

**EVERYDAY LIFE IN CHINA:
OR, SCENES ALONG RIVER
AND ROAD IN FUH-KIEN**

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Everyday Life in China: Or, Scenes Along River and Road in Fuh-Kien by Edwin Joshua Dukes

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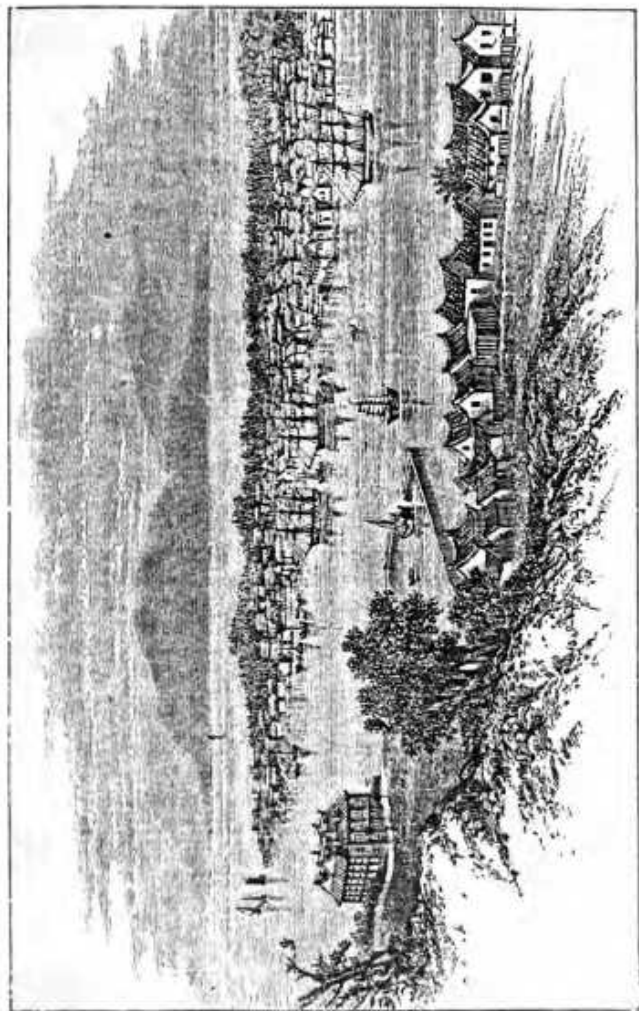
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EDWIN JOSHUA DUKES

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THE TOWN OF ANOT FROM KULANGSU.

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EVERYDAY LIFE IN CHINA

OR

SCENES ALONG RIVER AND ROAD

IN

FUH-KIEN.

BY

EDWIN JOSHUA DUKES.

WITH A MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS

FROM SKETCHES BY THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

THAT China is a mysterious problem to all who interest themselves in its affairs is the only excuse for writing another book about it. To the Christian its religious state is a subject to be spoken of with bated breath. To the politician the condition of its government and people is one of the chronic disturbing elements in his speculations.

In the following pages the writer ventures to think he has pictured the people of that great and wonderful land in a light in which they have not often been seen by any but a traveller. The endeavour has been to represent China, not from the special point of view of the politician, merchant, or missionary, but simply to describe the scenes of daily life as they appear to one moving to and fro among them. This book has no intention of being profound, nor of explaining everything. It is consistent with its title, and presents the reader only familiar sketches. The chapters are, with one or two exceptions, compiled from notes made

when travelling upon mission journeys, and from letters written to friends in England. It has been the writer's hope that the effort to portray the Chinese as they are seen in their daily life, may create in the minds of persons interested in the religious welfare of China a more intelligent sympathy with missionary work.

This strange nation, who win their way to the front rank in commerce, and easily outdo the Hindoo, Malay, and Saxon on their own soil, who have proved themselves the equals of European statesmen in diplomacy, who persevere steadily and earn a living in the face of every obstacle, taking 'time for their fulcrum and patience for their lever' (as Sir John Davis said of them), and who defy climatic differences, living with almost equal ease in the Torrid or Arctic Zone, must be destined to decide much of the future history of the globe. A few years more, and the 'Chinese question' will be regarded as one to be discussed not merely by Irish obstructionists of cheap labour in California, or by gold-diggers and sheep-farmers in Australia. It will become a great international problem, summoning to its solution the wisdom and resources of the cabinets of Western countries, and calling forth the united efforts of Christendom. Change and movement will be rapid in China, now that they are fairly begun. Outside nations will soon feel the pressure of the unwieldy mass of this Chinese race. The nation so long self-barred from international relations is being

driven to seek alliances abroad. A people who lately scorned to know where England is, or France, or Russia, is opening its eyes to see prospects of gain beyond its own borders. Already the Chinese are pouring down a human torrent upon the countries and islands of the East. Cambodia, Burmah, Siam, and the entire Malay peninsula show signs of being overrun by the Chinaman, while tens of thousands are wending their way across the sea to Borneo, Sumatra, Java, Papua, the Philippines, the Celebes, and the Sandwich Islands. More slowly they stream northward, settling down upon the bleak steppes of Asiatic Russia, and the green plains of Tibet, Mongolia, and Manchuria. The unoccupied spaces of the lands of the rising sun lie before them. Peacefully, but resolutely, they are taking possession of sparsely-populated regions. It needs but a little of the spirit of the prophet to foretell that this generation shall not pass till it has seen great events in China. Nor is there any doubt in the minds of any one acquainted with the story of its Protestant missions that, happen what may politically, the Christian Church is now so firmly rooted there that every change will result in the wider opening of the doors for the heralds of the Cross.

Many of these familiar descriptions of life in China were written at Amoy, in the Fuh-kien province—a place concerning which very little has been said by writers on China. It was the people of that province whom the

writer almost always had in his mind. Customs and manners differ in certain parts of the land as much as the languages of the southern half, but not enough, it is presumed, to prevent the Fuh-kienese from being typical, for the most part, of the Chinaman of Chili or Quantung, of Kansuh or Chikiang.

By the kind permission of Mr. James Clarke, the chapter on 'Feng-shui,' originally written for the *Christian World Magazine*, is reprinted here with only a few modifications and additions.