

of Colonel Hogge and his officers, with whom I was to be so closely associated in future, and in whom I always found such firm supporters. And by December 10 General Macdonald and his staff, the bulk of the troops for the advance, Mr. White, Mr. Walsh, Captain O'Connor, and myself had all rendezvoused at Gnatong, ready to move into Tibet.

The force then assembled consisted of two guns, No. 7 Mountain Battery, Royal Artillery; a Maxim gun detachment of the Norfolk Regiment; two guns, 7-pounders, 8th Gurkhas; half-company 2nd Sappers; eight companies 23rd Sikh Pioneers; six companies 8th Gurkhas; with field hospitals, engineer field park, ammunition column, telegraph, postal, and survey department detachments. In spite of foot-and-mouth disease among the pack-bullocks, of sickness and desertion amongst the Nepalese Coolie Corps, and of rinderpest, Major Bretherton had succeeded in accumulating a month's supply for the troops and ten days' fodder for the animals, and General Macdonald was able to make a short march on the 11th to the foot of the Jelap-la (pass) with the first column, consisting of 1,150 fighting men, four guns, and four Maxims.

On December 12 we crossed the pass itself. It is 14,390 feet in height, and leads, not across the main watershed of the Himalayas, but across the range dividing Sikkim from Chumbi, a sharp, bare, rocky ridge. The ascent to it was very steep, and, as the ridge formed the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet, it was possible we might be opposed at the summit.

But on the question of opposition I had had some communication with the Tibetans. News of the assembly of troops and of the preparations we were making had naturally reached the Tibetans, and on November 28 Captain Parr, who was in Chinese employ, associated with the Chinese delegate, informed me that the Tibetans were expecting that, before any advance was made into their country, the British Government would make a formal declaration of their intention; that if they intended to make war they would make a formal declaration of war.