



Deeper Than Indigo: Tracing Thomas Machell, forgotten explorer

By Jenny Balfour Paul

Medina Publishing. Paperback. Condition: New. 326 pages. The author's quest begins when the word indigo draws her to the illustrated journals, now in the British Library, of Victorian explorer Thomas Machell. She finds her life to have striking echoes of his, not least his travels to and within India, a career in indigo, and a passion for journal writing. She is also intrigued by his aspiration to write a novel in the form of an autobiography and by his quirky watercolor sketches. Machell of Crackenthorpe, born in 1824, first demonstrated his yearning for adventure when only twelve, and at sixteen left the family rectory to follow his dream of traveling to the East. By chance, he witnessed many important historical events, including the infamous First Opium War and the Indian Mutiny. He spent most of his adult life in India; the author follows him to indigo plantations of rural Bengal and Bangladesh, to coffee estates in Kerala's Malabar Hills, to unexplored regions of central India and to the city of Calcutta. Machell also traveled up the Indus River to Kashmir and the North-West Frontier and undertook an intrepid sea voyage with Muslim merchants. When the author voyages aboard the last...



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