

**Royal  
Geographical  
Society**

with IBG

Advancing geography  
and geographical learning

**WILEY**

---

Review: Siberia

Author(s): C. R. B.

Review by: C. R. B.

Source: *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Feb., 1904), pp. 246-247

Published by: geographicalj

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1775079>

Accessed: 25-06-2016 13:55 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*

in detail, through a veil of amethystine vapour; the damp air converted the naturally green hills of the middle distance into blocks of blue or mauve colour, recalling the background of an old Venetian picture. Soon the sun's shafts, darting into the thousand hollows that lie between the snows and Darjiling, drew the warm, moist air out of their depths in transparent waves. These, as they rose into a colder atmosphere, were condensed and transformed into tall, luminous, sharp-edged columns of cloud which rose vertically, until, caught by some upper current, they bent and broadened at the top, and finally broke up into detached fragments, which floated away slowly northwards to lodge in the hollows of the snows during the hours of noontide heat. Meantime less adventurous cloudlets loitered among the ridges which break down one beyond the other to the lowlands of Kuch Behar, or hung motionless, bright bars throwing pale shadows across the amber patch of plain, visible where the Teesta breaks through a deep gate in the outermost range of foothills." Can any photograph recall the Himalayan cloudland like that? or present to the imagination the glow and the glory of the "almost unbelievable vision" which Mr. Freshfield depicts as the day wears to its close?

T. H. H.

#### SIBERIA.

'From Paris to New York by Land.' By H. de Windt. London: George Newnes. 1904. Pp. xiii., 311.

This account of a journey from the western sea-board of Europe to the eastern sea-board of North America is mostly occupied with the formidable regions between Irkutsk and Bering straits, the passage of the straits, and the crossing of Alaska. The expedition was undertaken to ascertain—it has pretty well disproved—the feasibility of an Arctic railway uniting the American lines with the Siberian. The writer's sufferings, as recorded by himself, were so severe and prolonged, the task he undertook so beset with natural difficulties, that it is no wonder if a certain dyspepsia has got into his style; if he finds Moscow dull and dreary; if he recognizes so grudgingly the recent progress of Irkutsk; if he dismisses the Greater Schwarzwald of the Urals as "merely downs" (downs which reach 5000 feet); and if, after sounding almost every possible depth of misery among the Chukche villages, he introduces us to the first Eskimo settlement in Alaska as "infinitely drearier and more desolate." At the same time, his picture of the genial *ispravnik* of Verkhoyansk is a pleasant interlude; the agricultural work of the Skoptsi colony just outside Yakutsk is effectively described; and it must be recognized that the author's travels involved experiences as trying as anything that can be attempted in North Asia. His undertaking was of considerable negative importance, if it only discouraged fantastic schemes; it may be hoped that his criticisms of the remote Siberian outposts, such as Sredni Kolymsk, will not fail of result.

Some of the distance figures are not easy to follow. Thus, on the map facing p. 193, the interval between Verkhoyansk and Nijai Kolymsk is given as 2000 miles, while on p. 277, in the "approximate table of distances," it is returned as 1340; again, we have estimates of 3200 and 2840 miles for the space between Verkhoyansk and Bering straits, even the lesser being, we fancy, excessive if a straight course be intended. It is probable, and highly desirable, that the Siberian trunk may soon throw off a branch to Yakutsk, but why should this be prolonged north to Gijiga? For though this may be no "idle dream," as Mr. de Windt assures us, it is surely an idle way of describing the connection of two places lying practically in the same latitude, but separated by some thirty degrees of longitude?

Mr. de Windt's narrative shows clearly how recent developments in Southern Siberia have not only not been accompanied by parallel progress in the far North,

but have tended to draw off Russian activities from the Arctic and sub-Arctic belts of the Tsar's Asiatic domain to more temperate and promising zones. The railway has, in fact, sucked up an ever larger share of the life of Greater Russia, and thus the European outposts in the Chukche country have been gradually abandoned, the settlements in the Kolyma, Yana, and Indighirka have declined, and some of the old colonies of the eighteenth century have been wholly abandoned. On the other hand, the upper and middle Lena (down to Yakutsk) and the shores of the Okhotsk sea have distinctly progressed; the gold output in the Lena basin has trebled in the past four years; coal has been recently discovered close to Lake Baikal, and is already being exported in large quantities to the Pacific ports; while in the farthest East a line of steamers now leaves Vladivostok monthly (from June to September) to visit the ports of the *Okhotskii-Kamchatskii Krai*—Petropavlovsk, Okhotsk, Ayan, and Yamsk.

C. R. B.

#### FORMOSA.

'Formosa under the Dutch.' By Rev. William Campbell, F.R.G.S., English Presbyterian Mission, Tainan. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. 1903.

It might, perhaps, be thought that, with a large monograph on Formosa but just issued from the press, another volume, also of considerable bulk, is superfluous. But while Mr. Davidson's book, which was reviewed in this *Journal* for October, aims at giving all available information upon a large number of subjects—at producing, in short, as complete a monograph of the island as the author could compass, the present volume has but a limited field, and hardly overlaps Mr. Davidson's ground at all, except in dealing with Koksinga's conquest. At the same time it must be said that the book under review has of necessity less interest for the geographer as such than its predecessor, for the larger part of it is devoted to an account of the mission history and the progress of Christianity on the island in earlier days. Its more accurate title would be "Dutch Missions in Formosa in the Seventeenth Century."

The author divides his book into three parts. The first is a "General Description;" the second, which extends to some 300 pages, is composed of documents drawn from various sources, dealing with church work on the island; the third is the detailed account of Koksinga's siege of Fort Zeelandia, translated from the *Verwaarloosde Formosa*, published in 1675. There is also an appendix, giving, amongst other things, Benyowsky's narrative of his Formosan adventures, apparently from Captain Pasfield Oliver's biography. The "General Description" is partly from Valentyn and partly from Candidius's account. It will thus be seen that the volume is almost entirely a compilation, and indeed does not pretend to give any first-hand information except such as is contained in a few pages of explanatory notes and the useful bibliography at the end. It therefore does not demand further notice at our hands, beyond mention of the fact that the second part, culled from documents not always easily accessible, has occasional points of interest apart from that attaching solely to the efforts of the Dutch missionaries. The book shows defective editing, it being in many cases impossible to tell the author of a section unless the preface be read.

F. H. H. G.