

CHAPTER XVI

THE TERMS

I HAVE often been asked what were my feelings when I first saw Lhasa—whether I was not filled with a sense of elation. I was filled with nothing of the kind. It was when I left Lhasa that I really had all that feeling of intense relief and satisfaction which everyone experiences when he has set his heart on one great object and attained it. When I left Lhasa I had my treaty, and—what I had always put at more value than the treaty itself—the good-will of the people. When I arrived at Lhasa it was very doubtful if I should be able to get a treaty at all, and still more doubtful if I could get it with the good-will of the people, without which any paper treaty would be useless. To negotiate a treaty with a people acknowledged by those who knew them best—the Chinese, the Nepalese, and the Bhutanese—to be most obstinate and obstructive, time was required. To break through the reserve of so exclusive a people, to make friends of men with whom we had just been fighting, still more time was essential. Yet it was just time that was denied me. I had pressed for it in June, but in too ineffectual a manner, and had been rebuffed. Though this was an avowedly political Mission, military considerations were allowed to preponderate. I could only stay in Lhasa a month and a half or two months. We must be back before the winter. And thus tied, I had to set to work with all speed, but with the outward appearance of having the utmost leisure, to negotiate the treaty. Hurried as I was, I had yet to assume an air of perfect indifference whether the negotiations were concluded this year, next year, or the year after. And irritated though I might be, I had above all to