

# **AMONG THE TIBETANS**

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Among the Tibetans by Isabella Bird & Edward Whymper

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**ISABELLA BIRD & EDWARD WHYMPER**

**AMONG THE  
TIBETANS**





USMAN SHAH

# AMONG THE TIBETANS

BY

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*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY EDWARD WHYMPER*



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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

and upright 'settlement officer,' lent by the Indian Government, is investigating the iniquitous land arrangements with a view to a just settlement.

I left the Panjāb railroad system at Rawul Pindi, bought my camp equipage, and travelled through the grand ravines which lead to Kashmir or the Jhelum Valley by hill-cart, on horseback, and by house-boat, reaching Srinagar at the end of April, when the velvet lawns were at their greenest, and the foliage was at its freshest, and the deodar-skirted mountains which enclose this fairest gem of the Himalayas still wore their winter mantle of unsullied snow. Making Srinagar my headquarters, I spent two months in travelling in Kashmir, half the time in a native house-boat on the Jhelum and Pohru rivers, and the other half on horseback, camping wherever the scenery was most attractive.

By the middle of June mosquitos were rampant, the grass was tawny, a brown dust haze hung over the valley, the camp-fires of a multitude glared through the hot nights and misty moonlight of the Munshibagh, English tents dotted the landscape, there was no mountain, valley, or plateau, however remote, free from the clatter of English voices and the trained servility of Hindu servants, and even Sonamarg, at an altitude of 8,000 feet and rough of access, had