

last campaign against us. Many of our camp-followers deserted, and local men in our employ brought in stories of the numbers and prowess of the Tibetans, and how they would attack us in the night and swamp us.

These were the circumstances in which we set out, now in the extreme depth of winter, to cross over the main range of the Himalayas into Tibet.

On January 7 we encamped at the foot of the pass, the thermometer that night falling to 18° below zero. As I looked out of my tent at the first streak of dawn the next morning there was a clear cutting feel in the atmosphere, such as is only experienced at great altitudes. The stars were darting out their rays with almost supernatural brilliance. The sky was of a steely clearness, into which one could look unfathomable depths. Behind the great sentinel peak of Chumalhari, which guards the entrance to Tibet, the first streaks of dawn were just appearing. Not a breath of air stirred, but all was gripped tight in the frost which turned buckets of water left out overnight into solid ice, and made the remains of last night's stew as hard as a rock. Under such conditions we prepared for our advance over the pass, and as the troops were formed on parade, preparatory to starting, it was found that many of the rifles and one of the Maxims would not work, on account of the oil having frozen.

The rise to the pass was very gradual, and the pass itself, 15,200 feet above sea-level, was so wide and level that we could have advanced across it in line. But soon now the wind got up, and swept along the pass with terrific force. At this altitude, and clad in such heavy clothing, we could advance but slowly, and the march seemed interminable. The clearness of the atmosphere made the little hamlet of Tuna appear quite near; but hour after hour we plodded wearily over the plateau, and it was late in the afternoon before we reached it, and even then, for the sake of water, we had to go a mile or more beyond, and encamp in the open.

A Tibetan force was near at hand, and as they were credited with a habit of attacking at night, General Macdonald took special precautions against such an even-