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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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With Some Account of Corea

VOLUME 1

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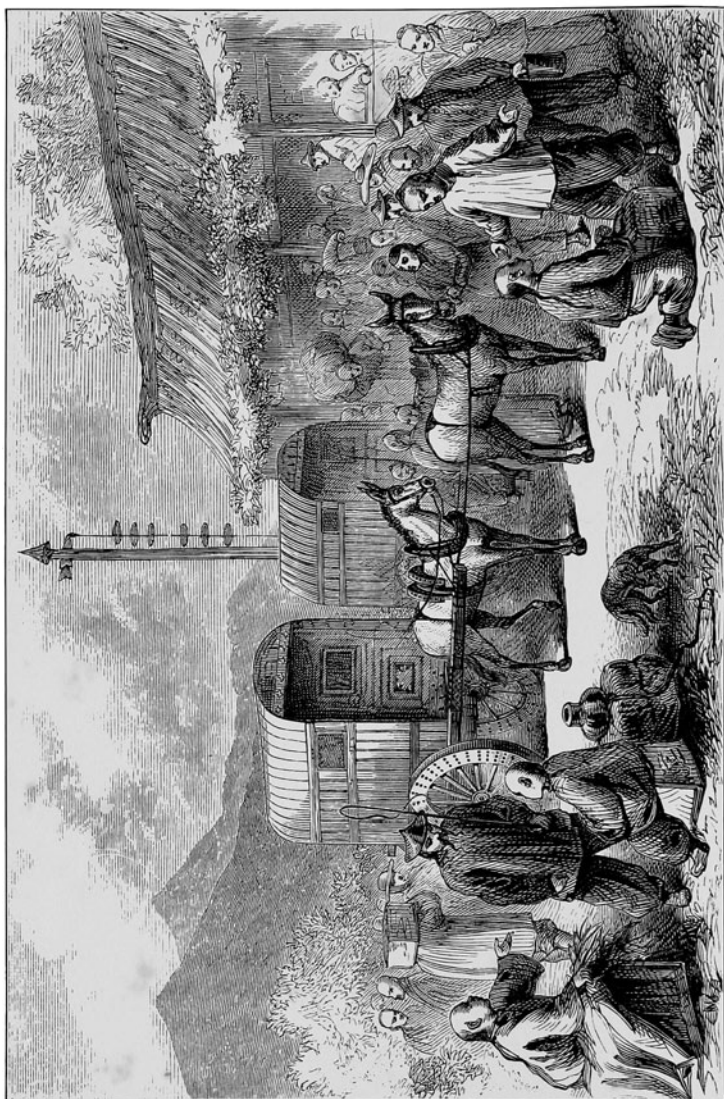
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JOURNEYS IN NORTH CHINA,
MANCHURIA, AND EASTERN MONGOLIA ;

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF COREA

BY THE

REV. ALEXANDER WILLIAMSON, B.A.,

AGENT OF THE NATIONAL BIBLE SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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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.

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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

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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.

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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

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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

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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

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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. Cornabé, 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.

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Chih — according to	}	=	13·1·8 inches.
Board of Works.....			
Chih—according to the	}	=	14·1 inches.
tariff			
10 chih	=	1 chang.	
1 chang	=	3 11-12 yards.	
1 li	=	1,826 feet.	
2·89 li (according to	}	=	1 English mile.
old usage)			
250 li (according to the	}	=	1 degree.
Jesuit measurement			
which now prevails)			
25 li do do.....	=	1 French league.	
3·1·3 li....do do.....	=	1 English mile.	

LAND MEASURE.

733·32 square yards	=	1 mow.
6·61 mow	=	1 acre.
100 mow	=	1 king.
1 king	=	15·13 square acres.

MEASURE OF CAPACITY.

1 shing	=	96-100 pint.
10 shing	=	1 tau.
1 tau	=	1·13 gallon.

WEIGHT.

16 liang	=	1 catty.
1 catty	=	1·1·3 lb. avoirdupois.
100 catties	=	1 picul.
1 picul	=	133·1·3 lb. avoirdupois.

MONEY.*

13 cash	=	say 1 fun.
130 cash	=	say 1 tséen.
1,300 cash	=	say 1 liang or tael.
1 fun	=	1 candareen.
10 candareen	=	1 mace.
10 mace	=	1 tael.
1 tael	=	say 6s. 3d.
1,000 cash	=	say 4s. 10d.

* See fuller explanations, Vol. I. pp. 58—62.

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VOCABULARY OF SOME CHINESE WORDS FREQUENTLY
RECURRING.

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

VOCABULARY OF A FEW MONGOLIAN WORDS.

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