

CHAPTER XXIV

SOME CONCLUSIONS

THE close of the long narrative of our efforts since 1773 to effect the single object of harmonizing our relations with Tibet having now been reached, it may be useful to draw here some practical conclusions from our past experience which may be a help for future action. And first I would make some observations on the agency through which our intentions have been carried into effect.

On several occasions in the course of this narrative I have referred to the relations of local officers with their Provincial Governments, of these Local Governments with the Supreme Government in India, and of the Indian Government with the Imperial Government in England. Since the days of Warren Hastings there has been a marked tendency towards centralization. More and more control has been exercised by London over Simla, by Simla over the Provincial Governments, by them, again, over their local officials. This tendency has been accentuated in the last few years. It has never been more pronounced than at the present time. And if the conduct of Tibetan affairs since 1873 may be taken as an example—as I think it may—there is not much evidence that it is producing satisfactory results.

It has been said, indeed, that if ever we lose India it will be in London. I am not of those who think we ever shall lose India, for I have much too great a faith in the common sense and spirit of my countrymen. Nor do I say that we are worse than other peoples in “trusting the man on the spot.” I think we are very much better. It requires a really big people to give their representatives rope; and a big people we are, and in the main the