

TIMOTHY RICHARD OF CHINA.

TIMOTHY RICHARD OF CHINA: Seer, Statesman, Missionary, and the most disinterested Adviser the Chinese ever had. By W. E. Soothill, M.A., Professor of Chinese in the University of Oxford. Formerly President of the Shansi Imperial University. London: *Seeley Service & Co.* 12s. 6d. net.

In this attractive-looking volume Professor Soothill tells the story of a very remarkable man who laboured for half a century as a missionary in China, and all who are interested in the people of China and especially in the progress among them of Christian missions should read it. In the title of the book the author makes large claims on behalf of its subject and without doubt he amply justifies them. Dr. Timothy Richard was born in 1845 in a small village in Carmarthenshire. During the great revival of 1858-60, he experienced, in Prof. Soothill's words, "a change of outlook": we perhaps need not mind calling it "conversion." That revival had great results, but probably none were greater in its far-reaching effects than the conversion of Timothy Richard. He was early drawn by the claims of foreign missions, and in his twenty-fifth year set sail for China under the auspices of the Baptist Missionary Society, reaching there in 1870, sixteen years after the arrival of Hudson Taylor, with whom he, later on, came into contact, and, alas that it has to be recorded, collision. Both men were needed in China, but they were of very different gifts and temperaments. It is an instructive and spirit-stirring thing to read the two lives and note the work which each did. Both were evangelists, but Timothy Richard accomplished his best work by educational means and did more than any other man to break down the prejudices and traditions which caused the Chinese to obstruct and persecute Christian missions. He thus opened the way for the spread of evangelization. He aimed at influencing the educated and ruling classes in the direction of a more liberal attitude to Christianity and to foreign ideas and civilization generally. He noted the best in the religions and temper of the people he met, rather than the worst, and by approaching them in a sympathetic spirit gained their confidence and support. This was, fifty years ago, not the prevailing attitude among missionaries, and Dr. Richard's aims and methods were not always understood. It must be remembered, however, that evangelization was always his goal. If he saw elements of good in Buddhism—and his biographer hints that he sometimes might have seen more than was there—he knew that Christ alone was the Way and the Truth and the Life and he never ceased to point men to Him. He felt, however, that the Chinese themselves—the Christian converts—were the best evangelists for the people of China.

There is, incidentally, a great deal of information about the modern history and development of China—the Tai Ping Rebellion, the war between Japan and China, the Reform Movement, the Boxer troubles and other matters, which gives the book additional value. We have greatly enjoyed reading it.