

ON THE

INUNDATIONS

OF

THE YANG-TSE-KIANG.

BY E. L. OXENHAM, F.R.G.S.

WITH A MAP.

*[Read before the Royal Geographical Society of London,
February 22nd, 1875.]*

LONDON:

PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET,
AND CHARING CROSS.

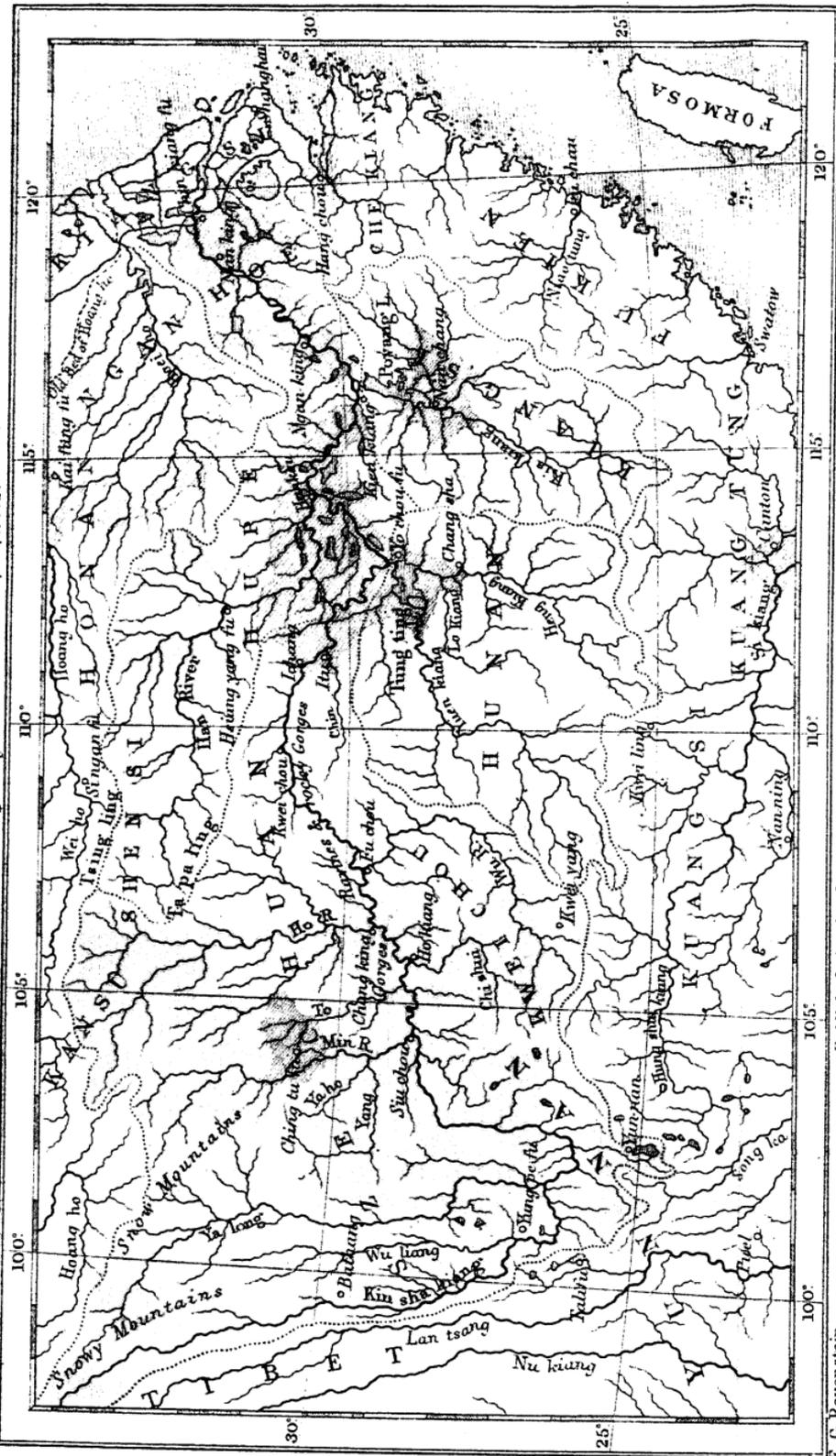
1876.



MAP OF THE BASIN OF THE YANG-TSE-KIANG,
 illustrative of a Paper by E. L. Oxenham, F.R.G.S.

Scale 1:15000000
 0 100 200 Sta. Miles.

The Basin of the Yang tse-kiang is tinted; Plains are shaded.



Published for the Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, by J. Murray, 1875.

F. G. Ravenstein.

A

A

ON THE INUNDATIONS OF THE YANG-TSE-KIANG.

ALL the great rivers of the world are at certain seasons liable to sudden inundations, and in some cases, as in that of the Nile, they recur with periodical regularity. More generally, however, the floods, especially when dependent, not on a fixed certain event like the melting of snow, but on rains and storms, are of a more fluctuating character. The Mississippi in America, the Yellow River in China, and many of the rivers in India, may be quoted as instances of this.

The ravages of the Yellow River ("China's sorrow") have been known to us from our childhood; but that its great rival, the Yang-tse-Kiang, should also be subject to floods and inundations is not so generally known, and it is the design of this paper to attempt to describe and account for—as far as our present information about the country concerned will allow—the inundations which repeatedly overwhelm vast tracts of the country through which the Yang-tse flows.

The only claim the writer has to deal with this subject is that of having resided some three years at Han-kow, a large city of 700,000 inhabitants, situated in the province of Hu-pe, on the banks of the Yang-tse, at the place where the Han River enters it, some 600 miles from the sea, situated in the centre of the flooded districts.

He witnessed here three successive floods, and the observations he then made on this phenomenon have given rise to the present paper. Though it does not pretend to offer a complete solution of the question, it is hoped it may be of some assistance to others, who, with the fuller and more accurate knowledge of the unknown lands where the Yang-tse and its feeders rise, which fresh discoveries will furnish, will be able to complete the shortcomings of this essay.

It is necessary first to give some account of the river Yang-tse itself before proceeding to the subject of its floods. It is said, though the exact spot is not known, to take its rise in the southern slope of the Pe-Ling Mountains in Northern Thibet,