



Rambles and Recollections of an Indian Official

Volume I

William H Sleeman

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Sir William Henry Sleeman (8 August 1788 ? 10 February 1856) was a British soldier and administrator in British India. A great admirer of India's rich natural beauty, he was born in Stratton, Cornwall, the son of Philip Sleeman, a yeoman and supervisor of excise of St Tudy. In 1809 William joined the Bengal Army, served in the Nepal War (1814?1816), and in 1820 became assistant to the Governor-General's agent in the Saugor and Nerbudda territories. He is best known for his suppression of the Thuggee secret society. He had captured "Feringhea" (also called Syeed Amir Ali, on whom the novel Confessions of a Thug is based) and got him to turn King's evidence. He took Sleeman to a grave with a hundred bodies, told the circumstances of the killings, and named the Thugs responsible. After initial investigations confirmed Feringhea's statement, Sleeman started an extensive campaign, becoming superintendent of the operations in 1835, and Commissioner for the Suppression of Thuggee and Dacoity in 1839. Sleeman was resident at Gwalior from 1843 to 1849, and at Lucknow from 1849 to 1856. He was opposed to the annexation of Oudh by Lord Dalhousie, but his advice was disregarded. He died at sea near Sri Lanka on a recovery trip to Britain in 1856.

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