

the fact that the control of affairs was in my hands. If we had intended war the control would have been in the hands of a General.

The delegates and the commanders in the jong were still undecided. No one would take the responsibility of evacuating the jong. On the morning of the 5th the Tongsa Penlop with some Lhasa Lamas came to see me, and I sent one of the latter over to the delegates, saying that at twelve a signal gun would be fired to warn them that half an hour afterwards firing would commence. I told them that if they came over either before or after with a flag of truce they would be given an asylum in the Tongsa Penlop's camp. I begged that the women and children should be taken out of the town; and I sent a special warning to General Ma, the local Chinese official. No notice was taken of any of these warnings. At twelve I had a signal gun fired, and at 12.30 I heliographed to General Macdonald that he was free to commence firing.

The Tongsa Penlop had stayed with me on the ramparts of our post up till noon, and I asked him to remain and see the fight. But he said he would prefer to see it from a little farther off, and I dare say he did not yet feel quite certain that we should win. For it was a tough task that lay before General Macdonald. We were right in the heart of Tibet, with all the strength that the Lamas, with a full year of effort, could put forth. The fortress to be attacked from our little post in the plain looked impregnable. It was built of solid masonry on a precipitous rock rising sheer out of the plain. It was held by at least double, and possibly treble, our own force, and they were armed, many hundreds of them, with Lhasa-made rifles, which carried over a thousand yards. In addition, there were several guns mounted. No wonder the Tongsa Penlop thought it best to be a little distance off, and not too decidedly identified with either side.

General Macdonald probably never would have been able to take the jong if his guns had not just been supplied, on the recommendation of General Parsons, the Inspector-General of Artillery, with "common" shell as well as the shrapnel, which was all that up till now they had carried