

---

Review: Assam and the N. E. Indian Frontier

Source: *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 45, No. 6 (Jun., 1915), p. 525

Published by: geographicalj

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1780148>

Accessed: 25-06-2016 09:49 UTC

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at  
<http://about.jstor.org/terms>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).



*The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers), Wiley* are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Geographical Journal*

disprove Sir George Staunton's lament that there is a ubiquitous dearth of forest trees and vegetation throughout this part of the country. Readers at all familiar with the wealth of recent literature on China will understand that the present work contains little beyond the average impressions of a cultivated tourist who from the necessities of the case was unable to devote time to serious investigation. In accordance with the not very praiseworthy modern practice, the book is profusely illustrated with small photographs of a uniform size. Surely landscapes, mountains, river scenes, towns, whole stretches of the Great Wall, portraits, small groups, and elaborate but smaller objects such as the astronomical instruments on the eastern wall of Peking require some discrimination as regards the scale of reproduction.

Although most of the localities described are fairly well known, an index map showing the line of route and positions of the places mentioned in the narrative would have added to its general interest.

#### ASSAM AND THE N.E. INDIAN FRONTIER.

'History of Upper Assam, Upper Burmah, and North-Eastern Frontier.' By Colonel L. W. Shakespear (2nd Gurkhas). London: Macmillan & Co. 1914. 10s. *net*.

There are few parts of India less known than those covered by the title of the present work. Most of this region which the author describes to us as more or less a *terra incognita* and at present largely covered by impenetrable jungle, was once the centre of thriving communities, and possessed at one time of important buildings such as forts and temples connected by old raised roads, the remains of which are still clearly to be seen in many parts. It is generally assumed that climatic conditions tended largely to bring about subsequent decay, for the climate is distinctly enervating, and each race that has settled there has in course of time lost its vigour and been supplanted by hardier folk, who in their turn have succumbed to love of ease and luxury. The disappearance of cities, canals, and other landmarks of the past is attributable to the soft alluvial soils of the valleys, which have often permitted the rivers to cut for themselves fresh channels, frequently destroying and carrying away the towns and buildings which history tells us did exist along their banks.

The early history of Assam is mostly legendary, but enough has been elicited by authorities like Meyer, Hannan, Bryan Hodgson, and others to connect the events of those times with historical landmarks of adjacent countries with which Assam had easy intercourse. Coming down to later times, three principal kingdoms claim notice, viz. the Kacharu, Kocches, and Ahoms, whose zenith of power arose at 1230, 1560, and 1700 respectively.

The later annals of the countries, of course, are in the main narratives of the European travellers and explorers from the east or west, who have placed on record all that has been ascertained regarding the tracts traversed. These chapters and sections are mostly dealt with geographically, and comprise the experience of Cooper in the Mishmi hills, Needham from the Sadiya side, Prince Henry of Orleans in his journey across south-west China, and various other expeditions.

As a collection of narratives and data regarding a region of unusual complexity whose literature it is often difficult and yet desirable to trace in view of the unexploited and obscure character of these frontier regions, this handbook is a useful contribution: credit being especially due for a good index, for well-selected photographs, some coloured plates, and a useful bibliography.