

Mission to Gyantse. They were, however, clearly of opinion that "this step should not be allowed to lead to occupation or to permanent intervention in Tibetan affairs in any form. The advance should be made for the sole purpose of obtaining satisfaction, and as soon as reparation was obtained a withdrawal should be effected. While His Majesty's Government considered the proposed action to be necessary, they were not prepared to establish a permanent Mission in Tibet, and the question of enforcing trade facilities in that country should be considered in the light of this telegram."

It was a curious telegram, which I never quite understood. It said that the advance was to be made for the sole purpose of obtaining satisfaction. But it was always understood, and it was most emphatically laid down, that this was not a punitive expedition to obtain satisfaction and get reparation. It was a Mission despatched to put our relations with the Tibetans on a regular footing, to establish ordinary neighbourly intercourse with them. Lord Lansdowne himself said in the House of Lords* : "We desire that a new Convention should be entered into between the Government of India, on the one hand, and the Tibetans and Chinese, as the suzerain Power, on the other. That is the object of the Mission." It is remarkable that a document which was so often quoted to the Russian Government, to the Indian Government, to the Chinese Government, and which the Indian Government on one occasion quoted to me in terms of admonition, should have described with so little precision the real purpose of the advance—and this at the culminating point of thirty years' effort on the part of the Government of India. It was not till after the Mission had been attacked at Gyantse, and on account of that attack, that we demanded satisfaction—in the shape of an indemnity. The obvious purpose of the advance was to do what Warren Hastings had attempted, what the Government of Bengal since 1873 had been advocating—to put our intercourse with the Tibetans on proper terms. We had found it impossible to effect this object on the frontier or

* February 26, 1904.