

road for the advance of the Mission, and guarding against the regrettable display of force with which the Tibetans had endeavoured to intimidate the Mission at Khamba Jong. He stayed there a couple of nights, during which the cold was intense, the thermometer registering about 40° of frost at night. The ground was frozen so hard that a working party of twelve men only succeeded, after two hours' hard work, in excavating some 33 cubic feet of earth, and as neither turf nor stones were available, it was impossible to construct any entrenchments.

Leaving Major Row in command of the two companies in the Jong, General Macdonald returned with the remainder of the force to Chumbi, which he reached on the 23rd. And on Christmas Day we received a mostly kindly and encouraging telegram from Lord Curzon. The inhabitants of the Chumbi Valley were now selling us grass, buck-wheat, turnips and potatoes, and Major Bretherton had arranged for 400 mules to ply on a contract system between here and the Teesta Valley. This, though very helpful, did not amount to very much, and we were dependent for most of our supplies and transport from the rear. In addition to this, the loss of the yaks was now severely felt. So our progress was necessarily slow. But I was very anxious, as soon as we could, to be over the main range, in Tibet proper, in some position equivalent to Khamba Jong. Just over the Tang-la (pass) we knew there was a small place called Tuna, and there I wished the Mission established with a good escort and plenty of ammunition and supplies, while all arrangements were being completed for the further advance to Gyantse. There was a certain amount of risk in this; but to be among the Tibetans proper, and to compensate for the withdrawal from Khamba Jong, I thought it was necessary to run it. Our prestige at this time on the Sikkim frontier was quite astonishingly low. I had never seen it so low elsewhere. In other places there was always that indefinable something behind which gave one something to work with, but on this frontier the people stood in much greater awe of the Lhasa Lamas than they did of