

Was there ever a more tragic reversal of an old position? Warren Hastings, Bogle, Turner, Lord Curzon, and we in 1904, all trying to induce the Tibetans to be ordinarily civil! And now the Grand Lama and his entire Government come to *us*, come to beg us to uphold their *right* of communicating direct with us, and to send British officers—and not merely officers, but soldiers—to Lhasa, and to form an alliance. In all history there can hardly be a case of a more dramatic turning of the tables. Yet, when all we had been striving after for a century and a half was now being pressed upon us, we informed the Dalai Lama we were precluded from interfering. When the Tibetans did not want us we fought our way to Lhasa to insist upon their having us; when they did want us, and had come all the way from Lhasa to get us, we turned them the most frigid of shoulders.

The reason for this attitude was said to be\* that the Anglo-Tibetan and Anglo-Chinese Convention specially precluded us from interfering in the internal administration of the country. But if the Tibetan Government themselves wished a change, there was no reason why the first objection should hold; and if the latter was the obstacle, it is inconceivable why we ourselves should have made it, and thus in yet one other way tied our own hands. It was because the Chinese had so grossly mismanaged Tibetan affairs that the Indian Government had to undertake two expeditions on the Tibetan frontier. And we must have taken some unfortunate step if, when the Chinese were again mismanaging Tibet, we were precluded by an engagement with them from taking what action we liked to keep this frontier quiet.

We were, however, not altogether inactive. On January 31, 1910, the Government of India, when they had first heard through the official sent by the Dalai Lama to our agent at Gyantse that the Chinese were advancing into Tibet, had suggested† that a representation should be made at Peking pointing out that disorder on our frontier could not be viewed by us with indifference,

\* Blue-book, IV., p. 218.

† *Ibid.*, p. 188.