Art. V.—*China viâ Tibet.* By S. C. Boulger.

One of the stipulations contained in the Convention recently signed at Che-foo by Sir Thomas Wade, and the Chinese statesman Li-Hung-Chang, sets forth that a mission is to be sanctioned between China and India through Tibet; or, to state this fact more comprehensively, that intercourse between India and Tibet has at last received the Imperial consent of Pekin. To those persons who are sceptical as to the amount of faith to be reposed in written agreements between nations, there can be no more potent confirmation for their disbelief than the perusal of those made hitherto between this country and China. Yet it must be confessed that, in this, our own lethargy has been quite as much to blame as the Chinese diplomatic craft in neglecting to fulfil promises, which we have seemed content to let remain empty words. The treaty just signed as the consummation of the long-pending negociations arising from the murder of Mr. Margary supplements that of Tientsin made some seventeen years ago. In its phrasing it may not be more liberal, but, as it has been obtained by peaceful means, it has claims, so far, to be considered the greater success. A few more ports have been added to those to which the foreigner is already admitted, but some of its fiscal details have, for some reason or other, excited considerable disapproval among those interested in that part of the question. It is not my intention here to dilate upon the justice or injustice of these dissentients. It is my opinion that we have now very seriously to consider, whether it would not be a wiser course for us to regard the vital clauses of this agreement as worth an effort to enforce, than by a temporarily self-deluding, but culpable indifference, to continue to hand down a legacy of convention-framing, with the possibility of

an ever-present war as the result of a failure in diplomacy, to succeeding decades. On this occasion, we have one pre-eminently favourable concession made to us; but, if it is not to become, practically, a dead letter, like so many of its predecessors, there must be no delay in putting it into execution. The abrogation of this clause must not be condoned by too lenient custom, and its observance may, at all events, be made to serve as a useful precedent in the future. I do not think, therefore, that I shall be endeavouring to draw public attention to an unimportant topic, if I venture to state, at some length, the reasons for which it is wise and politic to realize the advantages our diplomatist has secured for us with reference to Tibet. I do not hesitate to assert, in the commencement, that this can be made the most valuable concession we have ever obtained at the hands of the Chinese.

It is not necessary here to waste time and space on any details of the lonely journey of Mr. Margary, or of the fruitless expedition intended to promote land communication with China through Birmâ. The actors in that unhappy catastrophe may exclaim, "quæ regio in terris nostri non plena laboris." The motives that gave rise to that enterprise were most laudable, but the narratives of Dr. Anderson, and of Mr. Margary himself, setting forth the difficulties of the enterprise and the poverty of the part of China immediately concerned, the accuracy of which has been more than confirmed by the Grosvenor mission, must certainly damp the expectations of those who were most sanguine as to success. Perhaps also the chief objection has not yet been stated to this route. The country through which the caravans would have to pass is in many parts unsettled, and infested with bands of robber clans, unamenable to any authority, and outrages would repeatedly take place for which we should be compelled to exact redress. The punishment of such acts would entail so much expense and worry on our Government that the only remedy would eventually be found, either in giving up our own operations, a course which would be found practically impossible, or in

annexing the intermediate territory, an alternative as objectionable as it well could be. If no other way of securing direct land communication with China can be found, then the end in view may justify the risk attendant on an adoption of this route; but as we have ready to our hands another mode of securing this most desirable advantage, and offering at the same time great recommendations of its own, there can be no question of our wisdom in putting its efficacy to the test. A trade with Tibet, and with China afterwards through Tibet, would not be accompanied by any of the dangers incurred on the route through Birmâ. The Tibetans are a peace-loving, honest people; they possess great virtues, and, so far as we know, few vices. Their country is settled, has been well governed for ages, and in it there are good roads and important river highways. Beyond our frontier there are no robber clans, who would cause us continual trouble until extirpated, and enact the same part as the Afreedees are performing, much to our annoyance, at the present time on our north-western borders, and which the Kakhyens would also perform in the event of traffic beyond Mandalay. Consequently, one of the chief arguments in favour of the Tibet route to China is, that, in its essence, it would be a peaceful measure, and that it would require less direct interference on the part of the Government than any of its rivals. It would exist, I submit, having once been fairly started, on the true principle of reciprocity of interests. At any time a war with China is a pitiable calamity, and none are better aware of the truth of this than those, who know how close we have, at several moments lately, been to one. One of the sure results of such an occurrence would be the occupation by us of more territory, and, however advantageous in a strategical point of view the possession of an island or another strip of land might be, this would be an unmitigated catastrophe for the true interests of both countries. Not only does each acquisition leave a permanent object to remind every loyal and patriotic Chinaman—and, be it remembered, loyalty and patriotism are quite as great virtues among Chinamen as among Englishmen—that we

are on his soil as much as conquerors as merchants and representatives of the most enlightened ideas of civilization; but it also adds, indefinitely, to our own responsibility, without making our power one iota more real. Regarded from this point of view the possession of Hong Kong and Shanghai is an evil, however necessary in the past it may have been, and however salutary in the future the turn of events may make it. To explain my meaning more clearly, let us take an illustration. The Americans and Germans have great interests in China; and it is quite possible, perhaps probable, therefore, that some day or other a cause of dispute may arise between those powers and the Chinese. A war might ensue, and part of the terms of peace dictated by the conquerors would, almost certainly, be the cession of some permanent foot-hold on the country. This event, to which we have ourselves unfortunately furnished the precedent, would not only displease, it would also seriously alarm us. And why? In all probability it will occur some day, and what have we logically to advance against it?

To avoid war with China, and at the same time to maintain our dignity in the eyes of the Chinese, requires no ordinary amount of tact and firmness on the part of our resident minister in Pekin; but this object can only be permanently secured by an increase in friendly feeling between the two peoples, and friendly feeling cannot arise without mutual knowledge. As the time has passed by in the present phase of Anglo-Chinese affairs for those who argue for an addition to our hold upon China, so must every effort be made to take the greatest possible advantage of the present settlement to promote good feeling, and to increase the ties of friendship and of reciprocal utility between the English and the Chinese. The greatest incentive to war will have been removed when ignorance shall have given place to greater knowledge, and when the inhabitants of the innermost provinces of that great empire shall recognize the white man, whom they contemptuously designate "foreign devil," and who they have heard is tolerated in some of their seaports, as their most powerful and immediate neighbour.

When the people of Szchuen and Shensi wear Manchester goods and use Sheffield cutlery, when they are forced to acknowledge that honesty is the guiding principle of English merchants, and when, on the other hand, the caravans bearing the silk and tea of China come pouring, in half the time and at half the expense that they do at present, through the passes of Sikhim and Bhutan, to enrich the markets of India, then we may well feel confident that the Chinese people, who are, even at this moment, progressing so rapidly towards more enlightened ideas, and whose virtues we have hitherto to a great extent shut our eyes to, will be more eager to recognize our position with regard to themselves, for this perception will have been brought home to them by the most forcible of all arguments, benefit to themselves. Our object is not, therefore, to rest content with having obtained the removal of trade restrictions from a few additional ports; it must be our ambition to make China take her place as one of the great free countries of the world. The greatest step in this direction being, undoubtedly, the inauguration of intercourse by land between India and China, we have to discover how this can best be effected. The route through Birmà having been tried, and resulted in seeming failure, we have to consider the alternative one through Tibet. As the Chinese have removed their veto, which was the fundamental objection to its being essayed, it behoves us to test its practicability without any unnecessary delay. The clause expressing this concession is not only a most important diplomatic success, but it may also be made to serve, as I have endeavoured to show, the beneficial purpose of bringing the two nations into more harmonious accord.

Before describing, so far as our limited knowledge will permit, Tibet and the country lying beyond towards China, it will be advisable to give some account of our relations with the semi-independent states which are on our side of the Himalaya. First among these, both in right of its power and extent, is Nepaul, the kingdom ruled by the gallant Ghoorkas, the bravest and most warlike of all the mountaineers of

Hindostan. In the question, however, under our consideration, its geographical position, lying as it does much out of the direct road for us to Tibet, makes it of less importance than the smaller territories of Sikhim and Bhutan. Nepaul stretches along the southern slopes of the Himalayas from the borders of Sikhim on the east, to the River Kalee and the neighbourhood of Kumaon on the west, or about 500 miles in all; at its greatest breadth it is only 100 miles. The greater part of the country is covered with forests, which abound with wild game, and are well known to those sportsmen who can obtain the requisite permission to shoot in them. The country is extremely mountainous, and within its confines the Himalayas attain their greatest altitude. But, on the other hand, the low lands are fertile, and the two chief towns, Khatmandoo and Ghoorka, are fine, well-populated cities. Impartial observers estimate the total population at about 2,000,000, but the native accounts place it at a much larger figure. In trade the greater portion of the energy of the community is devoted to transactions with Tibet, and intercourse, although not yet heartily cultivated, with Bengal, is now gradually being freed from restrictions of various kinds. In the earlier years of our rule in India our relations with Nepaul were not free from trouble; but latterly, owing chiefly to the friendly policy, not incompatible with the maintenance, however, of an isolated position, of the late Jung Bahadoor, the prime minister and most powerful individual in the country, our friendship has been uninterrupted. We may learn from the events that have occurred between Nepaul and China an instructive lesson, if we will. Nepaul is nominally a tributary of China, and, if we turn to history, we discover that this suzerainty has been in fact maintained down almost to the present day. If we go back to the year 1791, we find that the Ghoorkas, not content with having formed a great and powerful State on the slopes of the Himalayas, had carried their victorious arms into Tibet, and, after ravaging the intermediate country, had entered Lhasa in triumph. After imposing an indemnity of three lacs of rupees, they

returned with much booty besides to their own country. But a Chinese army was despatched after these invaders, and on coming up with them, overthrew them in several engagements, recovered the indemnity and much of the spoil, and successfully reasserted the right of the Pekin Emperor to homage from the rulers of Khatmandoo. The hitherto successful Ghoorkas were compelled to entreat our Government to intercede for them with the conqueror, but although Lord Cornwallis's compliance was the chief cause of their escaping without further loss, all his efforts failed to promote a friendly feeling in the breasts of the Nepaulese. Once more, so late as 1856, on the occasion of a war between Nepaul and Tibet, did the Chinese compel the former to acknowledge their suzerainty, and, at the present time, the connecting link is still maintained. After the return of the Ghoorkas from the former of these expeditions, they resumed their aggressive operations on Cis-Himalayan territory, and with such success that our own susceptibilities were aroused. On the Nepaulese declining to accede to our terms, the wars of 1814-15 ensued, during which we suffered some slight reverses at the commencement; but Sir David Ouchterlony, by a series of brilliant movements, compelled the enemy to sue for peace, and to restore much of his recent conquests. By the cession of Kumaon, Nepaul was reduced to its present limits. The treaty ratified in 1816 still subsists between the two countries, and the friendly spirit shown towards us by Jung Bahadoor was more unequivocally demonstrated than in verbal protestations by the despatch of a Ghoorka contingent to our assistance during the Mutiny of 1857. This aid received the reward from our Government of the cession of the Terai. On his visit to this country at the time of the Great Exhibition, this sagacious ruler had doubtless formed accurate notions as to our true strength, while his personal feelings had been flattered by the fêtes of the great and by the cordial reception of the people. No mention of Nepaul would be adequate if nothing were said of those gallant mountaineers, who, leaving their native mountains, take service in our army, and are known as the best speci-

mens for activity, courage and endurance of the Anglo-Indian native forces.

To the east of Nepaul is Sikhim, a narrow strip of territory, ruled nominally by a Rajah, but under British protection, and forming practically part of our dominions. Prior to the year 1814 its independence was precarious in the extreme, wedged in between its two more powerful and warlike neighbours of Nepaul and Bhutan. At the time that the aggrandization of Nepaul seemed to us menacing, we took this little State under our protection, and in 1836, in return for an annual grant of £600, the Rajah ceded to us the district round Darjeeling, where are now the pleasant settlement and tea plantations so well known to every resident in India. But the grant was declared to be forfeited in 1850, on account of some outrages perpetrated on British subjects, for which no sufficient reparation could be obtained. Besides possessing a conterminous frontier with Tibet in Sikhim, which is to all intents and purposes British territory, we have also come into direct contact with Tibet in the Chumbi Valley, recently ceded to us, and of which mention will be made further on. On this question Sikhim is, by its position, of far more importance to us than Nepaul; and among its chief recommendations, the possession of the three good passes, Kongra Lama, Donkia, and Parijong, may be mentioned. The last of these was the one used by Mr. Bogle, Captain Turner, and Mr. Manning, in their respective journeys.

Bhutan, or Bootan, the country of the Deb Rajah, the independent State lying still further to the east, shares with Sikhim the place of the most importance in considering our road to China through Tibet. As with Nepaul and Tibet, so with Bhutan, have our trade and general intercourse been insignificant in the extreme, and our political relations have been even more troublesome than they have been with Nepaul. In fact, to a war with Bhutan may be traced our first acquaintance with Tibet. In 1772 the mountaineers of Bhutan had been pillaging the plains of Cooch Behar, and some alarm had been caused by their

irruption in the contiguous parts of Bengal. A small expedition was, in consequence, despatched against them by Warren Hastings. The Bhutanese were driven back to their fastnesses, routed in the battle of Chichakotta, and compelled to beg the Teshu Lama of Tibet, whose influence extended into the regions of these mountaineers, to come to their assistance. This potentate, an enlightened and kind-hearted man, so far listened to their entreaties as to send an embassy to Calcutta asking Warren Hastings to grant terms to the defeated Bhutanese. The Governor-General, anxious to conciliate his interesting neighbour, and perhaps struck by the simple-minded dignity manifested in the tone of the Teshu's letter, readily granted his request, and, at the same time, seized the favourable opportunity of sending a return mission, which he placed under the charge of Mr. George Bogle. That gentleman reached the town of Shigatze in safety, and resided some time at the great Lamasery of Teshu Lumbo; but, notwithstanding the great friendship he contracted with the Teshu Lama, all his efforts proved abortive to obtain the permission necessary for his entrance into the capital Lhasa, although that city was but a few miles distant. Possibly through apprehension of sinister intentions on the part of the English Government, possibly through jealousy of the Teshu, on the part of the all-powerful minister the Gesub Rimbochè, Mr. Bogle, after many fruitless overtures to remove the official objections raised to his further progress, was compelled to return to Calcutta without attaining his chief object. He had not succeeded in reaching Lhasa, he had not seen the Dalai Lama, or his potent minister, and therefore he had not been in any way able to pave the path for future negociation. It must not be supposed that Mr. Bogle was in any sense blameable for this unsatisfactory result. Like many before him, and since, he was baffled by the phlegm and stolidity of the Chinese Mandarins. I simply make this statement as showing the exact result of his—the only—mission to Tibet.

But to return to Bhutan, we were again compelled in 1837 to have recourse to violent measures, and as some com-

pensation for the non-payment of its tribute, we took possession of several tracts of their low country. Once more, in 1865, an expedition had to be despatched against them, and, although the first engagements were disastrous for our forces, these were soon retrieved, and the war concluded with the cession of the Chumbi Valley. This acquisition was most important, for it gave us a direct approach to Tibet, and placed in our hands one of the first essentials towards effecting intercourse with that country. It must be borne in mind that the Bhutanese are averse to us personally. They are shepherds, hunters, and warriors, and they have the great virtues of honesty and courage; but they fail to perceive the advantages of commerce. Their virtues, in themselves so worthy of approval, cause them to be to us a source of never-ending trouble. If they were less warlike, and more reconciled to sedentary occupations, time might accustom them to our habits and our empire; but as they are too brave to be cowed by threats alone, and too wedded to a life of independence to brook without murmur its loss, we find the solution of the difficulty with them not easy to be discovered. The opinion of those who are well informed in the matter that Bhutan must share the fate of its neighbour Assam, seems to express the course that will eventually have to be adopted.

Having now discussed our relations at the present moment and in the past with those border states through which caravans would have to pass *en route* for Lhasa and Western China, it may be as well to say something about the passes through the great northern barrier of India. The town of Tassisudon, the capital of Bhutan, is about 7000 feet above the sea, and Parijong, on the other side of the frontier, is about the same. The Parijong pass, of which we know most, is available for traffic throughout the year, and presents no serious obstacle at any period. Besides this, there are the Donkia and the Kongra Lama passes, which, so far as we know, are equally passable at all times. There are numerous others along the whole border. It is beyond dispute that there is no such formidable country in this direc-

tion as that passed through by the Yarkand Embassy north of Kashmir. Both Mr. Bogle and Mr. Manning travelled late in the year, but the inconvenience they suffered seems trivial to those accustomed to journeys in elevated regions. The pundits, who have recently been employed by the geographical department of the India Office in making explorations, have thrown considerable light on the topography of Tibet and Nepaul, but it cannot be disputed that much still remains to be done in this direction. It is safe to assert, however, that the roads to Tibet present no insuperable difficulties. Our best road to Tibet lies undoubtedly through Sikhim and Bhutan; but it is quite possible that greater experience may prove that the most advantageous route of all to China lies through Assam, and across the extreme edge of the Himalayas. This route, if found to be practicable, offers the shortest and most direct highway to China. While the distance from Lhasa to Singan-foo is 1100 miles, Rungpoor is only 600 from Mahou-foo, on the Yangtse, whence that river is navigable to its mouth.

The following table of the chief passes may prove useful. In Bhutan we have no definite information as to any practicable passes. Pemberton says that those by the Monass River are probably the least difficult. In considering these altitudes we must remember that the snow-line is exceptionally high, being about 14000 feet south and 16000 feet north of the range. A striking instance of the mildness of the atmosphere is seen in the fact that Sir Joseph Hooker found roses growing in the valleys at almost 13000 feet above the sea; and in the Tibetan table-land corn is sown at still loftier altitudes.

Jeylup	Chumbi Valley	nearly	16000 ft.
Parijong	Between Sikhim and Bhutan	,,	16000 ft.
Kongra Lama	Sikhim	,,	15700 ft.
Donkia	,,	,,	17500 ft.
Dangola	,,	,,	17000 ft.
Sebolah	,,	,,	17500 ft.
Tankra	,,	,,	16000 ft.
Tankrala	,,	,,	16200 ft.
Jelep la } leading to	,,	,,	13000 ft.
Yakla } the	,,	,,	14000 ft.
Chola } Chumbi Valley	,,	,,	15000 ft.
Lagulungla	Nepaul	,,	16000 ft.

Wallanchom	Nepaul	nearly	16700 ft.
Nola	"	"	16600 ft.
Photula	"	"	15000 ft.
Gala	"	"	16700 ft.
Taklakhar, in the gorge of the Karnali	"	"	17000 ft.
Choonjerma	"	"	15250 ft.
Kambachen	"	"	15700 ft.
Hatia Pass (or the Arun River)	"	"	16500 ft.
Kirong	"	"	17000 ft.

The last-named pass is the most important of all the Nepaulese passes, and a very considerable amount of merchandize enters Tibet by it throughout the year.

I stated that after Mr. Bogle's Mission, Tibet was left undisturbed by English enterprise for a number of years, and that interval might have been indefinitely prolonged but for the energy and daring of Thomas Manning. Mr. Clements Markham has, in a recent work, resuscitated the names of these two almost forgotten explorers, and has, besides, given us a most instructive and interesting account of the country, to which all must turn who wish for accurate information about Tibet.

While Warren Hastings and Mr. Bogle simply aimed at promoting friendship with Tibet, Mr. Manning only turned his steps in that direction in order to obtain admission into the interior of China. During several years' residence at Canton he had kept this idea prominently before him, but all his entreaties to induce the local mandarins to accede to his request, and all his stratagems to elude their vigilance, had proved unavailing. Despairing at last of success from Canton, he resolved, nothing daunted in his purpose, to resume operations from a totally different quarter. He sailed accordingly for Calcutta, and, crossing the Himalaya as a private individual, without any Government mission, much to his private chagrin, entered Tibet in the year 1811. Trusting solely to his acquaintance with the Chinese language and customs, he visited alone, and without any safeguard, the mysterious regions of Tibet. That he succeeded in reaching Lhasa; that he was also permitted to reside there for a considerable time, during which he acquired a great reputation among the people by his skill as a physician; that he was received in audience by the Dalai Lama, of

whom he has left, in the fragments of his journal, a most vivid description; are facts which best show the merit of this most courageous gentleman. Had his papers not been lost at sea some years later, he would undoubtedly have left us the most important information on this interesting country. But even he was unable to accomplish his chief object, that of entering China, and, after much useless negociation, he was obliged to give up his design and return to India. Since then the French missionaries, Huc and Gabet, have seen the Dalai Lama and have resided in Lhasa. They share with Mr. Manning the honour of being the only Europeans who have beheld that distinguished and saint-like personage.

Tibet is called Tsang by the Chinese, and is said to be extremely rich in minerals, although it is certainly poor as a vegetable-producing country. Among its chief recommendations Mr. Manning mentions that "excellent mutton can be obtained daily." To the intelligent observer the people present many features of interest. They are a simple-minded, honest, quiet people; yet they possess a fairer share of courage than most Asiatics. With a decided preference for an uneventful, safe, monotonous sort of existence, they are still not afraid to fight in defence of their belongings. Like most civilized people, they are grateful if the occasion does not arise. They are far from being cruel in their disposition, they are clean, for Asiatics, in their person, and they live one among the other in a homely way without unnecessary quarrelling. They obey the edicts issued from Pekin, they contribute their quota to the Imperial expenditure, and they respect the mandarin at the head of the military stationed in each town. This official, as a rule, does not abuse his power, and confines himself to his own province, leaving the people to jog along in their own quiet fashion in accordance with the precepts and examples of their lamas. It has been computed that there are 60,000 Chinese troops stationed in Tibet, but I confess that this seems to me an exaggerated figure; indeed, it is most probable that not more than 10,000 are required as a permanent guard for the frontier. A large trade is carried on

with China, and, while most of the merchants only go as far as Singan-foo, there are some who proceed to Hankow and Pekin. There is a good main road along the Tibetan table-land to the first of these places, whence the network of roads, for which China is justly famous, branches out in all directions. But during the winter months the weather here is terribly severe, and the roads are simply impassable. The Teshu Lama of Mr. Bogle's time, some years after the departure of our representative, received an invitation from the Emperor to proceed to Pekin, and being caught by winter in the exposed plateaux north of Lhasa, was compelled to halt for three months on his journey until the return of spring once more made the roads in a fit state for travelling. There is, therefore, no easy road even in this direction to China, and it must clearly be understood, that although good roads and security to life and property exist in Northern Tibet, during the winter months all intercourse will have to cease. This route must therefore be labelled "during fine weather only." There is fortunately good reason for supposing that trade and intercourse with Southern Tibet are not fettered by the same objection. The direct access that, even by this way, would be obtained with some of the least known and reputedly richest of Chinese provinces during many months of the year, could not fail to produce great results, and, quite apart from the question of commercial success that should be attained, the commencement of political and general relations with Tibet might with some justice be termed the most interesting event that had taken place in Asia for some time. In Tibet may not only be found the key of Chinese history and institutions, but also evidence of many kinds throwing light on matters that have been puzzling to the antiquaries and historical students of our own Eastern possessions. I may be permitted to call attention to the description of Tibet from the pen of Father della Penna, given in an Appendix to Mr. Clements Markham's work, for, taken as a whole, it is one of the most instructive *résumés* of that country. It is possible that it may have suffered the fate that usually befalls all matter

consigned to an Appendix, and been overlooked. No one can arise from a perusal of any of the works mentioned, or indeed from any other on Tibet, without experiencing an increase of respect for the Chinese. We cannot help acknowledging that their political system must be based on a foundation of true justice, since they have been able to govern Tibet for centuries with lenience and without difficulty. If they have been strict in maintaining order, they have at the same time tolerated the prejudices and customs of their subjects. They have indeed included them in the Chinese empire, but they have made the connecting link one of affection and mutual respect. We have a not less striking instance of the immense *prestige* of the Chinese Government in the fact that it has, in recent years, been able to assert its suzerainty over such far-distant tributaries as Nepaul and Bhutan. If we contrast with its weight and influence in these states our own, which are so near to them, and under whose direct influence they exist, we shall find not only food for cogitation, but real cause for admiration of the Chinese. The country that can exercise so wide a charm and fascination must needs possess some merits of a supreme degree. If the assertion of this will impress on some of us a greater respect for the Chinese, and if the study of their rule in Tibet will make us appreciate the fact that the Chinese are not to be set down as mere Asiatics, we shall have done something on our side, it might be said something of our duty, towards effecting a permanent reconciliation between the two peoples. Those who care to devote some of their leisure to the study of Tibet will find even in the meagre literature at their disposal much to interest, instruct, and improve them.

It is impossible to consider this question without taking into consideration another power besides the two directly concerned; it is impossible to follow out this proposition of an embassy to Lhasa to its logical conclusion, intercourse by land with China, without having the Russian empire brought into the argument. Russia's intercourse by land with China dates back to the days of Peter the Great. She has always been

treated on the footing of the most friendly nation; but, during the last ten or fifteen years, her efforts to force merchandize and friendship on the Chinese have been more persistent. While our trade has taken the roundabout line of the Straits of Malacca, Russia's has passed through the rising town of Ourga to Pekin. Alarmists may be frightened at the idea of our crossing our natural frontier in pursuit of a trade chimera, and entering upon an undertaking which must create fresh rivalry between Russia and this country. It may be sufficient answer to such persons to point out that between our routes lies the vast and impassable desert of Gobi. While our road would bring us into some of the richest of the provinces of the Chinese Empire, hers enters the same empire, under less favourable circumstances, many hundreds of miles to the north. The encounter must take place, therefore, if anywhere, in the heart of China, in the streets of Pekin or the bazaars of Hankow; just as at the present day Germans and Americans keenly dispute with us, and contest our right to precedence, in Shanghai and Foochow. There is not much risk, therefore, from our seeming to enter into a fresh contest, by opening up land communication with Tibet and China, with a nation with which we have already sufficiently numerous points in dispute, like Russia. Undoubtedly our merchandize will be placed on a more equal footing with that of Russia, and the consequence will be that, if our goods are cheaper and better, Russian merchants will suffer from the competition, and perhaps the Government will be compelled, by sheer necessity, to give up the restrictive commercial policy followed with such rigour throughout the whole of Asia. This may all occur, but, under any circumstances, it must take place some day or other, and the chief person benefited by it will be the Chinaman. We must regard in this case simply our own interests and our connexion with China. We of course wish naturally to promote the former, and we are now desirous of cementing the latter. The chief purport of this paper is to show that the surest precaution against misunderstanding is to be found in an increase of mutual knowledge, brought to pass

by legitimate means. We have obtained from China a concession, of which it will cost but little to test the practical value. Even if the result should prove disappointing, which would be very surprising, a mission to Lhasa would not occasion much outlay. If we could obtain the right to have a resident agent there, it would be additionally advantageous. Judiciously selected presents for the Dalai Lama and his minister might produce great results, and with tact on the part of our representative, who should, above all things, possess intimate acquaintance with Chinese etiquette, all would probably proceed satisfactorily. It might be wise not to arouse susceptibilities, which we know are tender, by attempting too much, and therefore it would be preferable to remain contented with intercourse with Tibet alone, for some time, until the more extended arrangement with China might at length take place, imperceptibly and as a natural sequence. Whatever our Indian and Foreign Offices may determine on, whether they confine their decision to a mission of amity to Lhasa, or to a fresh embassy to Pekin, viâ Tibet, the evils of delay must be impressed upon them both. If we are really to attempt to resume negociations with Tibet, if we are to make some provision for perpetuating good feelings in the future between China and England, we must not refuse to avail ourselves of the advantages of our position, or of those secured for us so recently by Sir Thomas Wade. We must, if we are not to sink once more in the estimation of the Celestials, by a little well-timed action, keep the fact prominently before them of our presence in Asia as a great power. In Asia we must speak and act as the Emperors of India.

To sum up briefly on the question. The difficulty in reaching Tibet is no insuperable obstacle; the route beyond is safe, and, probably, also, easy during nine certain months; the prospects of commercial success seem satisfactory; there is little danger of political complications arising; and there is no risk whatever of our being induced to add to our dominions. If successful, it will not only serve to form amicable relations with a new and highly-interesting country,

but it may also tend to increase those at present existing between England and China. In a political point of view it will also strengthen our hands immeasurably, for on the sea-coast we must always meet rivals in other civilized nations, here we should be alone. The prospect, I think, must be admitted to be very promising, and only requires a little vigour, to be put out of the realms of possibility into those of fact. Our rulers must, indeed, first show the way, but the conclusion of the matter rests only with ourselves.