

from his grandfather to the Raja, and which proved to be an edition of the Old and New Testament from the Papal press, dated in the year 1598. It was bound in Morocco, with the initials I. H. S. surmounted by a cross, stamped on each side of the cover. How it had come there no person could inform me, but it might possibly have been given to the former Raja by Desideri, who visited Ladakh, although it is very doubtful if he reached Lé. The Khalun and Khaga Tan zin made, at my request, very particular inquiry regarding any evidence of a European having been at Lé before us, and no proof nor tradition of such an occurrence could be traced." I feel confident that a critical edition of Desideri's diary will establish beyond doubt the fact that Desideri actually visited Leh.

But although Moorcroft was the second instead of the first visitor to Leh, his description of his visit is of the greatest importance in historical as well as geographical respects. Moorcroft visited Ladakh fourteen years before the kingdom lost its independence. He spent two years at Leh, and as he was a very keen and intelligent observer, his description of the kingdom is of unique interest. Trebeck, Moorcroft's travelling companion, who was a clever draftsman, made a pencil sketch of Leh, which was reproduced in the account of their travels, and this picture of Leh, the oldest known to exist, no archæologist would willingly lose. The reason why Moorcroft spent such a long time at Leh was his attempt to arrange for the king of Ladakh's tendering his allegiance to the East India Company. It took him a long time to win the confidence of the Ladakhi king, Tuntuk namgial (*Dong-rub-rnam-rgyal*) and his Prime Minister, Tsiva Tandu (*Thse-dbang-dong-rub*). But when they were ready to tender their allegiance, their offer was declined by the East India Company. How different the fate of Ladakh would have been, had it been accepted. Moorcroft had no doubts then, that Ladakh would soon be swallowed up by Russia, for the Prime Minister showed him a letter from the Emperor of Russia to the king of Ladakh which had been brought there by a Jew, six years before. Moorcroft and Trebeck became eye-witnesses of some little warfare between the Ladakhis and Baltis, and between the Ladakhis and the Kulū State; they also saw the seditious placard at Leh, in which the unsatisfactory rule of the king was contrasted with the excellent rule of his predecessor, his brother, who had died young. There is simply no end of most interesting information in Moorcroft's account, and I hope to be spared to edit the Ladakhi portion of his journal with notes from the Tibetan point of view.

Let me now quote Moorcroft's description of Leh, in 1820, and contrast it with the Leh of the present day. He writes: ¹ "Lé, the capital of Ladakh, is situated in a narrow valley, formed by the course of the Sinh-kha-bab [*Sengge kha-bab*, *i e.*, the Indus], and bounded on the northern and southern sides by a double chain of mountains running east and west, the highest of which are from eighteen hundred to two thousand feet above the plain. It is built at the foot and on the slope of some low hills, forming the northern boundary of the valley, and separated by a sandy plain about two miles broad from the river

¹ *Travels*, Vol. I, pp. 315 ff.