

And for the effect upon the Tibetans and upon men in general, upon our own soldiers, British and Indian, and upon the Nepalese, Bhutanese, and Sikkimese, and far away up into Kashmir and Turkestan, it was necessary to do something to strike their imagination, and to give some unmistakable sign that the Tibetans had not been able through all these years to flout us without suffering the penalty.

Here again to the common-sense man it would have seemed ridiculous and foolish to run more additional risk when the Treaty could have been signed comfortably and without any fuss in either my room or the Resident's. But those who have lived among Asiatics know that the fact of signing the Treaty in the Potala was of as much value as the Treaty itself. Few would know what was in the Treaty, but the fact that the British had concluded a Treaty in the Potala would be an unmistakable sign that the Tibetans had been compelled to come to terms. At the commencement of the Mission our prestige all along our frontier with Tibet had been at zero-point. Everywhere it was thought that the Tibetans could defy us with impunity. Our prestige had no value, and prestige in Asiatic countries is a high practical asset. Through prestige a few Englishmen, without a single British soldier, are able to control a district or State in India containing as many inhabitants as Tibet. Because they had allowed their prestige to wane, the Chinese, even with soldiers, were unable to control Tibet. It was to give an unmistakable sign, which all other countries could understand, that our prestige was re-established in Tibet that I insisted on having the Treaty signed in the Potala itself.

To the troops the news that the Treaty was concluded was a completely unexpected announcement. For weeks past they had heard of nothing but Tibetan obstruction. They knew that we should soon be leaving Lhasa, and they had made up their minds that we should have to leave without a Treaty. They were overjoyed, then, when they heard that the Treaty had been concluded and was to be signed next day. On most of the frontier expeditions upon which they had been engaged there was little to