

# BOYS AND GIRLS

## Bhutan and Its People.

Away up among the mighty Himalayas, on the southern border of the sealed and mysterious land of Thibet, is the independent kingdom of Bhutan. It lies adjacent to Assam, which is a British dependency to the south. Not even the Alps nor the Rockies present wilder or grander scenery, for the country of the Bhuteans is a succession of cloud-piercing mountains, forest-clad, and snow-capped, deep, dark valleys, and swiftly rushing rivers. One would imagine that in

one hand, and the raids of savage tribes on the other, the natives of the lower class are poverty-stricken and degraded almost beyond belief.

Our photograph of a Bhutea mother and child conveys an accurate impression of the condition of this class of the population. Physically a splendid race, they have become dispirited, lazy, and dirty. Their food consists of meat, turnips, rice, barleymeal, and tea which comes to them from China in the form of bricks, and is carried through the mountain passes by caravans. The men are

bows, swords, rude spear and arrow-heads. In a total population of perhaps 30,000 nearly 6,000 are soldiers.

Bhutan is a country of climatic contrasts. One section may be annually deluged by mountain torrents and heavy rains, while another section has to resort to artificial irrigation; and the inhabitants of Punakha (the winter residence of the rajahs) may be shielding themselves from the blazing sun at a time when the people of Ghasa are chilled by perpetual snows.

Buddhism is the native religion of Bhutan, and there are two branches of the government, authority being divided between the deb raja, or secular head, and the dharma raja, or spiritual head of the state. The country presents a fine field for missionary enterprise, and is practically unoccupied by any gospel workers at the present time.—'Christian Herald.'

## Serpent's Meat.

(Jane Ellis Joy, in New York 'Observer'.)

'Delia, can you come down stairs for a moment?' called Isabel in an exuberant tone. She was standing at the drawing-room door, a picture of lovely, elated girlhood, her eyes resting now on one pretty piece of furniture, and now on another. The upholsterer, having given the finishing touches to the newly furnished room, had just gone, leaving Isabel alone to enjoy the result of his labor and taste.

Her summons brought a quick response. Directly there was a flutter of skirts and the sound of springy foot-steps on the stairs, and another pretty girl made her appearance in the drawing-room, giving expression to her feelings in a delighted 'Oh!'

'Isn't it all splendid?' asked Isabel.

'Magnificent!' said Delia. 'And to think that all these things are our very own! To know that this is really home!' And she dropped into one of the luxurious satin-covered chairs, and laughed for delight.

'This is just such a room as I have often imagined, when I used to build castles,' went on Isabel. 'Do look how the light glints on that picture, making it look like a bit of reality framed in! Wasn't it kind of papa not to say that it was too costly when we selected it?'

As will doubtless be anticipated, the Dixleys had not always been wealthy. Until recently they had occupied a plain little house on a small street, Isabel and Delia both contributing to the family income. The former, who was nineteen years of age, had taught a primary school; while the latter, who was a year younger, had filled a place in a store as cashier. They were bright, healthy-minded girls, and they had expected to continue in the pursuits which they had chosen, until one day about three months ago, when it developed that their father had fallen heir to a large fortune.

The Misses Dixley's experiences for the last three months seemed to them like a dream, or a page from a story-book. It gave them a novel sensation to go out shopping with the knowledge that they might buy almost anything that they desired in the way of dress and furniture. Sometimes, half-forgetting their change of fortune, one would say to the other, when examining some expensive article, 'Oh, it's too dear.' And, then, recollecting their altered circumstances, they would smile and enjoy their late good fortune 'all over again,' as they said.

But as the months passed, these novel sensations wore away. Very soon the girls began to feel 'settled' in their new home. They enjoyed so many social pleasures that



A BHUTEA MOTHER AND CHILD.

so wild and rugged a country, the native population of which must needs be more than ordinarily thrifty, and industrious to make a living, the people would be left in peace to follow their own pursuits. But this is far from being the case. Travellers declare that the Bhutan mountaineers, a quiet, peace-loving, agricultural people, are oppressed and poor. 'Nothing that a Bhutan possesses is his own,' wrote a British envoy; 'he is at all times liable to lose it through the cupidity of others more powerful than himself.' Might is right, in the most literal sense, in Bhutan; and between official rapacity on the

wonderfully skilful as house-builders, and some of their wooden dwellings, made wholly without nails or iron in any form, are ingenious and picturesque, being not unlike the chalets of Switzerland. A chimney is a thing unknown in the Bhutean economy, and the smoke escapes through doors and windows. They have neat little patches of cultivated soil, set out in terraces among the rocks, some of these gardens being supported by stone embankments twenty feet in height. There is very little trade in the country, the sole manufactures being coarse blankets, cotton cloth, silk, leather, wooden