

smile as much as he possibly could, and I then said that I had to obey the orders of my Government, just as much as they had to obey the orders of theirs; that I would ask them to report to their Government what I had said, and I would report to my Government what they had told me. That was all that could be done at present; but if the Viceroy, in reply to my reports, ordered me back to India I should personally be only too thankful, as theirs was a cold, barren, and inhospitable country, and I had a wife and child at Darjiling, whom I was anxious to see again as soon as I could.

This eased matters a little. But the monks continued to clamour for me to name a date for withdrawal, and the situation was only relieved when a General suggested that a messenger should return with me to Tuna to receive there the answer from the Viceroy. The other Generals eagerly accepted the suggestion, and the tension was at once removed. Their faces became smiling again, and they conducted me to the outer door with the same geniality and politeness with which they had received us, though the monks remained seated and as surly and evil-looking as men well could look.

We preserved our equanimity of demeanour and the smiles on our faces till we had mounted our ponies and were well outside the camp, and then we galloped off as hard as we could, lest the monks should get the upper hand again and send men after us. It had been a close shave, but it was worth it.

I had sized up the situation, and felt now I knew how I stood. I knew from that moment that nowhere else than in Lhasa, and not until the monkish power had been broken, should we ever make a settlement. But it was still treason to mention the word "Lhasa" in any communication to Government, and I had to keep these conclusions to myself for many months yet, for fear I might frighten people in England who had not yet got accustomed to the idea of our going even as far as Gyantse.

While I perceived that the monks were implacably hostile, that they had the preponderating influence in the State, and were entirely convinced of their power to