

Tibet for 1,000 miles, from Kashmir nearly to Burma, the Russian border nowhere touched or even approached Tibet. The whole breadth of Chinese Turkestan lay in between the Russian frontier and the nearest frontier of Tibet, and Lhasa itself was 1,000 miles distant from the nearest point on the Russian frontier. To appreciate the position, let the reader draw out the map at the end of this volume.

The Government of India, accordingly, recommended prompt action. The attempts to negotiate an understanding with the Tibetans through the Chinese had proved a failure. It had been found impossible to open up direct communications with the Tibetans. The result of the exclusion of the Tibetans from the pasture lands at Giagong, though it had materially improved our position on the border, was not in effect more than a timely assertion of British authority upon the spot. These different rumours from such varied sources tending, in the opinion of the Government of India, to indicate the existence of some kind of an arrangement between Russia and Tibet, necessitated dealing with the situation far more drastically and decisively than it had ever been dealt with before. Continuously since 1873 the Government of India had been trying by every correct and reasonable method to regularize their intercourse with Tibet. Their patience was now exhausted, and, instead of trifling about on the frontier with petty Chinese or Tibetan officials, they proposed, in the very important despatch of January 8, 1903,\* to send a mission, with an armed escort, to Lhasa itself, there to settle our future relations with Tibet, and to permanently establish a British representative.

This proposal, when it reached England, seems to have caused considerable surprise. But Warren Hastings, a century before, had meant to do this very thing; and the Russians had a Consular representative in Chinese Turkestan alongside their frontier, so there seemed no particular reason why we should not have had a similar representative in Tibet alongside our frontier. The risk had to be considered, it is true, but why the case of

\* Blue-book, p. 152.