

Khamba Jong; but both Mr. White and I were anxious that no retirement should take place from one direction till we were actually advancing in another, for any symptom of withdrawal before such people as the Tibetans is apt to be misconstrued into fear, and to encourage them into hostile action. So it was arranged that until we advanced into Chumbi the Mission would remain at Khamba Jong, and then retire into Sikkim and join General Macdonald and myself in Chumbi.

General Macdonald, his Chief Staff Officer, Major Iggulden, who was well acquainted with the frontier, having served in the little Sikkim campaign of 1888, Major Bretherton, and Captain O'Connor now had their hands full with the arrangements for the advance, and, as always happens, every additional unnecessary difficulty arose. For advance into Tibet in mid-winter, animals like yaks, which hate being below 12,000 feet, and are stifled with the heat if the thermometer rises above the freezing-point, were, of all others, the most suitable, and the Nepalese Government, with great trouble had collected several thousand and despatched them to Sikkim. But just as they arrived some kind of disease broke out among them, and all, except a very few, which had to be secluded, died. It was a terrible blow, but Major Bretherton, with his unfailing cheery resourcefulness, set about getting the transport he knew and had worked so well on the Kashmir frontier—Kashmir ponies, Balti and Poonch coolies. Sir Edmond Elles, the Military Member of Council, was near by in Calcutta at the time, and with his unrivalled experience in organizing such expeditions, was able to direct the whole scheme of arrangement to its greatest possible advantage. He would not, indeed, at this stage spare those magnificently organized mule corps which he treasured up in the event of greater need elsewhere, and which he only eventually sent when operations in Tibet assumed a greater importance. But in every other way he gave General Macdonald support in these most difficult transport and supply arrangements, and with great rapidity bullocks, ponies, and coolies, arrived in the Teesta Valley. And sheepskins, blankets, woollen