

the Tibetans the idea of keeping themselves secluded. Anyhow, now they are quite evidently keeping us apart. And any means we had of preventing the Chinese insinuating themselves between us and the Tibetans have been taken from us through the jealousy of the Russians. Owing to this, we are not now in Chumbi and we have not an agent at Lhasa. The Chinese fear we may absorb Tibet and press them in Szechuan, and the Russians fear a predominant influence with the Dalai Lama might be used by us detrimentally to their Buddhist subjects present and to be. Both, therefore, stand in the way of that close relationship with the Tibetans which is now desired even more by them than by us.

This in brief is the situation at which we have arrived, and in drawing conclusions as to any future action we must first make our minds clear as to what we want in Tibet.

Many say that we do not want anything at all. They argue that the Tibetans live at the back of a stupendous range of snowy mountains, and we had much better leave them alone. Some go so far as to say that it was actually wicked of us forcibly to enter Tibet in 1904. The Mission was styled in the House of Commons "an ignoble little raid," and even the then leader of the Opposition, after its successful conclusion, said that it had "lowered our prestige." Before, then, I proceed to examine what we actually do want I will deal with this question as to whether we really want anything at all, and whether there was anything inherently wicked in the Lhasa Mission of 1904.

This idea of the immorality of in any way coercing a people like the Tibetans is, I believe, largely based on the assumption lying unconsciously at the back of people's minds that Tibet is as distant and as much separated from India as it is from England, that it is some remote and inaccessible country into which no one but meddling adventurers should want to enter. And they think that for us to go out of our way deliberately to interfere with a people who only wanted to be left alone was sheer wanton wickedness, and nothing else—except, perhaps,