

CHAPTER III

MANNING'S VISIT TO LHASA

Now when statesmen were most lukewarm about Tibet the inevitable English adventurer came to the front. And it is a curious circumstance that it was just when our relations with the Tibetans were at their coldest that the only Englishman who ever reached Lhasa before the Mission of 1904 achieved this success. He was not an accredited agent of Government sent to bring into effect a deliberate policy such as that conceived by Warren Hastings. He was a private adventurer, and he went up in spite of, and against the wishes of, the Government of the time.

His name was Manning. At Cambridge he was the friend of Charles Lamb, and was of such ability that he was expected to be at least Second Wrangler, but he was of an eccentric nature, and "had a strong repugnance to oaths," and left the University without a degree. He conceived, however, a passionate desire to see the Chinese Empire. He studied the Chinese language in France and England, afterwards made his way to Canton, remained there three years, and in 1810 procured a letter of introduction from the Select Committee of Canton to Lord Minto, then Governor-General of India, asking him to give him every practicable assistance in the prosecution of his plans. But he received little or no aid from the Government, and was left to his own resources, without official recognition of any description.

Manning, attended by a Chinese servant, proceeded to Tibet through Bhutan, and on October 21, 1811, arrived at Phari, at the head of the Chumbi Valley. His description of the Jong then precisely corresponds with our own