

life is a stern struggle, under arctic conditions, in the face of physical difficulties, oppressive alike to man and beast. It says much for the adaptiveness of the vital principle and the hardness of the Thibetan constitution that the inhabitants of such a clime manage, if not to amass wealth, yet to wrest a precarious livelihood from a region so little adapted for human sustenance.

Thibet, Dr. Henry Lansdell describes as "a highly elevated region of Central Asia, bounded on the north by Chinese Turkestan and Mongolia, on the south by India, on the east by China proper, and on the west by Kashmir." The length exceeds 1000 miles, while the breadth varies from 200 miles toward the east, to 150 miles toward the west, and 500 miles in the centre. The estimated area is 700,000 square miles, more than Austria, France, and Spain put together. Thibet is the most mountainous country in the world. "The Himalayas form its southern scarp;" westward are the Pamir tablelands, and on the east the Yung Ling Mountains of China. Some of the mountain passes stand at an elevation of 25,000 feet and upward, while the average plateau is 13,500 feet in the northern zone and 10,000 feet in the southern.

The country is sparsely populated. Mr. William Woodville Rockhill thinks the current estimate (6,000,000) too large, and computes the number at 4,500,000, basing his estimate on the quantity of tea imported; but it is a risky calculation to infer from the quantity of food that should be eaten, the number of mouths that actually do eat it. Since the last census—over one hundred and fifty years ago—was taken, when the population was a million and a half, many causes have been at work to make the rate of increase one of the smallest. Thibet is thinly and unevenly timbered; food of every kind is scarce; mining is forbidden, the only gold procured being what the surface washings yield. Then polyandrous marriages act as a serious check to the normal growth of population—a hateful custom attaching to life's struggle in the more upland regions, where, for domestic economy's sake, brothers have a wife in common, or a man clubs with his fellow for the possession, the strain being otherwise too great for his means. All these things, coupled with the increase of a celibate priesthood and the prevalence of epidemics, particularly the small-pox, must have tended greatly to stunt, if not altogether to kill the increase of the people.

Owing to the jealous guard against the intrusion of the foreigner, particularly of the European, very few, indeed, from Europe or America have explored the land, and still fewer found an entrance into Lassa, the capital. Time and again, however, the gauntlet has been successfully run. Mr. Thomas Manning, in 1812, succeeded in reaching Lassa, where he resided twelve months. Pères Huc and Gabet, in 1844, also made the journey, only to be conducted out of the country at the end of a month. Pandit A—K—repeatedly traversed the entire region for the purposes of geographical survey—a brilliant achievement worthy of a better