

His Majesty's Government had already recognized the necessity of asserting the predominance of British influence in Tibet, and Lord Lansdowne had clearly apprised Count Benckendorff of our attitude in this matter. To establish such an influence it was evident that we must now acquire something more practical than the nominal concessions acquired by the treaty of 1890 as the fruits of our operations in 1888. Our experience then gained showed that we could not trust to our recent military successes leaving any lasting impression. It was difficult to avoid the conclusion that the best guarantee for the due observance of the new Convention, and for the adequate protection of our rights as the only European Power *limitrophe* with Tibet, must be that, in addition to the appointment of officers to watch over our commercial interests at the marts to be established in Tibet, we should demand the acceptance of an accredited British agent in Tibet.

The place at which this agent should reside was a question on which opinions might easily differ, and it might, the Indian Government thought, be left open until they were in possession of the fuller information that would be acquired after the Mission had reached Lhasa. The arguments in favour of placing him at Lhasa were the following: Lhasa was the pivot of the religious and political life of Tibet; it was the seat of the Dalai Lama and his Council, with whom we had to establish official relations; and it was the focus of the priestly influence, which we had to conciliate or overcome. It might be argued that it was undesirable to arouse the resentment of the Tibetans by requiring them to receive a representative of a strange race and a strange religion in the home of their most sacred associations. But after the manner in which for the past fifteen years the Tibetans had repudiated their obligations and had derided the patience with which we had submitted to their insults, Government believed that, even should such a feeling exist, it might be better to face it than to allow of the misconception which would be placed upon the location of an agent at any place outside Lhasa.