

treacherously attacked at night. Now the Viceroy had ordered me to advance to Lhasa to negotiate there. Those orders I had to obey, but I had no desire to create disturbances in Lhasa or interfere with the religion of the country, and as soon as I had obtained his seal to the Convention I had been instructed to negotiate, I would retire from Lhasa. No religious places which were not occupied by Tibetan soldiers would be occupied by British soldiers; our soldiers would not fire if no opposition was offered to them; and all supplies taken from the peasants would be paid for. But if opposition were offered, our troops would be compelled to commence military operations, as they did at Gyantse, and the terms of the settlement would be increased in severity.

This letter I despatched on the 25th, and the same day we marched six miles down the banks of the Brahmaputra River, to Chaksam Ferry. For the purpose of crossing this river we had brought with us from India four collapsible Berthon boats, and with these and the local ferry-boats seven companies of infantry and one company of mounted infantry were crossed over by nightfall.

But a sad accident occurred: one of the boats capsized in the rushing, eddying current, and Major Bretherton, the Chief Supply and Transport Officer, and two Gurkhas were drowned. There was no more capable and energetic officer in the Force. Our success depended much less on fighting than on supply and transport arrangements, and these had been wellnigh perfect. Major Bretherton, in the Kashmir, Gilgit, Chitral, and North-West frontiers, had almost unrivalled experience of rough transport work, and his driving power, his readiness, quickness, far-sightedness, and inexhaustible buoyancy and cheerfulness were of inestimable value in carrying through such an enterprise as that which we had now so nearly completed. It was hard that young Gurdon should lose his life just at the beginning of so promising a career; it seemed almost more cruel that a man who had achieved so much, and who was just within sight of the goal for which he had worked longer and harder than any one of us, should have