

STUDIES IN IMPERIALISM

General Editor: John M. MacKenzie

In 1841, the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Foreign Missionary Society sent its first missionary to evangelise amongst the tribal peoples of the Khasi Hills of north-east India. As a history of the Welsh as agents of imperialism, this book follows Thomas Jones from rural Wales to Cherrapunji, the wettest place on earth and now one of the most Christianised parts of India. As colonised colonisers, the Welsh were to have a profound impact on the language, culture and beliefs of the Khasi people. As well as being a study of the early decades of missionary intervention, this book also foregrounds broader political, scientific, racial and military ideologies that mobilised the Khasi Hills into an interconnected network of imperial control.

In exploring the localised actions and relationships of controversial missionary Thomas Jones and his fellow workers, the book also provides alternative and surprising readings of the role of the individual in defining the limits of freedom and the rule of law on an imperial frontier. The themes of this meticulously researched history are universal: crises of authority, the loneliness of geographical isolation, sexual scandal and rivalry, greed and exploitation, personal and institutional dogma, and individual and group morality. This book makes a significant contribution in orienting the scholarship of imperialism to a much-neglected corner of India, and will appeal to students of the British imperial experience more broadly.

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