

attractive, honourable in all private intercourse; yet prostituting, as you and I may do to-morrow, the magic power of the telegraph and the printing-press for spreading abroad and perpetuating such crude nonsense as may be read by any one who takes even the blue-book side of the Tibetan story, beginning with the "Commercial Mission" of 1885 and ending with the "Negotiating Mission" of 1904. The first was a harmless *fiasco*, the second a tragedy, with possibilities of becoming a *fiasco*. It was organised to prevent Russian interference. Lord Curzon has not yet disclosed any reasonable ground for supposing Russia had endeavoured in Tibet any acts unfriendly to British-Indian interests. But he feared they might. This reason for the bold step is openly enough alleged in the correspondence. It was even more frankly admitted by every intelligent discussion of the subject, particularly in the administrative columns of the *London Times*. For accuracy's sake, however, it is well to record the other alleged motives, though if the historian, like the judge, may adopt as a maxim, *de minimis non curat lex*, then all the other incidents might be passed in silence. After the Tibetans had been forced back from the Sikkim frontier in 1888, it became prudent to have some precise demarcation of boundary lines, as nobody in London or Calcutta seems to have been prepared just then for forward movement, nor had any occasion been given which could be thrown to Little Englanders (*i. e.*, those who declare for ethics of the individual in national affairs) as an excuse for following the extremist policy of empire-stretching. Therefore in 1890 a convention was drawn be-