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USMAN SHAH

The Leisure Hour Library.—New Series

AMONG THE TIBETANS

BY

ISABELLA L. BISHOP, F.R.G.S.

HON. FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SCOTTISH GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY

36 PATERNOSTER ROW AND 65 ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD

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CHAPTER I

THE START

THE Vale of Kashmir is too well known to require description. It is the 'happy hunting-ground' of the Anglo-Indian sportsman and tourist, the resort of artists and invalids, the home of *pashm* shawls and exquisitely embroidered fabrics, and the land of Lalla Rookh. Its inhabitants, chiefly Moslems, infamously governed by Hindus, are a feeble race, attracting little interest, valuable to travellers as 'coolies' or porters, and repulsive to them from the mingled cunning and obsequiousness which have been fostered by ages of oppression. But even for them there is the dawn of hope, for the Church Missionary Society has a strong medical and educational mission at the capital, a hospital and dispensary under the charge of a lady M.D. have been opened for women, and a capable

archery practice begins, and in April and May the people prepare for the operations of husbandry.

The weather in Kylang breaks in the middle of September, but so fascinating were the beauties and sublimity of Nature, and the virtues and culture of my Moravian friends, that, shutting my eyes to the possible perils of the Rotang, I remained until the harvest was brought home with joy and revelry, and the flush of autumn faded, and the first snows of winter gave an added majesty to the glorious valley. Then, reluctantly folding my tent, and taking the same faithful fellows who brought my baggage from Leh, I spent five weeks on the descent to the Panjāb, journeying through the paradise of Upper Kulu and the interesting native states of Mandi, Sukket, Bilaspur, and Bhaghat, and early in November reached the amenities and restraints of the civilisation of Simla.

THE END

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