

CHAPTER XIX

COUNSELS OF PERFECTION

IF, then, the Younghusband raid seems to be what men call a crime, and what men call a blunder, what next? Let us suppose two possibilities: first, that in a reasonable time the treaty shall be ratified substantially as written. Then, in order that any effect be had, in order that things be not as they were before, there must be occupation by force sufficient to awe the Tibetans. The corresponding occupation of Turkestan by Russia, sooner or later, must be contemplated, and the probable series of complications already described in the excerpts from the *North American Review*. Second, suppose the treaty to be not ratified, but emasculated. The most difficult point may be the excision of the indemnity clause, for it must be supposed that even in India, non-voting, non-represented India, her British rulers would hesitate to charge up an account of £500,000 against Indian revenue, acknowledging its expenditure to have been unwise. Yet that would be the cheapest way out, I think, and, if necessary, London might help to bear this burden; but that is a counsel of perfection. The perfectly honourable, perfectly Quixotic, and hence perfectly improbable course would be the following: Let it be frankly stated, "We believed you might be in conspiracy to put yourselves in Russian leading-strings;