

CHAPTER XVIII

THE TREATY CONCLUDED

WE were now at the end of August ; my time was very short, and I was in an awkward predicament. On the 30th I had telegraphed to Government that the Tibetans, in spite of their protests of poverty, could really pay the indemnity, but that I thought trade concessions in lieu of a portion would be preferable. I also asked for liberty to arrange for payment of the indemnity by instalments of one lakh of rupees (£6,666) a year for a long term of years, if that arrangement were preferred by the Tibetans, a proposal which I had also made a month before. On the same day I was told by General Macdonald that September 15 was the latest date to which he could remain at Lhasa. The Secretary of State had telegraphed to the Viceroy* that "the date on which the return of the force from Lhasa is to begin should be fixed by the military authorities in communication with Young-husband." In accordance with these instructions, General Macdonald telegraphed to the Adjutant-General† that he had consulted me with regard to fixing a date for our departure, that I had said I could not fix any date, but thought the beginning of October the earliest, and could not guarantee that. The medical authorities considered September 1 the latest safe date. The officers commanding units thought the 12th might be risked. General Macdonald himself was prepared to stay till September 15, and would delay the departure a few days longer if that would make the difference. There had already been snow on the hills round Lhasa and Nagartse, there was heavy snow on the Karo-la and at Ralung, with severe

* Blue-book, III., p. 51.

† *Ibid.*, p. 242.