

could not understand each other in conversation." Moreover, besides these sounds attaching to the Chinese characters when read in the dialect of Fo-kien, thus discrepant from the sounds used in reading the same characters in the Mandarin dialect, yet *another* class of sounds is used to express the same ideas in the Fo-kien dialect when it is used colloquially and without reference to written symbols! (*Kidd's China*, etc., pp. 21-23.)

The term *Fokien dialect* in the preceding passage is ambiguous, as will be seen from the following remarks, which have been derived from the Preface and Appendices to the Rev. Dr. Douglas's Dictionary of the Spoken Language of Amoy,* and which throw a distinct light on the subject of this note:—

"The vernacular or spoken language of Amoy is not a mere colloquial dialect or *patois*, it is a *distinct language*—one of the many and widely differing spoken languages which divide among them the soil of China. For these spoken languages are not *dialects* of one language, but cognate languages, bearing to each other a relation similar to that between Hebrew, Arabic, and Syriac, or between English, Dutch, German, and Danish. The so-called '*written language*' is indeed uniform throughout the whole country, but that is rather a *notation* than a language. And this written language, as read aloud from books, is not *spoken* in any place whatever, under any form of pronunciation. The most learned men never employ it as a means of ordinary oral communication even among themselves. It is, in fact, a *dead language*, related to the various spoken languages of China, somewhat as Latin is to the languages of Southern Europe.

"Again: Dialects, properly speaking, of the Amoy vernacular language are found (*e.g.*) in the neighbouring districts of Changchew, Chinchew, and Tungan, and the language with its subordinate dialects is believed to be spoken by 8 or 10 millions of people. Of the other languages of China the most nearly related to the Amoy is the vernacular of Chau-chau-fu, often called 'the Swatow dialect,' from the only treaty-port in that region. The ancestors of the people speaking it emigrated many years ago from Fuh-kien, and are still distinguished there by the appellation *Hok-ló*, *i.e.* people from Hok-kien (or Fuh-kien). This language differs from the Amoy, much as Dutch differs from German, or Portuguese from Spanish.

"In the Island of Hai-nan (Hái-lâm), again (setting aside the central aborigines), a language is spoken which differs from Amoy more than that of Swatow, but is more nearly related to these two than to any other of the languages of China.

"In Fuh-chau fu we have another language which is largely spoken in the centre and north of Fuh-kien. This has many points of resemblance to the Amoy, but is quite unintelligible to the Amoy people, with the exception of an occasional word or phrase.

"Hing-hwa fu (Heng-hoà), between Fuh-chau and Chinchew, has also a language of its own, though containing only two *Hien* districts. It is alleged to be unintelligible both at Amoy and at Fuhchau.

"To the other languages of China that of Amoy is less closely related; yet all evidently spring from one common stock. But that common stock is *not* the modern Mandarin dialect, but the ancient form of the Chinese language as spoken some 3000 years ago. The so-called *Mandarin*, far from being the original form, is usually more changed than any. It is in the ancient form of the language (naturally) that the relation of Chinese to other languages can best be traced; and as the Amoy vernacular, which very generally retains the final consonants in their original shape, has been one of the chief sources from which the ancient form of Chinese has been recovered, the study of that vernacular is of considerable importance."

* CHINESE-ENGLISH DICTIONARY of the Vernacular or Spoken language of Amoy, with the principal variations of the Chang-chew and Chin-chew Dialects; by the Rev. Carstairs Douglas, M.A., LL.D., Glasg., Missionary of the Presb. Church in England. (Trübner, 1873.) I must note that I have not access to the book itself, but condense these remarks from extracts and abstracts made by a friend at my request.