

**PAGODA
SHADOWS: STUDIES
FROM LIFE IN CHINA**

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Pagoda shadows: studies from life in China by Adele M. Fielde

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ADELE M. FIELDE

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Adele M. Fielder

Swatow. China

PAGODA SHADOWS:

STUDIES FROM LIFE IN CHINA.

BY

ADELE M. FIELDE.

*WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
J. OSWALD DYKES, D.D.*



T. OGILVIE SMITH,
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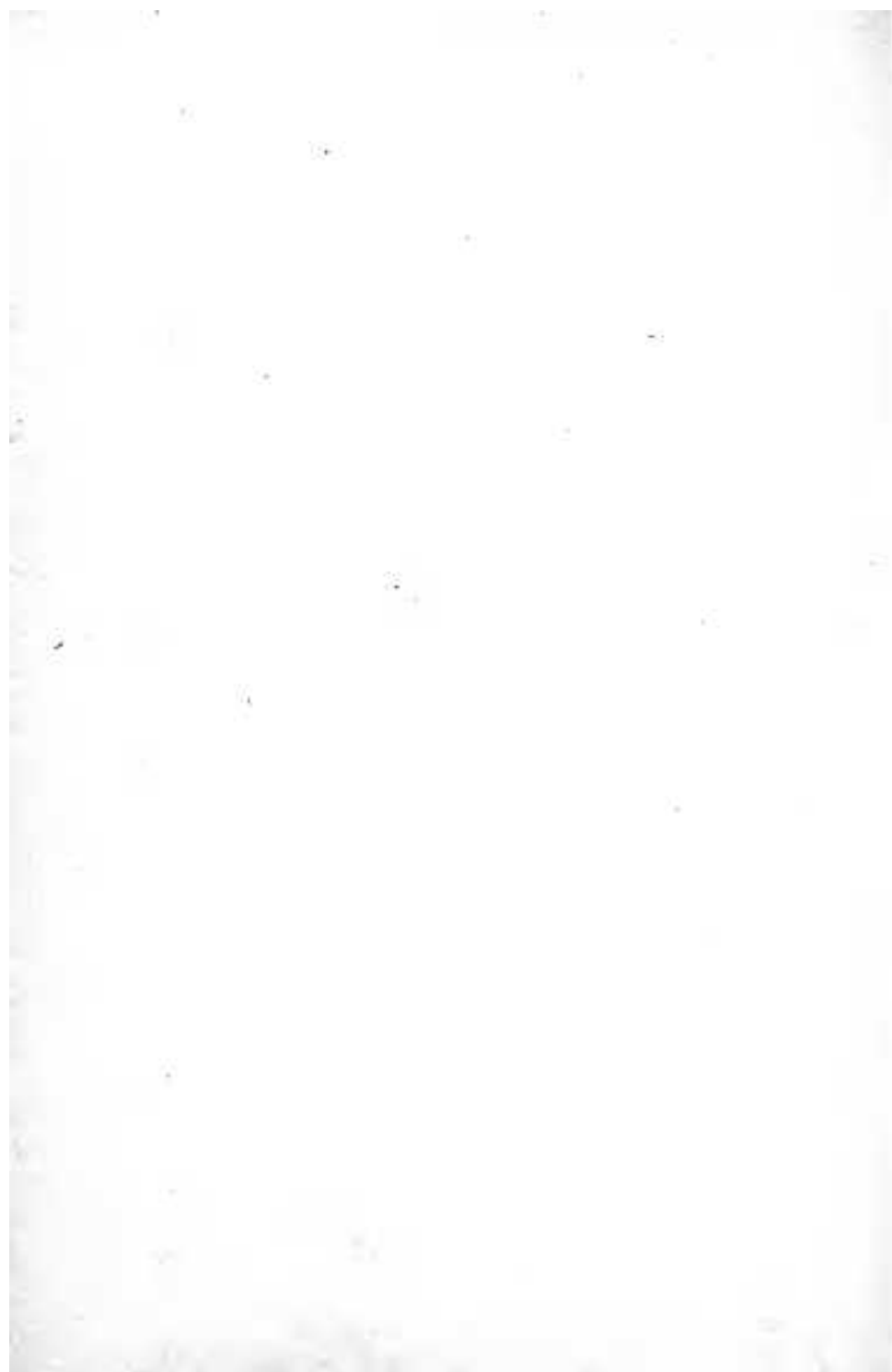
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PREFACE.

THESE studies have been made during a residence of ten years in China, with a knowledge of the language of the people, and an opportunity for close observation of their social customs. The autobiographies and the stories are exact translations of verbal narrations given to the author in the Swatow dialect.

A. M. F.

SWATOW, CHINA, 1887.



INTRODUCTION.

THE conversion of China is the heaviest piece of work now left for the Church of Christ to do. Nowhere else on the globe does there exist a compact or homogeneous population of anything like the same extent. The future Church of China will be in mere bulk the greatest branch ever known of the Church universal. But its importance will not be measured by its bulk alone. The Chinese are pretty sure to have a main part to play in the future of Asia. Those who possess the best acquaintance with the farther East, or are best able to forecast its probable development, are of opinion that this swarming Chinese stock, patient, industrious, frugal, ready to migrate, and able to thrive where others starve, is destined to be (next, perhaps, to the Anglo-American) a predominant element in the lands that are washed by the Pacific Ocean.

It used to be said that China contained one-third of the human family. Since interior Africa has been found to be populous, our conceptions of the human family have become enlarged. It is also to be recollected that the best estimate we can form of the population of China itself can be only an approximate one. We lack the materials, therefore, for such a comparison. But, be its

proportion to the earth's total population what it may, it is certain that China counts its people by hundreds of millions. The difficulty of reaching such a vast population so as to change its immemorial beliefs would be prodigious, even were it less stationary or inflexible than it has hitherto shown itself. Fortunately there are certain favouring circumstances which serve to lighten the task. The whole country is most densely occupied. Men stand closely grouped, so that each convert gained touches and affects a crowd of neighbours. Though people do not move far from home, yet a network of land and water highways offers ready, if leisurely, means of communication. In this way its provinces can be traversed from end to end. Society coheres tightly together, social bonds being singularly strong. Hence custom and public opinion are nearly omnipotent. So long as these remain anti-Christian, no doubt they constitute a formidable barrier to change. But for the same reason, once custom and opinion begin to turn, the change will be rapid; for an organized community ruled by usage, when it moves at all, moves in a body. In a similar way, the dominant influence of the great official or literary order, which is the chief bulwark of heathenism and is likely to be so for some time, will operate as decisively in favour of a new creed so soon as the *literate* themselves become open to Western thought. That this must come no one doubts. That it may come sooner than used to be supposed is even growing probable. Indications thicken that the old blind antagonism to foreign ways begins to yield. The instance of the Marquis Tseng shows how open to European ideas are some at least of the highest minds in the Empire. Two twin forces, commerce and diplomatic intercourse, are surely