

behind, and we came into a region of Alpine vegetation—spruce-firs, ash, birch, maple, crab-apple, and nut, with jasmine, ivy, spiræa, wood-sorrel, and here and there, rising lightly through the shade of the forest, a gigantic white lily, most exquisitely lovely.

On June 26 we reached Tangu, at a height of 12,000 feet above the sea, and here in a comfortable wooden rest-house, in a cool and refreshing climate, we were able to forget all the depressions of the steamy valleys. The spiræa, maple, cherry, and larch, which we had met lower down, had now disappeared, and in their place were willow, juniper, stunted birch, silver fir, white rose, berberry, currant, and many rhododendrons. The mountain-sides were covered with grass and carpeted with flowers, and especially with many beautiful varieties of primulas, as well as with gentians, potentillas, geraniums, campanulas, ground orchids, delphiniums, and many other plants, while near by we found a fine dark blue poppy; and, most remarkable plant of all, growing here and there on the mountain-side in isolated grandeur, a gigantic rhubarb (*Rheum nobile*), described by Hooker as the handsomest herbaceous plant in Sikkim, with great leaves spread out on the ground at the base, while the main plant rose erect to a height of 3 feet in the form of a pyramid, but with the clusters of flowers protected from the wind and rain, by reflexed bracts.

Here, at Tangu, only a march below the district round Giagong, which the Tibetans claimed, the real business of the mission commenced. By July 1 the whole of both the escort and the support—the former 200 men and the latter 300—were assembled, under the command of Colonel Brander. Both the men and the transport animals had suffered greatly in marching through the drenching rain and the steamy, fever-laden lower valleys; but now, in the cooler air of Tangu, they recovered their strength, and all were eager for the advance into Tibet. I was myself equally keen, but as I could hear no news of either Chinese or Tibetan officials of rank