

invade India through Afghanistan, but she could never invade India across Tibet and over the Himalayas. Why, then, should we be so touchy about her action there? Why not let her send as many missions and officers as she liked? This also seems a broad-minded attitude, such as a platform orator in the heart of England might safely take up. But, again, it was not so easy for those away on the frontier of the Empire, with immediate responsibilities on their shoulders, to feel so complacent. If Russia had been the friend she is now, and if our influence in Lhasa had been unmistakable, it would have been easier to take such a view, and it is, indeed, in my opinion, the right view now to take. But in 1902 she was still on the crest of a great advancing wave of expansion. She had not yet been checked by Japan. She had spread over Manchuria with startling rapidity. Where, at the time of my journey there with Sir Evan James, no Russian had ever been seen, there were now Russian railways and Russian cantonments. She had expanded in Western Turkestan and annexed the Pamirs, and it was generally looked upon only as a matter of time before she would absorb Chinese Turkestan and Mongolia. If, then, we complacently, and without a protest, allowed her to establish herself in Tibet, we could hardly expect those States dependent on us and bordering Tibet to think otherwise than that this was the real Power in Asia, and this, therefore, the Power to look up to.

A full-dress Russian invasion of India, through Tibet, no responsible person ever dreamed possible. But, without a real invasion, Russia established in Lhasa, while we were unrepresented there, could cause Government a great deal of anxiety. In practical detail it would mean the increase of our army on the North-East frontier by several thousand men.

It was obviously prudent, therefore, to prevent her acquiring a more predominant influence than our own in Tibet. While it was quite natural that she should be glad to have an influence at Lhasa, it was still more natural that we should be jealous of her having more influence than we had. For, while our border was contiguous with