

Besides these visits to monasteries and temples, we also saw something of the Tibetans socially during our stay in Lhasa, and Captain Walton, through his skill in medicine, attracted many hundreds to his hospital, and was able to get on terms of intimacy with unofficial Tibetans of the highest position. Many would come and dine with us, for the Tibetans, though they have the ordinary class distinctions which are found in every people, have not those rigid caste barriers which are such a hindrance to social intercourse in India. Even the ladies were very nearly induced by the persuasive Captain O'Connor to come to tea, and the wives of the Councillors had actually accepted an invitation, when at the last moment shyness overtook them. Women are much to the fore in Tibet, and have great influence with their husbands, so we especially regretted not having seen them.

The Tibetans, though they have their reputation for seclusiveness, are not by nature unsociable. We found them quite the reverse, and Kawaguchi says that they were "originally a people highly hospitable to strangers." This more natural sentiment was, he says, superseded by one of fear and even of antipathy, as the result of an insidious piece of advice which, probably prompted by some policy of its own, the Government of China gave to Tibet, and which was to the effect that if the Tibetans allowed the free entrance of foreigners Buddhism would be destroyed and replaced by Christianity. The people had, too, the idea that we sought their gold-mines.

Whatever seclusive feeling they may have had, they abandoned it when the Treaty was concluded. They came to our gymkhanas, and wondered why only the first should be given the prize when all the rest had covered exactly the same distance. They watched with wonder Vernon Magniac and other inveterate sportsmen pulling fish out of the river by pieces of string attached to long sticks. They watched theatrical performances, and marvelled at our display of fireworks; and they did a magnificent business with us in the sale, not only of supplies for the troops, but also of innumerable curios,