

I endeavoured throughout the interview to avoid being drawn into petty wrangling. Even more important than the securing of a paper convention, which might or might not, be of value, was, I stated to Government at the time, the placing of our personal relations with the officials of Tibet upon a good footing from the start. I had to be severe with them at Gyantse, because they would not pay proper respect to me; but at each interview since they had come well before the appointed time, they were thoroughly respectful throughout, and I was able to treat them with the politeness I preferred to show them when they made this possible. I trusted that, after I had suffered two interviews, one of three and a quarter hours and another of three and a half hours, they would feel that I was at any rate accessible, and that they would have no compunction in coming to see me whenever they felt inclined. Until, however, they received further orders from Lhasa, there was nothing more to be said on either side.

We had halted a day at Nagartse to collect supplies, of which we were short, and some question arose whether, as we had the negotiators here, it would not be better to stop and negotiate. By being too uncompromising we might be simply stiffening them up to renewed fighting, and in the desolate country in which we found ourselves, with practically no supplies and with a lofty pass behind us, we might find ourselves in a very awkward predicament. All this had certainly to be taken into consideration. Still, we should be sure to find supplies in the Lhasa Valley, unless the Tibetans resorted to the extreme course of destroying or carrying off all their foodstuffs; and as the Tibetans were now evidently on the run, I never had any real doubt that we should keep them on the run, and follow them clean through, right up to Lhasa.

On the 21st we found that the delegates had decamped in the night. Perhaps, after all, I had made a mistake, and allowed these very coy birds to escape just as they had come into my hand. On the whole I thought not. I believed others would soon come in. So I marched very contentedly along the shores of one of the most beautiful lakes I have ever seen—the Yamdok Tso. It was 14,350