



A THIBETAN ROOBY TEAP.

ACROSS THIBET—THE ROOF OF THE WORLD.

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ONE of the few countries of the world into which the Christian faith has not entered is Thibet. It is not a small country either, being ten times as large as England, and half as large as China. As far as known no Christian missionaries have ventured within its bounds. All foreigners have been persistently repelled. A few years ago an English woman stood on the line which separates it from China, and after full consideration resolved to enter the unknown land, and if possible reach its other border. She succeeded, and hastened back to England. She told the story of what she had seen, many were moved by it, and in one of the closing days of February she sailed again from England at the head of a party of thirteen, bound for Thibet, with the Gospel of Christ in their hands. Christian people everywhere will watch with intense interest this earnest band of Christian disciples who have followed Miss Annie Taylor to Thibet.

Miss Annie R. Taylor was easily led to the knowledge of Jesus. Her thoughts were first directed to the brethren when a school-girl at Richmond. Dr. Moffat's son gave an address on Africa, which greatly impressed at least one of his young hearers. The place and power of women in missions had not then been discovered, and the whole drift of the speaker's appeal was for young men. His plea was, however, so forceful that the sympathetic young people almost wished she were a boy that she might go at once. From that time she read all the missionary literature she could obtain, and pondered the theme constantly. Some years later she found that the Lord wanted women for China, that they were being accepted and sent out by the China Inland Mission, and that their labors were blessed in the Flowery Land.

Miss Taylor offered herself to and was accepted by the China Inland Mission. In 1883

she went out to China, and having learned the language, worked for a time in Tzu-Chau, near the Thibetan frontier. She was the first English person to reside in that city, and in 1880 visited the Great Lama monastery of Kum-bum, where the French priests, MM. Gabet and Huc, had previously learned Thibetan. Beyond this point no English traveler had gone, though a few Russians had explored the districts. That great, unevangelized land pressed upon Miss Taylor's heart. In the story of the China Inland Mission she saw how the great interior of China had seemed hermetically closed until the foot of faith pressed forward and then strangely and wonderfully it opened before the Lord's servants as they went in to possess, so she believed it would be on "the roof of the world," as Thibet has frequently been termed by reason of its altitude. At length she resolved to reach if possible Lhasa, the sacred city of the Lamas, the capital of Thibet.

Leaving China in 1888 Miss Taylor went to a Thibetan village near Darjeeling to learn the language. From there she pressed forward to Sikkim. "I went," she says, "in simple faith, believing that the Lord had called me. I knew that the difficulties were great, and that enemies would be numerous, but I trusted God to take care of me, just as He protected David from the hands of Saul." She got not far from Kambojong, a Thibetan fort. Here the natives would ask her frequently what they were to do with her body if she died. She told them she was not going to die just then. They have, however, a custom of "praying people dead," and to this they resorted, taking care to help their prayers in a very effective manner. One day the chief's wife invited the stranger to eat, and prepared rice and a mixture of eggs for her. Some conversation between the women as she was eating aroused Miss Taylor's suspicion as to the eggs placed before her, and sure enough, after she had partaken she became ill, with all the symptoms of arsenic poisoning. The Thibetan chief was greatly alarmed at her living so near the border, and came over and ordered her back to Darjeeling. She refused to go there, but settled down in a hut near a Thibetan monastery called Podang Gumpa, living as best she could.

After a year spent in Sikkim, surrounded by natives only, Miss Taylor was led to see that it was the Lord's will she should enter Thibet by way of China. Her stay at Sikkim had, however, not been in vain. First, she had learned the language as spoken at Lhasa, and secondly she had secured a faithful Thibetan servant. This young man, Ponso, is a native of Lhasa. Traveling on the frontier of India, he had hurt his feet and was directed to the white stranger for treatment. He had never seen a foreigner before, and the kindness shown him won his heart, so that from that time he has been her constant companion and devoted servant, as well as a follower of Jesus.

Taking him with her, Miss Taylor sailed for Shanghai, went up the great river to Tzu-Chau, a city in Kansuh on the borders of Thibet, and surrounded by Thibetan villages. She visited several large monasteries, and became familiar with many phases of Thibetan life and character.

A year was thus spent on the frontier, and at last came the longed-for opportunity of penetrating the interior. It came about thus. A Chinese Mohammedan, Noga, had a wife from Lhasa, and he had promised her mother that he would return to Lhasa with his wife in three years. This



THE CHINESE BRIDGE NEAR KALINGTUPU.