

REFERENCES TO FORMER CASES.
Secret E., May 1887, Nos. 88-97.

GOVT. OF }
INDIA. }

1887

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SECRET E.

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FIGS RE. BE. }

REFERENCES TO LATER CASES.

No. 119.

Mr. Ney Elias's note on Tibet.

LIST OF PAPERS.

No. 119.—Note by Mr. Ney Elias, Poltl. Agent, of
5th March 1887—Tibet.

FIGS RE. BE. }

KEEP-WITHS PRINTED.

- (1) Notes.
- (2) D.-o. correspondence.

KEEP-WITHS NOT PRINTED.

(3) Original and proofs of Progr. No. 119.

Exd—A. E. deS.

K. W.
SECRET E., MAY 1887.

No. 119.

Mr. Ney Elias's note on Tibet.

K. W. No. 1.

DEMI-OFFICIAL FROM NEY ELIAS, ESQ., POLITICAL AGENT (ON FURLOUGH) (TO MR. CUNNINGHAM),
DATED THE 5TH MARCH 1887.

Submits, with remarks, a note on Tibet.

May be submitted in print.

A. D. M.—*1st April 1887.*

J. R.—*1st April 1887.*

Yes, early.

2nd April 1887.

G. S. F.

Perhaps Under-Secretary would like to see the proof put up.

J. R.—*14th April 1887.*

I have examined the proof. Now strike off.

18th April 1887.

G. S. F.

Printed and submitted for orders.

A. D. M.—*26th April 1887.*

J. R.—*26th April 1887.*

Secretary may like to see.

27th April 1887.

G. S. F.

Thank Mr. Elias' demi-officially.

The note should go to Private Secretary for information. Mr. Ney Elias has knowledge and brains.

28th April 1887.

H. M. D.

Draft demi-official to Mr. Elias put up for approval. A copy of the note has been sent with Secretary's compliments to Private Secretary to the Governor-General for information.

J. R.—*28th April 1887.*

Issue.

29th April 1887.

G. S. F.

I understand that no further action is to be taken on this.

J. R.—4th May 1887.

SECRETARY.

No. But the office will take care that it is put up in connection with any question to which it refers.

4th May 1887.

G. S. F.

5th May 1887.

H. M. D.

I propose to record "Secret" only Mr. Elias' note; his covering demi-official and our acknowledgment being made K.-W.'s of the file.

J. R.—5th May 1887.

6th May 1887.

G. S. F.

K. W. No. 2.

[DEMI-OFFICIALS.]

Dated Oriental Club, Hanover Square W. 5th March 1887.

From—NEY ELIAS, Esq.,

To—W. J. CUNINGHAM, Esq.

So much has been said in the newspapers and elsewhere about reviving the Tibet expedition that I am tempted to offer the Foreign Office some remarks on the subject. If they are not required they can be dropped into the waste paper basket that yawns at your side. I do not know, in the least, whether the Government of India have any idea of reviving the Mission or of despatching a new one, and I only take the liberty of sending the enclosed note in case anything should be contemplated.

A conservative M. P. told me, the other day, that he intended to move some proposal on the subject, and as I know a good deal of misapprehension exists regarding Tibetan affairs, both at home and in India, I believe I have some excuse for troubling the Foreign Office with my views. They may be altogether wrong, but they can never lead to so undesirable a result as the late Mission. I have gathered them chiefly from enquiries made about Tibet in days when I was foolish enough to have a craze to go there, and from watching Tibetan affairs during six years at Ladakh.

I address this to you because I believe Durand is away on the frontier.

Since writing the note I have seen Mr. R. S. Gundry's article on Tibet in the "National Review" for this month. It is a fairly interesting article, but there is nothing in it to make me alter anything I have said. Gundry is a student of the subject, but has no practical or special knowledge of it. He was once Editor of a newspaper at Shanghai.

N. E.

Dated Simla, 2nd May 1887.

From—G. S. FORBES, Esq.,

To—NEY ELIAS, Esq.

Durand desires me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter to Cuningham's address, dated the 5th March last, and to thank you for your very interesting and useful note on Tibet.

[DEMI-OFFICIAL.]

Dated Viceregal Lodge, Simla, the 14th May 1887.

From—SIR DONALD MACKENZIE WALLACE, K.C.I.E.,

To—H. M. DURAND, Esq., C.S.I.

His Excellency has instructed me to send home to Godly and Maitland privately the note on Tibet by Ney Elias forwarded to Cuningham on 5th March. Please let me have the two copies required.

DEMI-OFFICIAL (TO SECRETARY) FROM SIR DONALD MACKENZIE WALLACE, K.C.I.E., PRIVATE
SECRETARY TO THE VICEROY, DATED THE 14TH MAY 1887.

Asks for two copies of Mr. Ney Elias's note on Tibet.

Two copies put up.

A. D. M.—14th May 1887.

Put in cover addressed to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy, with Mr. Durand's
compliments.

14th May 1887.

G. S. F.

Done.

A. D. M.—14th May 1887.

Secretary to see.

14th May 1887.

G. S. F.

Thanks.

14th May 1887.

H. M. D.

K. W. No. 1—(Continued).

* Secret E., May 1887, No. 119.

Please send to Sir Edward Bradford, by this mail, six copies of this paper,* with my compliments.

Also, afterwards, send one, under a demi-official, confidentially, to Sir John Walsham.

15th July 1887.

H. M. D.

Draft demi-official letter to Sir Edward Bradford for approval.

J. R.—15th July 1887.

† Received back.
J. R.—16th July 1887.

I have taken† out the recorded copy in order to read the note.

15th July 1887.

W. J. C.

(Confidential demi-official letter (from Under-Secretary) to Colonel Sir Edward Bradford, K.C.S.I., dated the 15th July 1887.)

Draft demi-official letter to Sir John Walsham for approval.

J. R.—16th July 1887.

SECRETARY.

18th July 1887.

G. S. F.

SECRETARY.

18th July 1887.

W. J. C.

20th July 1887.

H. M. D.

(Confidential demi-official letter (from Secretary) to His Excellency Sir John Walsham, Bart., dated the 21st July 1887.)

This demi-official correspondence may be printed, and added on to the K. W. of Secret-E., May 1887, No. 119.

J. R.—22nd July 1887.

23rd July 1887.

G. S. F.

K. W. No. 2—(Continued).

(DEMI-OFFICIALS.)

Dated Simla, the 15th July 1887 (Confidential).

From—W. J. CUNINGHAM, Esq., Under-Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department,

To—COLONEL SIR EDWARD BRADFORD, K.C.S.I., Secretary, Political and Secret Department, India Office, London.

Durand desires me to send you, with his compliments, six copies of the enclosed note on Tibet, by Ney Elias.

Dated Simla, the 21st July 1887 (Confidential).

From—H. M. DURAND, Esq., C.S.I., Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department,

To—HIS EXCELLENCY SIR JOHN WALSHAM, BART., Her Britannic Majesty's Envoy—Extraordinary and Minister—Plenipotentiary at the Court of China, Peking.

I am desired by Lord Dufferin to send, for Your Excellency's information, the enclosed copy of a note* on Tibet, by Mr. Ney Elias, of the Indian Political Department.

* Dated the 5th March 1887.

No. 119.

TIBET.

In approaching Tibetan questions the chief fallacies entertained of late years appear to have been: (1) the assumption that the region we call by the name of "Tibet" forms part of the Chinese empire—or, at all events, that the Central Government at Peking has supreme power over it; and (2) that "Tibet" is an internal State. It is not difficult to trace the origin of these misconceptions. The former has been borrowed, in the first instance, from European writers on China, who have derived their information from Chinese histories and from the writings of Amiot, Demaille and other Jesuit missionaries who, in the last century, recorded the results of the Tibetan wars between the Chinese and the Kalmaks. At that time an energetic Emperor (Kienlung) had the habit of publishing his own memoirs, from time to time, on all subjects of importance in his State, and the missionary historians fell into the error (as subsequent events have proved) of accepting literally all the complacent statements of a self-satisfied, because successful, Emperor. Thus they assumed that the policy which Kienlung laid down on paper, was the one which would necessarily remain in force, and modern writers, following in their footsteps, have arrived at the belief that the arrangements made nearly a century and a half ago, for the dominion of China over Tibet are those now in practical operation. It will be shown below how the correctness of this view has been impugned by the Chinese themselves in quite recent times, and how they virtually disclaim the supremacy in Tibet for which Europeans give them credit. Another reason for people in India holding the opinion that China gives the law in Tibet is that whenever English travellers have been prevented from entering Tibet from the south or west—from the Indian side—the excuse given by the Tibetans who stop them is that their own action is in obedience to Chinese orders. Yet on the east and north—the sides of China and Mongolia—travellers who attempt to enter are also stopped, but seeing that they come from Chinese territory, the obviously futile excuse of Chinese obstruction is replaced by some other or (as in the cases of some travellers) by a simple threat of attack if they should insist on crossing the frontier.

2. As regards the second misconception alluded to above, it will be necessary to point out, as briefly as possible, how the region we know as "Tibet," or "Chinese Tibet," is in reality a region which is not all under one Government. A native name for the whole of the highland region inhabited by the Tibetan races probably does not exist. The people call themselves *Bot* or *Bod*, and usually employ the same word when speaking of their country—whichever division of it matters not—with reference, or in contradistinction, to any other country. In this way the word *Bot* would be used in exactly the same sense as a Musulman of Turkistan, Khokand, &c., would use the word *Islam*, when speaking of his country in reference to Russia, China, &c. The word "Tibet" is Turki and is unknown to the inhabitants of the regions to which it is applied.* It is the name given by Turki-speaking people of Central Asia to all the country we mark Tibet on our maps, and also to Ladak, Baltistan and several States to the north and east of Lassa,

* Mr. Baber suggests the possibility of deriving it from the Tibetan words *Tsu* *Peu* (pronounced as in French). *Peu* appears to be a local pronunciation of the word *Bot* in the East, and *Peu*, he tells us, means "high" or "upper"—thus "Upper Bot." This derivation is extremely doubtful.

which in maps are excluded from "Tibet," and are placed within the frontiers of the Chinese provinces of Szechuan and Kansu. Yet these north-easterly States are, in fact, as Mr. Colbourne Baber (the best authority on these regions) has often pointed out, Tibetan or Bot† in population and in local government. In short, "Tibet," as Central

† Locally, also *Sifan*.

Asiatics and, through them, Europeans, understand the expression, may be said to extend from Baltistan (inclusive) in the west, to far within the political frontiers of the Chinese provinces of Szechuan and Kansu on the east say to Sitang and the upper waters of the Min river. The southern limit may be said roughly to include Lahoul and some parts of Kamaon, as well as native Sikim, Botan, &c., while the northern limit would coincide with the drop from the highlands to the plains of Eastern Turkistan—that is, along the line of mountains usually marked on popular maps "Kuenlun." But the whole of this huge region is not one State, whether called by the name of "Tibet" or by any other. It would be beyond the scope of this note to detail all the political divisions it includes. The Government of India has endeavoured to open intercourse with Lassa, and my object is to show why that part of Tibet, or Bot-land, is inaccessible, while other parts are accessible: in other words, that the territory governed by the Lama hierarchy at Lassa stands on quite a different footing to all the other divisions.

3. In speaking and writing of Tibet, the Chinese use the name *Sitsang*, and consider that the country so named is composed of two provinces called respectively *Wei* (or *U*) and *Tsang*, though they occasionally add a third which they call *Khám*. Recent explorations have shown that these provinces form only a small portion of what we know as Tibet, but they constitute precisely that portion which is governed from Lassa. Thus, when the Chinese Government treat with our Minister of Peking regarding *Sitsang*, it may be taken to mean Lassa territory, and all the recent utterances of the Tsungli Yamen respecting the independence of *Sitsang*, may also be applied to that territory exclusively. It may be said, roughly, that *Sitsang* or Lassa-governed Tibet extends from Bátang, on the east, to Ladak on the west, and from the frontiers of Nipal, Botan, &c., on the south to about Latitude 32° on the north and north-east of Lassa, and to about Latitude 34° on the north-west of it, till the latter parallel cuts the Ladak frontier. This last, northerly, limit is a mere approximation, which has only been practically tested at one point, *viz.*, by Prejevalski, who found the frontier of the Lassa State near the southern foot of the Tánglá mountains, in about Latitude 32° on the Ladak frontier, it is fairly well known that all to the north and north-east of Noh on the Pángong lake (about Latitude 33½°) is beyond the range of administration from Lassa. Thus, if Prejevalski's limit be prolonged westward, and with a northerly curve, the parallels of 32°—34°, as above, will roughly indicate the northern border of Lassa-Tibet. All to the north of this curved line, and between it and the plains of eastern Turkistan is called *Chángtán*, and its accessibility has been proved by both Prejevalski and Carey. All the permanently inhabited, the cultivated, and comparatively low-lying regions will then be found to fall within the Lassa State. Mr. Baber tells us: "the State of which that city (Lassa) is

designed to place the Government of that country entirely under the control of China. Among these the appointment of a Resident or *Amban** may perhaps be regarded as of great importance—not on account of the power he holds on behalf

* Properly there are two *Ambans*, though at the Saugli Yamen, apparently one only is recognised under the designation of *Kunchai* or Envoy Resident.

The word *Amban* is Turki and means simply an 'officer.'

of his Government, but chiefly because his appointment is one side of a reciprocal agreement under which Lassa sends certain Lamas to reside at Peking nominally to worship for the Imperial family, but who are perhaps actually regarded as hostages for their master's loyalty. That this exchange of representatives is looked upon as important there can be little question, but as a matter of fact the *Ambans* have no control over the government of Tibet, and exert no authority except in such matters of official ceremony and rites of religion as concern the reigning family at Peking, communication with Nipal and certain Mongolian tribes, tribute from Nipal and elsewhere to China, correspondence with Peking, &c., &c. Their influence, such as it is, is supported by about two hundred Chinese soldiers (chiefly Musulmans) from the neighbouring province of Szechuan: with the internal government of the country and—what concerns us mainly—with foreign and frontier affairs they have nothing to do, except in the cases mentioned above. Still they reside at Lassa as representatives of the Emperor and, from time to time, write memorials and despatches on the affairs of Tibet, in a style which gives the reader the impression that they are masters of the situation. These documents are published in the *Peking Gazette*, and are models of that "incredible brag" which a former Foreign Secretary (the late Mr. Wyllie), when writing on Central Asian affairs, regarded as the chief power employed by Chinese Governments of modern times for keeping up a show of supremacy over outlying States.

6. Apart from the mere statements of the Chinese ministers mentioned in paragraph 4 above, it may be useful to give a few instances to show the shadowy nature of Chinese power in Lassa, and the real, practical independence of the Lassa Government. Thus, in 1842, when the invasion of Ladak by the Dogras (*i.e.*, the Kashmiris) had been completed, and their army had retired from an unsuccessful attempt to annex the Lassa provinces of Chumurti and Gartok, it became necessary to draw up a treaty regulating the boundary, the trade, &c., between Kashmir and Lassa-governed territories. The representatives of the two States met at Leh, and among the Tibetan party there was no Chinese official (though one Kalon Shata, a Tibetan, pretended to have some Chinese rank†). The agreement concluded (12th September 1842) was written in the Persian and Tibetan languages only, and the preamble contained no authority for the Tibetan representatives to treat on the part of the Chinese Government.

† Nearly all native officials in Tibet, Turkistan, Mongolia, &c., have some nominal Chinese rank.

‡ For the Persian text of the treaty, see the *Gulab Nama* by Diwan Kirpa Ram of Kashmir. I was never able to discover the Tibetan text at Ladak; but the Kashmir Darbar could no doubt produce a copy.

Chinese passport, obtained for him by the Russian minister at Peking. After passing through *Changian*, and on arriving at the frontier settlement of Lassa,§ he was stopped by the Lassa authorities, who ignored the Emperor's pass, and compelled the explorer to return towards Mongolia. This was not the act of ignorant or irresponsible border officials, for Prejevalski remained long enough at the frontier post to communicate with Lassa and claim the recognition of his pass. His appeal was to no purpose, however; the Lassa Government bluntly refused to admit him with or without a pass from the Emperor, and the Chinese *Ambans* appear to have had no voice in the matter. Thirdly, we have the separate article of the Chefoo convention of 1876, already alluded to. In this document the Chinese Government by no means undertake to pass a British exploring party into Tibet. They undertake only to do their best towards that object, and "having due regard to the circumstances will, when the time arrives, issue the necessary passports, and will address letters to the high provincial authorities || and to "the Resident in Tibet." The value of any such passports may be judged from Prejevalski's experience, but if reference is made to the pourparlers which resulted

§ At the foot of the Tangle mountains, as mentioned in paragraph 3 above.

|| That is, to the authorities of the provinces of Szechuan and Kansu.

in the conclusion of the article quoted, it will be seen that the Chinese disclaimed their ability to pass a British party into Tibet against the will of the Lama Government, and that the words "having due regard to circumstances" were inserted in order that the Chinese might be held blameless if the mission should be stopped or molested by the Tibetans. In short the Chinese would do their best to assist the Viceroy of India in sending a mission to a country which did not belong to them, by addressing their provincial officials nearest the frontier and their Resident at the Capital, and by giving the passes asked for; but should "circumstances" be against the mission, the Chinese must not be held responsible.

7. Further, I do not know any case of a European traveller from the side of China or Mongolia, or from British India or Ladak having been prevented from entering Lassa territory by Chinese officials. On the Chinese frontier the obstruction has, I believe in every case, come directly from Tibetans, and though Chinese instigation has been suspected, I am not aware that any good grounds exist for the suspicion. From India and Ladak, travellers and sportsmen (usually officers on leave) are continually arriving at points on the frontier of Lassa Tibet, where they are turned back by petty local officials, who frequently deceive the victims of their obstructiveness by quoting orders

* To Europeans, on these occasions, they use the word *Chin* for China, because they know that to be the Indian name for China. But *Chin* is also the Indian (Northern Indian) name for Tibet: as *Chin-o-Machin*, i.e., "Tibet and China;" the *Chinan*, i.e., "river of Tibet," &c. The Tibetan name for China is *Gyénák*—for a Chinaman, *Gyénák-pá*, &c., &c.

which they pretend to have received from China.* They are fully persuaded that the English, like all other "barbarous" nations, stand in awe of the power of China, and they find it convenient to shift the responsibility for unfriendly action

from themselves to an authority in the background. I scarcely know how far to regard the present Futai (or Chief Commissioner) of Chinese Turkistan as an authority on Tibetan questions, but he probably knows something, in common with all well-informed Chinese officials, of the position of Tibet in reference to China. In 1880, when the Futai was Resident at Kashgar, I asked him how it was our officers were always stopped on the Ladak and Indian frontiers of "Sitsang" in the name of the Chinese Government. He replied that, as far as he knew, there was no reason for it, as China had no concern in the matter: he would consult some of his colleagues, however, and would let me know what the position was. The next day, accordingly, he informed me that China had no object in keeping Europeans out of Tibet, and no desire to do so. She had no jurisdiction over the provinces and frontiers I had mentioned. If China wished to guard those frontiers, her own officials would be present, and the Tibetans would not be relied on for the purpose. "Whoever," he concluded, "turns your people back in the name of the Emperor is telling a lie." I must admit that I do not consider this statement to be real evidence of the state of the case, for I am well aware that on some other outlying borders (the Afghan border, for instance) the local native tribes are held responsible, in the first instance, for guarding the frontier line. It is corroborative, however, of what I have stated above.

8. Perhaps as fair a description as can be given of the political position of the Chinese in Lassa, would be to compare it with our own position in Nipal, and this more especially with reference to the admission into the country of foreign travellers. We have a treaty with Nipal; our Resident represents the British Government and has certain—very limited—treaty rights; but he has no liberty of action and very little influence. Supposing the French Foreign Office to apply to our Government for passports for a French commission to travel in Nipal, our answer would be much the same as that of the Chinese to ourselves in the case of the Chefoo convention. We should have to reply that we had no control over Nipal: the French might rejoin that they regard us as the suzerain power. If we were specially anxious to oblige the French and to break down Nipali exclusiveness, we might perhaps answer: "We will give your Commissioner a letter to our Resident and instruct him to do the best he can for you, but if the Durbar decline to receive your party, we cannot be held responsible." If on such slender encouragement as this—and it is all we have received from China—the French commission were to proceed,

there would be little to wonder at if the result were a failure, and perhaps equally little if French writers unacquainted with the true state of relations between the British Government and Nipal, were to suspect our Foreign Office of bad faith.

9. Whether China, if she chose to exert herself for any interest of her own, could compel the rulers of Lassa to admit Europeans, is a separate question, and should a new expedition be contemplated it might be worth while to put the will and the power of China to the test on this point. I have not seen the documents connected with the Macaulay Mission, but I have understood that application was first made to the Chinese to admit a commercial mission, and that commerce was put forward as the chief aim the Government of India had in view in wishing to establish intercourse with Lassa. The expedition failed, as is well known, owing to opposition from the Tibetans, who in all likelihood were acting on designs of their own and without instigation from the Chinese. Bad faith on the part of China has not, in this instance, I believe, been suspected, but however this may be, the Peking Government have since engaged to do their best to facilitate trade between Lassa and India. If then it is desired to put the *bonâ fides* of the Chinese to the test and to utilise whatever influence they may still (notwithstanding what I have said above) be thought to possess, it seems almost obligatory on our part, in approaching the question again, to do so from a purely commercial point of view. It is now beyond all dispute that the Lassa authorities will not, of their own free will, admit us on any terms. They suspect our motives as they have always done, and the ostentatious preparations made for the late mission have no doubt intensified their fears. To the Tibetan mind, a civil official of high rank, a staff of surveyors, geologists, &c., and a military escort, hardly constitute a mission of enquiry into commercial affairs. Even previous to their present alarm, it is most improbable that the Lamas would have admitted a real commercial emissary, in the person of a *bonâ fide* merchant appointed for the purpose; yet this would have been the least significant or alarming form in which the Government of India could have given effect to their ostensible desire of obtaining a commercial report on the country. But even in this form a mission cannot now be proposed to the Lassa Government direct, with any chance of success; and I am at a loss to suggest any other scheme under which they could be approached, with the least hope of a good result. Indeed it would be almost impossible to open direct negotiations with them under any conditions. If, then, the Government of India still desire to persevere in opening intercourse with Lassa, it appears to me that the only plan that offers them a remote chance of gaining their object, is to make a new arrangement with the Peking Government, under the clause of last year's agreement which obliges China to facilitate trade between India and Lassa. If I am permitted to suggest, it might be explained to the Peking Government that we consider the matter to be now in their hands, and that we recommend them to send a mission of their own to Lassa to investigate the commercial capabilities of the place, and if possible to open communication with India. It might then be pointed out that Chinese and English ideas on such subjects as commerce, differ so widely that we consider it of importance to have a report from a competent European, and, for this purpose, they might be requested to appoint, as a member of their mission, some gentleman to be nominated by the Government of India and entrusted to their care and protection. This gentleman should, if possible, be a *bonâ fide* merchant—not an official—and he should be particularly instructed to act his part consistently. He should make no attempt at survey operations of any kind, and should not enquire into matters concerning the mines or the geology of the country, and he should not be provided with any presents to be given to the Lassa authorities in the name of his Government. It is just possible that a Chinese mission containing even one European would be rejected by the Lamas, but it is also possible that the Chinese Government might see some advantage in having such a measure as the opening of trade with India in their own hands, and might, in that case, feel disposed to take more energetic steps than if they were merely asked for assistance in passports, as on former occasions. They have, as yet, shown no jealousy, on their own part, and judging from their recent action in regard to

Europeans visiting Turkistan, Manchuria, &c., it may be assumed that the old exclusiveness has been broken through at the Tsungli Yamen. Still our Government would have to be prepared for the possibility of local opposition on the part of the Lassa Ambans, as in the case of Turkistan; and these last will scarcely be found to lack councillors adverse to our interests in the persons of ill-affected Kashmiri and Indian, and perhaps also Nipali, subjects, numbers of whom reside at Lassa. At all events it appears to me that if the public should press for a revival of the Tibet mission, the above would be the least objectionable and least costly plan of making a new attempt. It would, in any case, be only an imperfect measure, and could scarcely result in any large amount of useful information being gathered; but, if successfully carried through, without obstruction from the Chinese, some advantage could scarcely fail to be obtained, as a first step towards establishing intercourse, and a certain amount of information would be gained. If it should be a question whether a small measure should be attempted or none at all, it would seem that perhaps the above plan might be worthy of consideration, and were it to be adopted, as a first step, the degree of success it might meet with would form a basis on which to consider some further measure.

10. Finally—in taking the liberty of troubling the Foreign Office with my views unasked—I would only beg that it should be remarked that I am not advocating a new expedition. I am only endeavouring to draw attention to a few points regarding Tibet which I believe have been overlooked, and to suggest what I conceive to be the only feasible plan left for obtaining access to Lassa, in case the Government of India should wish to persevere in their efforts. The political value of Tibet to India is as nearly as possible *nil*; and what trade can be hoped for from a land of snowy mountains and barren valleys, sparsely inhabited by one of the poorest and most backward people in Asia, is scarcely apparent. Tibet may have attractions for the Russians as affording a road for their intriguers to the back door of Nipal, and they perhaps dream of the day when they may be able to send a Vitkenitch or a Stolietoff to Katmandu. But as long as Lassa remains closed to us, it will also remain closed to Russia, and her only lines of access to Nipal lie through Lassa territory.

N. ELIAS,
Political Agent.

5th March 1887.

[A. J.]