

with only a small following. I told him the Tibetans already had a promise in writing from me in my letter to the Dalai Lama that we would not fight unless opposed, and if, with that in their hands, they allowed disturbances to occur, I should presume they were not anxious for a settlement. I required no written promise from them not to harm us, but relied upon their sense of self-interest not to bring on further disturbances.

The Ta Lama, as a final effort, begged me to stay here for a day; and, last of all, as he was shaking hands with me—a ceremony which lasted a quarter of an hour—entreated me not to enter Lhasa city. I told him that I had the highest admiration for his eloquence and power of persuasion, and would have great satisfaction in telling the Dalai Lama that he really had done his utmost to delay us. I, of course, realized the position in which he stood, and that it was his business by every means in his power to prevent us reaching Lhasa. At the same time, I was sure, I said, that a man of his sense knew in the bottom of his heart that the Tibetans were extremely fortunate in having been able to secure our peaceful entry to Lhasa, and prevented the capture of the city by force of arms. We had promised not to occupy Lhasa if we were not further opposed, and with that promise they must be content.

The Ta Lama, though excessively urgent towards the close of the interview, was perfectly polite throughout. But so extraordinarily impracticable are these Tibetans that he evidently thought that, because I had assured him at previous interviews that we wished to make a friendly settlement, we were therefore committing a sort of breach of faith in now advancing to Lhasa. I had never ceased to assure him that we did intend to advance, but now that we actually were advancing he regarded it as a grievance.

For the next two days we marched steadily on towards Lhasa, expecting at each corner we turned to catch sight of the Potala in the distance, or at least to hear from the reconnoitring parties of mounted infantry that they had seen its gilded roofs. On August 2, at our last camp, a dozen miles only from Lhasa, which now