Travel and Exploration in Asia

This collection of travel narratives, mainly from the nineteenth century, records the impressions of Europeans who visited China, Japan, South and South-East Asia. Some came as missionaries, others as members of trade or diplomatic missions, or as colonial administrators. Some were straightforward tourists, and one or two arrived as prisoners or shipwrecked sailors. Such accounts of travellers’ experiences in exotic locations were eagerly received by European readers.

Journeys in North China, Manchuria, and Eastern Mongolia

Scottish missionary Alexander Williamson (1829–90) spent several years preaching in northern China. From 1863 to 1866, he was there as the first overseas agent of the National Bible Society of Scotland. During this time, he travelled as far as Mongolia and Manchuria, a considerable undertaking in those days. He later became secretary of the Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge among the Chinese, and formed the Chinese Book and Tract Society in 1884. In this illustrated two-volume work, first published in 1870, he records the observations he made during extensive travels that took him via the home of Confucius while propagating the Bible in Chinese script. Volume 1 offers introductory remarks on China’s physical geography, people, culture, government and foreign influences. It also provides descriptions of the northern Chinese provinces and accounts of travels starting from Shandong province.
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Journeys in North China, Manchuria, and Eastern Mongolia

With Some Account of Corea

Volume 1

Alexander Williamson
JOURNEYS IN NORTH CHINA,
MANCHURIA, AND EASTERN MONGOLIA;

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF COREA

BY THE
REVD. ALEXANDER WILLIAMSON, B.A.,
AGENT OF THE NATIONAL BIBLE SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND TWO MAPS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER & CO., 15, WATERLOO PLACE.
1870.

[THE RIGHT OF TRANSLATION IS RESERVED.]
TO THE DIRECTORS AND OFFICEBEARERS
OF
THE NATIONAL BIBLE SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND

These Volumes are Dedicated,

IN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE ENCOURAGEMENT AFFORDED
TO THE AUTHOR IN THESE JOURNEYS,
AND ALSO IN TOKEN OF THE
UNIFORM KINDNESS AND CONSIDERATION
SHOWN TO HIM IN ALL HIS LABOURS.
PREFACE.

My object in undertaking the journeys narrated in these volumes, was the distribution of the Scriptures and books and tracts in the Chinese language throughout the interior of North China. Travelling over districts near and remote from the Ports, I met with much that was interesting in the natural features of the country, in the character and aspect of the people, and not a little which was both new and important in reference to the products of the soil and the mineral resources of the different provinces. It appeared incumbent on me to make these things known, and therefore I hope this book will be looked upon, not as the offspring of any ambition for authorship, but as the result of a sense of duty.

Keeping to my purpose of setting forth facts, I have abstained, as much as possible, from controversy. One thing, however, has come up which demands some attention. In papers recently laid before Parliament (April 6th), “the inland residence” of foreigners has been denounced; the restriction of missionaries to the vol. 1.
vi

PREFACE.

ports has been advocated; and even the adaptation of Christianity to accomplish its great purpose has been questioned. This book will throw some light upon these matters,—for there is nothing kept back, and nothing coloured. It will be seen that there is no hostility on the part of the people of North China towards Protestant missionaries; and, moreover, that our passports were invariably acknowledged, and aid given, when required, even in the most distant places. The presumption, therefore, is, that were the matter of inland residence likewise made a provision in Treaty engagements, there would be little or no difficulty in peaceably carrying it out.

I know that the Roman Catholics are very much disliked: in some places on account of the outrages committed by French soldiers during the last war; in other places in consequence of the assumption of the priests; and also owing to the violent way in which they have insisted upon the restoration of property confiscated at the close of the last century, and the injudicious manner in which they have sometimes built upon the ground re-occupied by them. All these causes operate in Peking. But no charges of this kind can be brought against Protestant missionaries, as is proved by the repeated admissions of the Chinese Foreign Office itself.
PREFACE.

vii

It seems ungenerous to say aught against our gallant allies, and religionists, who aim at the same end as ourselves; but there are times when the whole truth must be told, and this appears to be one of them, seeing that charges which are valid only against Romanists, are—in the Blue Book just referred to—made the basis of an argument against the extension of privileges to Protestants.

It is true that the Mandarins have been much less civil to foreigners during the past year; that one premeditated and unprovoked attack near Tien-tsin, resulting in the murder of a foreigner, has been permitted; that two or three serious acts of persecution have been perpetrated; and that alarming rumours, pointing to the expulsion of foreigners from Peking and other places, have been spread far and wide; but these things have occurred in consequence of the ultra-liberal policy of our Government, and especially of that outburst of hostile criticism in the spring of 1869, on the part of our officials and leading politicians and writers at home—all of which was duly communicated to the Chinese authorities, leading them to believe either that we were shorn of our strength, or had lost all interest in our countrymen in China.

I trust no deeds of violence will ensue; but if they do, I hope the opportunity will be taken to set matters
PREFACE.

right once for all. In these volumes I have hinted at one or two things which appear indispensable to satisfactory intercourse; and among them, inland residence under proper sanctions. The truth is, China can never be truly or permanently opened up without inland residence among the people; and as Protestant missionaries are centres of light and truth and beneficence, better adapted for salutary pioneer work than any other class, acceptable to the natives, and never guilty of political intrigue, it is clearly the interest of all concerned that provision be made for their legal establishment and unfettered action. I am the more disposed to advocate this, inasmuch as the experiment has been tried with success. Protestant missionaries, British, German, and American, have been labouring unmolested for some years in many of their inland cities. The disturbances at Yang-chow and Ngan-king were exceptional, in so far as they were fomented before the citizens had time to understand the character and motives of the missionaries. My argument therefore is, that Protestant missionaries who have proved so useful, although under adverse circumstances, should not be denied rights and privileges which are granted to Roman Catholics and even Mohammedans.

The Chinese opponents of missions, as of everything foreign, are not the people, but that class of Chinamen
PREFACE.

ix

described in Vol. I. p. 5. But a clause in a Treaty would go a great way to restrain even them; or, if they broke out, a clear and decided expression of our feelings—as experience has repeatedly shown—would effectually prevent a repetition of it.

On the general question I make no remark further than that the history of the Chinese demonstrates that it is not only impolitic, but dangerous, to grant them all the privileges of civilized nations, and allow them to ignore all the responsibilities recognized by other powers.

This book being intended for general readers, I have reserved for another place remarks upon the religious aspects of the Chinese and the progress of Christianity among the people; and being desirous to make it as complete as possible, I asked my friend Mr. Edkins to prepare an account of Peking, which will be found in Vol. II., and I doubt not my readers will thank me for placing before them so interesting a contribution.

I have also added Mr. Oxenham’s valuable narrative of his journey from Peking to Hankow, so that the public have now observations of North China in all directions.

The results of my observations of the Chinese character and government, and the information as to the physical geography of the country and other matters
x

PREFACE.

of a general character, precede the narrative of my journeys, as it is hoped the reader will thus be prepared to account for the habits of this extraordinary people, and the present state of the country.

I have to thank my friend, Rev. Jonathan Lees, of Tien-tsin, for letterpress in Vol. I., from p. 250 to 341, and also to express my obligations to John Kesson, Esq., for the aid he has afforded me in preparing the sheets for publication, and in carrying the work through the press.

The engravings of the view of Peking and the Temple of Heaven are from photographs in the possession of W. A. Cormabé, Esq., and those of the Tomb of Confucius and the Avenue leading to it are from photographs taken by Mr. Baker, in the possession of Dr. Carmichael of Che-foo. I am also indebted to Mr. Lees, of Tien-tsin, for the sketches of the Cave-Houses, the Chen-wu, the Nestorian Tablet, the Iron God, and the Bronze Idol.

ALEXANDER WILLIAMSON.

LOCHWINNOCH, NEAR GLASGOW,
June 13, 1870.
CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

CHAPTER I.
INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS RELATING TO THE PRESENT
AND FUTURE OF CHINA.

Extent of China—Varieties of Soil and Climate—Mineral Resources
—Water Communication—Mental Capacity of the People—
Written Language—Education—Untouched Resources—Dep-
lorable Condition of the Chinese—Memorial to the Emperor
—Intrigues of Candidates for Office—Lying and Deceit Uni-
versal—No Hope for China in Herself—Mr. Hart's Opinion..... 1

CHAPTER II.
BARRIERS IN THE WAY OF PROGRESS IN CHINA.

Pretensions of the Emperor—His Titles—Duration of his Assumed
Greatness—Conduct of the Government towards Prince Alfred
—Lord Elgin's Policy—Conceit and Ignorance of the People
—Their Estimate of Foreigners—Chinese Maps—Mr. Hart's
Testimony—Worship of Ancestors a Form of Idolatry—Evils
resulting from it—Chinese Emigrants—Horrible State of Society
in Manchuria and Mongolia—The Fung-shui Superstition—
Solutions of the Difficulty—The Opium Traffic—Universal
Untruthfulness and Deceit—What the Chinese need to Reform
them ................................................................. 9

CHAPTER III.
MORAL FORCES IN CHINA.

Influence of Foreign Commerce—Effects of Competition—The
Foreign Customs' Service—Salutary Influence of the Consular
Services—The Diplomatic Services—What have they done ?—
The Anglo-Chinese College—Chinese Newspapers—Roman
Catholic Missions—Date of their Establishment—Native
CONTENTS.

Christians—Benefit and Deficiencies of the Catholic Missions—
Their Industrial Schools—Romeish and Protestant Missionaries—
Protestant Missions—What they have done—Their Books,
Periodicals, and Schools—Scientific Treatises for the Chinese
by Missionaries—Results of Missionary Labour—Missionary
Establishments Centres of Civilisation—The Duke of Argyle’s
Opinion—Foreign Intercourse with China—Lord Elgin’s
Treaty—Firmness essential in dealing with the Chinese ........ 20

CHAPTER IV.

Receptivity of the Chinese.

Improvements adopted from other Nations in Past Times—Translations
of European Books republished by Chinese Officials—
Modern Inventions and Improvements adopted for the Defence
of the Country—Influence of the Roman Catholic Missions—
Hospitals, Schools, and Colleges—Spread of Vaccination—
Openness to Conviction on Religious Matters—Cause of their
Stationaries—Chinese Capitalists—Prognostic of the Future
of China ........................................................................................................... 33

CHAPTER V.

The Country and its Government.

Physical Geography of North China—Geology—Coal-Fields—Iron
Ore—Topography—The “Foo,” “Chow,” and “Hien” Cities
—The Government—Magistrates and Governors of Provinces
—The Emperor—His Power and Titles—Rights of Rebellion
—The Censorate—Railways and Telegraphs involved in the
Chinese Theory of Government—Present Government—List
of its Members .............................................................................................. 40

CHAPTER VI.

Civilization and Means of Intercommunication.

State of Education—Population—Monetary System—Weights
and Measures—Water Communication in North China—Water
Communication with the Sea via Hai-chow—The Old Yellow
River—A River Vagary—River and Road Communications—
Han River—Imperial Highways—Cart-roads—Bridge-paths—
Proposed Railways—Treaty Ports—Revision of the Treaty—
Frauds of the Mandarin—Advantages of Railways ......................... 55
CONTENTS.

CHAPTER VII.

Province of Shan-tung.


CHAPTER VIII.

Province of Chi-hli.


CHAPTER IX.

The Province of Shan-si.


CHAPTER X.

Provinces of Shen-si, Kan-si, and Honan.

Coal—Iron—Gold—Silver—Copper—Quicksilver—Tin, &c. 170

CHAPTER XI.

The Terrace Deposits in North China.

Calcareaous Loam—Where Found—Theory of Pumppelly as to its Formation—Similar Deposits found in other Places—Houses Excavated in the Sides of Cuttings—Striking Features of the Terraced Hills—Magnificent Scenery—Village cut out of a Sand-hill—Bright Colours of the Strata—Extent of the Terrace Deposits and Cuttings—The Author’s Theory—Ancient
CONTENTS.

Chinese Tradition of the First Great Flood—Its date corresponds to that of the Noachian Deluge—Early Physical Condition of North China

CHAPTER XII.
Journey Round the Shan-tung Promontory.
Lost in the Dark—Tombs of another Race—Wei-hai-wei—Kiautu and its Inhabitants—Boulders and Granite—Fireworks and Jewels—Use of English a bad Sign—Shih-tau and its Warehouses—Kau-tswun—Regal Honours and Inconveniences—Sulphur Baths of Loong-chuen-tang—Ning-hai

CHAPTER XIII.
From Peking to Che-foo via Grand Canal, and the Country of Confucius and Mencius.

CHAPTER XIV.
Journey through the Provinces of Chih-li, Shan-si, and a Portion of Shen-si and Honan.
PART I.—CHIH-LI.
CONTENTS.

PAGE

CHAPTER XV.
JOURNEY THROUGH CHIH-LI, SHAN-SI, &C.—continued.

PART II.—CHIH-LI AND SHAN-SI.


CHAPTER XVI.
JOURNEY THROUGH CHIH-LI, SHAN-SI, &C.—continued.

PART III.—SHAN-SI.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER XVII.

Journey through Chih-li, Shan-si, &c.—continued.

PART IV.—SHAN-SI.

Friendly Reception at Ping-yau-hien—A degraded "foo" City—
Tombs in Chang-lang-chow—Group of Monuments—Candle-
stick Pillar—Geomancy—Plain of Tai-yuen—Water-courses
Intersecting the Roads—Walled Villages—Pylons—Chie-
hsin—Well-dressed and Refined People—A Magistrate listen-
ting to our Preaching—Pass of Han-hsin-ling—Coal-mining
Villages—Fire-damp unknown—Mass of Iron-stone worshipped
—Cave-dwellings—Ascent of the Pass—Magnificent Scenery—
Variegated Strata—Divining-Sticks—Provisional Escape—
A Cow-god—Plain of Ping-yang—Traditional Burial-place of
Yao—Chinese Claims to Antiquity—Ping-yang-foo—An
impatient Congregation—Ruined Temple—Iron Idols—
Colossal Head of Buddha—Paper-making—Great Memorial
Temple—Kau-hien—Wun-shi-hien—A City of Opium-smokers
—Salt Lake—Magnificent Temple—Suspicious Intruders—
Temple of Kwan-ti—A Great Dignitary—Pa-chow-foo—Ferry-
boats—Toong-kwan—An over-curious Crowd ................................ 318

CHAPTER XVIII.

Journey through Chih-li, Shan-si, &c.—continued.

PART V.—SHAN-SI AND HONAN.

A formidable Fortress—Interview with a Mandarin—The Sacred
Hill Hwa-Shan—Magnificent Temple in Ruins—Tradition
respecting it—Charming Scenery—The Mirage—The Moh-
ammedan Rebellion—Story of its Origin—Desolate City—Devas-
tated Towns and Villages—Desecrated Temples—A Company
of Prisoners—The Lake of Grass—A Slough of Despond—
City of Si-ngan-foo—Amenities of the Guard-house—Spacious
Loggings—Preaching to successive Crowds—Roman Catholic
Establishment—Curious Stone—Ancient Mosque—Quaint
Tradition—Mohammedan Compliancy—A Preaching Tour—
View of the City—Self-righteous Community—"Forest of
Tablets"—The Nestorian Tablet—Conversation with the
Catholic Bishop—Dust-storm—Dangerous Pass—Fear of the
Rebels—Wheelbarrowmen—Head of Foh—A Live Buddha... 364
CONTENTS.

CHAPTER XIX.

JOURNEY THROUGH THE SOUTHERN AND CENTRAL PORTIONS OF SHAN-TUNG.

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

## VOLUME I.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illustration</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THE MID-DAY HALT <em>To face Title.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAEHEE-WORSHIP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MENGUS: REDUCED FACSIMILE OF A RUBBING FROM AN ENGRAVED MARBLE SLAB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVEYRUE LEADING TO THE TOMB OF CONFUCIUS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOMB OF CONFUCIUS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONFUCIUS, &amp;c. &amp;c.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUDDHIST IDOL</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINE CAVE-HOUSES AT PING-DING-CHOW</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHEN-WU, OR MONUMENTS FOR AVOIDING EVIL INFLUENCES</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRONZE IDOL</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NESTORIAN TABLET</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEAD OF NESTORIAN TABLET</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACSIMILE OF RUBBING OF THE NESTORIAN CROSS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAP OF NORTH CHINA AND COREA</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## VOLUME II.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illustration</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VIEW OF PEKING, WITH IMPERIAL BRIDGE <em>To face Title.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MONGOL ENCAMPMENT, <em>en route, from a native drawing.</em></td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEMPLE OF HEAVEN, ON THE NORTH ALTAR, AT PEKING</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAP OF PART OF MANCHURIA</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Measures of Length

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Conversion Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chih</td>
<td>13'1-8 inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Works</td>
<td>14'1 inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chih—according to the tariff</td>
<td>1 chang.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 chih</td>
<td>11'12-12 yards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 li</td>
<td>1,826 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2'89 li (according to old usage)</td>
<td>1 English mile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250 li (according to the Jesuit measurement which now prevails)</td>
<td>1 degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 li</td>
<td>1 French league.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3'1-3 li</td>
<td>1 English mile.</td>
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### Land Measure

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<th>Conversion Factor</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>733'32 square yards</td>
<td>1 mow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6'61 mow</td>
<td>1 acre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 mow</td>
<td>1 king.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 king</td>
<td>15'13 square acres</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Measure of Capacity

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 shing</td>
<td>96-100 pint.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 shing</td>
<td>1 tau.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 tau</td>
<td>1'13 gallon.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Weight

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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>16 liang</td>
<td>1 catty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 catty</td>
<td>1'1-3 lb. avoirdupois.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 catties</td>
<td>1 picul.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 picul</td>
<td>13'1-3 lb. avoirdupois.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Money *

<table>
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<th>Conversion Factor</th>
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<tr>
<td>13 cash</td>
<td>say 1 fun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130 cash</td>
<td>say 1 tsien.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,300 cash</td>
<td>say 1 liang or tael.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 fun</td>
<td>1 candareen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 candareen</td>
<td>1 mace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 mace</td>
<td>1 tael.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 tael</td>
<td>say 6s. 3d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000 cash</td>
<td>say 4s. 10d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

( xx )

VOCABULARY OF SOME CHINESE WORDS FREQUENTLY RECURRING.

Shan, a hill.
Chung, a city.
Cheng, a large village.
Tsun, a village.
Tun, a fortified pass.
Man, a gate.
Kow, a port.
Kiai, a street where a market is held.
Ho, a river or canal.
Kiang, a great river.
Hu, a lake.
Hoo, a lake.
Yamun, a mandarin’s office.
Wang, a prince.

VOCABULARY OF A FEW MONGOLIAN WORDS.

Alin, a mountain.
Omo, a lake.
Nor, a lake.
Pira, a river.
Ula, a great river.
Muren, a great river.
Hata, a rock.
Hotan, a city.