

rapidly grew, when the Tibetans begged him to desist from entering their country. Soon it became an army of about ten thousand men all told.

The commissioner indicates at once his mild attitude by declaring that he will not negotiate at the point within Tibetan territory which his hosts have nominated. Imagine that message coming from a man leading an army into your country; imagine the nauseating hypocrisy of it; imagine the terror, the despair, the final frenzy of it among the victims of this Christian-led force of Mohammedans and Hindoos going into a land of monkish farmers and shepherds! There was honest hope, stupidly indulged, that the poor creatures would yield their country without a fight. They were known to be helpless, but they were not known to be heartless, and why Colonel Younghusband continued to negotiate for the control of the country before shooting a goodly number and thus satisfying their natural desire for effort and for sacrifice one hardly knows. Could he be Machiavellian enough to have considered that every day's delay meant a larger indemnity; could he have tarried until that indemnity reached a figure which meant indefinite occupation of the country? No, it is not probable, yet possible.<sup>1</sup> The probability is that his course was merely halting from two causes: an honourable desire to avoid bloodshed, and a stupid belief that he could accomplish his object without it.

There were the usual delays of waiting for Chinese Ambans, tentative discussion, frantic appeals by

<sup>1</sup> See below for confirmation appearing after this chapter was written.