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CHINESE PEASANT LIFE—GOING TO MARKET.

(From a Chinese Engraving.)

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# OLD HIGHWAYS IN CHINA

BY

ISABELLE WILLIAMSON

OF CHEFOO, NORTH CHINA

THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY

56 PATERNOSTER ROW, AND 65 ST PAUL'S CHURCHYARD

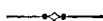
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## PREFACE.



DURING my earlier years, in the company of my husband, Dr. Williamson, I made several journeys through the province of Cheh-kiang, and resided in some of the cities in the interior of that province. At that time I gave my impressions of the women of China in a series of articles, entitled 'Our Sisters in China.' These appeared in the 'Leisure Hour' for 1863.

In 1864, removing to the province of Shan-tung, which had been recently opened to foreigners, I occupied myself for some years in tentative work in Chefoo and the neighbourhood. After becoming familiar with the language of that district, and also with the habits and etiquette of the women of that province, I made four long journeys, two of which are briefly described in the following pages.

The first journey was undertaken in the autumn of



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1873, *via* Weihien, Tsi-nan-foo, Tai Shan, and the cities of Confucius and Mencius, returning by Mung, Yiu hien, and Tsingchow-foo; the second in 1875 to Weihien, Tsi-nan-foo, and back; the third in 1881 from Chefoo to Peking, as narrated; the fourth in the spring of 1882, partly on the 'Old Highways,' and partly on the byways and bridle-paths of the eastern portion of Shan-tung.

The object of these journeys was first to carry Gospel truth to as many of the women of China as I could reach, and secondly, to familiarise them with Western women, and so to render the visits of those who followed me more easy.

Both objects were attained, and the result has been that Western women can safely travel and reside in any part of the province.

This volume does not profess to give an account of mission work—that will be found in our denominational literature—but rather records observations of every-day life made during my journeys through North China and during my intercourse with the people.

I trust, however, that it will deepen the interest of English readers in the women of China; they well deserve it. As regards natural endowments, they are, as may be supposed, in every respect compeers

of the men—active, intelligent, and, like our sisters in every land, more open to religious teaching than the men are.

Missionaries of the widest information and greatest experience, both in China and India, concur in affirming that missionary operations have reached that point when efficient zenana work is indispensable to satisfactory progress. They find that men will never be converted in any large numbers till the women are won over to the side of Christianity. The women conserve the ancient religions and superstitions of their country; and what can a man do when the women of the household are against him? The elevation, therefore, of the nations of the East, and the advancement of Christianity among them, depend to a large extent upon the women of Christendom.

Again, the promises of Scripture converge towards the Gospel being preached to every creature. Nearly half the women of the world belong to the two great empires of China and India. The Scriptures can never be fulfilled so long as these Eastern women have not had even the opportunity of hearing of the Gospel of Salvation. The end of all evils, therefore, and the fulfilment of the purposes of God, seem contingent on our Zenana work. I look upon work among the women

of the East as now the great question of the Christian Church.

There are many noble-minded women of independent means and few family ties wishing for an outlet equal to their zeal, and why should they not go forth resolved to spend their lives in this work? In such a beautiful country as North China there is no more danger to health than there is in the Northern States of America or in Australia.

May God so bring home, to those who can go, the needs of the women of China, that there may soon be a great going forth of the Christian women of Great Britain, thus fulfilling the prophecy contained in Psalm lxxviii. 11, new version: 'The Lord giveth the word, and the women that bring glad tidings are a great host.'

ISABELLE WILLIAMSON.

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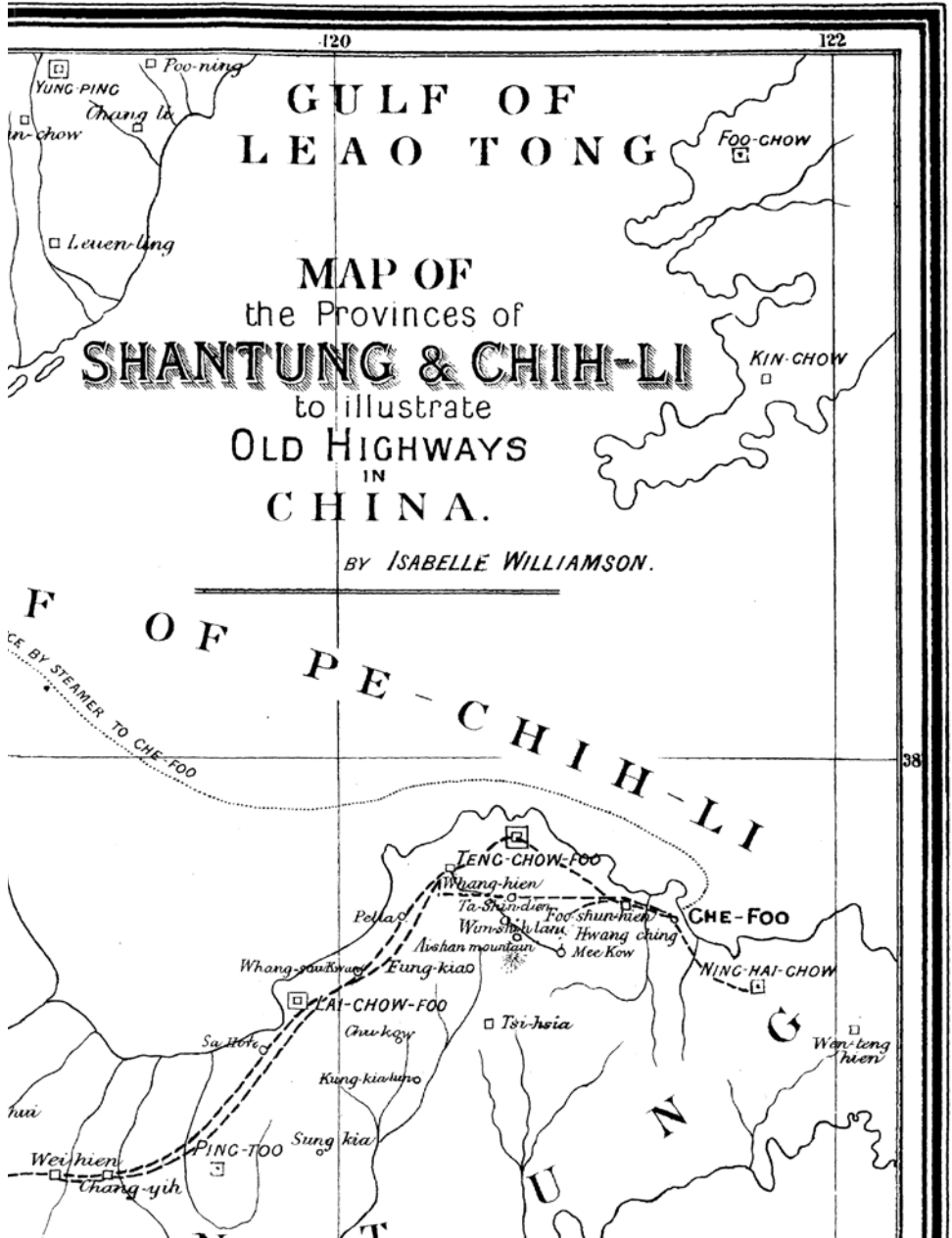
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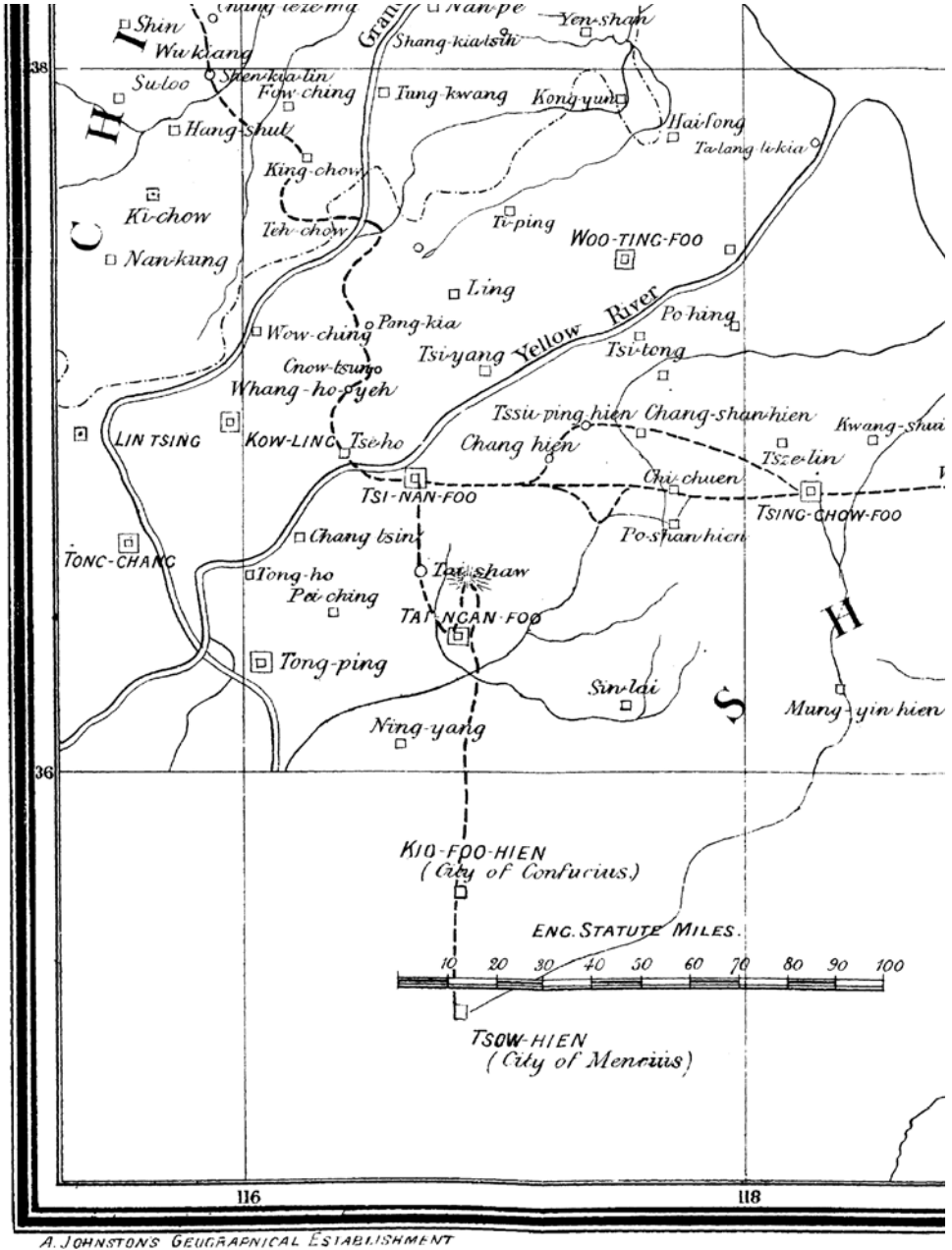
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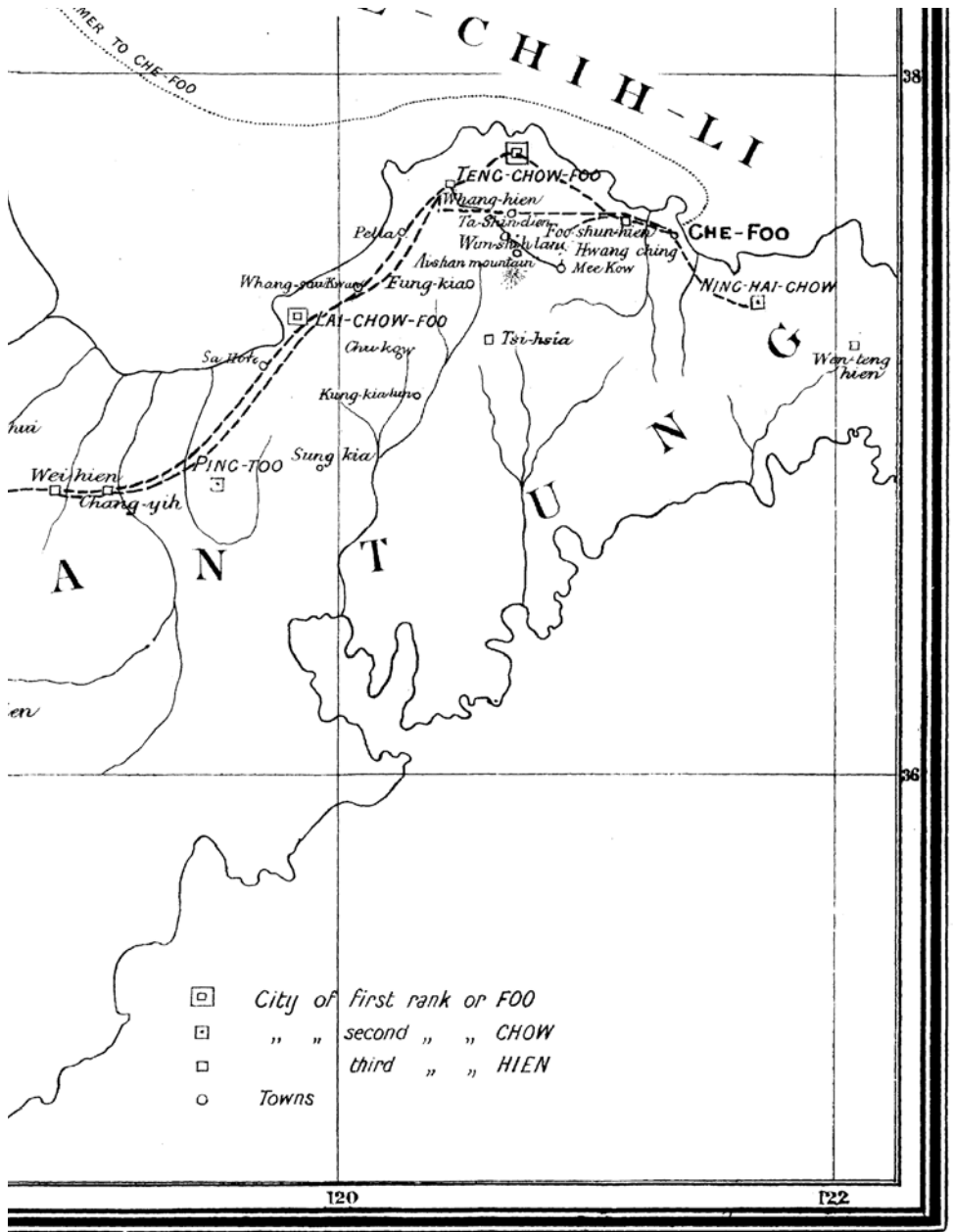
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