

British and Tibetan officials for the due settlement of the trade and frontier difficulties which might occur.

In conclusion, I was warned to be very careful to abstain from using any language or taking any action which would bind the Government to any definite course hereafter without first obtaining the sanction of the Government of India.

All was now prepared for the start of a mission. In this extraordinarily complex and intricate matter the many different lines had at last been made to converge on one point. The manifold communications which had taken place for thirty years between the Bengal Government and the Government of India, between local Indian officers and local Chinese and Tibetans; the correspondence between Simla or Calcutta and London, between the India Office and the Foreign Office, between the Foreign Office and the Russian and Chinese Governments, and between the Viceroy and our Minister at Peking and the Chinese Resident at Lhasa, had all been boiled down into the definite act of the despatch of a mission to a place a bare dozen miles inside Tibet to discuss trade-relations, frontier and grazing rights.

This was not, after all, any remarkably bold or outrageously aggressive act. Such as it was, was it justified? The narrative of the causes which led to the move has been long, but, even so, it has been hard to put their true significance so that it may be appreciated by people unacquainted with Orientals. Still, there are some fairly plain facts and considerations which emerge from the long narrative, and which all who are accustomed to the conduct of affairs may be expected to understand.

The first fact is this—that it was aggression on the part of the Tibetans or their vassals which led to action on our part, and that before ever a single soldier of the British Government had crossed the frontier into Tibet Tibetan troops had crossed it to the Indian side. It was the irruption of the Bhutanese into the plains of Bengal which caused Warren Hastings to send Bogle to Tibet in