Foreign students of natural history in China have, by their researches in every department, furnished material for more extensive and precise descriptions under this subject than could possibly have been gathered twoscore years ago. The sixth chapter has, therefore, been almost wholly rewritten, and embraces as complete a summary of this wide field as space would allow or the general reader tolerate. The specialist will, however, speedily recognize the fact that this rapid glance serves rather to indicate how immense and imperfectly explored is this subject than to describe whatever is known.

That portion of the first volume treating of the laws and their administration does not admit of more than a few minor
changes. However good their theory of jurisprudence, the people have many things to bear from the injustice of their rulers, but more from their own vices. The *Peking Gazette* is now regularly translated in the Shanghai papers, and gives a coup d'œil of the administration of the highest value.

The chapters on the languages and literature are considerably improved. The translations and text-books which the diligence of foreign scholars has recently furnished could be only partially enumerated, though here, as elsewhere in the work, references in the foot-notes are intended to direct the more interested student to the bibliography of the subject, and present him with the materials for an exhaustive study. The native literature is extensive, and all branches have contributed somewhat to form the résumé which is contained in this section, giving a preponderance to the Confucian classics. The four succeeding chapters contain notices of the arts, industries, domestic life, and science of the Chinese—a necessarily rapid survey, since these features of Chinese life are already well understood by foreigners. Nothing, however, that is either original or peculiar has been omitted in the endeavor to portray their social and economic characteristics. The emigration of many thousands of the people of Kwangtung within the last thirty years has made that province a representative among foreign nations of the others; it may be added that its inhabitants are well fitted, by their enterprise, thrift, and maritime habits, to become types of the whole.

The history and chronology are made fuller by the addition of several facts and tables;¹ but the field of research in this direction has as yet scarcely been defined, and few certain dates have been determined prior to the Confucian era.

¹ An alphabetical arrangement of all the tables scattered throughout the work may be found under this word in the Index.
The entire continent of Asia must be thoroughly investigated in its geography, antiquities, and literature in order to throw light on the eastern portion. The history of China offers an interesting topic for a scholar who would devote his life to its elucidation from the mass of native literature.

The two chapters on the religions, and what has been done within the past half century to promote Christian missions, are somewhat enlarged and brought down to the present time. The study of modern scholars in the examination of Chinese religious beliefs has enabled them to make comparisons with other systems of Asiatics, as well as discuss the native creeds with more certainty.

The chapter on the commerce of China has an importance commensurate with its growing amount. Within the past ten years the opium trade has been attacked in its moral and commercial bearings between China, India, and England. There are grounds for hope that the British Government will free itself from any connection with it, which will be a triumph of justice and Christianity. The remainder of Volume II. describes events in the intercourse of China with the outer world, including a brief account of the Tai-ping Rebellion, which proximately grew out of foreign ideas. No connected or satisfactory narrative of the events which have forced one of the greatest nations of the world into her proper position, so far as I am aware, has as yet been prepared. A succinct recital of one of the most extraordinary developments of modern times should not be without interest to all.

The work of condensing the vast increase of reliable information upon China into these two volumes has been attended with considerable labor. Future writers will, I am convinced, after the manner of Richthofen, Yule, Legge, and others, confine themselves to single or cognate subjects rather than attempt such a comprehensive synopsis as is here presented. The
number of illustrations in this edition is nearly doubled, the added ones being selected with particular reference to the subject-matter. I have availed myself of whatever sources of information I could command, due acknowledgment of which is made in the foot-notes, and ample references in the Index.

The revision of this book has been the slow though constant occupation of several years. When at last I had completed the revised copy and made arrangements as to its publication, in March, 1882, my health failed, and under a partial paralysis I was rendered incapable of further labor. My son, Frederick Wells Williams, who had already looked over the copy, now assumed entire charge of the publication. I had the more confidence that he would perform the duties of editor, for he had already a general acquaintance with China and the books which are the best authority. The work has been well done, the last three chapters particularly having been improved under his careful revision and especial study of the recent political history of China. The Index is his work, and throughout the book I am indebted to his careful supervision, especially on the chapters treating of geography and literature. By the opening of this year I had so far recovered as to be able to superintend the printing and look over the proofs of the second volume.

My experiences in the forty-three years of my life, in China were coeval with the changes which gradually culminated in the opening of the country. Among the most important of these may be mentioned the cessation of the East India Company in 1834, the war with England in 1841-42, the removal of the monopoly of the hong merchants, the opening of five ports to trade, the untoward attack on the city of Canton which grew out of the Lorcha Arrow, the operations in the vicinity of Peking, the establishment of foreign legations in that city, and finally, in 1873, the peaceful settlement of the kotone, which rendered possible the approach of foreign ministers to the Em-
peror's presence. Those who trace the hand of God in history will gather from such rapid and great changes in this Empire the foreshadowing of the fulfilment of his purposes; for while these political events were in progress the Bible was circulating, and the preaching and educational labors of missionaries were silently and with little opposition accomplishing their leavening work among the people.

On my arrival at Canton in 1833 I was officially reported, with two other Americans, to the hong merchant Kingqua as *fan-kwai*, or 'foreign devils,' who had come to live under his tutelage. In 1874, as Secretary of the American Embassy at Peking, I accompanied the Hon. B. P. Avery to the presence of the Emperor Tung-chi, when the Minister of the United States presented his letters of credence on a footing of perfect equality with the 'Son of Heaven.' With two such experiences in a lifetime, and mindful of the immense intellectual and moral development which is needed to bring an independent government from the position of forcing one of them to that of yielding the other, it is not strange that I am assured of a great future for the sons of Han; but the progress of pure Christianity will be the only adequate means to save the conflicting elements involved in such a growth from destroying each other. Whatever is in store for them, it is certain that the country has passed its period of passivity. There is no more for China the repose of indolence and seclusion—when she looked down on the nations in her overweening pride like the stars with which she could have no concern.

In this revision the same object has been kept in view that is stated in the Preface to the first edition—to divest the Chinese people and civilization of that peculiar and indefinable impression of ridicule which has been so generally given them by foreign authors. I have endeavored to show the better traits of their national character, and that they have had up to this
time no opportunity of learning many things with which they are now rapidly becoming acquainted. The time is speedily passing away when the people of the Flowery Land can fairly be classed among uncivilized nations. The stimulus which in this labor of my earlier and later years has been ever present to my mind is the hope that the cause of missions may be promoted. In the success of this cause lies the salvation of China as a people, both in its moral and political aspects. This success bids fair to keep pace with the needs of the people. They will become fitted for taking up the work themselves and joining in the multiform operations of foreign civilizations. Soon railroads, telegraphs, and manufactures will be introduced, and these must be followed by whatsoever may conduce to enlightening the millions of the people of China in every department of religious, political, and domestic life.

The descent of the Holy Spirit is promised in the latter times, and the preparatory work for that descent has been accomplishing in a vastly greater ratio than ever before, and with increased facilities toward its final completion. The promise of that Spirit will fulfil the prophecy of Isaiah, delivered before the era of Confucius, and God’s people will come from the land of Sinim and join in the anthem of praise with every tribe under the sun.

S. W. W.

New Haven, July, 1883.