

## CHAPTER XII

### TUNA

THE first event of importance after our arrival at Tuna was the receipt, on January 12, of a message from the Lhasa officials, saying that they wished for an interview. At noon, the time I had appointed, several hundreds of men appeared on the plain below the village. They halted there, and asked that I should come out and meet them halfway. Perhaps unnecessarily, I refused this request. It was bitingly cold in the open plain, and I thought the Tibetan leaders might have come into my camp, where I had said I would receive them, and where a guard of honour was ready. However, I sent out the indispensable and ever-ready Captain O'Connor to hear what they had to say, and on his return he replied that they once more urged us to return to Yatung, but afterwards stated that they were prepared to discuss matters there, at Tuna.

This constituted a distinct improvement on the attitude adopted by them at Phari, and their general demeanour was much more cordial, according to Captain O'Connor. But they told him that if we advanced and they were defeated, they would fall back upon another Power, and that things would then be bad for us. In conversation with the Munshi they said that they would prevent us from advancing beyond our present position, and they repudiated our treaty with the Chinese, saying they were tired of the Chinese, and could conclude a treaty by themselves.

Encouraged by the fact that they showed some little signs of a desire to discuss matters, I determined now to make a bold move to get to close quarters with them.