

Local officers are often told that they are too impatient, and that they too frequently want to settle a matter by local action, when it might be so much better disposed of by correspondence from headquarters; by negotiations, for instance, between London and Peking, or London and St. Petersburg. They are urged to take a wider view, and to display a calmer spirit, and greater confidence in the wisdom and sagacity of their London rulers. But when thirty years after this very moderate and perfectly reasonable request was made by the local authority, the matter was still no nearer settlement than it was when the request was made; and when the House of Commons, which controls the destinies of the Empire, was still asking why we did not apply to the Chinese, the local officer's faith in the superior efficacy of headquarters treatment is somewhat shaken. And he often questions whether matters which, after forming the subject of voluminous correspondence between the provincial Government and the Government of India, between the latter and the India Office, between the India Office and the Foreign Office, between the Foreign Office and the Ambassador abroad, between him and the Foreign Government, which are discussed in the Cabinet, and form a subject for debate in the House of Commons and the House of Lords, and for platform speeches and newspaper articles innumerable, do not in this lengthy process assume a magnitude which they never originally possessed; whether, having assumed such magnitude, they ever really do get settled or only compromised; and whether, after all, they might not have been settled expeditiously and decisively on the spot before they had been allowed to grow to these alarming proportions.

There are, one knows, many cases which can only be settled by the Central Government, and which are so settled very satisfactorily, but I am doubtful if Tibet is one of these, and whether we have been wise in the instance of Tibet, and in many others connected with China, to make so much of, and expect so much from, the Chinese Central Government, which has so little real control over the local Governments. Perhaps if the