

FORBIDDEN LAND.

Katmandu, capital of forbidden Nepal, has more foreign visitors now than ever before. Thirty-six-year old King Mahendra has marked his coronation by lifting the curtain from his strange country, where a third of the population are engaged in load-carrying of one fern or another - so primitive are Nepal's communications. Nowhere is the violent contrast of old and new more evident than in Katmandu itself, lying between the Himalayan ranges of the north and the forest lands of the south. The people (of Mongol origin), have absorbed Buddhism from Tibet, and Hinduism from India, till the two religions are almost indistinguishable.

For all its isolation, Katmandu with its surrounding villages number 80000,000 people, and its markets do a thriving trade in goods which have almost all been carried on men's backs. During the Coronation, celebrations when the King makes many public appearances, Katmandu is busier than ever. Foreign visitors include the Earl of Scarborough, seen here attending the Coronation review. The king takes the salute at the march past of his Gurkha troops - men of a Nepalese warrior tribe who are among the most famous soldiers in history.

The only Hindu reigning monarch, Mahendra is a king with modern ideas, who believes his country has a part to play in the world.