

accepted system, regardless of pronunciation, which readers unacquainted with the language will in any case distort—in obedience, it would seem, to a perverse instinct misguiding all alike, whether *docti* or *indocti*, in the presence of unknown vocables.

Prior to the appearance of Cunningham's *Ladak* (London, 1854)—with which we should associate the likewise valuable work (*Western Himalaya and Tibet*, London, 1852) of his fellow-explorer, Dr. Thomas Thomson—information concerning Western Tibet was based almost exclusively upon the reports of travellers, Chinese travellers from the fourth to the ninth century A.D., Roman Catholic missionaries during the seventeenth and eighteenth, British travellers (Moorcroft, Henderson, Vigne) during the first part of the nineteenth. Some lists of kings were supplied by Csoma Cörösi, who lived in the country from 1823 to 1830, in Prinsep's *Useful Tables*, pp. 131-2; and a few isolated notices have been traced in the Sanskrit chronicles (*Rāja-taraṅgiṇī*) of Kashmir.

Cunningham's work was of great importance, furnishing not only a great deal of systematic information concerning the geography, topography, meteorology, and economics of the whole region, but also a description of the ethnology and common life, the government, the religion, the languages, and the history. He supplies genealogies of kings and successions of priests for the several districts, and details the substance of local chronicles and narratives. His remarkable historical and topographical insight enabled him to produce a work which is susceptible much more of amplification than of correction, and which will retain its value as an original source. Since his time the region has been extensively visited by officials,¹ explorers, mountaineers, scientists, travellers, and sportsmen; and Ladakh in particular has been found not beyond the reach of ordinary tourists. The most marked deficiency in our present knowledge of the whole territory affects its early history, which is not without importance, seeing that the trade route viâ Ladakh has from ancient times connected Kashmir and India with the life and politics of Central Asia. Dr. Francke's work, providing definite outlines for the later centuries, may furnish threads leading back to the beginnings.

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August, 1925.

¹ One Englishman, an ex-Corporal named Johnson, even held under the Kashmir Mahārāja the office of Wazir of Ladakh (1871-1883). He left a very honourable reputation (see p. 142 of the present work).