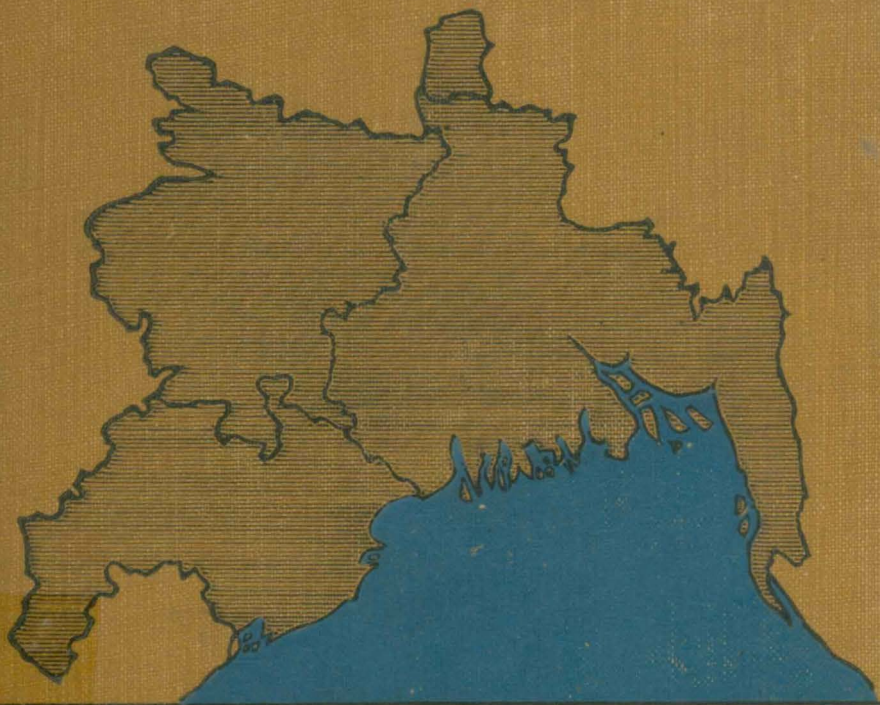


BENGAL BIHAR AND ORISSA SIKKIM

L. S. S. O'MALLEY



PROVINCIAL GEOGRAPHIES OF INDIA

Provincial Geographies of India

GENERAL EDITOR

SIR T. H. HOLLAND, K.C.I.E., D.Sc., F.R.S.

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SIKKIM

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BENGAL
BIHAR AND ORISSA
SIKKIM

BY

L. S. S. O'MALLEY

OF THE INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL STATISTICAL SOCIETY AND OF
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EDITOR'S PREFACE

I N 1910, when I was asked by the Cambridge University Press to suggest a suitable sub-division of the Indian Empire into natural geographical units for treatment in separate volumes, I was embarrassed by the fact that the Province of Bengal, as it had been known for many years before 1905, was then restricted, for administrative convenience, to the western three-quarters of the old province, the eastern districts having been lumped with Assam to form the Lieut.-Governorship of Eastern Bengal and Assam. To find an author who could give, in true perspective and as the result of personal intimacy, an outline sketch of two such dissimilar units as old Bengal and Assam seemed to be impossible; and thus it was decided, in spite of the obvious disadvantages, especially in nomenclature, to cut off Assam, which differed so greatly from the rest of the new province of Eastern Bengal, leaving to the ingenuity of the author the problem of designing for the residual area a geographical name that was sufficiently expressive without clashing with the new official nomenclature.

Faithfulness, however, to the principles of classification on physical and ethnographical grounds brought its own reward; for, before Mr O'Malley's manuscript got into type, a re-shuffling of boundary lines in 1912 resulted in the obliteration of the artificial partition that was set up in 1905: Assam became again a separate administration under a Chief Commissioner; Eastern and Western Bengal were reunited as a Governorship, while

the districts, still further west, in Bihar and Orissa, formed a new province under a Lieut.-Governor.

In many respects the Gangetic portion of Bihar might be conveniently grouped with Bengal, while the divisions of Chota Nagpur and Orissa differ in certain features both from Bengal and, in other respects, from one another, being still imperfectly connected with natural lines of communication.

One hopes now that, for the sake of administrative stability, no further changes in the boundary lines will be made before this edition is out of print. Accordingly, in spite of overlapping interests—the perpetual enemy of all forms of natural classification—it is decided to treat together in one volume the newly constituted province of Bengal, the closely related districts in Bihar, and the two less advanced divisions of Chota Nagpur and Orissa. This decision was mainly influenced by the fortunate discovery of an author who was personally acquainted with both provinces, with a recent, precise and evenly distributed stock of information gained as Census officer and editor of the new district gazetteers.

The success of Mr Thurston's sketch of the Madras Presidency and associated States justifies Mr O'Malley's adoption of the same model for this second volume of the provincial series. But it is through chance, not artificially designed symmetry, that the next area taken up after Madras follows the order in which British influence has spread in India.

T. H. H.

February 1916.

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PROVINCIAL GEOGRAPHIES OF INDIA

General Editor:

Sir T. H. HOLLAND, K.C.I.E., D.Sc., F.R.S.

The general aims and features of the Series are set forth in the Editor's Preface at the beginning of the present volume.

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