

frost on the Karo-la, and the return march would take nineteen days. General Macdonald concluded that September 13 was the latest safe date for our stay in Lhasa, and would be glad of immediate orders, but, in the absence of orders to the contrary, would fix the 15th for the departure.

From the purely military point of view this was perfectly sound, and latterly the emphasis had been so much laid upon military considerations that I had not much hope of this date being altered. It had, indeed, got into the papers from some military office in Simla, and reached Peking. I was then in a very critical position. The Treaty was almost within my grasp, but I might be pulled back by military considerations before I had time to conclude it.

On the other hand, Mr. White, Captain O'Connor, and I had between us interviewed at length all the principal men in Lhasa, and if we had not fully convinced them, we had, at any rate, broken down most of their opposition. And the Nepalese and Bhutanese, and the Chinese Resident, too, had worked away to bring about the same result. The consequence was that about this time I was pretty well convinced that the bulk of them had at the back of their minds decided to agree to our terms, and put an end to the business. They all realized that the Dalai Lama, or his previous advisers, had blundered into a hopeless position, out of which they had to get as best they might. No one man liked to get up and propose that they should agree to our terms. But if they were put in a position when *all* had to agree, no one would undertake the responsibility of *objecting*. That was how I gauged the situation.

The time to strike had come. If I had moved earlier, before the Tibetans had, each of them, had the opportunity of blowing off steam, I should simply have aroused more armed opposition. If I delayed, I might have to leave Lhasa through military considerations before I ever got the chance. I had asserted fifteen months before, in a letter to my father written when just starting for Tibet, that I would sit tight any length of