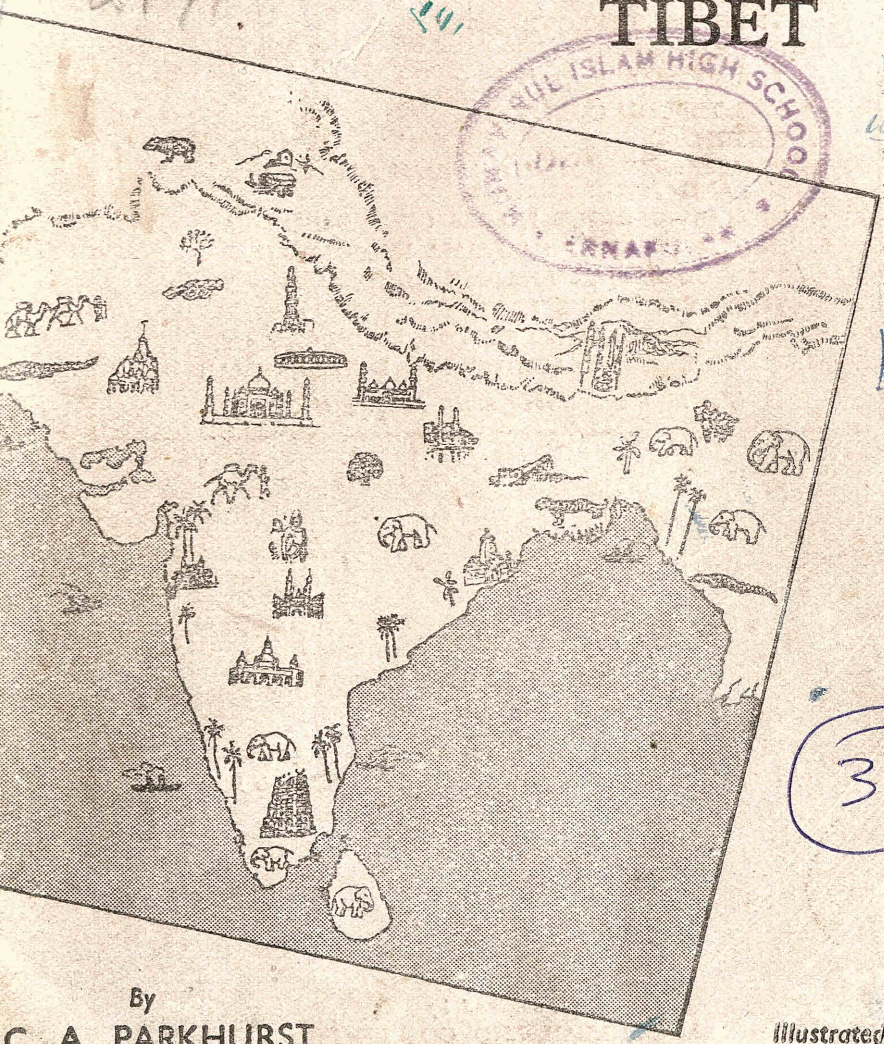
THE MYSTERIOUS LAND OF TIBET

2171
ISLAM HIGH SCHOOL
332



By
C. A. PARKHURST

Illustrated

HERE AND THERE IN INDIA

THIRD SERIES

1. THE UNITED PROVINCES
2. ORISSA
3. THE BENGAL PRESIDENCY
4. THE TELUGU COUNTRY
5. SIKKIM
6. SOME FAMOUS MAHOMMEDAN SAINTS AND THEIR SHRINES
7. THE SEVEN HOLY PLACES OF THE HINDUS
8. IN THE STEPS OF GAUTAMA BUDDHA
9. TWO CHRISTIAN SHRINES IN INDIA
10. THE MYSTERIOUS LAND OF TIBET
11. BHUTAN, THE LAND OF THE THUNDERBOLT
12. CEYLON, THE PEARL OF THE INDIAN OCEAN

(*For First and Second Series see p. 4 of Cover*)

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ERNAKULAM.
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THE MYSTERIOUS LAND OF TIBET

1

Until quite recent times very little was known about Tibet. Protected by great mountain ranges, it remained a land of mystery. The only other country with which it had any real contact was China, for it was governed as one of China's outlying territories.

Even now no foreigner is allowed to enter Tibet without permission from the Tibetan Government. Perhaps it is not surprising that a country which has for centuries been cut off

from the rest of the world does not trust strangers. They may be only explorers or traders, but on the other hand they may be the agents of some powerful nation which one day will interfere with the country's old ideas and ways of living, and possibly destroy its freedom.

But in the end even Tibet had to give up some of its secrets. The Tibetans had broken trade agreements and had invaded the territory of Sikkim. In 1904, a British force made its way from India to Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, and compelled the authorities to make agreements for trade and traffic over the existing routes. The British undertook not

to interfere in the Government of Tibet or take any of her territory. Since then young Tibetans have sometimes been sent to Western schools and universities to study sciences, such as engineering, which will be of practical use in their distant native land.

2

Tibet is a very large country. It has high mountains, broad uplands and valleys. Round the great mountains flow rivers fed by many torrents and waterfalls from the snows above. In the valleys, where they are sheltered from the winds by the hills, we shall find farms and villages. There

are many lakes, hot springs and natural parks.

The hot springs are amongst the most interesting natural features of Tibet. They may be seen at the side of lakes expelling their heated jets into the air. But although the water is boiling at the moment it comes out of the ground, it cools when it comes in contact with the air, and turns into ice before it can reach the ground again. Thus you see the strange sight of a jet of hot water shooting up from within a column of ice. Some springs throw up their geysers to a height of sixty feet.

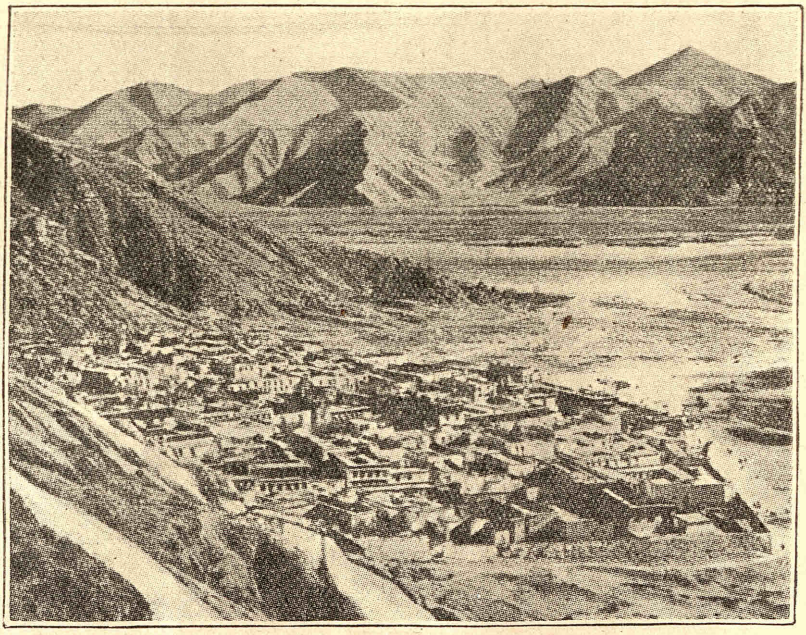
The boundaries of Tibet are the Kwenlun Mountains on the north,

NAVIRUL ISLAM HIGH S
ERNAKULAM.

separating it from Eastern Turkestan, China on the east, the Himalayas on the south, and Kashmir on the west. It is mostly a table-land, 16,000 feet above sea-level. It is thus the highest plateau in the world.

The climate in the northern half of Tibet is very cold, so there is not much vegetation. The area south of the Tangla Mountains is the more populous part of Tibet. Here lie the upper courses of some great rivers of India, Burma and China—the Brahmaputra, Indus, Sutlej, Ganges, Salween, Kwang-ho and Yangtsze-kiang.

There are five provinces—Amdo, Kham, Wu, Tsang and Nari. The real rulers are the lamas, and their



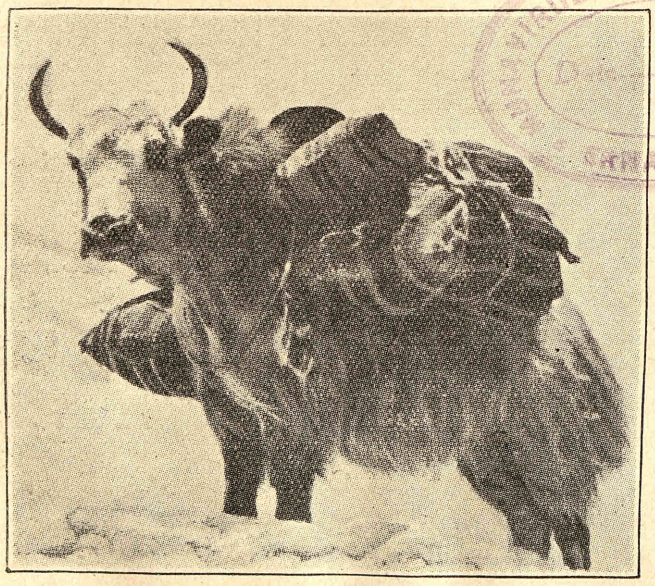
THE LHASA PLAIN

chief is the Dalai Lama, who resides at Lhasa, the capital. Tibet has a population of two millions. Lhasa is 11,700 feet above sea-level, and is known to Buddhists as "God's ground."

3

In the great forests grow fir, pine, oak, maple, ash, cypress, walnut and many other kinds of trees. The wild animals include leopards, bears, lynx, wolves, yaks, wild horses and sheep, antelopes, monkeys, foxes and

ISLAM HIGH SCHOOL
CHAKULAM



A YAK

hares. Among birds we shall find eagles, vultures, parrots and many birds with lovely coloured feathers.

In summer Tibet is a land of flowers. Every valley, heath and open space is covered with beautifully coloured shrubs and flowers, such as rhododendrons, hydrangeas, honeysuckle, lilac, roses, lilies and orchids. In winter there is, of course, a vast change. The places where we saw green grass and flowers are then covered with a thick mantle of snow. Everything remains quiet and peaceful until the spring comes round.

The staple food of the Tibetans is tsamba—flour made from a kind of barley. Wheat and maize are also

grown, but not rice. This is imported from foreign lands. Turnips, radishes, peas, potatoes and onions are grown, and more than ten kinds of mushrooms. Fruits include the pear, peach, walnut, pomegranate, apple, strawberry, blackberry and raspberry.

The chief drink is tea, which is imported from China. Tibetans use butter or milk in their tea, butter being preferred. The milk and butter come from the yak, the long-haired ox of Tibet. The tea-leaves are put into the kettle with a pinch of soda, and when the water is boiling it is poured into a receptacle where butter and salt are added. When all is



TIBETAN VILLAGERS

throughly mixed the tea is ready for drinking.

Houses are generally of two or three storeys, although some may have five or six. Nobody lives on the ground floor, which is kept for the horses and cattle.

There are prayer-flags fluttering in the breeze from the house-tops. The windows are small and square, with wooden shutters. Household utensils are made of earthenware, steel, iron, copper, silver, gold and wood.

4

The chief articles of dress for Tibetans is a kind of cloak with very wide sleeves. It is fastened to the waist with a broad belt



TIBETANS OF GYANTSE

of cloth, generally woven with thread of various colours. These cloaks are of woollen cloth or silk or sheepskin. Men and women wear high boots up to the knee. These may be of leather or felt. If of felt they are generally coloured. Under the cloak both men and women wear shirts of cotton or silk. Many of them wear turbans of the same materials. The wife of a rich land-owner may wear three or four necklaces of coral, heavy gold and silver bracelets, and rings of gold inset with precious stones.

Men and women treat each other as equals. The wife manages the house. She holds the keys and is in charge of the money. The daughters

if any, help the mother in the management of the house.

When a child is a few months old the parents take their baby to a lama or priest, and present him with a scarf of silk or cotton. The lama's attendants take the scarf and tell him that the parents want a name for the baby, whereupon he takes the child's head in his hands



A YOUNG MONK THREE YEARS OLD

and blesses it and gives whatever name he thinks fit.

The children who are destined to become lamas are educated in the lamaseries, (monasteries) where they go at the age of eight or nine, although a few go much earlier. Not all of them become priests. They may leave the lamaseries if their parents want them back, or if they themselves decide that they do not want to become lamas. Children must obey their parents, and disobedient children are punished with the full approval of the lamas and the neighbours.

5

Tibetan literature began with the

translation of Indian classics into Tibetan. There are two sacred books —the *Kangyur* and the *Tengyur*. Apart from these sacred writings there are many books of folk-lore, short stories and fables. The Tibetans are very good actors, and they have a great variety of religious, historical and fairy plays to choose from.

Many thousand of Tibetans become lamas, but on the other hand many thousands become farmers. They are called Rongpa and live in the valleys. Those who do not carry on agriculture may move from one place to another as their needs demand, exchanging things such as cattle, etc.

Tibet is rich in gold, but the methods of mining are primitive, so the production is very small. Silver, lapis-lazuli, salt and borax are also found. Trade is carried on with China, Turkestan, Mongolia, Indo-China and India. Tibet imports silk, gold lace, carpets, tea, porcelain, cotton goods, horses, leather and sheep. Its chief exports are wool, salt, furs, borax and some gold and silver.

6

We can divide the history of Tibet into four periods. From the fifth century B.C. to the tenth century A.D., called the "Period of the First

Monarchy" ; from the tenth century to the thirteenth century, called the "Period of Disunion" ; from the thirteenth century to the seventeenth century A.D., called the "First Line of Priest Rulers", and from the seventeenth century to the present day, the "Second Line of Priest Rulers."

The first known king was Song-tsan Gam-po, who reigned in the first half of the seventh century A.D. The monarchy had been in existence for more than a thousand years before Song-tsan Gam-po came to the throne. One of his first acts was to invade the Chinese Empire. His territory at that time comprised Tibet proper,

Bhutan, Nepal, Upper Burma, Turkestan and parts of Western China.

Buddhism was originally introduced into Tibet from India, owing to the influence of the Chinese Princess Wen Chang, who was given in marriage to Song-tsan Gam-po. One of her wedding presents to her husband was a large statue of the Buddha. The story goes that at one point on the journey it was found that the Buddha could not be moved. When the priests were consulted they said that if a copy of the statue was made and kept at that particular place, then the original statue would be willing to proceed to Tibet. This was done. The copy was put in the Lha-gong

Gompa (lamasery) in the district of Menya. When the original statue arrived at Lhasa a special temple was built for it. This is called the Jo Khang. Tradition says that this statue was made in Magadha whilst the Buddha was still on the earth, and that it is made of an alloy of gold, silver, zinc, iron and copper.

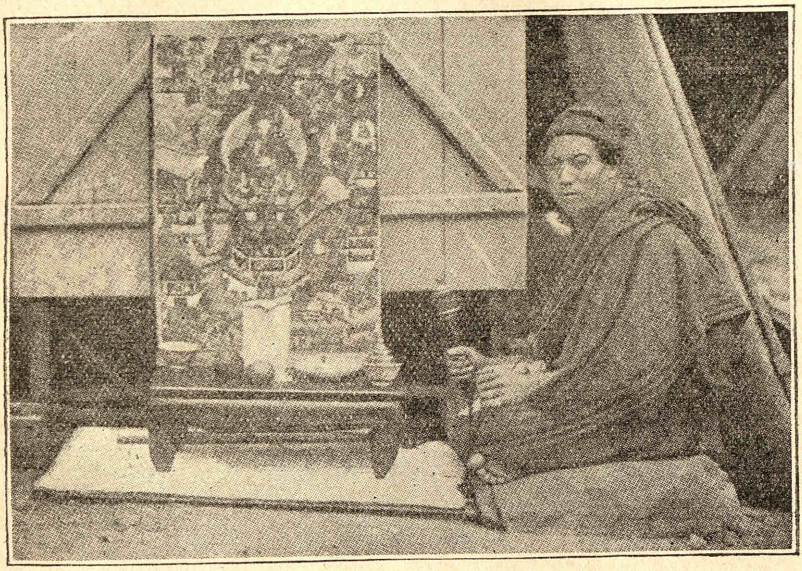
The king's Chinese wife soon converted him to Buddhism. It was under the influence of the Princess Wen Chang that the first lamaseries were built in Tibet. Many more were gradually established throughout the country.

About the middle of the seventeenth century Nga-wang Lob-sang,

the abbot of the Drepung lamasery, overthrew the Sakya line and established the present line of Priest Rulers. His new title as head of lamaism was Dalai Lama, fifth in the line of succession. The rule of succession in Tibet is very strange. It is by reincarnation. It is believed that when the Dalai Lama dies he is immediately re-born and appears as a baby in some part of the kingdom. There is a long and careful search until the right baby is found, and then he taken away to Lhasa. A Regent rules the country until the Dalai Lama grows up.

7

We have already told you that there are many lamas and priests in

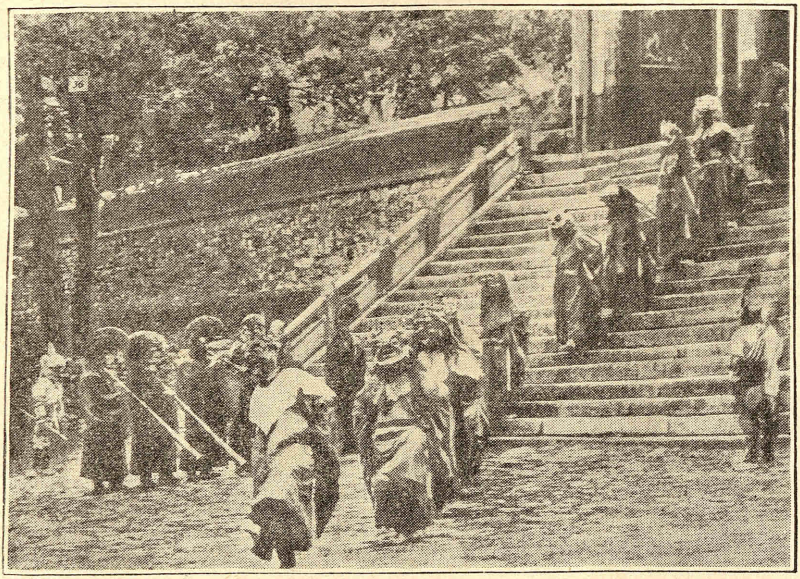


A TIBETAN PRIEST

this country. All parents wish that at least one of their sons should be a priest. The lamas live in gompas or lamaseries. Some of these lamaseries are bigger than large villages. Every lama has his own room or house and provides his own food. He is sup-

ported by his family or by his own hands. He lives very simply. The lama has no amusements and his time is occupied in praying and helping others.

The highest prelates or chief priests among the lamas are the "Living Buddhas". When a "Living Buddha" dies, he is reborn somewhere in the country in the form of a small baby. His whereabouts are discovered by a lama possessed of the gift of divination. Articles used by a "Living Buddha" in his previous incarnation, such as his prayer-wheel and clothes, as also places, such as the lamasery where he lived etc., are supposed to be easily recognised by the baby.



DEVIL DANCERS

One of the chief festivals of the lamaseries is the annual dance. Every lamasery holds its own dance. The most famous dances are held at the Oerel-ku-Lungse monastery, high up in the mountains.

Everybody goes to the lamasery

courtyard. Awnings are erected, and under them sit the priests in full robes, among them those who will play on

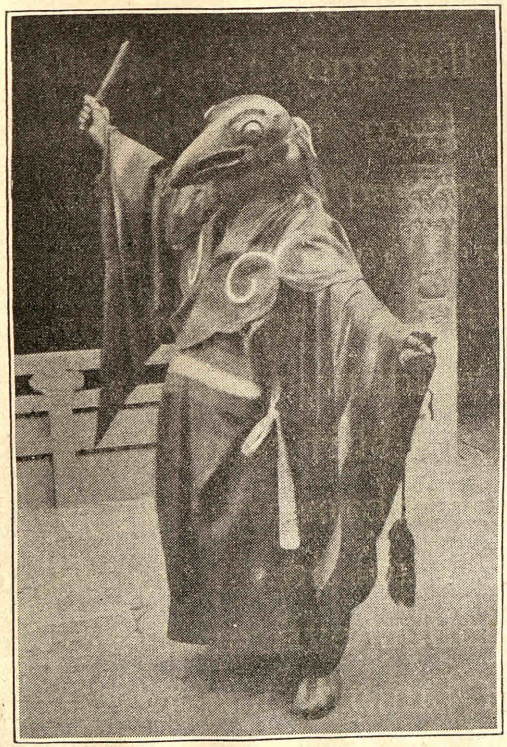


THE ORCHESTRA FOR THE DEVIL DANCERS

the trumpet, clarionet, cymbals, drum and bell. The chief priest of the gompa sits on a dais under a canopy. The people occupy every available

space on the balconies and flat roofs and in the courtyard.

The dancers are priests. There is a clash of cymbals and trumpets on their appearance. They dance with measured steps and then retire. Others then emerge from the lamasery and go through the same performance. All the dancers wear masks, mostly of



A BIRD DEMON AT THE DEVIL DANCE

gods, beasts and birds. After the last dance of each day, all the dancers take part together, the chief priest joins them, and the celebration ends with a tremendous noise of prayers and music.

We will describe the famous Black Hat dance near the end of this book.

8

In 1882 a distinguished Indian headmaster went to Tibet disguised as a Lama. You know that no foreigners are allowed to enter Tibet unless very special permission is first obtained from the Tibetan Govern-

ment. The headmaster's name was Sarat Chandra Das. He must have been a very brave man to undertake the perils of such a journey. After many exciting adventures he arrived at Lhasa.

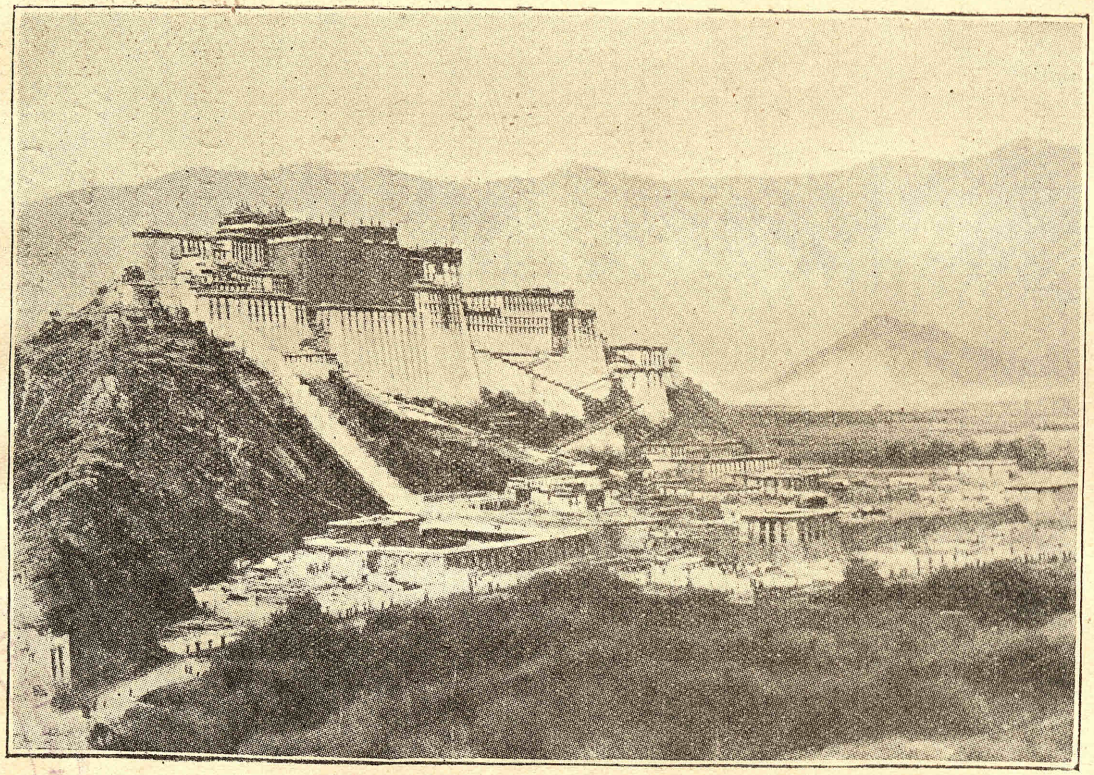


SARAT CHANDRA DAS, C.I.E.

With the help of a Tibetan friend Sarat Chandra was given the chance of seeing the Dalai Lama, who resides in the Potala Palace. To be granted an audience of the Dalai Lama is a very great

honour, and you may be sure that Sarat Chandra kept his eyes very wide open. Here is his own account of the visit:—

"Arriving at the Eastern gate of the Potala we dismounted and crossed through a long hall on either side of which were rows of prayer-wheels which every passer-by put in motion. Then ascending three long flights of stone steps we left our ponies in the care of a bystander, for we were not allowed to ride any further, and proceeded towards the palace, having a young monk for a guide. We had to climb up five ladders before we could reach the ground floor of the Red Palace. Then we had half a dozen



THE POTALA PALACE, LHASA

HIGH SCHOOL

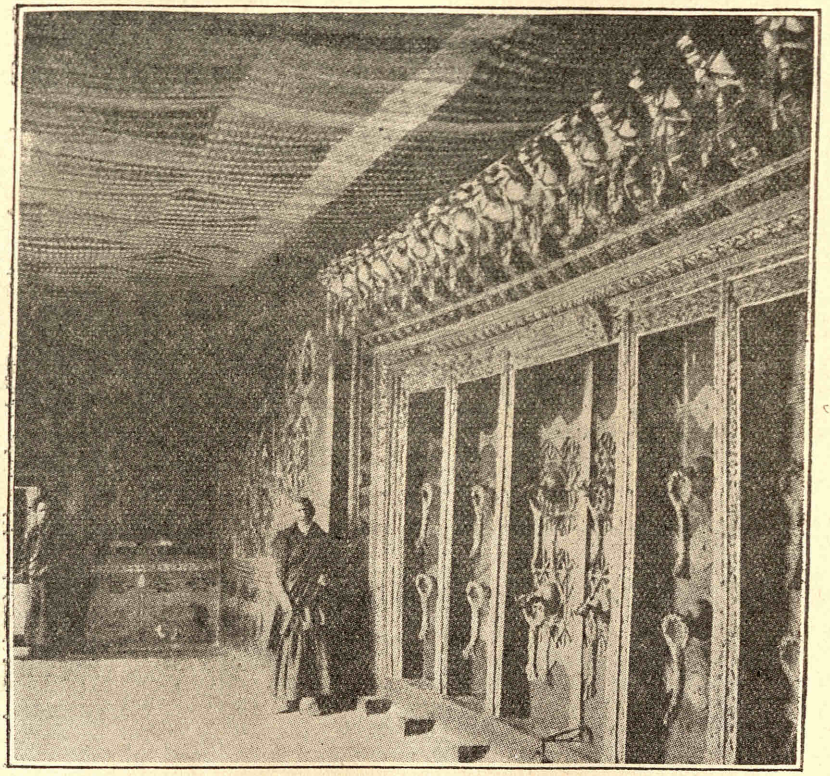
more ladders to climb and found ourselves at the top of the Potala, where we saw a number of monks awaiting an audience.

"After a while three lamas appeared and said that the Dalai Lama would presently conduct a memorial service for the soul of the late Mera Ta Lama and that we were allowed to be present at it. Walking very softly we came to the middle of the reception hall. The furniture was that generally seen in lamaseries, but the hangings were of the richest brocade and cloth of gold; the church utensils were of gold; and the frescoes on the wall were of exquisite fineness. When I approached the Dalai Lama I placed

in his lap, much to the surprise of all present, a piece of gold weighing a *tola*. We then took our seats on rugs of which there were eight rows; ours were in the third row and about ten feet from the Dalai Lama's throne.

"The Dalai Lama* is a child of eight with bright and fair complexion and rosy cheeks. His eyes are large and penetrating. A yellow mitre covered his head and a yellow mantle draped his person, and he sat cross-legged with joined palms. The throne on which he sat was supported by carved lions and covered with silk scarves. The state officials moved about with becoming dignity; there

* In 1881.



A CORRIDOR IN THE POTALA PALACE

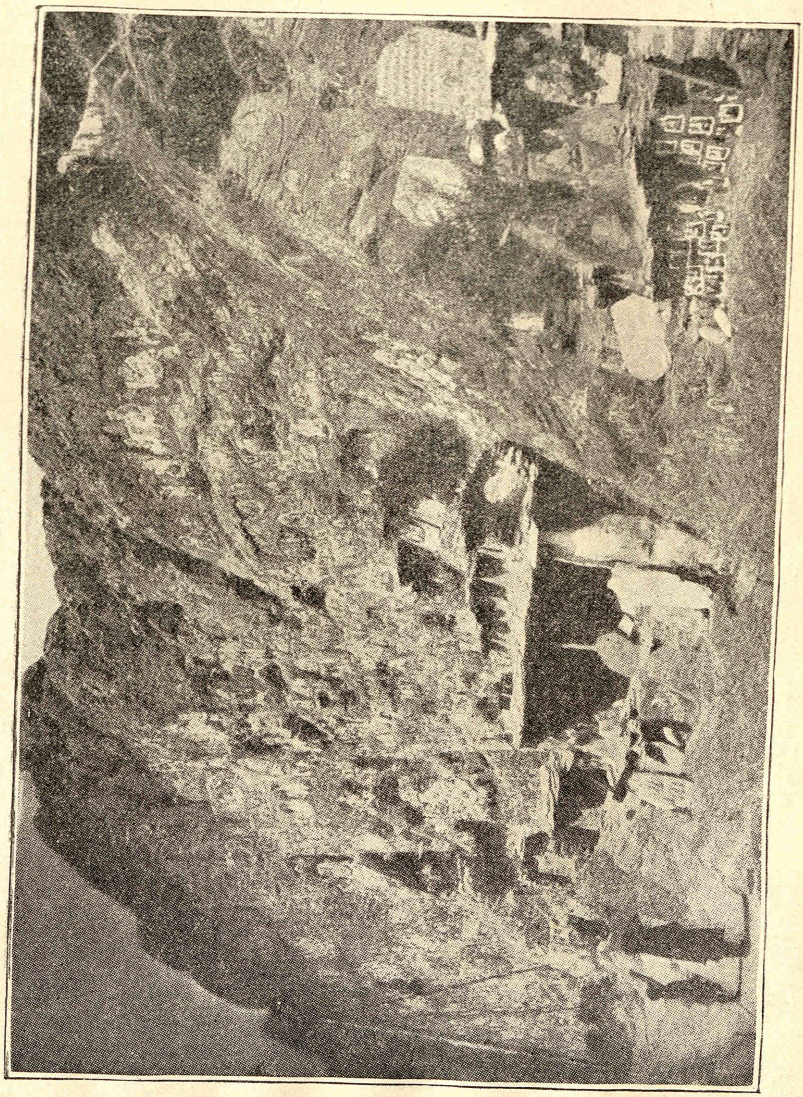
was the Kuchar khanpo, with the bowl of holy water; the incense bearer with a gold incenser with three chains; and the Salpon chenpo with a golden

tea-pot, etc. Two golden lamps burnt on either side of the throne.

"When all had been blessed and had taken their seats, the Solpon chenpo poured tea into His Holiness's gold cup, and four assistants served the people present. Then grace was said. Then we silently raised our cups and drank the tea, which was most deliciously perfumed. In this manner we drank three cupfuls and then put our bowls back in our gowns.

"After the distribution of rice, His Holiness in a low and distinct voice chanted a hymn which was repeated by the assembled lamas in deep grave tones."

HIGH SCHOOL



PAINTED ROCK-SCULPTURES AT LHASA

During Sarat Chandra's travels in Tibet he was very often asked for medicines. One old man who suffered from indigestion was given an effervescent powder. When the medicine was put into cold water as directed, it of course effervesced, whereupon the old man exclaimed, "Oh, Sir, it boiled and frothed as it ran down my throat; it must be a very wonderful medicine *to boil in cold water.*"

9

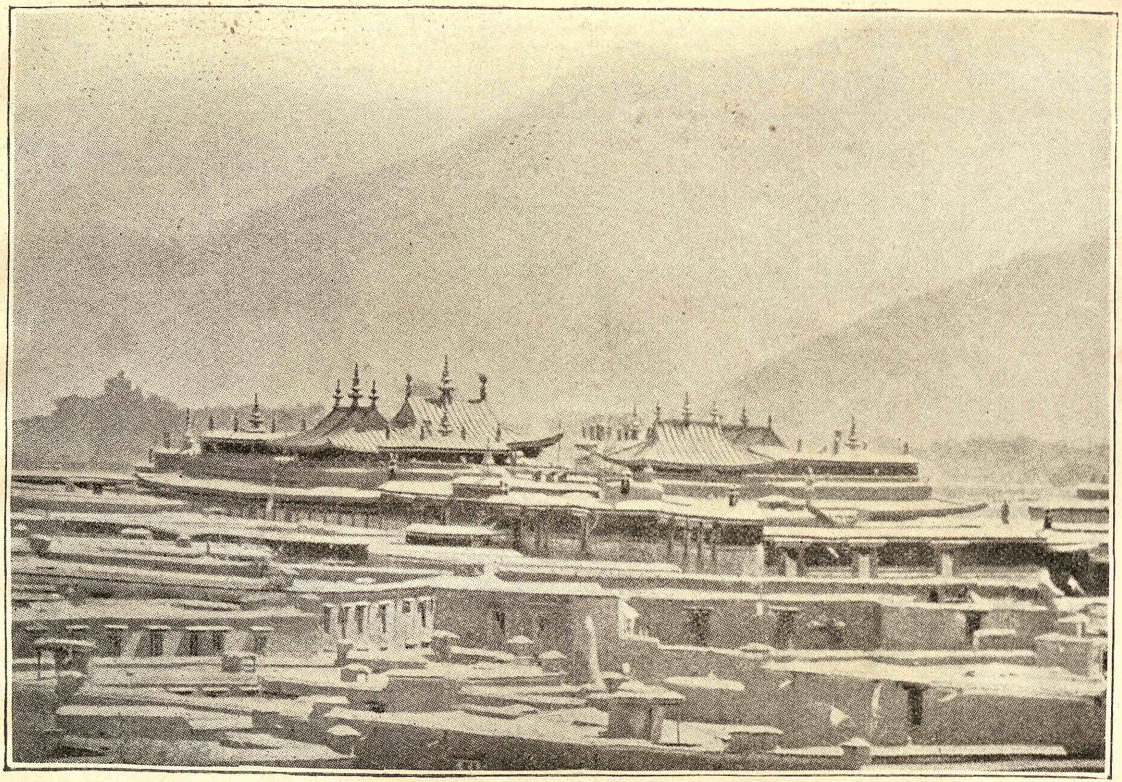
The present Dalai Lama is Lama Tanchoo, who is the fourteenth in the line of succession. He lives in the Potala Palace at Lhasa, as we have

already read. With its gilded roofs and pinnacles glittering in the sunshine, the Potala is a wonderful sight. Another famous place in Lhasa is the Jo Khang lamasery.



THE DALAI LAMA WHO IS 12 YEARS OLD

The numerous wooden pillars supporting the second storey of the Jo Khang are among the most remarkable things in this temple. The largest of the pillars have capitals with sculp-



THE JO-KANG OR CATHEDRAL OF LHASA

tured foliage, and at their bases are buried great treasures of gold and silver. There are other pillars with dragon heads as capitals, having hidden under them charms against devils, for curing diseases, and for keeping off the evil designs of the enemies of Buddhism. Other pillars have lions' heads as capitals, and under them are buried powerful charms to ensure bounteous crops.

The kitchen of the Dalai Lama is in a yellow building called the Phodang Serpo. The cooking-stoves are ornamented with gold, silver and precious stones. All the cooking utensils are made of solid gold. The butter and milk used here is obtained from

a special herd of five hundred yaks belonging to the Dalai Lama.

The greatest religious dance of Tibet is the Black Hat Dance, which was introduced in the eleventh century A.D. It commemorates the assassination of King Langadarma by Lama Lhalun Paldor. The murderer disguised himself in black when seeking to approach the King.

Just before the New Year approaches, decorated tents are erected over the great courtyard of the Potala. In the centre is a raised platform for the Head Lamas and guests of distinction. After a short service the Black Hat Dance begins. The dancers are eighty in number and their gowns are



BLACK HAT DANCERS

made of white, red and green satin. Each one holds a wooden skull in his left hand and a short club in his right hand. They prance about, waving their arms and shrieking wildly. After half an hour more shrieking is heard, and a second set of dancers with

masks come in. These are called Kambab. They continue the wild dance accompanied by the music of cymbals, drums and flutes. When the Kambab stop, four dancers dressed as skeletons arrive. These are followed by sixteen figures representing Indian *apsaras*, which cause the spectators to



A DEVIL DANCER

roar with laughter. Everyone is merry! We then have a number of dances by men wearing stag masks, and then all the Black Hats make a final appearance and the dance is over.



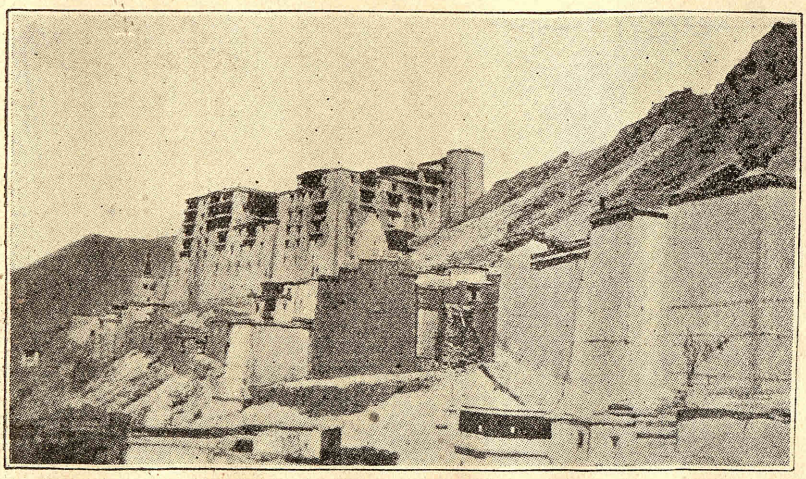
A LADAKHI LADY SPINNING WOOL WITH A *takli*

10

To the west of Tibet proper is Ladakh or Lesser Tibet. Here both men and women wear

distinctive and beautiful dresses. The men wear cloth caps turned up at the back and sides, with a lining of fur. The women wear the beautiful head-dresses you can see in the picture.

Here also there are many monasteries. Leh is the capital city. High above the city is a massive palace, and in the background are the moun-



THE PALACE AT LEH

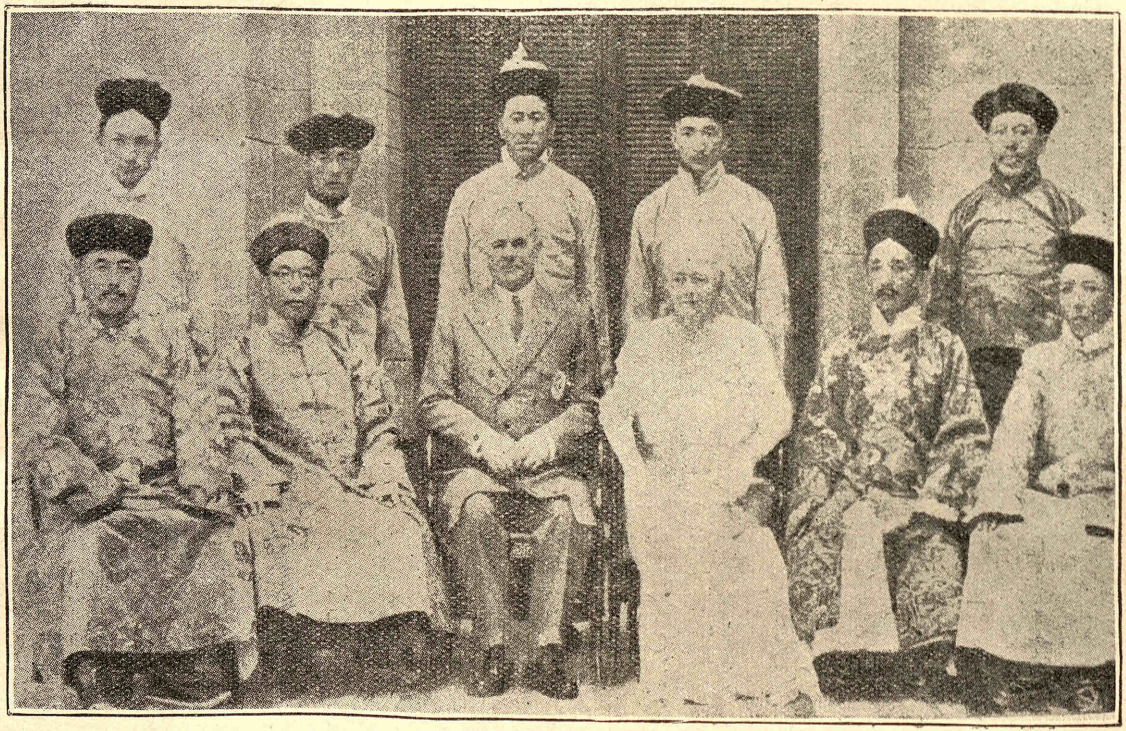
tains of the Ladakh range. The main street of Leh is very wide, and has rows of trees down its entire length.

Here can be seen an amazing collection of races, men from China, Turkestan, Japan, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Punjab, Nepal, etc., all friendly and making jokes with each other. There is a wonderful atmosphere of peace in Ladakh.



LADAKH SCHOOL BOYS

As you will have learnt from the beginning of this book, Tibet was not always a peaceful country. There was not much goodwill between Tibet and her neighbours. But now-a-days everybody is friendly. In order to show friendship towards the King-Emperor and the Viceroy of India, the Tibetan Government sent a mission of goodwill to New Delhi, in 1946, bearing presents for the King-Emperor. After travelling hundreds of miles by ponies over high mountains and treacherous passes, the Tibetan Mission arrived at New Delhi and was received by the representative of the King-Emperor. Valuable carpets, brocades, embroideries, metal-work



THE TIBETAN GOODWILL MISSION, WITH THE VICEROY AND LADY WAVELL, AT VICEROY'S HOUSE, NEW DELHI

and manuscripts were accepted by the Viceroy for transmission to the King-Emperor as a gesture of friendship from the Tibetan Government.

Here is a photograph of the members of the mission together with Lord and Lady Wavell. You will notice the gorgeous robes of brocade worn by some of the members.

We have now finished our visit to the mysterious land of Tibet.

Before we part let me tell you a Tibetan fairy tale :

A crow once caught a fine fat frog, and taking him in her bill, she flew with him to the roof of a neighbouring house in order to devour him at her leisure. As she alighted

on the roof of the house the frog gave an audible chuckle.

"What are you laughing at, Brother Frog?" said the crow.

"Oh, nothing, Sister Crow," said the frog; "never mind me. I was just thinking to myself that, as it fortunately happens, my father lives close by here, on this very roof, and as he is an exceedingly fierce strong man, he will certainly avenge my death if any one injures me."

The crow did not quite like this, and thinking it as well to be on the safe side she hopped off to another corner of the roof near to where a gutter led away the rain-water by means of a small hole in the parapet

and a wooden spout. She paused here for a moment and was just about to begin to swallow the frog when the frog gave another chuckle.

"What are you laughing at this time, Brother Frog?" asked the crow.

"Oh, it's only a small matter, Sister Crow, hardly worth mentioning," replied the frog, "but it just occurred to me that my uncle, who is even a stronger and fiercer man than my father, lives in this very gutter, and that if anybody was to do me an injury here they would have a very small chance of escaping from his clutches."

The crow was somewhat alarmed at hearing this, and she thought that, on the whole, it would be safer to

leave the roof altogether; so again picking up the frog in her bill, she flew off to the ground below, and alighted near the edge of a well. Here she placed the frog upon the ground and was just about to eat him when the frog said:

"Oh, Sister Crow, I notice your bill seems rather blunt. Before you begin to eat me don't you think it would be a good thing to sharpen it a little. You can strop it very nicely on that flat stone over there."

The crow, thinking this was a good idea, took two or three hops towards the stone, and began sharpening her bill. As soon as she had turned her back, the frog gave one

desperate jump, and dived into the well.

When the crow had made her bill nice and sharp she returned from the stone, and looked about for the frog. Not finding him where she had left him she hopped to the edge of the well and peeped over, turning her head from side to side. Presently she spied the frog in the water, and called out to him:

"Oh, Brother Frog, I was afraid you were lost. My bill is quite nice and sharp now, so come along up and be eaten."

"I am so sorry, Sister Crow," replied the frog, "but the fact is that I cannot get up the sides of this well.

The best thing would be for you come down here to eat me."

And so saying he dived to the bottom of the well.

(*Capt. W. F. O'Connor.*)

This is very good book.



2171

MUNAVIRUL ISLAM HIGH SCHOOL
ERNAKULAM

EXERCISES

1. Where is Tibet ?
2. Tibet is a "closed" country. What does this mean ?
3. What is its capital city ?
4. Who is the most important person in Tibet, and where does he live ?
5. State briefly how the Tibetans make tea.
6. Give a short history of Tibet.
7. Give an account of religious activities in Tibet.
8. Describe in your own words a devil dance.
9. Who was Sarat Chandra Das and for what is he famous ?
10. Describe the two principal buildings in Lhasa.
11. Draw a picture of a crow and a frog.

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12. THE LAND OF THE FIVE RIVERS.

SECOND SERIES

1B. MADRAS, THE CITY BY THE SEA.
2B. ASSAM, THE LAND OF TEA AND WATERFALLS.
3B. TRAVANCORE, THE LAND OF PALMS & CANALS
4B. BEAUTIFUL RAJPUTANA.
5B. THE N. W. F. AND THE KHYBER PASS.
6B. COCHIN, MALABAR AND THE NILGIRIS.
7B. SIND AND BALUCHISTAN.
8B. CENTRAL INDIA.
9B. THE NIZAM'S DOMINIONS.
10B. THE TAMIL COUNTRY.
11B. WESTERN INDIA.
12B. THE KINGDOM OF NEPAL.

