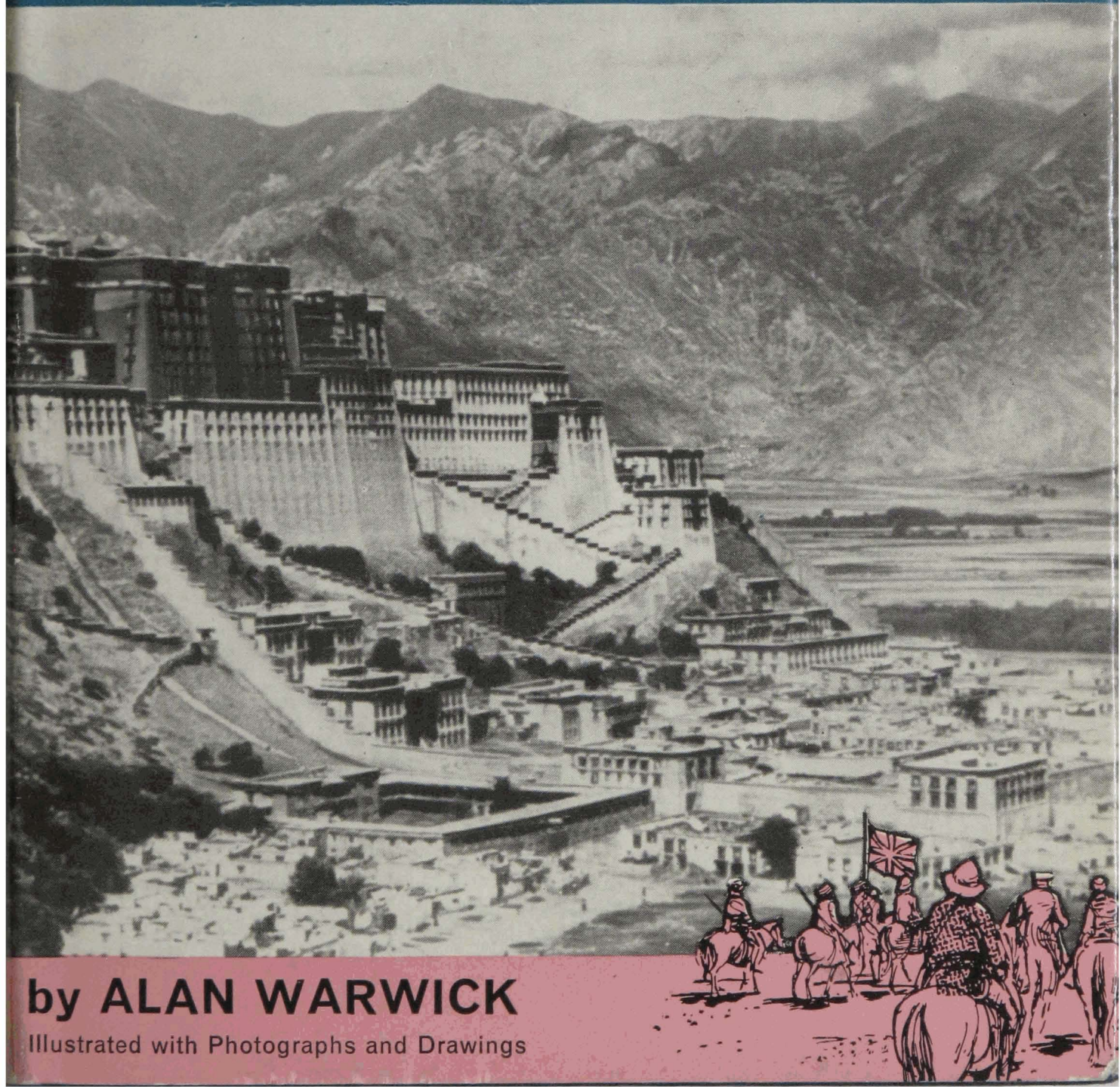


ADVENTURES IN GEOGRAPHY SERIES

With Younghusband in

TIBET



by **ALAN WARWICK**

Illustrated with Photographs and Drawings

Adventures in Geography Series

Editor: Robert Owen

WITH YOUNGHUSBAND IN
TIBET

by

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I

Over the Forbidden Frontier

ONE day in February, in the year 1895, a young Royal Artillery officer arrived at the hill station of Darjeeling. Fresh out from England, he was reporting for duty with No. 8 Mountain Battery, the headquarters of which were in the cantonments on the Darjeeling ridge.

His posting to this north-east frontier hill station was to prove to be the turning point in Lieutenant W. F. O'Connor's career. In time it was to take him, as one of the principal figures in the Younghusband Mission to Tibet, over the tremendous Himalayas to the high tableland that lies beyond, and finally to Tibet's aloof and jealously guarded capital, Lhasa. No Englishman had been to Lhasa since the year 1811.

Darjeeling is 300 miles north of Calcutta, and to get there the traveller takes the express train to the railhead at Siliguri, near to the Himalayan foothills. There he changes trains to make the mountainous ascent to Darjeeling, 7,160 feet above sea level.

Changing trains at this remote railhead, in the steamy heat of the plain of Bengal, is like leaving Brobdingnag for Lilliput, for drawn up modestly alongside the gigantic Calcutta express is a miniature train on a two-foot gauge

track. It looks like a toy. Nevertheless, it is the mountain railway which takes the traveller and his luggage to Darjeeling, which in those days was the summer capital of Bengal.

It is when one pulls out from Siliguri, and starts the long climb to Darjeeling, that the sense of adventure really begins. As the tiny mountain train puffs and whistles its way upwards through the profusion of tropical forest, brilliant with exotic flowers, the familiar every-day world is left behind. The air grows cooler. Ahead, beautiful and remote, is the awe-inspiring range of tremendous peaks and Himalayan vastnesses; of snowfields flashing in the sunlight; of hard edges where earth and sky touch.

Indeed, the mountain journey to Darjeeling is the first stage in the long and tortuous journey that finally ends at Lhasa, where the road becomes a mystical circular loop around the sacred city and the Great Potala Palace, seat of the Dalai Lama, incarnate god, ruler of Tibet.

Look at the map. Darjeeling lies in a tiny northern enclave. On its western side is Nepal. To the east is Bhutan. Immediately to the north of Darjeeling is the tiny State of Sikkim. Sikkim is sandwiched between Nepal on the one side, and Bhutan and the Chumbi Valley on the other. On Sikkim's northern border is the high tableland of Tibet. Sikkim is all that separates Darjeeling from Tibet. On Sikkim's eastern side, between it and Bhutan, is the tongue of land falling to the south that belongs to Tibet and is called the Chumbi Valley.

Darjeeling, once part of Sikkim, was in 1835 ceded to the government of India by the Maharajah of Sikkim and

became the seat of the Bengal Government during hot weather.

At the time of O'Connor's arrival, there was considerable uneasiness on the part of the government of India concerning Tibet, the rulers of which were refusing to enter into any discussions with India. That in itself was not, perhaps, very important, but while Tibet was keeping India at arm's length, she was at the same time being ostentatiously friendly with Russia.

Tibet was also refusing to recognize the line of the Tibet-Sikkim border which had been clearly defined in the 1890 Treaty between Sikkim on the one side, and Tibet and China on the other, China holding dominion, or suzerainty, over Tibet, and so recognized by Britain. Recently, however, boundary pillars set up on the Tibet-Sikkim border had been thrown down, and Tibetan soldiers had been occupying a strip of Sikkim's northern territory. An increasingly grave view was being taken of Tibetan aggressive acts, coupled with the fact that the Tibetan authorities were obstructing legal trade between India and Tibet. These irritations were finally to lead to the dispatch of the Tibet Frontier Commission under Colonel Younghusband, in which, as Interpreter and Secretary, O'Connor was to play a distinctive part.

Meanwhile, as a young artillery officer, new to India, O'Connor was allotted a bungalow that stood on a promontory of the Darjeeling ridge. Darjeeling is said to possess the finest view in the world, and that view was there to be seen from O'Connor's windows. On the one side were the succession of snow-capped peaks that traced a glittering

wall against the deep sky, and crowning them and marking Sikkim's northern boundary was the tremendous Kangchenjunga, its summit rising 28,146 feet above sea level. Eighty miles to the west, half in Nepal, and half in Tibet, was Kangchenjunga's sister mountain, Everest, 29,002 feet high.

Below Kangchenjunga were the ridges and valleys, forest-clad, humid and tropical. In the rain-drenched forests of Sikkim were tenuous green tracks that crept upwards until they finally vanished into that remote, secretive country hidden beyond the peaks.

On O'Connor's other side was the view of the plain of Bengal, spread out below like a vast carpet of light and shade, threaded with the silver of great rivers, and fading at last into the blue of distance.

Here, as it were, was the meeting of the known world with the unknown. On one side were the teeming millions of India, their customs and cities tangible and real. On the other was the secret, forbidden land of the living Buddha—a locked country of mystery and legend.

For a thousand miles the frontier between Tibet and India traces its tortuous way through some of the most inaccessible country in the world—a land of mists and precipices; of snowfields and hard rock-face; of winds that cut to the bone—and out of which have been born the stories of the Yeti, the Abominable Snowman.

The Tibetan frontier threads its way from mountain peak to mountain peak, following the high dividing ridge of the Himalayan watershed. Where the waters flow south into India, that is the Indian side; where the waters flow

northward, that is Tibet. The exception to this rule is the Chumbi Valley, which is an area contained in a southern loop in the Himalayan range. Chumbi is Tibetan territory, though the people residing in the valley are not true Tibetans, and the river flows south into India.

O'Connor began to read all he could find about Tibet—which was not much—and to try to make himself familiar with the language, which on the face of it should not have been difficult. Tibetans crowded into Darjeeling, but for the greater part they were small traders. Some were criminals who, to escape justice, had fled their country. Their accent and idiom would be of the peasant. The Tibetan speech that O'Connor sought was of the style and accent of the ruling class in Lhasa.

At last he found a Tibetan to be his house servant. The man had recently come to Darjeeling from Lhasa where he had been employed in the home of an upper class Tibetan family. He was a superior man, and able to instruct O'Connor in the correct speech of Lhasa, so that within a year O'Connor was able to express himself tolerably well in that subtle and difficult language.

His thoughts continually turned towards Tibet, as did his footsteps. Whenever a spell of leave came round with its prospect of game shooting, O'Connor went northward into the mountains, where in a maze of valleys of Sikkim he explored the lesser tracks and passes leading upwards to the thin air of the peaks.

It was in Sikkim that O'Connor first became acquainted with Claude White. White, the British Political Officer there, was resident in the capital, Gantok. He was twenty

years older than O'Connor, but between the two men sprang up a warm friendship. Later they were to be closely associated on Younghusband's staff, when Claude White was appointed Assistant Political Officer to Younghusband.

Claude White had good cause to be interested in Tibet. He had set up the frontier posts between the two countries, and the Tibetans had thrown them down. Also he had been involved with the Tibetans in other incidents of a similarly unfriendly or hostile nature.

At that time White's engineering skill was being chiefly directed in opening up the almost roadless country of Sikkim. He had already constructed a number of roads and bridges, and was engaged in building a series of rest-houses for travellers.

O'Connor found White a valuable companion. Together they would explore the high ground where the air was thin and halts had to be frequent. Beyond the mountain tops was the Chumbi Valley, which formed the southern extension of Tibet. The close proximity of that forbidden country drew O'Connor like a magnet; it tugged at him to go and see for himself.

In the following autumn the opportunity came. Three months' leave was due to him. He fitted out a tiny expedition, ostensibly for a hunting trip, consisting of himself and a schoolmaster friend from Darjeeling, named Clarke, and a dozen coolie porters.

O'Connor took care that not a whisper of the true purpose of the trip should leak out, for fear of opposition, either by the Tibetans or the army authorities. Everything, however, went according to plan. Once in the forests of

Sikkim, the little party moved forward until they had arrived at a point north of Kangchenjunga, where they were surrounded by mountain peaks, none of which was less than 20,000 feet high.

They were then in the district of Lharak, which is the north-west corner of Sikkim, at an elevation of 12,000 feet. Suddenly they were confronted with a Tibetan official and escort. There were still a dozen or more miles ahead before the Tibetan border would be reached.

“He was not at all pleased to see us,” O’Connor said afterwards, “and he ordered us to go back. The last thing I wanted to do just then was to argue with a Tibetan official, so, to shake him off, we appeared to accept his angry dismissal. We went back, and then worked our way round to a pass that was very roughly indicated on our map.”

It was the Chorten Nima pass that crossed a spur running northward from Kangchenjunga. O’Connor took an altitude reading with a hypsometer, and found that the Chorten Nima pass was 18,500 feet above sea level. (A hypsometer is an instrument for taking altitudes by means of a thermometer reading taken in boiling water. The greater the altitude the lower the temperature at which water boils.) On the far side of the Chorten Nima pass lay Tibet.

“This was the moment I had so often dreamed about,” O’Connor recorded. “Suddenly before my eyes was Tibet. It was a strange country, mostly yellow and brown, stretching to the horizon. There were mounds and humps and pinnacles and odd shapes scattered over this broad and mostly flat Tibetan plain. It was in complete contrast to the verdant, rain-drenched hills of Sikkim, and it was quite

unlike any landscape I had ever seen. It was the country of a dream, and desolate. To the north lay a second range of mountains, blue in the distance, which I knew to be the second of the three great Himalayan ranges.”

For the rest of the day O'Connor contented himself with taking observations and compass bearings, making notes and sketch maps. On the following morning the party crossed over into Tibet itself.

A glacier descended on the Tibetan side of the pass, and they had to cut steps in the ice for the coolies, who were encumbered with their loads. But by evening they were safely encamped in a narrow valley, near to a deserted hermitage. Close by was a stream and a dilapidated shrine, or *chorten*, after which the pass was named.

For three days they probed cautiously northwards. They moved with stealth, for the most part keeping to the obscurity of the narrow valleys, avoiding skylines. Then they ran into a party of Tibetan shepherds, who became very excited at the presence of strangers, and attacked them with stones and sticks. O'Connor's little party defended themselves with their bare fists, and before long the shepherds, who were getting the worst of it, made off to inform the local headman of the presence of strangers.

Not far away was Khamba Jong—a massive fort perched on a hill. It looked rather like a medieval castle in appearance, and was the residence of the local Jongpen, or magistrate, and the small force of soldiers under his command.

So far as O'Connor and his party were concerned, there was nothing for it but to get away as quickly as possible. In fact, before long a sizeable Tibetan force of mounted

men were in hot pursuit. It was a near thing! O'Connor's party crossed over into Sikkim by the Sebu pass in an exhausted state, with the Tibetan soldiers rapidly closing on them.

Just as they made the pass a heavy snowstorm descended, blotting out everything. Fortunately, it shook off their pursuers, who would have had no compunction in following them into Sikkim territory, and at last they stumbled on to a yak-herd's camp as night was falling.

The yak-herd gave them food and put them up in his tent for the night. The next morning he lent them yaks to ride to the nearest civilized point ten miles away.

In this manner ended O'Connor's first taste of Tibet. The immediate outcome of this unofficial trip was an official rap over the knuckles. It was not, however, a severe rap, and shortly afterwards O'Connor found himself detached for a while from No. 8 Mountain Battery and seconded for duty with the Intelligence Branch at Simla.

The maps and sketches he had made of his trip into the Khamba Jong area, together with the information he had gained, were put into the official records. Later he was sent to prepare an up-to-date Sikkim Route Book, which occupation provided him with several visits to that pocket-size state, where he resumed acquaintance with Claude White.

All this was to come in very useful in due time. The route taken by the Younghusband Mission to Khamba Jong was to follow that taken by O'Connor.

The whole situation between Tibet and India was most unsatisfactory, and steadily deteriorating as time went by. Although Tibetans had free access to India, there was no

reciprocal access to Tibet, except at Yatung at the southern tip of the Chumbi Valley, and that had been made futile.

A trade agreement made in 1893 had constituted the little village of Yatung a trade mart that was to be open to those from India trading with Tibet. Despite this agreement, such trade was virtually non-existent, due entirely to the obstructiveness of the Tibetan and Chinese authorities. There had been nothing in the agreement to say that Yatung was to be kept open to Tibetans trading with India! The Tibetan authorities, with the connivance of their Chinese overlords, sabotaged the whole agreement by building a wall across the valley immediately north of the trade mart, and forbidding Tibetan traders to pass south of the wall.

This was a source of intense irritation. Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, was perturbed, too, by the Tibetan aggressive encroachment over the Sikkim border. Soldiers had penetrated fifteen miles south as far as Giaogong, claiming that a wall on the south side of the village was the Tibetan boundary. Claude White had immediately proceeded with a detachment of Gurkha troops to Giaogong and bundled the Tibetans back over their own border, but later reports had shown that they were once more infiltrating.

It was known, too, that Tibet was making overtures to Russia. A Buddhist monk named Dorjjeff was reported to be acting as emissary between Lhasa and St. Petersburg, the capital of Tsarist Russia, and it was feared that attempts were being made to negotiate an alliance. The Tibetans would have been glad of a powerful ally in Russia, so as to break the suzerainty, or over-lordship, of China; they would have then also been able to defy India.

Lord Curzon, in a last effort to break down Tibetan silence, wrote a personal letter to the Dalai Lama in the hope of arranging a meeting that way. It was dated 11 August, 1900. Six months later it was returned, unanswered, with the seals broken. Lord Curzon then sent a second, more strongly worded letter; that, too, received no reply.

Disturbing rumours now came in thick and fast. There was only one thing left to do—to dispatch a mission into Tibet and reason with the Tibetan authorities on their own ground and there make a new and lasting agreement with them. Khamba Jong was selected as being the most suitable point, it being the nearest habitable place inside Tibetan territory.

China was informed of Britain's intention, and agreed to send their Political Resident in Lhasa, or Amban, to meet the Mission at Khama Jong. The necessary high-ranking Tibetan officials would accompany him.

The year was now 1902, and the preliminary arrangements for the Mission were put in hand. It was also the year of the great Durbar at Delhi on the accession of Edward VII to the throne of India.

Claude White was in Delhi for the occasion, with the young Maharajah of Sikkim. There he saw O'Connor, and told him that the Mission to Tibet was in the process of formation.

O'Connor immediately asked to be employed with the Mission. He had continued his studies in Tibetan, both as regards the language and its political organization. His invaluable tutor was a Lhasa Lama named Shab-dung, who was now O'Connor's daily companion. Shab-dung

Lama had held a high position, but had had to leave Lhasa for political reasons. As well as being thoroughly acquainted with Tibetan ecclesiastical lore, he knew all the leading personalities of Tibet, and had the latest political information at his finger-tips. Thus, O'Connor's knowledge of Tibet and the language was now very considerable.

Following his application, O'Connor had an interview with Lord Kitchener, who was the new Commander-in-Chief, India. O'Connor was accepted, and by the following January he was back in Darjeeling, hard at work helping to prepare the ground for the Mission.

Meanwhile, a good road was being built from Siliguri to Gantok, the capital of Sikkim, and other roads were being improved.

Nor were these preparations passed unnoticed. Far away in the little Indian State of Indore, in central India, the local British Resident was watching with nostalgic interest such reports as reached him concerning this proposed mission to Tibet. His every instinct responded to it, but it did not cross his mind that he was destined to become the centre-piece of that Mission.

In May 1903, Major Francis Younghusband, British Resident in Indore, received an urgent telegram, summoning him to Simla.

2

Younghusband Takes Command

“**H**ERE, indeed, I felt was the chance of my life. I was once more alive. The thrill of adventure again ran through my veins.”

In those enthusiastic sentences Younghusband summed up his emotions on the receipt of that telegram out of the blue. He packed his things and hastened to Simla.

There he saw the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, and Lord Kitchener. The three lunched together, and in the afternoon at a gymkhana, while ladies and gentlemen were demonstrating their equestrian skill, these men sat together in the shade of the trees, and Lord Curzon outlined the Tibetan situation as he saw it to Francis Younghusband. Would he be prepared to undertake so difficult a task?

Younghusband's response was immediate.

“I was proud indeed to have been selected for this task. It was like being awakened. I was suddenly myself again, and all the exotic life of the Maharajas and Durbars and gold chairs and scarlet *chupressies* [Indian uniformed attendants] a sickly dream. Hardships and dangers I knew I should have. The whole enterprise was risky. But men always prefer risk to ease. Comfort only lulls and softens their capacities, whereas danger tautens every faculty—and

Lord Curzon was risking much in sending me. I had never seen a Tibetan, nor served on the North-Eastern Frontier. I might make a hideous mess of it. I saw quite clearly the risks he [The Viceroy] was taking, and this made me all the keener to justify his choice."

Claude White arrived in Simla a few days after Youngusband, and went immediately to see him. Because of his long residence in Sikkim, White was probably more familiar with the Tibetan than any other Englishman. The two men immediately got down to work on arrangements, and Youngusband soon learned from White what dealing with Tibetans really meant. He was already primed on the situation, having read the entire Foreign Office file on the subject.

During that reading, Youngusband discovered that fifteen years back, in 1888, after his return from an exploratory journey across the Gobi Desert, his services had been asked for by the Government of Bengal for special duty on the North-Eastern Frontier. They wanted him to assist in an expedition against the Tibetans, who had recently invaded Sikkim.

Twice this application, unbeknown to Youngusband, had been made by the Bengal Government, and twice the request had been refused by the Indian Government on the grounds that he was required for routine examinations necessary for his promotion to Captain.

Youngusband was born at Murree in the Himalayan foothills of Kashmir, on 31 May, 1863. After he passed through Sandhurst, he returned to India to serve in the King's Dragoon Guards. A stocky cavalryman, five feet

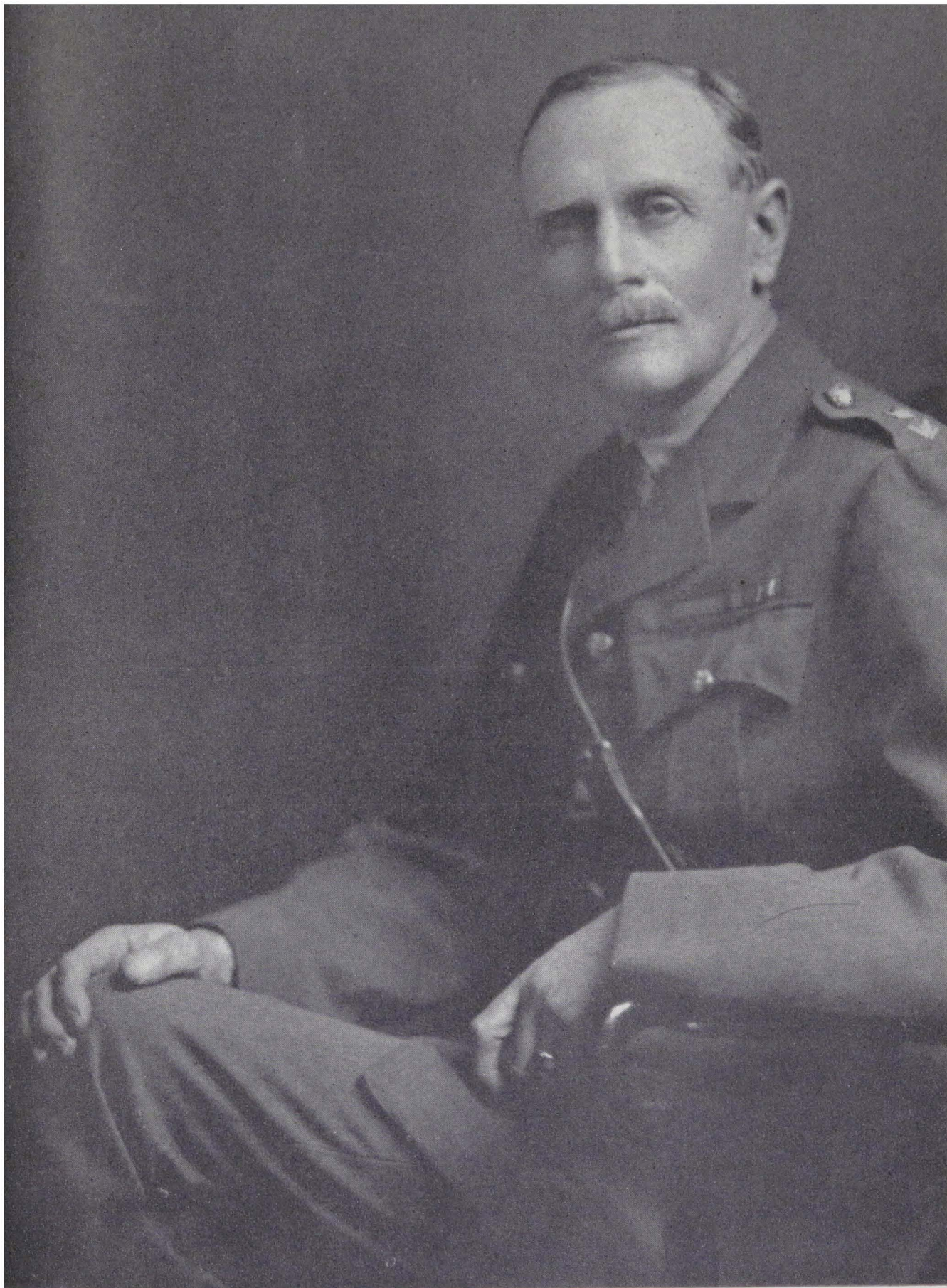


Colonel Younghusband, June, 1895



(Above) A view from Darjeeling showing the Himalayas and Kanchenjunga. (Below) A street in Darjeeling





Captain O'Connor. This photograph was taken at the time of his attaining the rank of Lieut.-Colonel



(Above and below) The bleak, barren roads of Tibet



six inches in height, Younghusband proved himself to be a resolute, hard-working officer with a distinct taste for adventure. The quality of the man was shown in all he set himself to do.

Thus, on his first leave from his regiment, the young officer had turned instinctively to the mountains. Travelling light, and sleeping on the ground under the open sky, "to get the feel of the place," he applied himself to the art of being master of his circumstances and to be prepared to tackle any emergency.

While on that first Himalayan journey, as he was turning-in one night, his Indian bearer came to him and said that a man was dying where a caravan had halted nearby, and would the Sahib go and see him?

Younghusband found the man lying on the ground in great pain, and surrounded by his friends who were helplessly wringing their hands and saying he was dying. Left like that he most certainly would die.

"I had not the slightest idea what was the matter with him, but something had to be done. I thought some chlorodyne would do no harm, so I administered a dose, and left him some to be given later on.

"As soon as I gave the chlorodyne and asserted with as much confidence as I could muster that he would soon be all right, his friends shouted: 'The Sahib has saved your life; tomorrow you will be well.' And next day he really was much better. He declared I had saved his life, and all his friends began kissing my feet."

Younghusband had a knack of putting the mark of his own personality on every emergency that faced him. Some

years later, when he was probing the North-West Frontier in the neighbourhood of the Pamir Mountains, he came across a Russian officer with a detachment of Cossacks. The meeting happened in that most desolate part where Kashmir, Afghanistan, Chinese Turkestan, the little state of Hunza, and Russia are very near to each other in a labyrinth of mountains and ill-defined frontiers.

The Russian officer, Colonel Yonoff, was friendly, and invited Younghusband to have dinner with him. He admitted with cheerful frankness that he was in the process of annexing portions of Afghanistan and Chinese Turkestan to add to the territorial possessions of the Tsar. Younghusband merely remarked that he appeared to be opening his mouth pretty wide, and went on enjoying his dinner. For some time the two continued on the friendliest terms. One night, however, Younghusband was disturbed by the clatter of hooves. Looking out, he saw in the moonlight thirty Cossacks drawn up before his tent with the Russian standard in front, and a very embarrassed-looking Colonel Yonoff.

Apologetically he informed Younghusband that he was trespassing on Russian territory and that orders had just come through from St. Petersburg to expel him.

Younghusband bluntly told him that he was in Afghanistan. "You may think this Afghan territory, but we consider it Russian," was Colonel Yonoff's reply.

In face of this array of Cossacks there was nothing for it but to lodge a formal protest with Colonel Yonoff, and withdraw. But before packing up, Younghusband hospitably invited the Russian officers to have a meal with him as they must be hungry after their long march. They accepted

gratefully, Colonel Yonoff apologizing repeatedly during the meal for having to expel his friend and host.

Incidents such as this Younghusband never resented. In his view, Colonel Yonoff was only carrying out his orders. Next morning, as he was leaving, Colonel Yonoff sent him a haunch of venison, and then came personally and begged again and again to be excused for acting as he had done.

On another occasion when Younghusband was on an exploratory journey, it was a Russian who provided him with a map of the area far superior to his own.

“It is always a pleasure to meet a Russian,” Younghusband wrote. “He is invariably so frank and hearty . . . I believe there are no two nations that would take to each other more than the Russians and ourselves, if the opportunity were forthcoming, and the more the members of each nation know each other the better it would be for us both.”

Each of those early journeys added new laurels to Younghusband’s growing reputation as a soldier and explorer. His most famous achievement up to that time was a 3,500-mile journey in 1887 from Peking to Kashmir, via Yarkand, the capital of Chinese Turkestan.

His route lay across the great Gobi Desert. It was a journey which had not been attempted by any European since Marco Polo in the thirteenth century. That journey was one of the loneliest in the world; for a thousand miles Younghusband did not see a single human habitation.

To avoid the heat of the day, Younghusband mostly travelled at night, under the brilliant canopy of stars. “In

the stillness of those long hours, night after night and week after week, that radiance made an impression on my fresh young mind which deepened with the years. I began to feel at home with the stars."

A most remarkable person in that desert journey was the Chinese guide. Younghusband wrote in his diary: "The way in which he remembered where we were, at each march in the desert, was simply marvellous. He would be fast asleep on the back of his camel, leaning right over with his head either resting on the camel's hump, or dangling about beside it, when he would suddenly wake up, look first at the stars, by which he could tell the time to a quarter of an hour, and then at as much of the country as he could see in the dark. After a time he would turn the camel off the track a little, and sure enough we would find ourselves at a well.

"The extraordinary manner in which he kept the way surpasses anything I know of. As a rule no track at all could be seen, especially in sandy districts, but he used to lead us somehow or the other."

When Younghusband arrived in Kashmir, his face bearded and blackened by exposure, wearing a sheepskin coat and belt, and long native boots, he was mistaken for a Yarkandi.

His safe arrival in India was marked by a congratulatory telegram from Lord Roberts (then Sir Frederick Roberts), Commander-in-Chief, India. He was also congratulated by his Colonel, who had also received a telegram from the C.-in-C. "From my fellow subalterns," Younghusband observed drily, "I got just the kind of welcome subalterns

would give one of their number who had been away for a total of nearly twenty months while they had to do his duty for him.”

The Royal Geographical Society invited Younghusband to lecture to them on his historic journey. For this purpose he was given special leave by the Commander-in-Chief. The Royal Geographical Society honoured him with the Gold Medal of the Society, and a Fellowship. He was still only twenty-four years of age, and by far the youngest Fellow of the Society.

The feasibility of a journey to Lhasa in disguise came to him in consequence of having been mistaken for a Yarkandi after his Gobi Desert journey. Tibet had often been in his mind. “I dreamed of a journey to that mysterious country. I would pierce through the Himalayas, come out on to the highlands of Tibet, see marvellous mountains, visit the great lakes, explore the sources of the Indus, the Sutlej, and the Brahmaputra, come to know the curious people of that secluded country.”

He proposed to the Indian Foreign Office that he should make his exploration to Lhasa, disguised as a Yarkand merchant. The Foreign Office was impressed, but Younghusband's Colonel gave an unequivocal “No”. His young officer had been away from his regiment far too much of late!

Regimental duties, however, did not claim him for long. Because of his knowledge of the Himalayas and of hillmen generally, he was called to deal with an epidemic of bandit raids by Hunza brigands on the caravans entering Kashmir from Turkestan. These Hunza tribesmen, had they wished to fight it out, were in an almost impregnable position; yet

Younghusband, with a detachment of six Gurkhas, succeeded by sheer personality and persuasive tongue to come to an amicable arrangement with the tribesmen.

After that, Younghusband was taken off the strength of his regiment and transferred to the Indian Political Department. Work on the Frontier continued for a time, and then he was sent on political work far from the Himalayan scene. This sudden call to take command of the Mission to Tibet on the eve of his fortieth birthday was as though his youth had been given back to him.

Khamba Jong was to be the meeting place with the Chinese and Tibetan delegates. The Chinese Government had agreed to this, and promised to send their representative, to be accompanied by a Tibetan delegate of equal rank. As the year was now well into summer, Younghusband requested an early meeting; in any case, there would not be much time to spare for negotiations before the winter set in. The Chinese promised that the delegates would be at Khamba Jong as soon as possible after 7 July.

The Mission was to have a protective escort provided by the 32nd Pioneers, a general purpose regiment which was as experienced in building roads as in fighting, and well practised in both. The regiment was now in Sikkim, improving the road to the Tibetan border.

Younghusband and Claude White left Simla for Darjeeling, travelling via Calcutta. Because at this stage it was advisable to keep the Mission secret, Younghusband merely told his friends that he was going to Darjeeling for a short while.

The two leaders of the Mission travelled on the night

express from Calcutta to Siliguri, and Younghusband's mounting enthusiasm is echoed in the words he wrote in his account of the expedition, *India and Tibet*, published in 1910.

"As in the earliest dawn I looked out of the train window to catch the first glimpse of those mighty mountains I had to penetrate, I saw far up in the sky a rose-tinged stretch of cloud. All around was level plain. The air was stifling with the heat of a tropical midsummer. But I knew that pinky streak across the sky could be nothing else than the line of the Himalayas tinted by the yet unrisen sun. It gave me the first thrill of my new adventure."

At Darjeeling they were joined by O'Connor. This was their first meeting, and they hit it off from the start.

"It was fortunate for the success of the Mission," commented Younghusband afterwards, "that the government were able to send with it, first as Intelligence Officer, and afterwards as Secretary, Captain O'Connor." He also commented that "O'Connor was never so happy as when surrounded by begrimed Tibetans, with whom he would spend hour after hour in apparently futile conversation".

Out of this association there developed a life-long friendship between the two men.

The little party rode out on horseback from Darjeeling on 19 June, 1903, in drenching rain. Younghusband was wearing a heavy waterproof cloak, with a riding apron, and carrying an umbrella. But the water soaked through everything for, as well as the rain, there was everywhere a penetrating mist that turned the riders' clothes into a sodden mass.

The rendezvous for the Mission was a place called Tangu,

12,000 feet up in Sikkim. Tangu was only a day's march below Giaogong, which the Tibetans obstinately claimed was their territory. Here the Mission force gathered together, which consisted of 200 escort troops and 300 support troops. Men and animals had suffered greatly in marching through the drenching rain and the steamy, fever-laden lower valleys, where they were plagued by insects and countless leeches, which were everywhere in the grass and undergrowth, and attached themselves to men and horses.

At Tangu the cool mountain air completely revived them. It was a place of rhododendrons and silver fir trees. There were stunted birch and willows. Wild roses were in full bloom, and the ground was grass-covered and dotted with many varieties of flowers, which included the characteristic Tibetan blue poppy.

Then came a hitch. News came that neither Chinese nor Tibetan delegates had arrived at Khamba Jong.

Younghusband immediately decided to send Claude White and Captain O'Connor on in advance to Khamba Jong with the escort. They would make preliminary arrangements, while he remained at Tangu with the support troops.

On 2 July, Claude White and Captain O'Connor, with the Sepoy escort, moved forward some nine or ten miles. Ahead lay Giaogong, and beyond that the Kangra Pass, 18,800 feet above sea level, leading into Tibet. As they climbed higher, so the trees dwindled and vanished and were replaced with dwarf rhododendrons. Then, as they neared Giaogong, a Tibetan official with an unarmed escort met them on the road.

Both parties drew rein, and the Tibetan official informed them that he was the Khamba Jongpen, in other words, the commander of the Khamba fort. He was also the magistrate of the Khamba area. The Jongpen told White and O'Connor that a General and a Chief Secretary of the Dalai Lama were now awaiting them at Giaogong, on the north side of the wall.

White replied that his party would be camping that night south of the wall, where he and Captain O'Connor would be very happy to greet the General and the Chief Secretary, but that they were not prepared to halt or hold any discussion at Giaogong. All talks were to take place at Khamba Jong, as was agreed with the Chinese Government.

The Jongpen accepted this information with a rueful countenance; then he and his escort turned round and rode back to Giaogong. The Mission party pitched camp for the night south of the wall; but nobody came to see them.

On the following morning O'Connor rode on ahead of Claude White to the wall. The Khamba Jongpen once more approached and begged him to stop. Again he was told that no discussion was possible at this point. When Claude White rode up, the Jongpen still did his best to persuade them to dismount.

White and O'Connor rode through the gateway in the Giaogong wall without further opposition from the Khamba Jongpen, but on the north side they saw the two Lhasa officers approaching along the road. They were arrayed in yellow silk, and accompanied by a crowd of unarmed retainers. Captain O'Connor immediately went forward to meet them. One of the officers was a Lhasa Depon or

General; the other, a monk, was a Chief Secretary. This conformed to the Tibetan official procedure that all matters of State were jointly conducted by lay and clerical officials of equivalent rank.

The yellow-robed officers dismounted and asked Captain O'Connor and Mr. White to do likewise, and to retire with them to their tent close by, and partake of refreshment, and to discuss the matter.

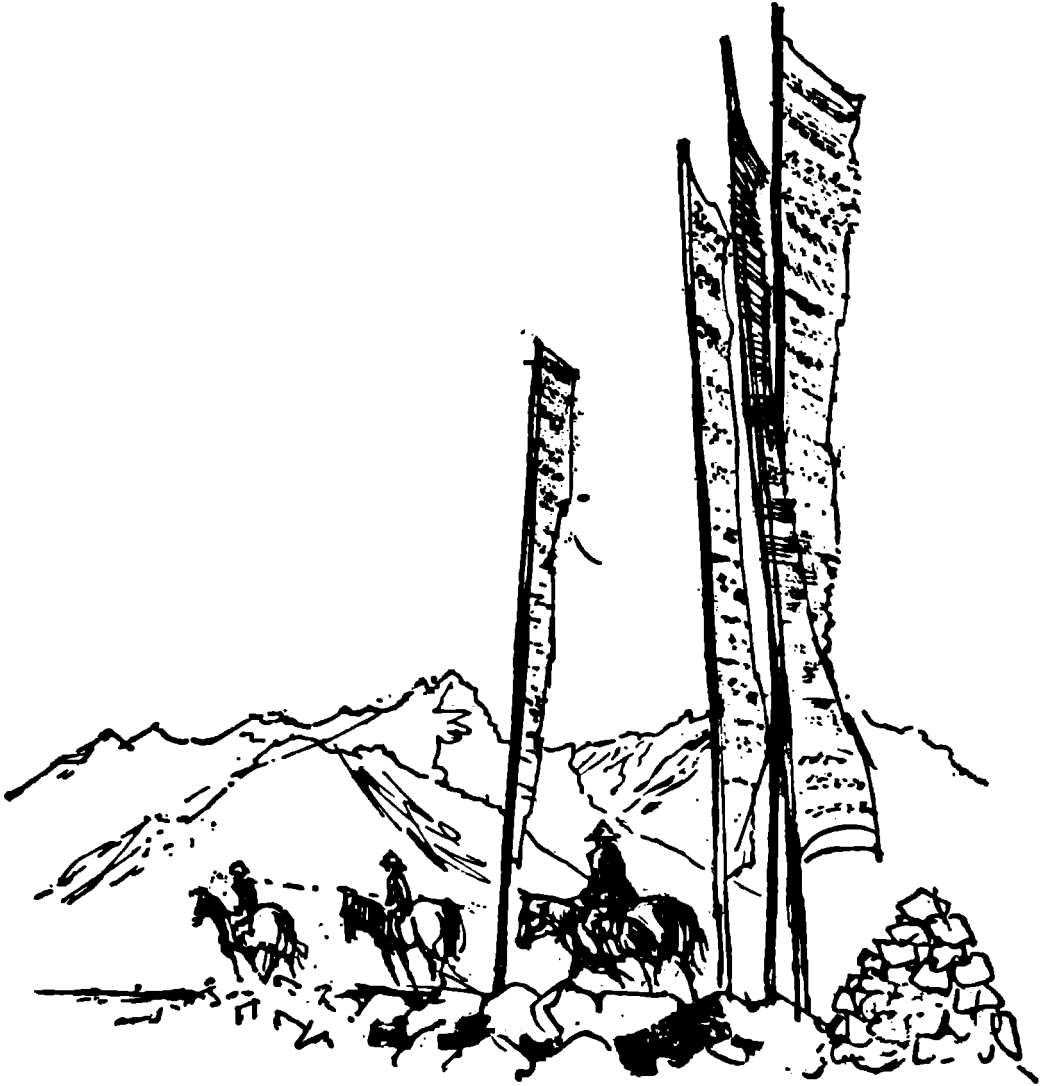
O'Connor once more replied that the Assistant Commissioner was not prepared to break his journey at Gjaogong, but would be happy to see them at his camp that evening. At the same time he pointed out that any discussion must be deferred until the arrival of Major Younghusband and the Chinese Commissioner at Khamba Jong.

This refusal to halt obviously upset the two Tibetan officers, for they at once came forward on foot and, catching hold of the horses' bridles, urged them to dismount. At the same time Tibetan servants pressed round the horses of the escort officers, and tried to lead them away.

There was a moment of tension. Very civilly, Claude White appealed to the Lhasa officers to let go their horses. As this had no effect, he called up several Sepoys to clear the way. This was done, and without further obstruction the British party proceeded along the road. The two yellow-robed Tibetans remounted their ponies and rode back to their own camp.

Only the Khamba Jongpen continued his protestations, urging them to halt for the day and to confer with the Lhasa officers. Actually, the unfortunate commander of Khamba Jong was in an unhappy position. His orders had

been to stop the Mission or any of its personnel crossing into Tibet; failure to do so, whatever the reason, might well cost him his liberty and fortune, if not his life.



Claude White and Captain O'Connor rode quietly across the Kangra-la, with its festoons of tattered Tibetan prayer flags blowing in the wind

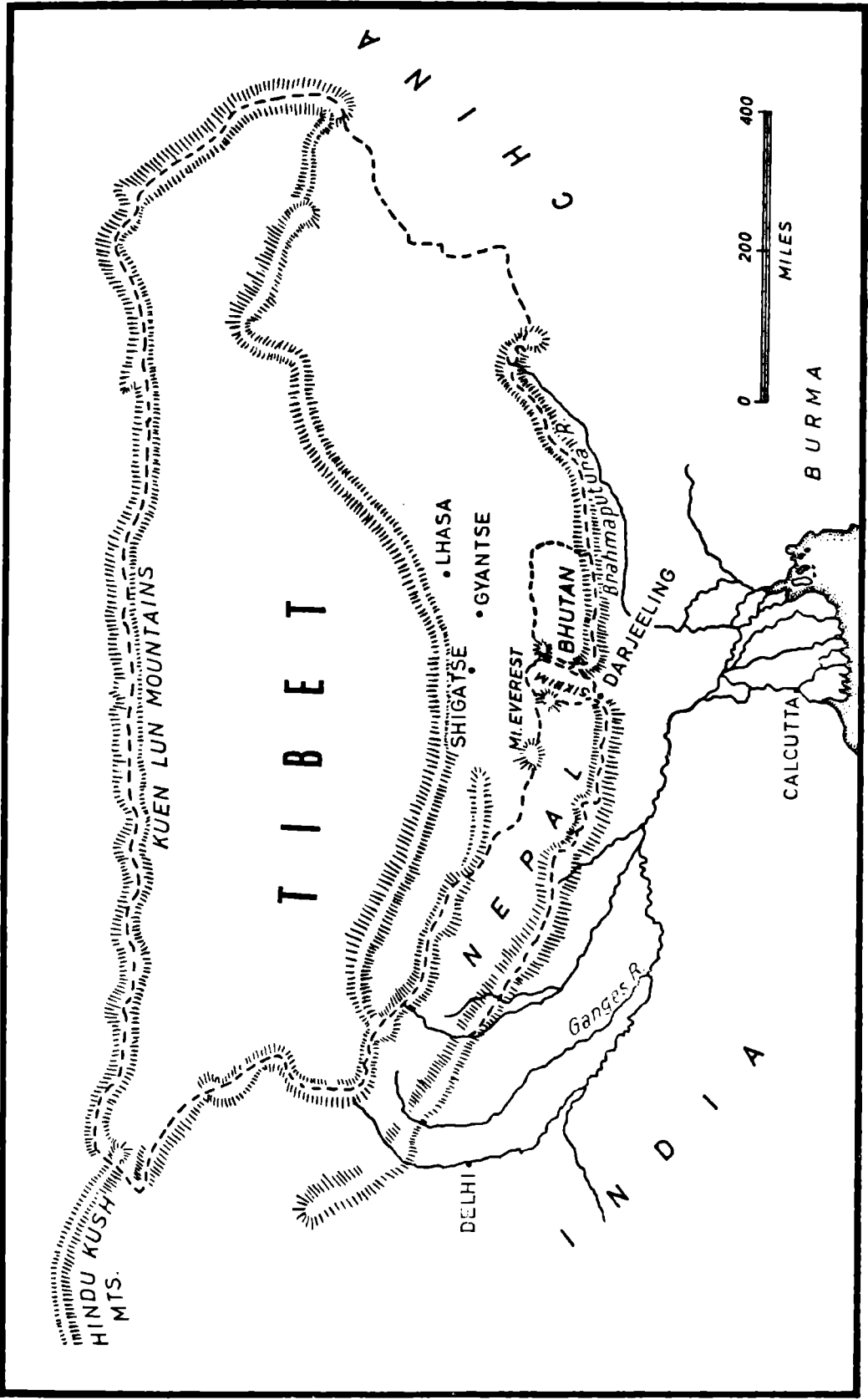
He was therefore in a very excited state, pleading and arguing and threatening, and hinting at the danger of full-scale hostilities. He said: "You may flick a dog once or

twice without his biting, but if you tread on his tail, even if he has no teeth, he will turn and try to bite you.”

O'Connor tried to point out to the Jongpen that that was precisely the position the British were in. It was the Tibetans who had seized British territory and had abducted British subjects, not we theirs!

At last the Jongpen left them, and rode on as fast as his pony would take him to his own fort. More slowly, the advance party pushed on towards the Kangra-la, which led into Tibet. As they neared the pass they were met by a messenger from the Chinese delegate, Mr. Ho, who wished them to know that he had arrived at Giri, seven miles on the Tibetan side of the Kangra-la, and requested that they should remain at Giaogong.

Mr. Ho's request was not complied with. The next day Claude White and Captain O'Connor with the escort rode quietly across the Kangra-la, with its festoons of tattered Tibetan prayer flags blowing in the wind and its cairn of stones, to which the faithful in passing would add a further stone to pacify the spirit of the pass.



3

Stalemate at Khamba Jong

UNEXPECTEDLY, there was no opposition, and the party crossed into Tibetan territory without meeting anyone except the Chinese Commander of the small military post at Giri. He went by without a word, to all outward appearances blandly unaware of two hundred men invading his domain.

The advance party camped that night near Giri, where they received a visit from Mr. Ho, who formally requested that the Mission should remain there instead of moving on to Khamba Jong. The request was politely refused, after which Mr. Ho ceased all opposition.

On 7 July, Claude White and O'Connor, with their escort, marched to Khamba Jong, twenty miles inside Tibet. The Jong was an imposing building, perched on the summit of a lofty crag that rose several hundred feet above the level of the plain, where it dominated its surroundings, looking like a medieval castle, with steep slopes up to its sides. The Mission pitched camp by a small stream close under the Jong itself, forming a picturesque contrast between the old and the new.

Under medieval conditions—and at the time of the Younghusband Mission the Tibetans were still a medieval people—it would have been a difficult fort to capture.

No one greeted them when they arrived at Khamba Jong, but a letter was delivered from the Chinese Mr. Ho informing them that he had instructed the Jongpen to provide them with such supplies as might be needed.

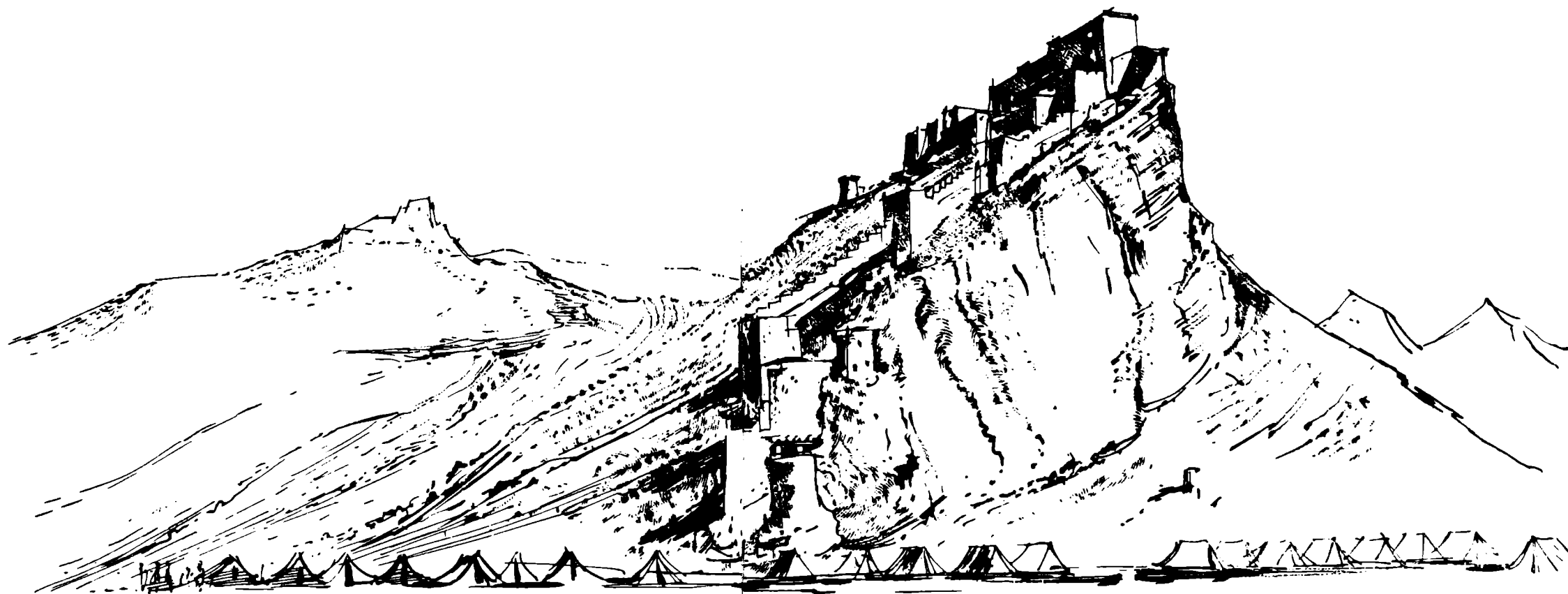
On the strength of this, Mr. White wrote to the Jongpen, but the letter was returned unopened, and with it a somewhat unceremonious verbal message.

This was not very promising, and the next day the Mission's transport officer, Major Bretherton, found a fertile valley about four miles away where there was good grazing, barley crops, and sheep and cattle in abundance. Supplies, which were at all times paid for, were thus assured. Earthworks were thrown up around the camp, which put it into a strongly defensive position. It would have been difficult to take by storm. Although it was hoped to avoid direct collision with the Tibetans, reconnaissance patrols brought back information that troops were in the neighbourhood.

The Jongpen apparently relented his previous rudeness, for he called at the camp with two junior officials bringing with him presents from the Lhasa delegates, and his own apologies. He was now quite prepared to supply the Mission with the grass it needed.

The two Lhasa officials turned up at Khamba Jong on 11 July. They were polite, but limited themselves to saying with almost parrot-like insistence: "Return to Giaogong, and we will talk to you."

At Tangu, Major Younghusband was debating his next move. Between him and his advance party was Giaogong, which was occupied by Tibetan troops, cutting across his



Khamba Jong, looking like a medieval castle, was perched on a lofty crag, where it dominated the surrounding country

lines of communication. He expected daily to find those lines cut.

He debated driving the Tibetans out of Giaogong and back over the border into Tibet, but decided against it as that was one of the matters on which it had been arranged to negotiate at Khamba Jong. Delegates of some sort had arrived from Lhasa, though they had been extremely evasive, under O'Connor's questioning, as to the extent of their powers to negotiate. Younghusband's decision was to ignore the troops at Giaogong, and to ride through to Khamba Jong which presided over that bare stretch of earth, dotted with big boulders and patches of coarse grass, that composed the Khamba plain.

Crossing the Kangra-la, Younghusband was greatly im-

pressed with the change of scenery, where the narrow valleys of Sikkim were exchanged for the broad Tibetan plain which was completely treeless, and could be crossed in any direction. In the far distance were the great ranges of mountains of the central Himalayas.

After the rain on the lower slopes of Sikkim, the sky was quite cloudless and intensely blue, the sun shining with a remarkable intensity. During the day the shade temperature was in the region of eighty-two degrees, yet at night, owing to the altitude, there would be four degrees of frost.

"As we rode into Tibet and got out into the open, and well away from the Himalayan range, we obtained a glorious view of that stupendous range from Chumalhari, 24,000

feet, on the extreme east, to Kangchenjunga, 28,275 feet, in the centre, and Everest itself, 29,002 feet, and ninety miles distant in the far west.”

The first person Major Younghusband called upon was the Chinese delegate, Mr. Ho, who had with him the two Tibetan delegates. Younghusband was not particularly impressed with Mr. Ho who, though amiable, lacked polish. In contrast to Mr. Ho, the Tibetan Chief Secretary made an extremely good impression. His style and manner were genial and engaging. He was clearly very accomplished, and at that stage he appeared friendly.

Unfortunately, as Younghusband ruefully observed, his manner and appearance quite belied him. In all respects, and right up to the final signing of the Treaty, the Chief Secretary was the enemy of the Mission. Much of the irritation and delay that followed could be laid at his door.

No progress whatever was made at Khamba Jong under the influence of the Chief Secretary. After a few formal calls the Tibetan delegates shut themselves up in the Jong and refused to have any further dealings with the Mission. Mr. Ho also gave up the struggle, and after observing that the Tibetans were very ignorant and difficult to deal with, retired to Lhasa on grounds of ill-health.

Occasionally a minor Chinese official came to the camp, but the purpose of such a visit was curiosity rather than business. Local Tibetans, too, intrigued by the presence of “*Feringhies*”, as they and the Chinese called the British, would lounge for hours outside the camp perimeter.

Despite the failure of direct negotiations, during which time discussions were taking place between the Indian

Government and Peking, Younghusband enjoyed his surroundings. He did not let the present stalemate dampen his interest during the three months he was to spend at Khamba Jong.

He often went out with members of the scientific staff on botany expeditions, or collecting fossils, or undertaking geological research. Younghusband, who combined in his stocky frame the man of action and the man of meditation, was entirely satisfied with his surroundings, and the stark beauty of this barren plateau fascinated him.

“As I looked out of my tent in the early morning, while all below was still wrapped in steely grey, far away in the distance the first streaks of dawn would be just gilding the snowy summits of Mount Everest, poised high in heaven as the spotless pinnacle of the world. By degrees the whole great snowy range would be illuminated and shine out in dazzling, unsullied whiteness. Then through all the day it would be bathed in ever-varying hues of blue and purple till the setting sun clothed it in a final intensity of glory, and left one hungering for daylight to appear again.”

There was opportunity for careful survey work over a wide area, for though the Tibetans had broken off any pretence at negotiations, the movement of individuals outside the camp was not at that time restricted. Observations were made to augment existing maps.

It must not be thought that because Tibet was a closed country it was poorly mapped. The opposite, in fact, was the case. Maps had been constructed from early times. There were maps made by Roman Catholic missionaries in the eighteenth century, and earlier, when foreigners were

admitted into the country. There was also the famous Lama Survey, which had been made at that time by Tibetan Lamas trained in map making, at the instigation of the Emperor of China.

The most important survey of Tibet was that made by British agents at the time of the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India in the middle years of the nineteenth century. Under the direction of Colonel Montgomery of the India Survey Office, certain Tibetans, who lived on the southern Himalayan slopes and had become British subjects, were trained in survey work. They were taught to use the sextant and prismatic compass, and how to recognize the fixed stars, and to use the boiling-point thermometer for altitude reading.

These men set out in the year 1866, and subsequently, under a variety of disguises, to survey Tibet. They methodically travelled the length and breadth of that high tableland, mapping it in secret. It was dangerous work, for had they been caught they would almost certainly have suffered the most cruel penalties. Nevertheless, those brave and devoted men faithfully and zealously carried out their task.

One of the most famous of these survey "Pandits", as they were called, was Nain Sing. Disguised as a merchant from Laydak, he reached Lhasa in the latter part of 1866, and was the first person exactly to determine its latitude and longitude.

Nain Sing, like the rest of his survey comrades, did his work with the aid of his prayer-wheel and rosary, which were the outward symbols of the devout Buddhist, or holy man. There were, however, slight differences between the survey, Pandit's imitation rosary and prayer-wheel and the

genuine articles. A Buddhist's rosary contains one hundred and eight beads. The Pandit's contained only one hundred. A Tibetan prayer-wheel is packed with closely printed prayers on scrolls of paper, and that which is carried in the hand may contain several thousand such prayers. Each twirl of the wheel offers that number of prayers to heaven;



The Survey "Pandit", Nain Sing, did his mapping of Tibet with the aid of his prayer-wheel and rosary

the greater number of spins, the greater the number of prayers offered up, and the greater the merit gained thereby.

In Tibet there are prayer-wheels of every size up to giant barrel-like wheels, ten to twelve feet high, containing literally millions of printed prayers. These are mounted at the entrances to temples, sometimes in batteries of eight or ten, and are on such smooth-running bearings that the slightest brush of the hand of the passer-by sets them

revolving. Some are spun by wind machines; others are in the form of great water-wheels.

Nain Sing's prayer-wheel was innocent of printed prayers. Instead there were blank strips of paper, useful for recording survey data.

The measurement of distances was carried out by pacing and counting the number taken. At every hundred paces the survey Pandit would let a bead of his rosary slip through his fingers, and very accurate measurements were achieved that way.

It was soon discovered that a prayer-wheel was exempt from official or customs inspection. Consequently, it became a convenient receptacle for concealing a prismatic compass. It was also useful for warding off persons who looked as though they might ask inconvenient questions. Tibet being a thinly populated country, a stranger on the road is immediately an object of interest, if not of suspicion. It is, however, recognized by Buddhists that anyone employed in spinning his prayer-wheel is occupied with devotional thoughts, and must not be disturbed, wherefore it was only necessary for the survey spy to twirl his prayer-wheel busily if he saw anyone approaching who might prove to be an awkward customer.

It is related that while in Lhasa, Nain Sing went with a party of pilgrims into the Potala Palace, and into the presence of the Dalai Lama. Nain Sing was very apprehensive that the Dalai Lama, who is credited with omniscience, and able to read men's minds, should see through his disguise. It was an anxious time, but Nain Sing emerged without being detected.

Another survey Pandit, named Krishna, crossed and re-

crossed Tibet up to the frontiers of Mongolia, China and Burma. When his figures were calculated out in the Survey Office his work was so accurate that it fitted almost exactly with all the known points on those borders.

There was Pandit B who, when he reached Lhasa, carried out the ritual journey along the circular road, called the Ling-kor, which encompasses Lhasa, including the Potala and the great Buddhist Temple. This circular road is continually perambulated by monks and devotees. They move in a clockwise direction, with ritual devotions, until the circuit is completed.

Pandit B carried out this religious exercise in every detail, noting the exact number of paces and genuflexions to accomplish the journey. On his return to India he laboriously went through the entire ritual, and thereby established the length of the circular road, and from his other data, the area of land it contained.

So thorough were those surveys that the maps subsequently made during the Younghusband Mission added very little to what was already known, though they confirmed the Pandits' findings to a striking degree.

During Younghusband's stay at Khamba Jong, while the Lhasa officers were sulking in their fort, the Mission received other distinguished visitors. In particular, two important representatives of the Tashi Lama, or, as he is sometimes called, the Panchen Lama, called on the Mission. Khamba lies in the province of Tsang, most of which is under the jurisdiction of the Tashi Lama, who is of equal spiritual importance to the Dalai Lama, though politically less so.

These visitors, unlike the Lhasa delegates, were friendly, and became immensely popular with the members of the Mission. One of them was the Abbot of the Tashi Lhumpo monastery. He was a delightful companion, deeply interested in everything to do with the British, and very intelligent.

He was, however, entirely medieval in learning and upbringing. It was as though one were talking to an educated man of the tenth century. Thus, he was on one occasion paying careful attention to O'Connor's account concerning recent scientific discoveries when, to everyone's surprise, he commented that the western world was quite wrong in believing that the earth was round like a ball. The earth was, in fact, flat, and triangular in shape, rather like a shoulder of mutton, and Tibet occupied nearly half of its superficial area!

Despite these agreeable diversions, the purpose of the Mission was being stifled, and the situation worsening.

Two Sikkim men who had gone to the Tibetan town of Shigatse, had been arrested and thrown into prison. There was a report that they had been tortured or killed. In spite of demands for their return to Sikkim, the Tibetans refused to release them. As a retaliatory measure, the Mission seized some Tibetan herds, and expelled all the Tibetans who were at Giaogong.

Reconnaissance patrols reported the massing of Tibetan troops, and Younghusband received the information that nearly 3,000 men were occupying the hills above where the Mission was encamped. So far, they were passive in their waiting role, but the indications were that when winter set in they would attack the Mission. Tibetan refusal to

negotiate was complete, and that despite the fact the Dalai Lama himself had agreed to Khamba Jong as the meeting place for the Mission and Tibetan delegates.

The Tashi Lhumpo Abbot remained faithful in his attachment to the members of the Mission, so much so that the Chinese were quite convinced that he had been accepting bribes from the *Feringhies*! The Abbot tried hard to find a peaceful solution to the present stalemate, but his ideas on that matter were somewhat ineffectual.

“One day he lunched with us,” wrote Major Younghusband, “and assured us that he had made a divination that Yatung [a hamlet at the southern end of the Chumbi Valley] was the place where negotiations would be carried out quickest. I said that what we wanted to find was a place where the negotiations could be carried out, not quickest, but best; and I asked him to consult his beads again to see if Shigatse [a town in the Tsang province, second in importance to Lhasa] would not be suitable in that respect. He laughed and replied that the divination had to be made in front of an altar to the accompaniment of music.”

It was now evident that the Tibetans were massing troops for open war on the Mission. Younghusband returned to India for urgent talks with the Viceroy. It was clear that the Mission would have to be put on a much bigger footing, and that a far deeper penetration into Tibet would have to be made to convince the Tibetan Government of British determination to arrive at a proper and enduring settlement with them.

4

Previous Visitors to Tibet

THE stalemate at Khamba Jong served one useful purpose. It produced movement in another direction. A few days after Younghusband's departure for talks with the Viceroy, O'Connor was called back to India to discuss the military situation. By November it was agreed that a new and much deeper advance would have to be made to impress upon those strangely difficult people the urgency of the situation.

Tibet had not always been the forbidden country with which the Government was now dealing. In earlier times there had been friendly contact with India, though foreigners had never been encouraged to visit Lhasa, and the high Tibetan plateau, which averages from 12,000 feet to 15,000 feet above sea level, had made it difficult to reach. Everything had conspired to keep the Tibetans a secluded people, while their Chinese overlords found it convenient to foster this seclusion, thereby creating a buffer state between China and India.

Nevertheless, many seventeenth-century travellers succeeded in reaching Lhasa, including Jesuit and Capuchin monks.

The first official British contact with Tibet was made in

the year 1774, when Warren Hastings, one of the great Governors-General of India, appointed Mr. George Bogle to head a Mission to Tibet. Warren Hastings was a man of opportunity, and the chance to make this approach had suddenly come his way.

In the year 1772, the Bhutanese had raided Cooch Behar, a dependency of the East India Company, and had carried off the Rajah as prisoner. Warren Hastings sent troops and utterly defeated the Bhutanese. He was then about to teach the Bhutanese a severe lesson, when he unexpectedly received a letter from the Tashi Lama interceding on behalf of the raiders whose spiritual head he was.

Warren Hastings immediately responded to the Tashi Lama's intercession. He forgave the Bhutanese and withdrew his troops. He then decided to send a Mission to Tibet, and selected Mr. Bogle who, though only twenty-eight years of age, was highly qualified for the task. It was the Governor-General's wish that he should hold conversations with the two great incarnate Lamas, namely the Tashi Lama, and the Dalai Lama, though the latter at that time was a minor. During his minority the Tashi Lama was Regent. In a letter dated 13 May, 1774, Hastings wrote to Bogle:

"I desire you to proceed to Lhasa. The design of your Mission is to open up equal communication of trade between the inhabitants of Tibet and Bengal, and you will be guided by your own judgment in such means of negotiating as may be most likely to effect that purpose. You will take with you samples, for trial, of such articles of commerce as may be sent from this country. . . . And you will diligently inform yourself of the manufactures, productions, goods,

introduced by the intercourse with other countries, which are to be procured in Tibet. . . .

“The following will be also proper objects of your enquiry; the nature of the road between the borders of Bengal and Lhasa, and of the country between; the communications between Lhasa and the neighbouring countries. The period of your stay will be left to your discretion. . . .”

No man could have wished for more lucid and comprehensive instructions. George Bogle set off for Tibet with letters and presents from the Governor-General and samples of manufactured goods by which he hoped to tempt the Tibetans into commercial relations. He also took with him a supply of seed potatoes.

The potatoes were Warren Hastings's idea. Potatoes at that time were unknown in the mountainous country beyond India's northern border, and might be introduced as a valuable article of food. Mr. Bogle was instructed to plant a few potatoes at each stopping place where conditions were favourable.

Bogle meticulously carried out this task, sometimes noting the fact in his diary. That potatoes are plentiful in Tibet today are somewhat due to Warren Hastings's thought in the matter.

On 23 October, 1774, Mr. Bogle arrived at the village of Phari in the Chumbi Valley. He was there met by two Lhasa officers who acted as his escort. On 8 November he reached Shigatse where the Tashi Lama resided in the monastery of Tashi Lhumpo. The next day he had an audience with the Lama, and presented him with a letter from Warren Hastings, also several gifts including a pearl necklace and a gold watch.

This was the first interview ever to have taken place between a British officer and a Tibetan ruler. It was an historic occasion, and one that was to have a strange echo one hundred and thirty years later, when Captain O'Connor paid an official visit to the Tashi Lama at Tashi Lhumpo.

The Tashi Lama received Mr. Bogle with great kindness and courtesy. The two conversed in Hindustani, the Tashi Lama strolling about the room and explaining the pictures and objects there. The Lama also remarked with some wonder at the colour of Mr. Bogle's eyes, which were blue.

It is evident that the Tashi Lama made a very deep impression on Bogle, who afterwards always spoke of him with the greatest affection and reverence. He wrote in his diary:

“Although venerated as God's vice-regent through all the eastern countries of Asia, endowed with a portion of omniscience and with many other divine attributes, he throws aside, in conversation, all the awful parts of his character, accommodates himself to the weakness of mortals, endeavours to make himself loved rather than feared, and behaved with the greatest affability to everyone, particularly to strangers.”

Speaking of the British and the East Indian Company, the Tashi Lama said:

“I have heard much of the power of the *Feringhies*; that the Company was like a great king, and fond of war and conquest; and as my business and that of my people is to pray to God, I was afraid to admit any *Feringhies* into my country. But I have learned since that the *Feringhies* are a fair and just people.”

And so Mr. Bogle established the most happy and cordial relations with the Tashi Lama. When the time came for them to part, the Tashi Lama took from his own neck three charmed strings of beads forming a necklace. These he presented to his friend, telling him that any ladies on whom he might bestow them would be protected from all evil.

Bogle returned to India, his mission partly fulfilled. He did not get to Lhasa, for the Lhasa officials did not share the Tashi Lama's same generous attitude. Thus he did not meet the young Dalai Lama.

The friendship between Bogle and the Tashi Lama, which was sustained by subsequent correspondence, and by Mr. Bogle arranging for a Buddhist temple to be built on the Ganges for the use of Tibetans in India, as requested by the Tashi Lama, was of tragically short duration. The Tashi Lama died of smallpox four years later while in Peking on a visit to the Emperor of China. Mr. Bogle died suddenly of a fever in Calcutta the following April.

This was a severe blow to Warren Hastings's hopes of expanding trade relations with Tibet. In 1782, however, the news reached India that, in accordance with the Tibetan idea of reincarnation, the Tashi Lama had reappeared in the person of an infant born exactly at the time the Tashi Lama had died.

Warren Hastings sent his cousin, Captain Samuel Turner, to congratulate the Regent. Captain Turner, who spent nearly a year in Tibet, promoting goodwill with India, was accorded an interview with the new Tashi Lama. It was an audience with a child eighteen months old, who was seated on a throne with his parents sitting at his left hand. Captain

Turner was informed that the young Tashi Lama, though as yet unable to speak, could fully understand what was said to him.

Captain Turner thereupon addressed the young child in these words:

“The Governor-General on receiving the news of your decease in China was overwhelmed with grief and sorrow, and continued to lament your absence from the world until the cloud that had overcast the happiness of your nation was dispelled by your reappearance; and then, if possible, a greater degree of joy had taken place than he had experienced grief on receiving the first mournful news. The Governor-General anxiously wished that you might long continue to illumine the world with your presence, and was hopeful that the friendship which had formerly subsisted between us would not be diminished, but rather that it might become still greater than before; and that by your continuing to show kindness to his fellow-countrymen there might be an extensive communication between your votaries and the dependents of the British nation.”

It was recorded that the infant looked steadfastly at Captain Turner with the appearance of much attention, and nodded with repeated slow motions of the head as though he understood and approved every word. His whole attention was directed to the envoy, and he conducted himself with astonishing dignity and decorum. He was the handsomest child Captain Turner had ever seen.

After that occasion no other British officer was to have an audience with the Tashi Lama until, at the successful conclusion of Younghusband's Mission, Captain O'Connor

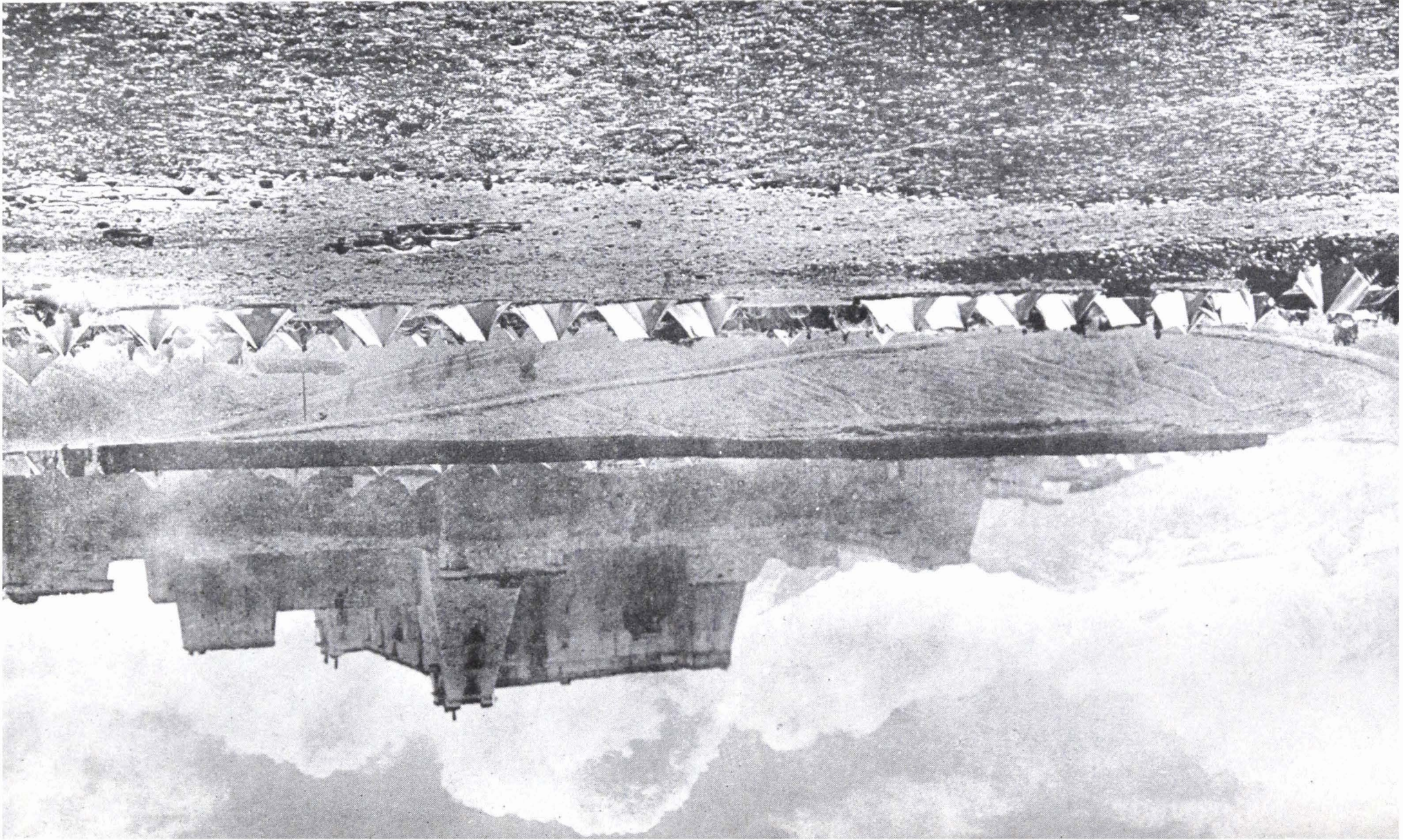
was received in audience. As happened with Mr. Bogle, Captain O'Connor and the Tashi Lama became great friends. Later, O'Connor was to escort the Tashi Lama to India where he was the guest of honour of the Indian Government, and there met the Prince and Princess of Wales, afterwards King George V and Queen Mary.

At the first meeting between the Tashi Lama and O'Connor occurred a strange echo of Bogle's first visit. The Tashi Lama said how pleasant it was *once more to meet a British officer!* No other British officer had ever met this Tashi Lama before, and O'Connor was startled. Then he remembered the Tibetan concept of reincarnation. Nevertheless, the Tashi Lama spoke with such vivid detail of his meeting with Mr. Bogle, the subjects they had discussed together, and the presents they had exchanged, that it seemed indeed as though the Tashi Lama of Mr. Bogle's time and the Tashi Lama to whom Captain O'Connor was speaking were one and the same man.

He showed O'Connor the presents Bogle had brought, and O'Connor noticed that the mainspring of the gold watch was broken. Accordingly, he persuaded the Tashi Lama to let him take it away and send it to India to be repaired. In due course it was returned in perfect working order.

It is true to say that so long as Warren Hastings remained Governor-General of India, affairs with Tibet prospered. But grave misfortune followed his departure from India. Nepal, then a fierce and warlike independent state, invaded Tibet, sacked the town of Shigatse, and looted the monasteries.

The mission camped at Khamba Jong





(Above) A typical Tibetan trader



(Left) The dresses of these three Himalayan princesses have not altered in design for a thousand years

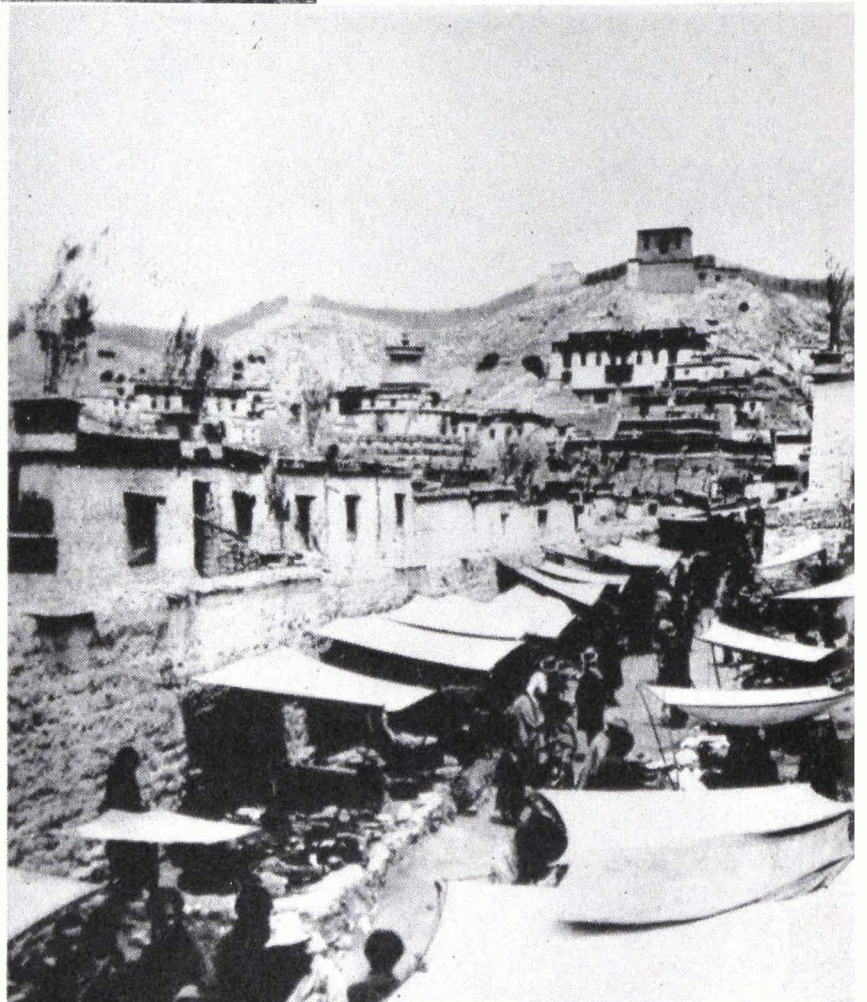


(Above) Some yaks and drivers of the expedition. (Below) Yaks crossing a river by a suspension bridge while men paddle over in cowhide boats





(Left) A view of the Lhasa road, with mules



(Right) The bazaar at Gyantse

Tibet appealed to the Emperor of China for help, and a Chinese army was dispatched to their aid. The Nepalese were driven back across their own frontier, and suffered a humiliating defeat near Katmandu, the capital. They were forced to surrender all their Tibetan plunder. As a result of this victory, the Chinese recovered some of their lost authority over Tibet, and greatly influenced the selective attitude of Tibet towards other countries, particularly Indians and Europeans.

Now it so happened that at about the time of the Nepalese attack on Tibet the first British envoy to Nepal had arrived at Katmandu. The Chinese Army Commander was quite convinced that the British had instigated the attack on Tibet. This false assumption became widely believed, and quite undid all the good work done by Warren Hastings. From then on Tibet virtually closed her frontier to India.

Until the Younghusband Mission, hardly any Europeans succeeded in getting into Tibet. Even when the Tibetans made an unprovoked attack on Sikkim, the British force which was sent to drive the invaders back into Tibet, and might reasonably have occupied the Chumbi Valley, did not cross the border. Twice more Tibet invaded Sikkim, and each time the British, in driving them back, refrained from occupying Tibetan territory.

Curiously, one Englishman, accompanied by his Chinese servant, boldly entered Tibet as a tourist, and became an historical exception. In the year 1811, without letters or visa, Thomas Manning, a notable English eccentric and friend of Charles Lamb, visited Tibet as a private traveller, and actually reached Lhasa.

Manning struck up a friendship with a Chinese General who was travelling to Lhasa with a detachment of soldiers. Manning, who had some knowledge of medicine, successfully treated several of the soldiers of their ailments, and soon found himself under the general's personal patronage and part of his entourage. The General also greatly admired Manning's long grey beard!

Arriving at Lhasa, Manning somehow managed to pass himself off as a Chinese gentleman, and there rented a house for himself and his Chinese *munchi*, or servant. As the *munchi* could speak no English, and Manning could speak no Chinese, they conversed in Latin.

Manning succeeded in being accorded an audience with the Dalai Lama, who was then a child. He records in his diary that when he went to the Potala Palace on that occasion he took with him some bright new dollar pieces as presents for the Dalai Lama and the head magistrate, called the Ti-mu-fu.

“Besides these I had some genuine Smith's lavender water, with which I filled two large handsome phials for the Grand Lama, and one for the Ti-mu-fu.”

When he had reached the presence in the great Audience Hall, Manning records that “I made due obeisance, touching the ground three times to the Grand Lama, and once to the Ti-mu-fu. I presented my gifts, delivering the coin and a handsome scarf with my own hands to the Grand Lama and the Ti-mu-fu. While I was kneeling the awkward servants contrived to let fall the bottle of lavender water intended for the Ti-mu-fu. Of course I seemed not to observe it, though the stream flowed close to me, and I

could not help seeing it with the corner of my eye. Having delivered my scarf to the Grand Lama, I took off my hat, and humbly gave him my clean-shaven head to lay his hands upon. The ceremony of presentation being over, *munchi* and I sat down on two cushions not far from the Lama's throne. . . . The Lama's beautiful and interesting face and manner engrossed almost all my attention. He was at that time about seven years old; had the simple and unaffected manners of a well-educated princely child. His face was, I thought, poetically and affectingly beautiful. He was of a gay and cheerful disposition; his beautiful mouth perpetually unbending into a graceful smile, which illuminated his whole countenance. Sometimes, particularly when he looked at me, his smile almost approached a gentle laugh."

Manning had several audiences with the Dalai Lama, though conversation between them was complicated. The Dalai Lama would ask questions in Tibetan, and these would then be translated into Chinese by an interpreter who addressed them to Manning's servant. The servant would then repeat the questions to Manning in Latin, who would reply to the Dalai Lama in the same way.

Thomas Manning resided in Lhasa for some months, he was then privately advised by friends to leave, as his life was in danger. The monks were becoming increasingly resentful of a foreigner in their midst, and Manning decided that it would be as well to go.

In due course he arrived back safely in India, the only Englishman ever to have stayed in Lhasa until the Young-husband Mission reached the Forbidden City.

5

An Advance in Strength

THERE are three towns of consequence in Tibet; Lhasa, the capital, and seat of the Dalai Lama; Shigatse, the seat of the Tashi Lama; and Gyantse, a sizeable market town on the road to Lhasa, and about one hundred and forty miles inside Tibet.

In deciding on the Mission's next move, the government ruled out Lhasa as the place for negotiation, though in many respects it was the logical venue, and Younghusband was convinced that the sacred city itself was the only place to impress upon the obtuse Tibetans the strength of British purpose to come to a clear-cut agreement regarding both trade and frontier disputes. The government, however, was sensitive to Russian susceptibilities as well as political feeling at home if the Mission should be ordered to Lhasa.

Accordingly, Gyantse was chosen as the place for negotiations with the Tibetans and Chinese. It was hoped that the deep advance into Tibet would be unopposed. Nevertheless, the Mission had to be in a position to defend itself in any emergency, and troops up to Brigade strength were detailed for escort and support duty. They numbered about 2,800 rifles with complementary troops including artillery, engineers and medical services.

Major Younghusband, as leader of the Mission, was

promoted to the rank of Colonel. Claude White was appointed Assistant Commissioner. The Military Commander, whose charge it was to defend the Mission and deliver it safely to Gyantse, was Colonel Macdonald, Royal Engineers. In matters purely military, Macdonald was in command, while in the political field and main objective of the Mission, Younghusband was the supreme authority.

It did not turn out to be an altogether happy arrangement. Younghusband was essentially enterprising and given to taking calculated risks—Colonel Peter Fleming describes him as “a thruster”—while Macdonald was a slow and cautious Scot who was for ever anticipating risks and seeking to avoid them. Consequently, at times their views were diametrically opposed. Nor was their relationship made easier by the fact that, in consideration of the size of his force, Macdonald was promoted to Brigadier-General. Thus he was senior in rank to Younghusband, though much of his time he was acting on orders from a man younger than himself and militarily his junior.

At Younghusband’s insistence, the original small force remained in occupation at Khamba Jong until the newly constituted Mission had advanced into Tibet by way of the Chumbi Valley, which, as the reader will remember, lies in the mountain enclave between Sikkim and Bhutan.

Younghusband emphasized that a withdrawal from Khamba Jong would be construed by the Tibetans as weakness, and might precipitate a military attack. So while the small force remained in its lonely and threatened camp at Khamba Jong, with the Mission temporarily in the care of Mr. Wilton of the China Consular Staff, phase two of the

Tibet Frontier Commission, as it was officially called, was being organized at top speed. Early in December the Mission with Macdonald's force set out through Sikkim towards the 14,390 feet high Jelap pass that leads into the Chumbi Valley.

This was a considerable military undertaking, being carried out in the face of a Himalayan winter. Such an operation had never before been attempted on the northern frontier of India, as being considered suicidal; but more recent military thought, together with Claude White's own expert opinion on the Sikkim-Tibet frontier, had reversed that opinion. It was decided that an organized large group of men could go with safety where a few would perish.

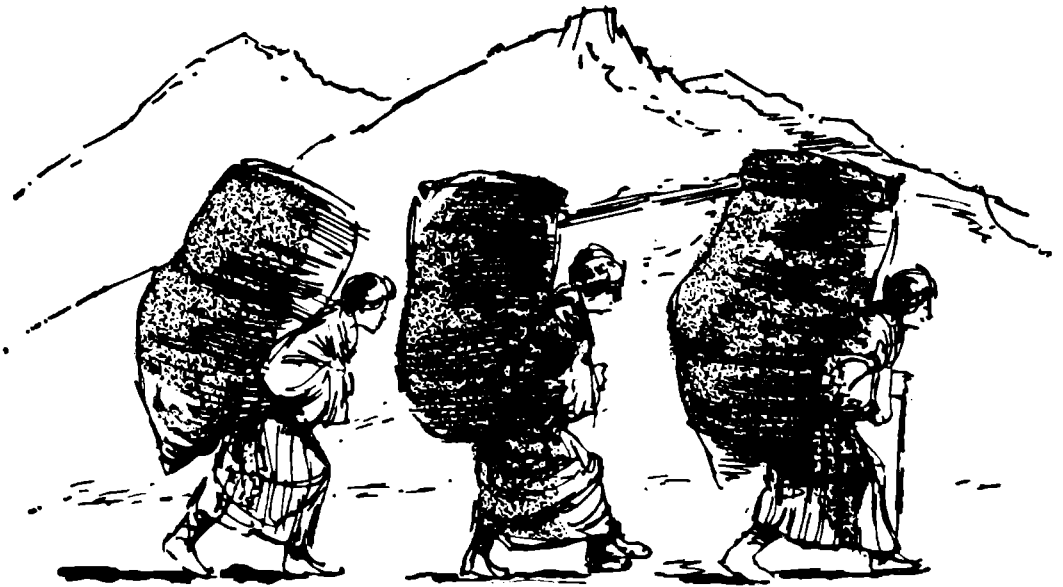
This winter advance was in many ways comparable with that of Hannibal crossing the Alps. Transport was the major problem, as no wheeled vehicles could be used after the first few miles from the railhead at Siliguri. Everything had to be carried, either by animals or coolie porters. For this gigantic move everywhere had been ransacked for pack animals. Ponies, donkeys, yaks, bullocks and mules were pressed into service. Even camels were tried, but they died on the way. The most reliable were the mules.

Porters were recruited from Himalayan hillmen, and among them were a large proportion of Tibetans.

On the move through Sikkim, from the Teesta river to the high dividing ridge, the moving, winding ribbon of soldiers, civilians, porters and animals extended for more than four miles as it crawled painfully to the "Roof of the World". In that extended line there were something like 3,000 soldiers and 7,000 porters.

The higher the army climbed, the thinner became the air, and the greater the strain on the lungs. Movement was painful and dwindled to a snail's pace at the high altitudes, with men and animals gasping for breath at every step and pausing after every few yards. Many of the pack animals died of exhaustion.

On 12 December the leading files crossed the Jelap-la. This pass is not over the main Himalayan watershed, but



Porters to carry the Mission's food and supplies were recruited from Himalayan hillmen

crosses the south spur that loops around the Chumbi Valley, separating it from Sikkim and Bhutan. The Jelap-la is a sharp, bare, rocky ledge, the final ascent to which is steep.

It had been expected that the Mission would meet with active opposition at the Jelap-la, and advance skirmishing parties were on the alert, for news of the intended advance had, of course, reached the Tibetan authorities. As it turned out, the pass was quite unguarded. The explanation for this

was provided by a Captain Parr, who was in Chinese employ at the Yatung customs station at the south end of the Chumbi Valley. The Chinese told him that the Tibetans had been expecting a formal declaration of intention from the British before the advance was started.

Thus, the only opposition met by the Mission, as it breasted the final harsh slope, was the icy wind from the north that cut through winter clothing as though it were the thinnest gauze, and the fluttering shreds of Tibetan prayer flags calling on the spirit of the pass.

In that wind, it was impossible to pause and study what lay ahead, but as each man drove himself over that rock ledge he had an instant view of the land that lay beyond—a countryside of wild hilltops flecked with snow, and deep, tree-clad valleys. Forty-five miles to the north gleamed the high mountains that separated the Chumbi Valley from the plateau of Tibet, their pinnacles flashing in the crystal morning light and dominated by the 23,930 feet high Chumilhari which marks the meeting-point of Tibet with Chumbi and Bhutan.

In the teeth of this biting winter blast, troops and porters and animals scrambled over the ridge and down the slippery northern slope of glacier and splintered rock. By evening the Mission was encamped in three groups in a narrow wooded gorge.

Here was relief from the weather, and the camp fires were comfortably lighted. Then through the little green valley, thickly wooded, came a small procession. It consisted of twenty or so Chinese soldiers, escorting two Chinese Mandarins and a Tibetan official dressed in bright silks.

Over each dignitary was held a huge ceremonial umbrella. It was picturesque, dramatic, and unexpected. The Mandarins were like brilliant exotic butterflies against the sombre green, while, surprisingly in that colourful group, was, unmistakably, a British officer—Captain Parr of the Chinese Customs.

Colonel Younghusband, accompanied by Captain O'Connor and Mr. White, moved forward to meet them. The two Mandarins were Chinese delegates. The Tibetan was the Phari Depon, the Governor of the Chumbi Valley, whose castle was at Phari at the head of the valley. Captain Parr was stationed at the southern end of the valley at the Trade Mart and Customs at Gartok, which had the status of a treaty port.

The deputation made the formal request that the Mission should retire to Gnatong on the Sikkim side of the Jelap-la, where discussions could then take place between the Tibetans and the British. Younghusband replied by re-affirming his intention to go on to Gyantse.

The Chinese then informed him that there was a defensive wall right across the valley at Yatung. What did Colonel Younghusband propose to do if they closed the gateway in the wall?

“If I find the gate closed,” replied Younghusband, “I shall be forced to blow it open.”

After that the deputation quietly retired along the winding track, and were lost to sight among the dark trees.

The next morning the advance party reached the Customs Post and Trade Mart at Yatung, where Captain Parr lived in his strangely lonely exile. (The Chinese had granted him

leave to go and fight with a British regiment during the Boer War in South Africa.) The Trade Mart looked forlorn and deserted. It was an impossible, melancholy spot in which to set up a trade mart between two countries, and in practice it was used by the Chinese to prevent trade from India entering Tibet, certainly not to encourage it.



A massive stone wall blocked the width of the Yatung valley and extended high up the mountainside

Beyond the Trade Mart a massive stone wall blocked the width of the valley and extended high up the mountainside. There was a break at one point where the river flowed through. The gate through which the road passed was left discreetly open.

As he reached the wall, Colonel Younghusband was once more met by the Chinese and Tibetan officials and Captain Parr. They again repeated their demands. Younghusband

again rejected them and rode through the gateway side by side with General Macdonald. As he passed through his bridle was seized by a Chinese soldier, and the Phari Depon protested that they should at least remain on the south side of the wall until matters could be arranged.

A short way on, Younghusband drew rein and dismounted. Calling together the officials and others, and seating himself on a large boulder, he explained the reason for the advance. A crowd of locals also gathered to listen, and when he had finished the Phari Depon once more voiced his protest.

This little ceremony over, the meeting broke up with smiles all round. At the invitation of Captain Parr the leaders of the Mission adjourned to his house where a very good lunch was served. The Mandarins and the Phari Depon also came along, their servants bringing Chinese and Tibetan delicacies, such as sharks' fins, bird's-nest soup, and black and putrid eggs to add to the European food. Glasses were filled and healths were drunk. Everybody was most amiable. The Phari Depon was the first to make his farewell, and departed rapidly up the valley in the direction of his own castle.

Phari was reached by the Mission on 22 December, and the Jong was occupied. It was then that the forward progress of the Mission slowed down. Younghusband was eager to press forward to Gyantse as quickly as possible, but was held back by Macdonald's caution and preoccupation with the security of his supply route from India. Macdonald also faced considerable transport problems.

The Mission had suffered heavily in animal casualties, and a large number of porters from one of the coolie corps had

deserted. A persistent and unfortunate rumour had grown up that the Mission was advancing to its own death. It was a feeling shared by both the local Tibetans and the porters.

On the other hand, the health of the men was very good, and the inhabitants of the Chumbi Valley, who are not true Tibetans, and speak their own dialect, were friendly, and willing to sell supplies. Their friendliness, however, was sharply curbed by the arrival at Phari of monks from Lhasa representing the three great ruling monasteries, namely the De-pung, Sera, and Ga-den. The monks, surly and unfriendly, imposed a ban on the trading of supplies to the Mission. They were somewhat put out, in their turn, by being threatened with immediate banishment from Chumbi by General Macdonald if they did not instantly withdraw the ban.

Younghusband was determined to press on to Tibet proper. The Chumbi Valley was not true Tibet, and there was no prestige in being there. Tuna, a small hamlet, lay a few miles beyond the Tang Pass that gave on to the tableland of Tibet. Younghusband wanted the Mission to be established at Tuna as soon as possible. Macdonald objected on military grounds, but Younghusband insisted.

The Mission camped below the Tang-la on the evening of 7 January. Younghusband records that the thermometer reading gave fifty degrees of frost that night.

“As I looked out of my tent at the first streak of dawn next morning there was a clear cutting feel in the atmosphere, such as is only experienced at great altitudes. The stars were darting out their rays with almost supernatural brilliance. The sky was of a steely clearness, into which one could

look unfathomable depths. Behind the great sentinel peak of Chumalhari, which guards the entrance to Tibet, the first streaks of dawn were just appearing. Not a breath of wind stirred, but all was gripped tight in the frost which turned buckets of water left out overnight into solid ice, and made the remains of last night's stew as hard as a rock. Under such conditions we prepared for our advance



Troops crossing the Tang-la at 15,200 feet above sea level

over the pass, and as the troops were formed on parade, preparatory to starting, it was found that many of the rifles and one of the Maxims would not work on account of the oil having frozen.”

Although the Tang-la was 15,200 feet above sea level, the ascent was so gradual, and the crossing so wide and smooth, that the troops could have advanced across it in line. It would not have been easy to tell when the top had been reached, but for the line of cairns of stones.

As they approached the cairns, the Tibetan servants and mule drivers stopped. They turned to face the sacred Chum-alhari, and each man placed a stone on a cairn as an offering to the gods.

In the clear air Tuna seemed very near on the flat Tibetan plain, but its nearness was an illusion. Hour after hour went by, and it was not until the afternoon that the place was reached.

It must have been one of the most miserable places in the world, and one of the filthiest. The Mission tried living in the squalid houses, but despite the intense cold of 15,000 feet, they preferred their tents. Another hardship was lack of fuel. They could not have the comfort of a fire, for no trees grew at this elevation, and only sufficient fuel for cooking could be provided, which for the most part consisted of yak-dung. Any wood they had was brought from Chumbi.

The advantages were that snow seldom fell, and during the day-time the sky was clear and the sun shone brilliantly. For Younghusband, the natural scenery was a joy of which he never tired. The gravel plain was perfectly smooth and level, and stretched for a breadth and width of more than ten miles each way, while on the far side was the range of mountains, their peaks snow-capped, that separated Tibet from Bhutan.

A Tibetan force had established itself at a point about ten miles ahead of the Mission towards the north. That was at Guru, a hamlet on the road to Gyantse. Reconnaissance by the mounted infantry estimated that there were now about 2,000 soldiers barring the way.

On 12 January a message was received from the Tibetan commander of the troops at Guru asking for an interview. Colonel Younghusband immediately invited this Lhasa General, who was called the Lheding Depon, to visit him at the camp at noon, and ordered a guard of honour to receive him.

Shortly before midday, several hundred horsemen appeared, galloping across the plain. They drew rein some distance from the Mission camp, and the Lhasa General sent word to Younghusband to come across as he would not venture into the camp, "being," as he said, "too suspicious of us."

Younghusband was deeply mortified that the Lhasa General should distrust the bona fides of his invitation. His response was a refusal to go out to meet the General. Instead, he sent Captain O'Connor to confer with the Lhasa General and hear what he had to say.

The Tibetan demand, which was expressed in polite terms, was that the Mission should retire to Yatung. The Lhasa General also said that if the Mission attempted to advance any further the Tibetan forces would be compelled to do everything in their power to prevent it. Should the Tibetans be defeated, then another power would come to their aid, the results of which would be disastrous to the British. This "other power" was obviously Russia, on whom Tibet was clearly pinning her faith. Later, under the spell of O'Connor's urbane and persuasive tongue, the Lhasa General hinted that they would be prepared to enter into discussions at Tuna.

With this news, O'Connor returned to his chief. Young-

husband was deeply gratified to learn that the Lhasa General had been courteous and amiable in all that he had to say, and that the Tibetans might be prepared to talk at Tuna. This seemed like a slight thawing of the ice between the two sides.

Younghusband was still hurt that the Lhasa General had not trusted him, but it seems likely that the Commissioner was now regretting that he had not swallowed his pride and gone to meet the Lheding Depon in that no-man's-land. Younghusband was not by nature stiff-necked and on his dignity.

It is also likely that while Younghusband was listening to O'Connor's report, a resolve was being formed subconsciously—a resolve to redeem by one simple act the whole situation. Though the Tibetans had been suspicious of him, and had remained at arm's length, and he in his turn had failed in generosity in declining to leave the camp to meet them, he would now do that very thing. He would visit the Tibetans in their own stronghold, and thereby demonstrate his complete faith and trust in them.

It is possible that he went to bed that night with those thoughts already half formed. It is known that he awakened in the night with the crystallized conviction that that was what he must do. Perhaps it was his conscience that had awakened him. Whatever it was, it was about to make him embark on what was without doubt the most dangerous and foolhardy act he had ever committed in his life.

6

Battle at the Wall

NEXT morning Younghusband told O'Connor of his plan to ride over and have an informal talk with the Tibetan leaders. It was a gamble, he admitted, but there was the chance that it would break the deadlock. He would need O'Connor's help; would he be prepared to go with him?

O'Connor was considerably taken aback by this proposal, but he was a man of resilience as well as personal courage.

"I knew the Commissioner too well by now to attempt any remonstrance, so I merely remarked that it was a bit risky, and declared myself ready to accompany him. The Officer Commanding our escort, Colonel Hogge, of the 23rd Pioneers, was concerned at the danger the Commissioner was proposing to run, but Colonel Younghusband absolved him from all responsibility, and said that he alone was responsible for what he was about to do."

Mr. Wilton of the China Consular Service tried to dissuade him from his hazardous enterprise, for he quite clearly saw the peril of it all. The violently hostile monks from Lhasa might well take such an opportunity to exact their vengeance on the man in whom they saw a possible threat to their hold on the superstitious peasants. But nothing would shake the

Commissioner's determination to take what he considered to be a justifiable risk.

As soon as they had had breakfast, Younghusband and O'Connor set off for Guru. With them was Captain Sawyer of the 23rd Pioneers, who was studying Tibetan and begged to be allowed to go with them. They took no orderlies, nor did O'Connor bring his Tibetan tutor, Shab-dung Lama, who had accompanied him on the Mission. The Lama would undoubtedly have been treated as a traitor by the Lhasa monks, and it was therefore prudent to leave him behind.

Theirs was a lonely venture, the sense of which was not lessened as they drew near to the Tibetan camp. This consisted of little more than a collection of yak-skin tents pitched in a haphazard manner among the houses and out-buildings of Guru.

There were no sentries, but as the unheralded visitors drew nearer, a group of horsemen rode out to meet them. Captain O'Connor announced who they were, and that they would like to be taken to the General. They were then conducted through the camp, passing down lines of gaping soldiers who had tumbled out of their tents to stare at the strangers. They were rough, amiable peasants, and they were mostly armed with ancient matchlocks and swords of antique design. Only here and there was a modern breech-loading rifle observed by the visitors.

The Tibetan leaders were in a well-built stone house, at the entrance of which Younghusband was met by the Lhasa General. He greeted them with affable courtesy, concealing any surprise he might have felt at this unexpected visit. He instantly recognized O'Connor with whom he had parleyed

only the day before. After the usual compliments, the Lhasa General and several lesser Tibetan Generals conducted the British officers to an upper room where the three yellow-robed representatives of the great Lhasa monasteries were seated on cushions.



Tibetan peasant soldier

After their formal greeting, to which the monks barely made response, the visitors were given places on cushions. The Generals likewise seated themselves, and buttered tea was served. Only when the tea-drinking ceremony was over did Younghusband explain the purpose of the visit. He emphasized that it was purely an unofficial visit of friendship, intended as a possible way to clear up any misunderstandings that might exist between the two sides.

The Generals gave careful attention, and asked questions, but the three monks were hostile, ill-mannered and arrogant,

and demanded that the Mission should instantly retire to Yatung.

They ignored all reasoning on the part of Colonel Young-husband, and under this savage barrage from the monks the air of amiability, which characterized the Generals' demeanour, was slowly swept away. The looks on their faces became serious; the atmosphere in the room became tense and strained. O'Connor said afterwards that he thought they would be arrested at any moment.

Younghusband remained outwardly quite unperturbed. What apprehensions he might have felt were completely masked. In his subsequent report to the India Office he said: "When I made a sign of going and said that I hoped they would come and see me at Tuna, their tone suddenly changed and they said we must go back to Yatung. One of the Generals said—though with perfect politeness of manner—that we had broken the rule of the road in coming into their country, and that we were nothing but thieves and brigands in occupying Phari fort. The monks, using forms of speech generally addressed to inferiors, loudly clamoured for me to name a date for our retirement from Tuna before I left the room; the atmosphere became electric; the faces of all became set; a General left the room; trumpets outside were sounded and attendants closed round us."

Younghusband, always at his best in moments of crisis, smiled blandly, and told O'Connor to keep his voice studiously calm and to appear at ease. The yellow-robed monks continued to demand that he should name a date for withdrawal, to which he patiently reiterated that that was a matter on which his Government alone could decide.

Suddenly the tenseness of the situation was released. A General suggested that a messenger should go back with the British officers to Tuna to receive the answer of the Viceroy on the withdrawal date. The other Generals at once agreed, and instantly the room was smiling again.

Only the monks continued to look as black as devils as Younghusband and his companions were escorted back to their ponies by the Lhasa General with the same easy politeness with which they had been received. In contrast with the rude and obstinate behaviour of the Lhasa monks, this courtesy invariably characterized the Tibetan Generals.

As Younghusband got into the saddle it was agreed that a deputy should visit the Mission on the morrow. Then the three men rode slowly out of the Tibetan camp into the bitter wind of the plain.

It had been a touch and a go. Not until they were well away from the Tibetan camp did Younghusband put spurs to his horse, and they passed from a trot to a canter, and from a canter to a gallop.

If it had achieved nothing else, the visit to Guru had shown clearly where the real opposition lay. The Lhasa monks were the enemies of the Mission, not the Generals. Their bitter determination to get rid of the British was founded on their fear of losing their hold over the superstitious peasants.

After the Guru visit there followed a period of deceptive quiet and seeming inaction. For Younghusband these were three trying months of waiting, while General Macdonald, back in the Chumbi Valley, was slowly building up for the advance to Gyantse.

In retrospect, it seems that that waiting period, which in other circumstances might well have brought about a peaceful solution, only made more certain the clash that was to come.

A few days after Younghusband's visit to Guru, the Lhasa General, accompanied by a Shigatse official of equivalent



The Lhasa General. He was affable and courteous to the British officers

rank, came to confer with the Commissioner. He was received with the guard of honour which he had missed on his first visit. In his relations with Orientals, Younghusband was a confirmed believer in ceremony and display of uniforms. A full dress uniform worn on the right occasion could often effect better results than a show of strength.

The Lhasa General told Younghusband that, as man to man, he was most anxious to come to a friendly settlement, and it was his personal request, as well as the official one, that

the Mission should go back to Yatung where talks could take place in the fullest harmony.

To that Younghusband inevitably had to say no. It was impossible to go back one yard now.

The Lhasa General was indeed an ill-starred man. The fiercely dogmatic monks on the one hand, and the rigid determination of the British on the other, were the upper and nether millstones that were finally to crush him. It was his duty to make Younghusband retire, yet he was powerless to enforce it; it was likewise his duty to report the Commissioner's counter-proposals, but the monks refused to transmit them to Lhasa.

Other messengers came and went and there were further fruitless talks. The hard winter conditions on the windswept plain slowly gave way to the promise of spring. At Chumbi, the main force under Macdonald gathered its strength in the form of supplies painfully manhandled over the mountains.

Patrols reported that the Tibetans had built a wall across the road three miles south of Guru. It was loopholed for musketry, and Tibetan soldiers swarmed behind its heavy stonework.

On 16 March a group of Lamas were sent to curse the Mission. For three days they cursed it by all their devils. Special charms were issued to all the Tibetan soldiers to render them invincible against the Mission's bullets.

But, it would seem, the Lamas' curses were doomed to failure; 1904 was the baleful year of the Wood Dragon in the Tibetan almanack. An old prophecy had long marked it out as a year of trouble and foreboding.

In his book, *Lhasa and Its Mysteries*, Colonel Waddell,

who was a member of the Mission, gives a translation he had made of that curious prophesy some years before the Mission was even thought of. It runs as follows:

“In the year of the Wood Dragon the first part of the year protects the young king; there is a great coming forward of robbers, quarrelling and fighting, full many enemies, troublous grief by weapons and suchlike will arise, the king, father and son will be fighting. At the end of the year a conciliatory speaker will vanquish the war.”

On 28 March General Macdonald arrived at Tuna with the rest of the troops to complete the armed escort, and on 31 March, in bitterly cold weather, the Mission moved out of its quarters on its way to Gyantse. Younghusband notified the Lhasa General of the move a few hours before the advance started. He also notified the Amban in Lhasa. As the expedition advanced over the level, snow-covered plain, with Younghusband's Union Jack flying from its standard carried by a mounted infantryman, there was suspense and a sense of impending tragedy. A single horseman came galloping towards them from Guru. He was a messenger from the Lhasa General, demanding instant withdrawal. The reply sent back by the same messenger was that the advance would continue.

When the head of the Mission reached a point about a mile before the wall, a Tibetan deputation was seen to be approaching. It consisted of several silk-apparelled Generals, a yellow-robed monk, and an escort of armed men. The advance was halted, and Younghusband, Macdonald and O'Connor rode forward with the Union Jack and escort to meet them. The Lhasa General and the monk led the Tibetan

deputation. Their attendants spread rugs and skins on the ground; the British officers spread their greatcoats. This was the final parley.

There was no change of tone. Obstinate the Tibetans ordered the Mission to retire. They had absolutely no comprehension of their inability to enforce that demand. Young-husband's reply was to point to the Mission's troops deployed



The British advance against the Tibetan defensive wall

for action. He said that for fourteen years the British had tried, within their own frontier, to settle matters. For eight months now they had tried to negotiate on Tibetan soil, but no one with the least scrap of authority had been to see them. Letters were returned; messages were refused. Now the time had come to advance to Gyantse in the hope that responsible negotiators would come to see them.

Younghusband's ultimatum was to give the Tibetan leaders a quarter of an hour, after they had returned to their

wall, in which to decide whether to oppose the British force or retire.

Clearly bewildered at their failure to halt the Mission, the Tibetan deputation remounted and rode back to their lines. It seems that even then they could not believe the British force would advance. The months of inertia had only convinced the Tibetans of the Mission's weakness. Their numbers were not impressive and the invaders were in a country hostile to them; they were at an unaccustomed elevation of 15,000 feet; two great mountain ranges divided them from India.

That the Tibetans realized; what they did not realize was the devastating power of modern weapons.

Slowly the quarter of an hour's grace ticked away. Whistles blew and the final advance on the wall got under way. The Tibetan wall was built across the road from a ruined house on the east side of the road to high up a steep hillside to the west. On the hillside, too, were small emplacements designed to defend the wall's western end. The east end of the wall incomprehensibly stopped short at the ruined house. Beyond was a broad, undefended plain that stretched for three thousand yards to the salt waters of a lake.

That lake, the Bham-Tso, no doubt many years ago lapped up to where the ruined building stood, but like so many Tibetan lakes, had dried up and receded. It may therefore have been that orders were given from Lhasa to man what had been, anciently, a defensive position, though the ancient defence was no longer there.

During the advance on the wall, Younghusband gave orders that the Mission troops should not fire unless first of

all fired upon. It was an advance made in almost complete silence, the khaki-clad figures fanning out and probing towards the Tibetan positions. There were about 100 English troops and 1,200 Indian, and to those who took part in it, it was one of the most nerve-racking advances in modern times. The loopholes in the wall were bristling with weapons; at any moment a murderous fire might open up, and these men were expected to go forward without the advantage of covering fire, or artillery support, to protect them.

But the Tibetans did not fire. They, too, had been given orders not to fire, by the Lhasa General. So the two forces came face to face, the khaki-clad Mission troops looking into the eyes of the grey-clad Tibetans.

Those on the hillside in their sangars were disarmed and shouldered away. Positions of fire were taken up, while the mounted infantry, riding round to the east of the ruined house, took up positions on the road. In the uncanny silence the situation became almost farcical. The Lhasa General was actually in front of the wall with members of his staff and surrounded by Sikh troops of the Mission. Several British officers had walked round behind the wall, their revolvers back in their holsters, and were taking photographs of the bloodless victory.

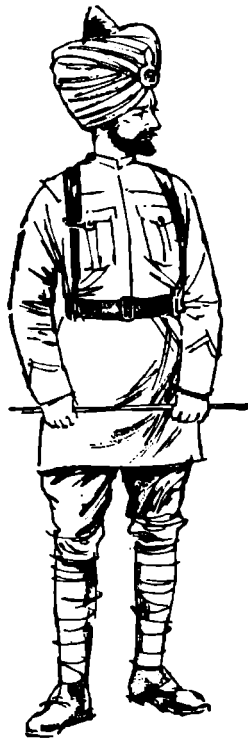
Colonel Younghusband and General Macdonald were up by the ruined house. The first essential now was to disarm the Tibetans. Accordingly Younghusband sent O'Connor across to reason with the Lhasa General, who seemed like a man in a dream. O'Connor said afterwards that the General was at the end of his tether, sitting on the ground and muttering to himself. He was now incapable of reasoned thought,



The Tibetan wall across the valley was bristling with weapons.
At any moment a murderous fire might open up on the advancing
British troops

sulky, and took no notice of what O'Connor was saying to him.

The luckless man was indeed at the end of his tether. Whatever he did, the day for him was lost, and the retribution of Lhasa would be his share. Tibetan Generals were not expected to lose engagements.



A Sikh soldier of the Indian regiment that went into action at the Tibetan wall

The Indian troops at the wall began disarming their opponents, and little personal struggles for weapons began to take place. The Tibetan soldiers, whether they wanted to fight or not, nevertheless resented having their weapons wrested from them. A growl of anger rippled along the wall.

The Lhasa General, suddenly violently protesting against the disarming of his men, leapt on his pony, and seemed as

though he were going to rally them. His pony's bridle was seized by a Sikh. It was then that the Lhasa General did a thing that was to cost the lives of hundreds of men. He drew his revolver and shot the Sikh in the jaw.

That was the signal. In a flash the bloodless victory became a scene of death. Tibetans began firing wildly; instantly the trained troops replied, they could do nothing else. Tibetan swordsmen leapt the wall and inflicted a number of wounds before they were shot down. The Maxim machine-guns opened fire, and the Lee-Mitford rifles did their deadly work. Shrapnel from the field guns wrought havoc in the rear. In five minutes it was all over, sickeningly finished. Tibetan dead lay everywhere, strewn among their pathetic weapons, while those who had escaped the hail of bullets were streaming along the road back to Guru.

On that road lay a yellow-robed monk—the Lama representative of the Ga-den monastery. He had been shot dead where he had been trying to stem the flight of the men from the wall. In front of the wall, where he had hoped so desperately to avert the final clash, and where he had made his one mistake, was the lifeless body of the Lhasa General.

7

The Road to Lhasa

AFTER the battle of the Wall, Guru itself was held for a while by determined men firing from the houses, and the place turned out to be a positive store-house of explosives. Buildings struck by shell fire, and set alight, would suddenly blow up with a tremendous roar as stocks of gunpowder, stored in tightly stitched skins, exploded. Long after resistance was over, houses continued intermittently to blow up, and this abandoned gunpowder caused more casualties among the Mission's troops than did the enemy's weapons.

Though other battles were to be fought before the game was played out, none made such a profound and disturbing impact on the British as the slaughter at the wall.

"It was a terrible and ghastly business," Younghusband wrote in his account of the action. "Left to himself, he [the Lhasa General] would, we may be sure, have arranged matters with us in a perfectly amicable manner, for at Guru in January, and when he came to see me at Tuna, he had always shown himself courteous and reasonable; and his men had no antipathy towards us. But he had on his side, ruling and overaweing him, a fanatical Lama from Lhasa. Ignorant and arrogant, this priest herded the superstitious

peasantry to destruction. It is only fair to assume that, somewhere in the depths of his nature, he felt that the people's religion was in danger, and that he was called upon to preserve it."

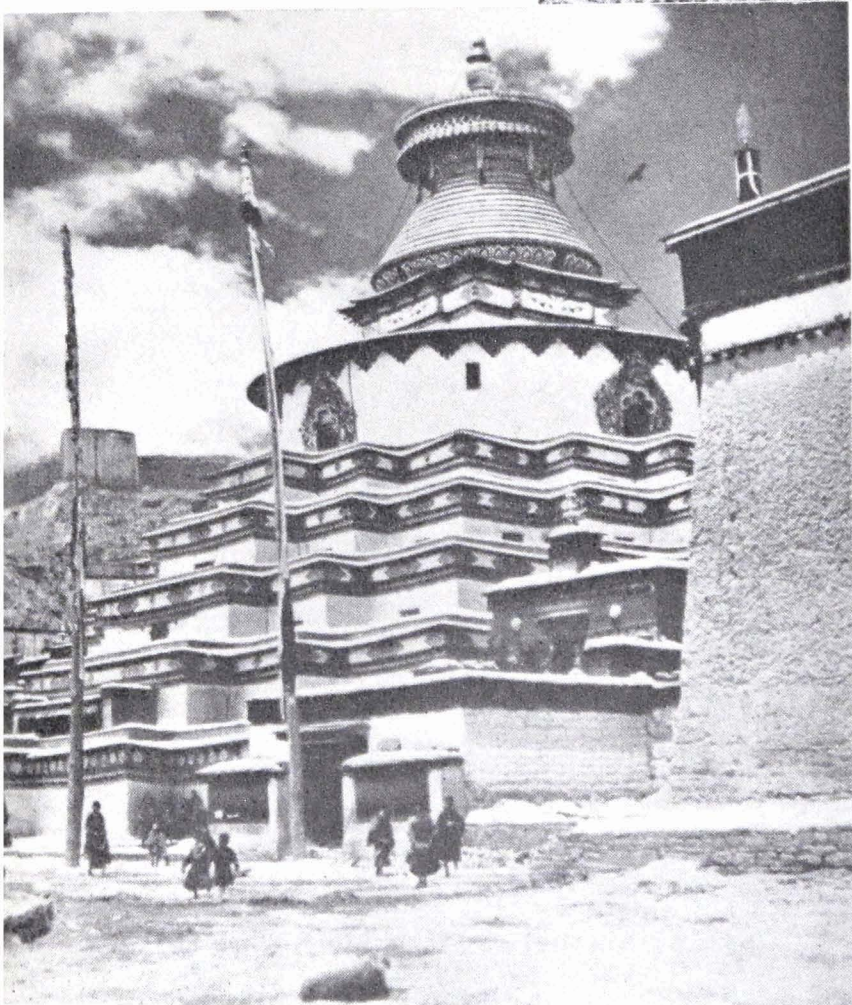
Both men were now dead—and four hundred others with them. At Tuna, General Macdonald set up a field hospital, where over 200 Tibetan wounded received surgical and medical treatment and were nursed and cared for. Continually other wounded men, who had fled, were rounded up and brought in. Among the wounded was the Phari Depon, who, it will be remembered, had met the Mission inside the Sikkim border, and had joined the Mission leaders at Captain Parr's house at Yatung.

The Tibetan wounded were touchingly grateful for what was being done for them, though they could never understand why the British should want to take their lives one day, and want to save them the next. Their gratitude was such that when they were discharged from hospital they refused to leave the company of those remarkable people who had healed them, and remained as self-appointed servants and porters.

As to the failure of the charms given by the Lamas to ward off British bullets, their faith in the efficacy of such devices was not in the least shaken. The charms, they explained, had been against bullets of lead, but the British bullets had contained other metals as well, such as silver and nickel. That had not been anticipated at the time, but the oversight would be corrected for all future charms against bullets!

As soon as the news of the Tibetan defeat reached Lhasa,

(Right) Tibetan monks blowing gigantic nine-foot long trumpets



(Left) The holy shrine at Gyantse



(Above) Monks reading a proclamation and (below,) in procession

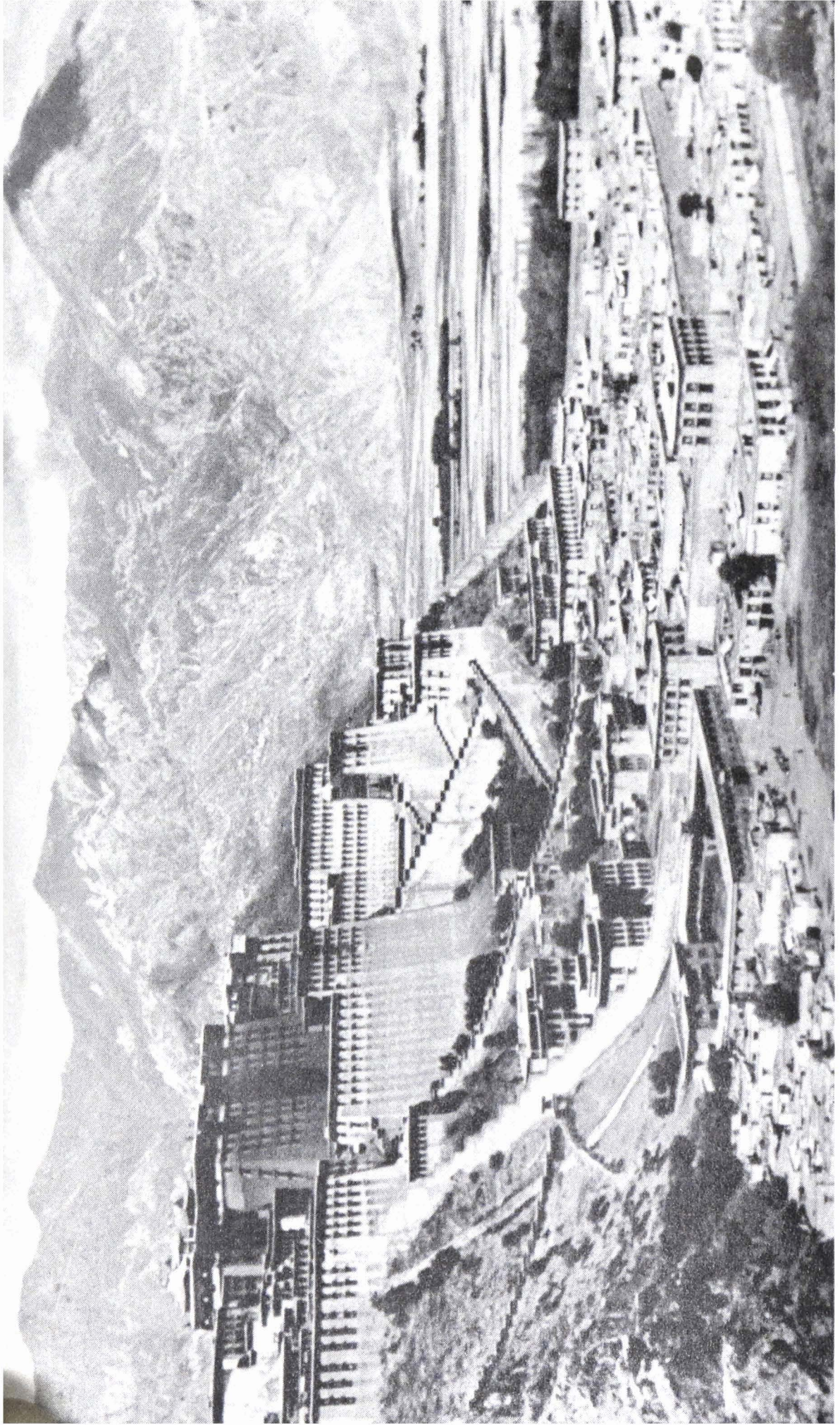




(Above) The gateway to
Lhasa



(Right) Monks at prayer



Lhasa and the beautiful Potala Palace

the Amban sent a dispatch to Colonel Younghusband, informing the Commissioner that he was leaving immediately for Gyantse to meet him there. The Amban apologized for not having come before, but the Dalai Lama had denied him transport. The British victory had greatly altered the Dalai Lama's attitude towards the Mission, and both he and the Tibetan people were deeply grateful for the medical aid that had been rendered the wounded.



A Chinese mandarin, as colourful as a butterfly, was standing under a red umbrella

The eighty-mile march to Gyantse was accomplished in seven days, in the first spring weather. At the little hamlet of De-chen, ten miles from Guru, where a track to the left led up a side valley and over the hills to Khamba Jong, a Chinese mandarin, as colourful as a butterfly, was seen standing under a red umbrella, surrounded by his retinue, to welcome the Mission.

He was fat and smiling, and about forty years of age.

He introduced himself as General Ma, and informed Colonel Younghusband that he had been sent by the Amban to assist in negotiations. He appeared most anxious to please, but his only contribution to the Mission's purpose was strongly to advise against going any further. Gyantse, he affirmed, was a bleak and inhospitable place. When further questioned he conceded Lhasa was not a bad place, with parks and trees, and even some of the luxuries of Peking.

Captain Parr, who had attached himself to the Mission as a Chinese representative, questioned General Ma, and informed Younghusband that he was only a Major who had been granted temporary rank of General while living in the barbarous country of Tibet.

After this amiable but unproductive meeting, General Ma rode off to Gyantse ahead of the Mission.

The march took the Mission along the shore of the great Rham Lake, which is fifteen miles long by five miles broad. Its farther shore was seen as rolling uplands that finally merged into the bold snowy peaks of the Chumalhari range. The edge of this salt lake was still ice-bound, but over most of the area the ice had melted and the water was crowded with all manner of water fowl—duck, geese, teal, terns, waders and cranes.

These birds showed no fear of man, as the Tibetans never molested them nor took them for food, though they netted fish in the lake, which were very good to eat. The attitude of the lake birds, be it said, quickly reverted to their behaviour when wintering in India; after the first of their number had been shot for food, the rest rapidly retired out of gun range.

During this march along the shore of the Rham Lake, villagers stood "kowtowing" and staring in wonder at the length of the cavalcade winding along the road to Gyantse. Most of all, they stared at the little flat, two-wheeled carts drawn by yaks. These light vehicles had been carried over the Himalayas in their component parts, and assembled on the plateau. They were the first wheeled vehicles those



These were the first wheeled vehicles the local Tibetans had ever seen

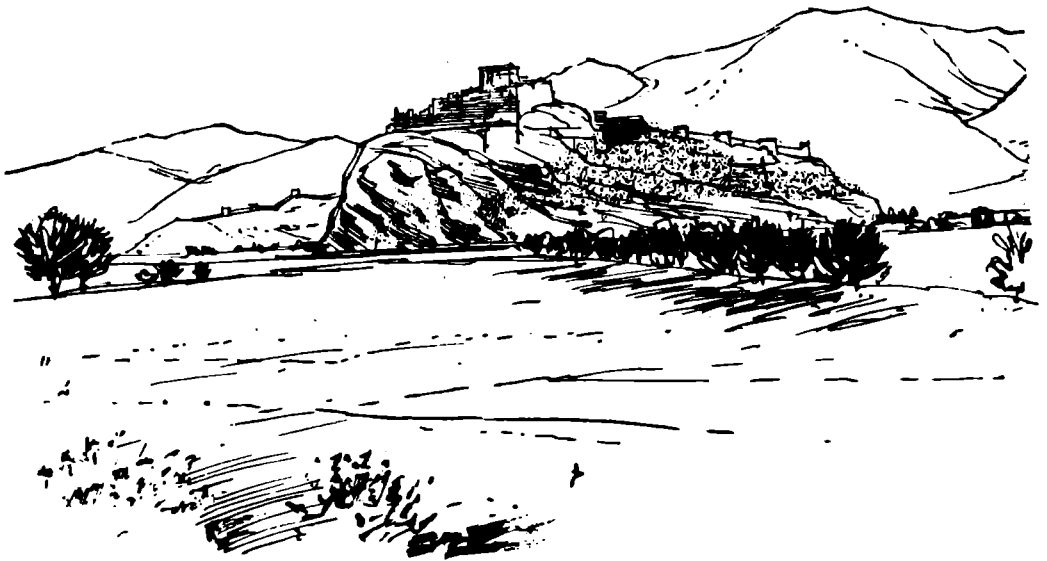
local Tibetans had ever seen, as at that time wheels for transport were quite unknown in Tibet, and these were regarded as an astonishing exotic western novelty.

Gyantse proved to be far from being the bleak and inhospitable place that the somewhat specious General Ma would have had them believe. At an altitude of 13,120 feet, it was about 2,000 feet lower than Guru, which in itself was a relief. It was set among cultivated fields, and was rich in trees. Villas and farms were pleasantly scattered,

and through the delightful valley flowed the Nyang-chu, or River of Joy.

Dominating Gyantse was the gleaming white Jong, built on top of a great rock and somewhat reminiscent of the Rock of Gibraltar. Gyantse Jong was one of the great bastions defending the road to Lhasa.

Reconnaissance had located the bridge crossing the river as being only three-quarters of a mile from the Jong, and



Dominating the town of Gyantse was a gleaming white Jong, built on top of a great rock. It guarded the road to Lhasa

therefore within range of any jingals, which were a kind of old-fashioned cannon, so it was decided to ford the river at a point two miles away. That day the Mission pitched camp on the north bank.

To them came a dignified and picturesque procession from the Jong, headed by the Gyantse Jongpen and General Ma. Both the Jongpen and the General appeared to regard the whole matter as a delightful social occasion. The matter on hand was the question of the Jong. The Jongpen asked

to be forgiven for not surrendering the Jong to Colonel Younghusband, for were he to do so he would undoubtedly have his throat slit when it became known in Lhasa. At the same time he admitted, with engaging frankness, that he was quite unable to defend the Jong as he was without soldiers. They had all deserted that morning.

It was decided to hold the Jongpen and General Ma hostages while troops examined the Jong. This arrangement seemed entirely to satisfy both of them; they immediately made themselves at home in the Mission and readily posed for their photographs. General Ma greatly enjoyed his stay. He examined everything on view and was entertained by being given demonstrations of the heliograph, which signalling device particularly intrigued him.

One of the things which had surprised members of the Mission was that the local Tibetans appeared to dislike the heliograph. They thought its winking light was some kind of western evil eye, by means of which the *Feringhies* could look through mountains. On the other hand, they were quite indifferent to the telegraph wire that had followed the Mission, telegraph pole after telegraph pole, all the way from India, and was ultimately to reach Lhasa itself.

The expedition was thereby in constant touch with India. Interruptions, when they occurred, were usually due to weather. Less than twenty times during the whole of the advance was the line deliberately cut by the Tibetans. In the main the people tried to protect it. A Lama had asked a Post Office engineer what the line was for. The engineer's inspired reply had been that the Mission was very poor at finding its way about, and feared it might lose its way going

home. It had therefore spun a thread behind it, like a spider, which would lead it safely back home.

As the Tibetans wished nothing so much as the return of the Mission to India, they took care that the line was not deliberately destroyed.

Now that the Mission had reached Gyantse, Young-husband was at the limit of his authorized advance into Tibet. He was now to await the arrival of the Amban and competent Tibetan officers to negotiate a new agreement. Younghusband informed the Amban of his arrival at Gyantse, and waited for someone to turn up. It was the same story—he was left to wait!

Nevertheless, after the rigours of a winter at Tuna, the gentle spring-like warmth of Gyantse was sheer delight. Buds were sprouting on the willow trees; irises were everywhere breaking into flower. A rich and verdant valley extended all the way to the sister town of Shigatse, fifty miles to the west. No wonder the Tibetans called it the Pleasant Province.

The natives were friendly; good relations were encouraged, and a hospital was set up to which the Tibetans flocked. The Mission took up its quarters in a new and well-built house with a fine courtyard. It was about a thousand yards from the Jong, and the escort fortified the house against attack.

After the Mission was settled in, the main force under General Macdonald retired to Chumbi for the purpose of maintaining the supply route, and Younghusband was left with a guard of about 300 men. It was therefore decided that the little force must be concentrated in one area, and

the Jong was evacuated. As to whether that was a wise move has since been debated, but in Younghusband's judgment, the weakness of the Jong lay in its water supply which could be denied the defenders by a besieging force.

During the first weeks of occupation, visits were made to the surrounding monasteries. Of all those visited none was more remarkable than the Nyen-de-kyi-buk monastery about twelve miles from Gyantse. The name of the monastery, in English, is "The Cave of Happy Musings on Misery".

The monks in that monastery are, in appearance, distinct from all other Tibetan monks. They wear their hair long, unplaited, and hanging loosely over their shoulders, matted and unkempt. The Abbot, who received Captain O'Connor and Percival Landon, *The Times* Correspondent attached to the Mission, and gave them tea, was himself clean-shaven, and in outward appearance conformed to the general appearance of Abbots in Tibetan monasteries everywhere. He proved a charming host and entertaining companion.

After tea, at their request, the Abbot took them to the place of the Immured Monks. He led them out into the sunshine, where the valley below lay in all its springtime beauty under a blue sky, and the blossom of a peach tree moved gently in the wind. Climbing forty or fifty feet up the steep hillside, they were shown into a small courtyard surrounded by rough stone walls. Here is Landon's account.

"Almost on a level with the ground there was an opening closed with a flat stone from behind. In front of this window was a ledge eighteen inches in width, with two basins beside it, one at each end. The Abbot was attended by an acolyte who, by his master's orders, tapped three times sharply

on the stone slab; we stood in the little courtyard in the sun, and watched that wicket with cold apprehension. I think, on the whole, it was the most uncanny thing I saw



At the monastery where monks live in tiny cells in total darkness. Once a day food and water is brought to each inmate and left on the ledge at the entrance

in all Tibet. What on earth was going to appear when that stone slab, which even then was beginning weakly to quiver, was pushed aside, the wildest conjecture could not suggest. After half a minute's pause the stone moved, or tried to

move, but it came to rest again. Then very slowly and uncertainly it was pushed back and a black chasm was revealed. There was again a pause of thirty seconds, during which imagination ran riot, but I do not think any other thing could have been so intensely pathetic as that which we eventually saw. A hand, muffled in a tightly wound piece of dirty cloth, for all the world like the stump of an arm, was painfully thrust up, and very weakly it felt along the slab. After a fruitless fumbling the hand slowly quivered back again into the darkness. A few moments later there was again one ineffectual effort, and then the stone slab moved noiselessly again across the opening.

“Once a day, water and an unleavened cake of flour is placed for the prisoner on the slab, and the signal is given that he may take it in.”

Both O'Connor and Landon were deeply stirred by this manifestation of the living dead in the Monastery of the Happy Musings on Misery, but the Abbot himself remained tranquil and smiling. He explained that the monks lived in the darkness of their tiny square cell of their own free will. They do so in three stages. The first is for six months, after which the monk comes out and takes part once more in the communal life of the monastery. Then comes the second period of immurement, on which the monk may enter whenever he likes, or not at all. Once he enters the cell for the second time he remains there for three years, three months and three days. He then returns once more to his life among living men. Finally comes the last voluntary immurement of all, which lasts without light or conversation with his fellow men for the rest of his life.

The Abbot told O'Connor that only that morning one of their number had died after having lived in darkness for twenty-five years.

"What happens when they are ill?" O'Connor asked the Abbot. "They never are," was the reply.

The Abbot told his guests that he himself had already passed through two of his periods of Happy Musing, and was now approaching the time when he would make his final farewells to his fellow monks and enter his cell for the last time.

O'Connor said afterwards that the Abbot seemed to be a happy, contented and healthy man, normal in every way. One could only wonder in horror that he was prepared to destroy his life in so futile a manner.

News came from the Amban that the Dalai Lama had refused him both transport and properly empowered Tibetan officials. News also came from the Mission's own patrols that Tibetan troops were advancing on Gyantse from different directions. 1,500 Tibetans had been located at the Karo-la, a 16,200 feet high pass that lay to the east on the road to Lhasa, and a force of men under Colonel Brander was dispatched by Colonel Younghusband to deal with them.

News then came of a concentration of troops at Dongtse, twelve miles to the west. Whereas before conditions had been relaxed at Gyantse, there was now a feeling of foreboding.

In a sharp battle, in which troops fought at a record height of 19,000 feet, Colonel Brander decisively defeated the Tibetan concentration, and then returned hurriedly to Gyantse, where the Mission was now in a state of siege.

While the main force of the escort had been at the Karo-la, the force of about 800 Tibetan troops from Dongtse had crept up to the Mission walls, and had suddenly poured fire through the loopholes at a range of a dozen yards. Fortunately, their fire was wild and did no damage. The little Gurkha force beat them off after a two-hour battle



Tibetan troops occupied the Jong. From then on jingals were firing their leaden shot, the size of cricket balls into the Mission post

in which the enemy lost 250 dead and wounded. Young-husband himself, seizing a rifle, joined his Gurkhas in the defence of the Mission.

Although the attack was driven off, and Colonel Brander returned with his troops from the Karo-la, the Mission remained in a state of siege for five weeks. Tibetan troops occupied the Jong, and from then on jingals were firing

their leaden shot, the size of cricket balls, into the Mission post. This was not comfortable, but it was also not very dangerous, as owing to the high trajectory at which the jingals had to fire to reach the Mission, the sound arrived first and the ball some seconds afterwards, which gave people time to take cover.

On 13 May, Younghusband received a telegram from the Government of India informing him that the British Government now agreed to an advance to Lhasa, unless the Tibetans consented to negotiate at Gyantse. Younghusband replied tersely that they were being bombarded all day, and any messenger sent to Lhasa would almost certainly be murdered on the way. He had, therefore, no means of contacting the Chinese Amban.

It was nearly five weeks later that the relieving force from Chumbi arrived at Gyantse, and on 6 July the main assault was launched on the Jong. The artillery blew a breach in the wall, and a party of Gurkhas led by Lieutenant Grant climbed the almost vertical cliff and stormed their way in through the breach. After some very stiff fighting the Jong fell to the British. For leading this critical attack through the hole in the Jong defences, Lieutenant Grant was awarded the Victoria Cross.

So, with the great fort defending the way to Lhasa in their hands, on 14 July, a year after the original advance on Khamba Jong, the Mission set out for Lhasa.

8

Country of the Pig-faced Goddess

THE road from Gyantse to Lhasa rises 2,000 feet in thirty miles. Gradually, from the lush and pleasant valley with its River of Joy and its poplars and willows, the Mission was once more in the treeless zone of scrub and dwarf bushes and naked rock, and the sense of remoteness that goes with great altitudes. Ahead was the 16,000 feet high Karo-la, and everywhere were clumps of vivid sky-blue Tibetan poppies with their crinkly *crêpe-de-Chine* petals and spined stems.

Nobody knew what was in store. There were fresh Tibetan troops reported—Kham warriors from Eastern Tibet, such as had attacked and besieged the Mission at Gyantse. Reinforcements might be moving up. Then there was the chance that fanatical Lhasa monks would make a mass attack. There were 40,000 of them in Lhasa, and they might try to overwhelm the Mission by sheer weight of numbers.

The Tongsa Penlop, afterwards Maharajah of Bhutan, had accompanied the Mission as a travelling guest. His views were encouraging. "Those troops you have fought will not ever fight you again. The only soldiers who would face you now are men who have not faced you before."

At the Karo-la there was some opposition. It was a natural

defensive point, and the heights were seen to be swarming with Tibetans. A flanking movement was made by Gurkhas and Pathans at a height of 19,000 feet, and from that vantage point a mountain battery shelled the Tibetan positions. The Tibetans broke and fled, and when the Royal Fusiliers made a frontal attack along the road there was no one there.



The Tongsa Penlop, afterwards Maharajah of Bhutan

Emerging from the Karo-la, the Mission found themselves looking out over the vast panorama of a great basin lying a thousand feet below, stretching to the far horizon. Flashing in the sunlight was the beautiful and far-famed Yamdok Lake, unbelievably blue, its shore-line dotted with what looked like the remains of feudal castles and towers.

Ahead lay the town of Nagartse, on the edge of the lake. It is the most important town between Gyantse and Lhasa.

The usual Jong dominated the little town, and was built on a promontory that pointed across the town towards the waters of the Yamdok-tso. Waiting there were high-ranking Lhasa delegates. They were the Yatok Sha-pé, the Ta Lama, and the Chief Secretary. The Yatok Sha-pé and the Ta Lama were both members of the Ruling Council of Five, and they were most polite and respectful in their demeanour; no doubt the fall of Gyantse Jong, which the Tibetans had confidently expected to be impregnable, had had a salutary effect. They requested an interview with the Commissioner.

Younghusband immediately granted it, and a time was set for a durbar at three o'clock. At the appointed hour the Tibetan delegates rode into the camp in a colourful procession, dressed in yellow silks, and were met by the Mission officers in the full dress uniforms into which they had changed. Claude White wore the full dress of a Political Officer. A guard of honour was mounted.

The Yatok Sha-pé led the Tibetan delegation. He was genial, easy of manner, and courteous, but it was quickly evident that the baleful Chief Secretary was the one in charge. Their attempt to arrive at an understanding was childish and quite futile. The one demand was, "Return to Gyantse, and we will talk to you." They absolutely ignored the fact that they were in no position to make any demand, though they did not hesitate to dwell on the severe penalties that they themselves would suffer if they failed to persuade the Mission to return to Gyantse. They hinted that their liberty, if not their lives, would almost certainly be forfeit.

Colonel Younghusband was quite unimpressed. His reply

was that he too had his orders, and if he failed to reach Lhasa after all these months of waiting, and there make a conclusive agreement, his Government would certainly have him beheaded.

There were several of these unproductive conferences at Nagartse. Between meetings, an attempt was made by the leaders of the Mission to pay their respects to the Abbess of the Samding monastery nearby. The monastery, perched on a high crag, was the abode of a mixed order of monks and nuns under the Abbess.

There was a special reason for wishing to pay deference to the Abbess of this monastery. She was the greatly venerated Darje Phagmo, and was considered to be the incarnation of the Pig-faced Goddess of Indian Buddhist mythology. Darje Phagmo was venerated only second to the Tashi Lama in importance. The Mission's regard for the lady, however, lay more in the fact that her predecessor, and former incarnation of the Pig-faced Goddess, had given hospitality to the Indian Traveller, Sarat Chandra Das, when he visited Tibet in disguise in the later years of the nineteenth century. During that time he had been taken seriously ill, and the Abbess and her attendant nuns had nursed him back to health in the monastery.

Nor was that the only association of Darje Phagmo with the British. Warren Hastings's envoy, George Bogle, had also paid his respects to the Abbess, and records in his diary being taken "into the apartment of Durjay Paumo, who was attired in a gylong's dress [monk's dress], her arms bare from the shoulders, and sitting cross-legged upon a low cushion. She is about seven and twenty, with small

Chinese features, delicate, though not regular, fine eyes and teeth, her complexion fair, but wan and sickly; and an expression of languor and melancholy in her countenance, which I believe is occasioned by the joyless life that she leads. She wears her hair, a privilege granted to no other vestal I have seen: it is combed back without any ornaments, and falls in tresses on her shoulders. Her *chawa* [hand benediction], like the Lama's, is supposed to convey a blessing, and I did not fail to receive it. After making my presents and obeisances, I kneeled down, and stretching out her arm, which is equal to 'the finest lady in the land', she laid her hand upon my head."

Because of the kindness of the previous Darje Phagmo to Chandra Das, and of the hospitality of the still earlier incarnation of the Goddess to Mr. Bogle, a letter was sent to the present Darje Phagmo asking if she would receive three British officers.

To Younghusband's great disappointment—as it was, indeed, to O'Connor and others—it was discovered that the inmates of the monastery, nuns and monks, had fled the night before on the approach of the Mission, fearing invaders, and being quite unaware of the high esteem in which the monastery and its inmates were held by the Mission. It was also learned that the present incarnate Pig-faced Goddess was a child of six, in the care of her mother, and that they had gone to Lhasa.

Nevertheless, a visit was made to the deserted monastery, and precautions were taken that no troops should damage or loot or otherwise profane this convent-monastery with its British associations.

No progress whatsoever was made with the Tibetan delegates at Nagartse, despite Younghusband's monumental patience at these durbars, and it once more became apparent that the Yatok Sha-pé and the Ta Lama, supervised by the Chief Secretary, had no more power than any previous deputation. They could only demand withdrawal, and when that failed they themselves withdrew. It was discovered on the morning of 21 July that the Tibetan delegates had departed silently under cover of the night.

"So," said Younghusband philosophically, "I marched very contentedly along the shore of one of the most beautiful lakes I have ever seen."

The Yamdok Lake, which lies 14,350 feet above sea level, contains what is almost an island, connected by a narrow isthmus to the surrounding land. This near-island itself contains a lake, at a slightly higher level than the surrounding water. This strange formation long ago gave rise to the legend, which travellers have long supported, that the Yamdok-tso consisted of two concentric lakes, both perfectly circular. Perhaps there was a time many years ago when one lake encircled the other, but in time the waters have receded—as indeed they have gradually diminished in all the lakes on the Tibetan plateau—and the intriguing circle within a circle shape has long been lost.

The lake's present shape is fascinating enough. Colonel Waddell described it, as seen in plan on a map, as in the shape of a scorpion—"scorpionoid" was the word used by *The Times* correspondent. The Tibetans have a second name for the Yamdok-tso; they call it the Turquoise Lake because of the exquisite blue-green which is the lovely reflected

colour of the water. Close inshore, where it ripples over the white sand, the water is clear and quite colourless, but twenty yards out, the bed of the lake drops steeply, and there the water takes on the blue intensity which gives it its name.

There is no outlet to the lake, and so, as the years go by, it is becoming increasingly salty. That invariably happens. Fishermen among the members of the Mission found that the Yamdok-tso was well stocked with a handsome fish somewhat resembling a carp, but almost without scales. Sport was good, fish up to six pounds being taken, but owing to the multitude of minute branching bones, it was found to be almost impossible to eat them.

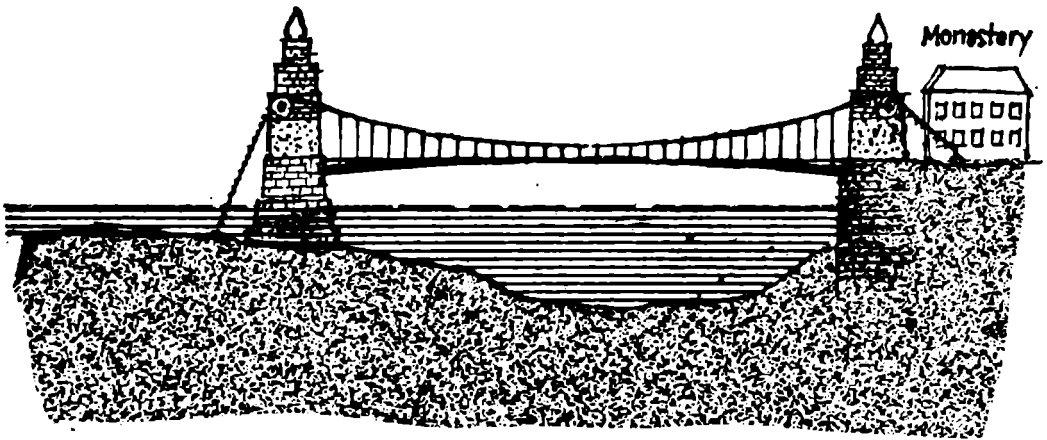
The total outer perimeter of the lake is about 200 miles. The Mission marched along its northern shore for about twenty miles, and then bore off to the left to cross the last pass that lay between them and Lhasa.

This was the Kamba-la, 15,400 feet above sea level, and it was undefended by Tibetans. On the other side the Mission descended to the great central river of Tibet, the Tsang-po. This river, where it flows through a gap in the Eastern Himalayas into Assam, becomes the Brahmaputra.

This river represented a major obstacle. The mounted infantry, probing along the bank down stream for about five miles, reached what they were seeking—the Chaksam Ferry. They captured it intact. Retreating Tibetan soldiers, though they had looted the village of Chaksam, from which the inhabitants had fled, quite failed after they had crossed the river to take the elementary military precaution of destroying the ferry boats. When the mounted infantry

arrived at the ferry the last boatloads of Kham warriors had just been transported to the other side, and were riding away towards the mountains.

The ferrymen were seemingly quite prepared now to transport the Mission to the other side, and brought both boats over to the south bank. They were massive, box-shaped wooden vessels, forty feet long by twelve feet wide with four feet of freeboard, and decorated with carved wooden horses' heads at the prows. They were capable of



An iron suspension bridge spanning the Tsang-po

transporting a hundred men at a time, or twenty ponies and men and a ton of load.

Nearby, stretching over the river to an island near the north bank, were the massive remains of an ancient iron suspension bridge. The span was 200 feet, and the four iron chains were made up of links a foot long. The spans were intact and practically free of rust, but the actual foot-bridge, that had been suspended from the chains, had been taken away. It would not have required a great deal of attention to restore the bridge with its footway across the 200 foot span. The problem would have been the causeway

that linked the island with the north bank. Due to change in the flow of the river, the causeway was now submerged, and was more in the nature of a weir. The remarkable thing about the suspension bridge was that it had been put up 500 years before.

The transportation of the Mission across the Tsang-po took five days. The ferry boats were clumsy to manœuvre, and each crossing in the fast stream would sweep them as much as two miles down stream. The operation might well have taken three weeks had not one of the engineer officers succeeded in stretching a strong wire hawser across the river. The ferry boats were then attached to this hawser, thereby turning them into a floating bridge.

The crossing of the Tsang-po was marked by tragedy. Major Bretherton, the Mission's chief Supply and Transport officer, accompanied by two Gurkhas, was crossing the river on a raft made of two portable boats lashed together with a flat platform, when it got into turbulent water. The raft was suddenly violently tilted and the men were thrown into the water. Before any attempt could be made to help them, all were swept away and drowned.

This tragedy greatly upset Younghusband. Major Bretherton had been with the Mission from the Khamba Jong days; he had been a close friend of Younghusband's for many years. When this happened, Younghusband was still lamenting the death of Lieutenant Gurdon, who had been killed at the storming of Gyantse Jong.

"It was hard that young Gurdon should lose his life just at the beginning of so promising a career; it seemed almost more cruel that a man who had achieved so much



A raft made of two portable boats lashed together with a flat platform was used for crossing the Tsang-po. It got into turbulent water, was swamped, and Major Bretherton and two Gurkhas were drowned

and who was just within sight of the goal for which he had worked longer and harder than any of us, should have been swept away in an instant and have never seen his reward. It is in reflecting on cases such as these that one begins to wonder whether our touching trustfulness in the mercy of Providence is altogether justified."

On 27 July Colonel Younghusband had a three-hour interview with the Dalai Lama's Chamberlain. The Chamberlain was a man of some capacity, was possessed of an air of great consequence, and was looked upon by his colleagues with the deepest respect. His companions at the interview were the Ta Lama and a Secretary of the Council, who was a brisk, cheery man with an engaging smile.

They tried hard to persuade Younghusband to turn back, but the Chamberlain, seeing that the Commissioner was quite adamant on that point, hurried back to Lhasa to report to the Dalai Lama, while the Ta Lama remained behind, exerting every effort to halt the Mission at the eleventh hour.

It was a fruitless attempt. During the next two days the Mission marched steadily towards the Forbidden City. On the night of 2 August, the camp was only twelve miles away from their goal.

During the afternoon the delegates had reappeared with a very large following. There were abbots and other lamas and lay officials in profusion, all gaily bedecked in brilliantly coloured costumes and strangely shaped hats. To the English eye it was more like a carnival procession than an attempt to stem an invading army. Colonel Waddell, that close observer of detail, noted everything.

“There were fluffy tam-o’-shanters, and large deep-fringed circular bonnets, like pink silk lampshades, flat crowns of claret-coloured velvet with long bushy crimson tassels, and the Chinese brimmed hat of the Lama Councilors with yellow satin peaked crown. Those worn by the cup-bearers to the abbots were the most remarkable, being in the form of a large water-jug or ewer, as indicating the office of their wearers.”

The Ta Lama headed the deputation, bringing with him the Abbot of the De-pung monastery, and also the Lord Chamberlain of the Dalai Lama. These important dignitaries were wearing gold-lacquered hats with a round knob on top, and tied under the chin.

As before, they begged that the Mission should not enter the sacred city. They said that there had been a mass meeting of about 10,000 Lhasa citizens, and at that meeting a group of resolute men had volunteered to fight to the last to prevent the invading army defiling the holy city with its presence.

This move, however, had been stemmed by the authorities, who had sent the heralds out into the streets to proclaim by beat of drum that neither violence nor resistance must be offered to the British soldiers, who, in retaliation, would grind the city to dust.

The Ta Lama was particularly insistent that the soldiers should not be allowed into the city when off duty. Young-husband was quite ready to agree to this as a temporary measure, but made it a stipulation that local traders were to be allowed to set up a bazaar outside the camp.

During the same day Chinese officials arrived bearing a

message from the Amban announcing that he would be calling on the Mission on the following day when they arrived at the gates of the city.

That night the *Daily Mail* correspondent, Edmund Candler, wrote in his diary, "Tomorrow, when we enter Lhasa, we will have unveiled the last mystery of the East. There are no more forbidden cities which men have not mapped and photographed. . . . Now there are no real mysteries, no unknown land of dreams, where there may still be genii and mahatmas. . . . Why could we not have left at least one city out of bounds?"

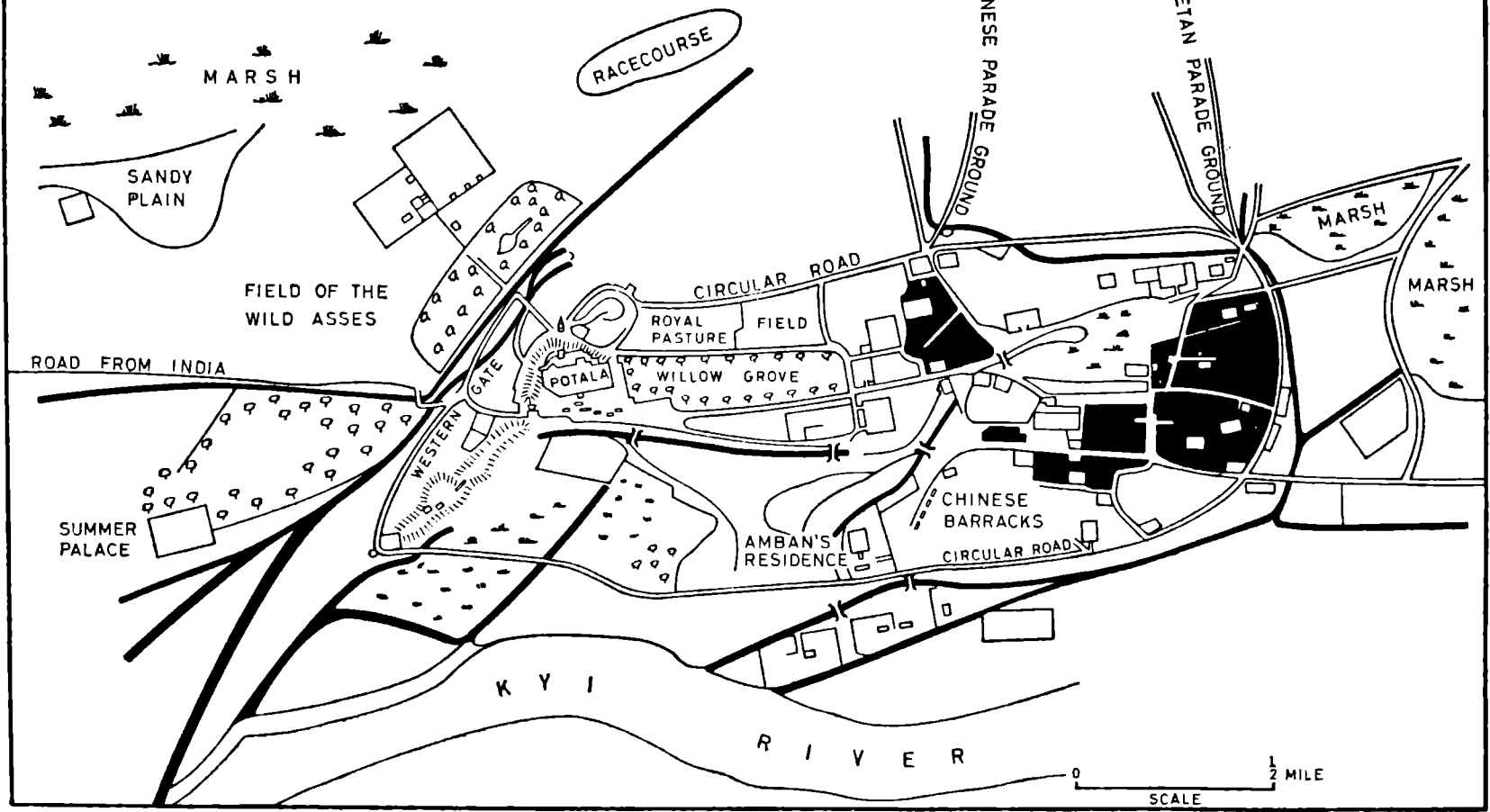
On 3 August the Mission set out on its last march. This was through the Plain of Milk, a valley two to three miles wide, protected by steep and jagged mountains whose peaks were white-tipped with snow, wherein lay the still invisible city. Butterflies and dragonflies were everywhere. The valley was lush and green and carefully cultivated, and a broad river, the Kyi-chu, flowed through the pleasant land to join the Tsang-po. There were farms and villas and hamlets, and dotted here and there were poplar groves and willow trees in first leaf. Over all was an air of tranquillity and smiling welcome in utter contrast to the harsh and barren high ground over which the Mission had marched so many miles. Here was a warm and sheltered valley to give an almost dream quality to the last lap of the long road from India.

Younghusband's mind at that moment must have been a medley of emotions, his eyes straining forward and taking in everything, but looking for one thing.

At last he saw it! For a few seconds a dazzling beam of

pure light, that struck like a sword, flashed from a golden roof, as it deflected the sun's rays. Rising grandly from a rocky prominence was a tremendous and dominating building, crowned in gold. There before him was the Potala Palace, home of the incarnate god-king, the Dalai Lama of Tibet.

PLAN OF LHASA



9

The Forbidden City at Last

MOST men saw Lhasa differently. When he first caught sight of the golden roofs, O'Connor said it was as if a myth and a legend had suddenly become a fact; a fairy-tale come true.

Claude White urged his horse forward in the long moving column, and touched O'Connor's arm.

"Well, there it is at last!" was all he said. After that the two men rode together in silence, each with his own thoughts.

Percival Landon grew lyrical. He said it was like a spiritual experience when he first beheld "the never-reached goal of so many weary wanderers, the home of all the occult mysticism that still remains on earth. The light waves of mirage dissolving impalpably just shook the far outlines of the golden roofs and dimly seen white terraces. I do not think anyone of us said much. Life seemed very full; but the fact of achievement seemed remote and impossible. Still, there it was. There was Lhasa."

Colonel Waddell was moved and impressed by what lay before him. "It was a moment of mute but heartfelt exultation to every member of the expedition. . . . The vast panorama of the holy city in its beautiful mountain setting burst upon our view, and we gazed with awe upon the

temples and palaces of the long-sealed Forbidden City, the shrines of mystery, which had so long haunted our dreams, and which lay revealed before our eyes at last.

“Here at last was the object of our dreams!—the long-sought, mysterious Hermit City, the Rome of Central Asia, with the residence of its famous priest-god—and it did not disappoint us! The natural beauty of its site, in a temperate climate and fertile mountain-girt plain, with the roofs of its palatial monasteries, temples and mansions, peeping above the groves of great trees . . . fits Lhasa . . . to be one of the most delightful residential places in the world.”

Edmund Candler, who had lamented the necessity to pull away the veil that had shrouded Lhasa, seemed now only to be disillusioned.

“Not a single house looked clean or cared for. . . . Even the Jokkang [Cathedral] appears mean and sordid at close quarters, whence its golden roofs were invisible. There was nothing picturesque except the marigolds and hollyhocks in pots, and the doves and singing birds in wicker cages. . . . The only building in Lhasa that is at all imposing is the Potala. . . . It is not a palace on a hill, but a hill that is also a palace. Its massive walls, its terraces and bastions stretch upwards from the plain to the crest . . . and underneath, at the distance of a furlong or two, humanity is huddled abjectly in squalid smut-begrimed houses.”

And Younghusband? What were his thoughts as he rode in his place in that Hannibal-like army of men and animals? Younghusband at that moment was a man apart. On him lay the heavy load of responsibility for finding a fitting result to justify the occasion. Yet even as he beheld the

golden-roofed Potala he knew that the bird had flown. The Dalai Lama was even now three marches away.

Nor was that the Commissioner's only concern. He was acutely aware that advancing stealthily towards him, was the threat of winter, the first onset of which in the high passes was but eight weeks away. Between the retreat of the Dalai Lama and the advance of winter an agreement had to be forged between the two countries.

When asked for a description of his feelings upon reaching Lhasa, Younghusband said that he had none worth describing. His thoughts were entirely preoccupied with the need of obtaining a satisfactory treaty between the two countries, and still more importantly, of gaining the good will of the Tibetan people.

Certainly, he no longer feared a military attack, but he did fear General Macdonald's morbid concern over the approach of winter. He was aware of the military commander's determination, treaty or no treaty, to withdraw his force before the Tibetan snows—as he affirmed—would turn a withdrawal from Lhasa into a disaster.

As the force neared the city, the road became a causeway across marshes. Almost all the near vicinity of Lhasa was marshland, and it was advisable at all times to keep to the roads or paths. Though the parks were places of beauty, they were mostly bog lakes. Local superstition had it that beneath Lhasa was a subterranean lake, and that the serpent of the lake had to be constantly placated with prayers and ritual offering to hold back the waters from rising and drowning the city.

To the left of the line of march, standing out promi-

nently in the foothills of the nearby mountains, was the great De-pung monastery—the largest monastery in the world—with its gilded roofs flashing in the sun. It was said to contain more than 4,500 monks. Close by, and rising from a grove of trees, could be seen the golden pagoda roof of the State Oracle. This magnificent building was the residence of the Magician Royal and his hundred monks. Though within the domain of the De-pung, which is a Buddhist monastery, it was not of it, being of an older, heathen religion. Nevertheless, it was a powerful instrument of government.

The function of the State Oracle was to make divinations into the future by astrological and other means; to practise the black arts, such as exorcizing devils, conjuring the assistance of demons, raising the spirits of the dead, and other rites of wizardry. As such, the State Oracle received the support and protection of the Lamas, and it was the Magician Royal who would indicate by his occult powers where the new incarnation of the Dalai Lama would be found on the death of the predecessor.

That day the Mission pitched camp near the western gateway of the wall-less city on a broad, marshy meadow called the Field of the Wild Asses. Tents were pitched on fairly dry ground close by the Dalai Lama's Summer Palace, and with a superb view of the Potala Palace, that towers seventy feet higher than the cross of St. Paul's Cathedral, and is 900 feet in length.

The Chinese Amban arrived at the camp in great state. His Excellency, Yu-tai, a mandarin of the highest class and wearer of the coral button, made a brave entrance. He



The Chinese Amban arrived at the Mission Camp outside Lhasa in great state

was preceded by a long string of attendants in scarlet and black uniforms, bearing banners. These were followed by halberdiers, or pikemen, carrying an assortment of arms, and after them were the horsemen of the Amban's mounted staff. Near the end came the Amban's state sedan chair, borne at a swinging pace. The Amban stepped briskly out, and after shaking hands with Colonel Younghusband, he was introduced to the Mission staff and all other senior officers present.

Thus, after a year of delays, excuses, and broken promises, the Representative of his Majesty, the Holy Man, Son of Heaven, Emperor of China, met the British Commissioner.

Younghusband wrote of the Amban: "As a man he was not indeed strikingly clever, and I did not see him at his best . . . the Tibetans had put him in a most humiliating position, which he must have felt or he would not have paid me a visit before I visited him. But he kept up appearances and made a brave show with all the aplomb of his

race, and I had a real feeling of relief in talking to a man of affairs after so many long, dreary and ineffectual interviews with the ignorant Tibetans."

The Commissioner asked the Amban to try to impress on the Tibetan leaders that the Mission had been forced to come to Lhasa against their own wishes, and were no longer to be trifled with. He also told him that in view of the treacherous attack on the Mission at Gyantse, he intended to impose an indemnity on the Tibetans to cover at least a part of the cost of the military operation. His demand would be assessed at Rupees 50,000 per day from the date of the attack on the Mission up to a month after signing an agreement between the two countries. In English money Rs. 50,000 was approximately £3,333.

The Amban remarked that the infliction of a daily increasing indemnity would be a proper and reasonable way of making the Tibetans—whom he personally regarded as ignorant barbarians—see reason.

On the next day, 4 August, Younghusband entered Lhasa for the first time, to make a ceremonial return visit to the Amban. As the Amban's official residence was on the south side of the city, Younghusband had had the choice of either riding through the city or round it on the circular road. Despite the possibility of a clash with the Lhasa monks who thronged the streets, and were reported by the Nepalese Consul to have 3,000 armed men in readiness, Younghusband had elected to march through the capital.

It made an impressive display. The Mission and escort were preceded by a contingent of the Amban's Chinese bodyguard and retainers sent by him to escort the Mission. The British troops were greatly struck by the smart appearance and handsome uniforms of the Chinese. The Amban's personal bodyguard were dressed in short loose coats of French grey, embroidered in black with various emblems, both in front and behind. Then came the Chinese halberdiers dressed in bright red coats with black embroidery, and wearing black turbans, or pugarees. Their arms ranged from three-pronged tridents and medieval pikes to scythe-blades mounted on the ends of poles. On all these weapons were suspended red banners with embroidered devices.

In marked contrast to these colourful figures, the khaki-clad Mission troops, English and Indian, with bayonets fixed, looked formidable and business-like. There were two companies of Royal Fusiliers, and the 2nd Mounted Infantry Regiment. Tibetans and Chinese residents stood in every doorway, crowded every balcony, and thronged into the streets to behold the historical first military procession of a foreign civilized power through the streets of Lhasa.

Colonel Waddell recorded that "towards the Amban's quarters, past a Chinese theatre and restaurants, the houses were nearly all one-storied, as in the Flowery Land, with neat turf walls in front enclosing little flower-gardens with pots of blooming asters, marigolds, stocks and hollyhocks, and nasturtiums within and on the window-sills; but the streets were in a revoltingly filthy condition, dirtier even than Peking, and littered over with all sorts of refuse and miry sewage, in which scores of unwholesome pigs wallowed repulsively."

Mingling with the crowds were shaven-headed monks from the surrounding monasteries. Their sullen looks contrasted sharply with the cheerful smiles of the countrymen. There were also to be seen the blue and yellow coats of the richer people, the women elegant in silks and expensive jewellery.

When the Mission reached the Residency, the Amban heralded the arrival of the Commissioner with a salute of bomb explosions and a fanfare of shrill pipes. A Chinese guard of honour, in bright yellow and blue uniforms edged with scarlet, presented arms with modern rifles.

The Residency consisted of a succession of paved courtyards, each with its reception rooms, and connected by gateways that were decorated with flags and signboards bearing Chinese seals and inscriptions. There were pig-tailed sentries on duty, while incense-burners and tall poles bearing banners and Chinese lanterns imparted a festive and elegant air.

The Amban received Younghusband in the third court, and then conducted him to the inmost court where refreshments were served. They consisted of china tea, a sweetmeat

made from shredded kernels of nuts, and Huntley and Palmer's biscuits. English-made biscuits were regarded by the Chinese and upper-class Tibetans as a great delicacy, and many tins of such biscuits found their devious way to Lhasa. Cigarettes and cheroots were also provided.

The Amban's assistants wore dark blue silk jackets with lighter blue collars and frock-skirts. Their boots were of black velvet, while their black hats with upturned brims bore a peacock's feather. Each member of the staff wore the button of his rank on the crown of his hat. The Amban's chief assistant, who spoke fluent French, having lived for some years in Paris, wore a clear blue button, while the lesser mandarins wore the opaque blue of clear crystal buttons.

It was a pleasant interlude, and the Amban made a genial host. He was a Manchu of noble birth, a distant relation of the Emperor, and had been especially posted to Peking by the Dowager Empress to handle the Anglo-Tibetan dispute. Yu-tai had been instructed to handle it successfully under the threat of severe punishment should he fail. Thus, he was in a somewhat delicate position.

Younghusband, after the usual compliments, handed the Amban a note containing the terms of settlement to be imposed on the Tibetans. These terms, he asked, should be transmitted to the Tibetan authorities without delay.

The essence of the draft agreement was that the Tibetans should be bound by the Agreement of 1890 and to recognize the frontier of Sikkim as then laid down. It was now required that in addition to the existing trade mart at Yatung in the Chumbi Valley, trade marts should be established at Gyantse and Gartok. The roads leading to those trade marts were to

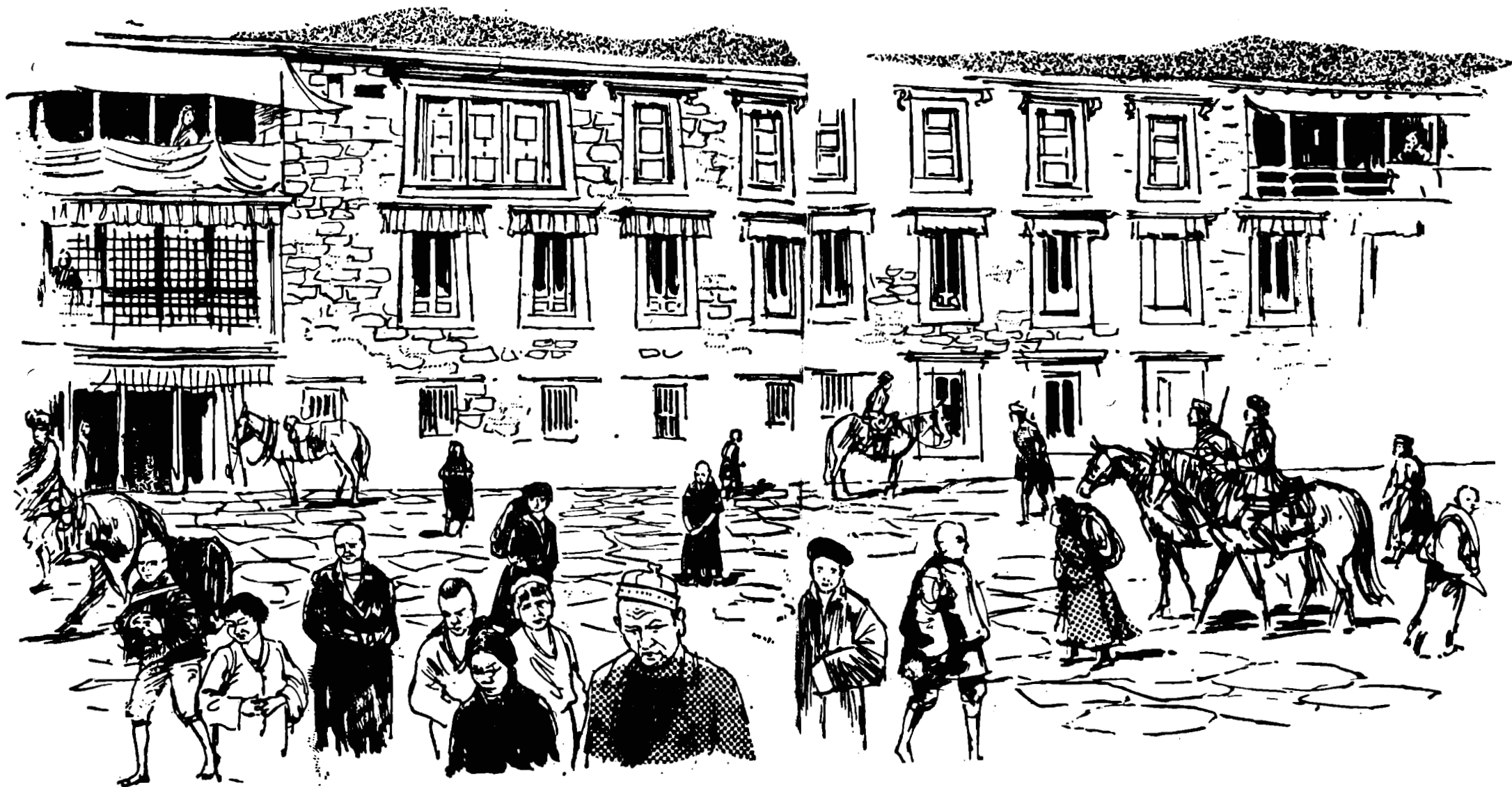
be kept open by the Tibetans, who were to co-operate with the British trade agents appointed. It was further demanded that all fortifications between Lhasa and India should be razed.

There was also the matter of the indemnity, which was increasing by Rs.50,000 per day. A method of payment still had to be decided upon. When the Convention came to be signed, the indemnity was £500,000 or Rs.7,500,000. This sum was afterwards reduced by the British Government to one-third of this amount.

The return march from the Residency took a detour through the heart of the city, once more headed by the Amban's own escort. Again there were great crowds to watch the spectacle. It was noticed that the streets of Lhasa were somewhat narrow, but well laid out. The houses were mostly two to three stories high, well built, with flat roofs. The walls of the buildings were of stone and the eaves were elaborately picked out in red and brown and blue, which provided a fine splash of colour against the general whiteness of the buildings. It was noticeable, too, that the streets in the heart of the city were very much cleaner than those in the suburbs. The total area of Lhasa was about a half-mile square.

The next day two Councillors with two Secretaries called on Colonel Younghusband. It was necessary that the Mission should be properly housed, and with the object of securing the best house in Lhasa, Younghusband blandly made pretence of expecting to be housed in the Dalai Lama's Summer Palace.

In shocked tones he was told that that was quite im-



The streets of Lhasa were well laid out. The houses were mostly two or three stories high, well built, with flat roofs

possible—the Summer Palace was a religious building and dedicated to the service of the Dalai Lama. As an alternative, Younghusband was pleased to accept for the use of the Mission the large villa belonging to the first Duke of Tibet. It was a fine mansion, large enough to accommodate Younghusband's entire staff as well as an escort of two companies of infantry.

There was, however, no sign of definite delegates being appointed to commence negotiations, though various officials came and went. Younghusband adopted the attitude that

he had all the time in the world, and if the Tibetans did not mind paying Rs.50,000 a day towards the cost of the Mission, then he did not mind, either. Yet all the while he knew the sands were running out; there were reports of first falls of snow on the higher passes between Lhasa and India, and Macdonald was obstinately pressing for an early departure for home.

The Tibetan authorities appeared to be in utter confusion. The Dalai Lama was now reported to be eight marches away and heading for Mongolia. The unfortunate

Ta Lama had been disgraced and thrown into prison. Prospects of a settlement seemed remote.

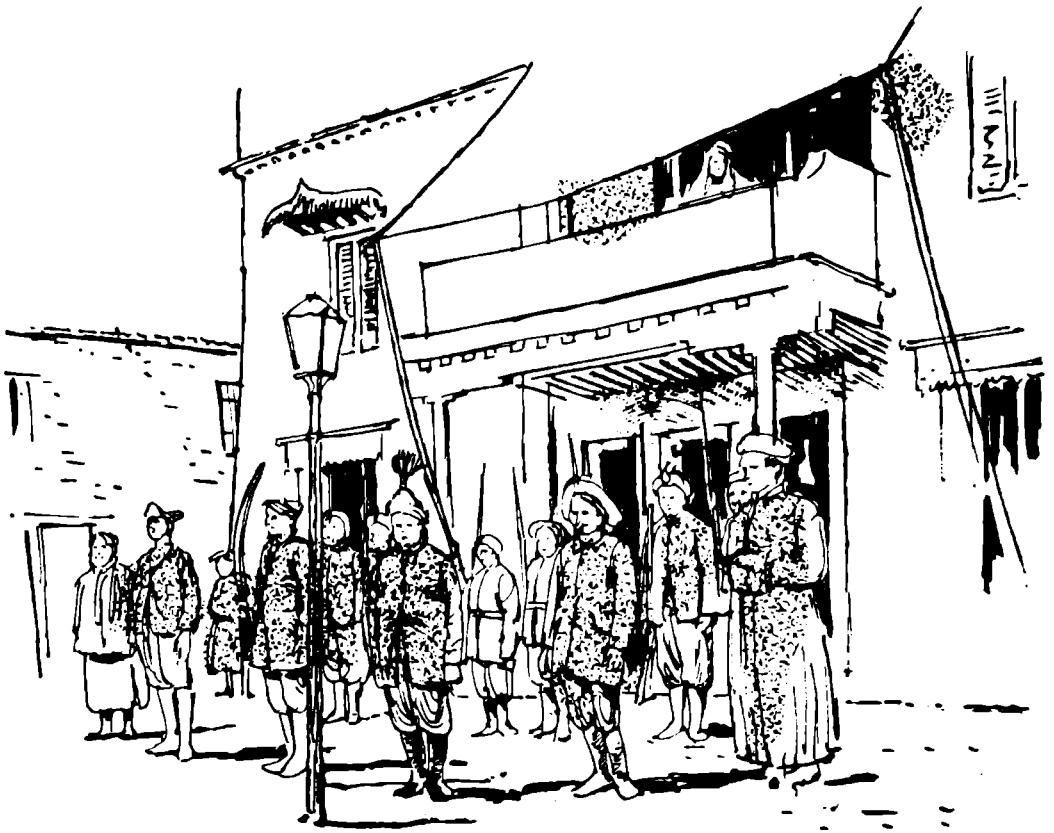
Younghusband, fortunately, had two very useful friends in Lhasa. One was the Tongsa Penlop of Bhutan, who had considerable influence. The other was the Nepalese Consul, who had received instructions from his Government to give Colonel Younghusband every assistance.

The latter told Younghusband that he had seen the Ti Rimpoche, who was the Regent of Tibet in the absence of the Dalai Lama. It seemed that before leaving the capital, the Dalai Lama had entrusted his seal to be given to the Ti Rimpoche, authorizing him to act in his name.

When the Nepalese Consul had explained to the Ti Rimpoche that matters between Tibet and Great Britain were now at a critical stage, the Regent had replied that both he and the Dalai Lama's brother were deeply anxious to make a settlement.

On 14 August the Ti Rimpoche came to see Colonel Younghusband. He was an old man and a much respected Lama, a Cardinal of the yellow sect of monks, and occupant of the principal chair of the Ga-den monastery. As it turned out, the seals of office could not have been entrusted to a more thorough and competent person. The Ti Rimpoche saw the true situation at a glance, and slowly under his control matters took shape out of the chaos created by the Chief Secretary. Nevertheless, it was slow work, as the Ti Rimpoche had to contend with Tibetan obstinacy at every turn.

The two Sikkimese who had been seized a year ago, were released. In their own view they had been fairly well treated, except that they had been slightly beaten at Shigatse. They



The Nepalese Consulate in Lhasa, with the Consul's personal bodyguard

had been kept in separate dungeons below ground, and had not seen daylight for nearly a year, though that did not appear to them to have been a particular hardship. On their being released, Younghusband informed the Sha-pés that he would not now press for reparations concerning these two men.

During August one unfortunate incident occurred. A fanatical monk from the western part of Tibet, wearing chain mail under his monk's robe, attacked two British officers with a sword, seriously injuring them. The monk was overpowered, and the next day he was hanged in public. As security for future good behaviour, Younghusband demanded four hostages, one from each of the three great monasteries, and an important Government representative.

A fine of Rs.5,000 was exacted from the powerful De-pung monastery.

The four hostages arrived in a state of terror, under the impression that they were going to be executed there and then. To their surprise and relief, they found themselves treated as personal guests of the Mission, and given every comfort, though they were kept strictly within the bounds of the camp. The Ti Rimpoche and the Chinese Amban called personally to express to Younghusband their horror at the attack by the monk, and to inquire after the wounded officers.

As August drew towards its close matters were still far from finalized regarding the terms of the Convention, though every point was agreed except the size of the indemnity. To make things more difficult, General Macdonald informed Younghusband that 15 September was the latest date to which he could allow troops to remain in Lhasa. Already there was heavy snow on the surrounding high ground. Younghusband accordingly telegraphed India: "Am I to receive orders from military authorities as to date of my return? Supplies of wheat, barley, fodder for whole force, can easily be obtained here, warm clothing for force can also be obtained. Tibetan military forces are utterly broken, people are perfectly friendly. If I leave here before completion of my work, Government risk losing all best result of their expensive efforts and of bravery and endurance of troops."

The immediate reply from India was that the Government could see no reason why the Mission should not stay at Lhasa until the middle of October, if necessary. After that, there was no further pressure from Macdonald.

Younghusband, White and O'Connor interviewed at length all the principal men in Lhasa. The popularity of the Mission personnel increased daily. Younghusband announced that he would distribute a thousand rupees to the poor of the city. When twelve thousand poor appeared at the camp for the Mission's bounty, he immediately increased the gift to four thousand rupees. Public comment on this was that when Tibetan troops came to Lhasa they looted everything; British troops, on the other hand, were not only kept from looting, they paid for everything they required and even distributed alms to the poor!

At last negotiations between the Mission and the Tibetans reached the penultimate stage. On 4 September, the Ti Rimpoche and a Secretary of the Council, accompanied by the Tongsa Penlop, called on Colonel Younghusband, and announced that they were ready to conclude the Convention. A last detail of the method of payment of the indemnity was discussed, after which the Ti Rimpoche affixed his private seal to the draft Convention. This he did with some emotion, saying to Younghusband that he would seal it a hundred times over if, by so doing, he could bring immediate peace to Tibet.

This was the eve and foretaste of Younghusband's greatest triumph.

IO

Mission Completed

ON the twenty-seventh day of the seventh month of the Wood Dragon Year, a Convention of peace and friendship between Tibet and Great Britain was sealed in the Throne Room of the Potala Palace. To the State Oracle this was clearly the fulfilment of the prophecy that had long stigmatized the Wood Dragon year in the Tibetan Almanack. The “quarrelling and fighting, full many enemies, troublous grief by weapons and suchlike” were now over. The conciliatory speaker—Younghusband or the Ti Rimpoche? It did not matter—had vanquished the war. The future of the two countries was to be linked in friendship.

The State Oracle had predicted that 4 September would be the most favourable day for the signing, and the Ti Rimpoche, when he sealed the draft Convention, had urged that the Convention itself should be signed and sealed that same day. He was greatly disappointed when Younghusband told him that it would be impossible to complete arrangements before 7 September.

This was a day of ceremonial at the Potala, though the Tibetans had requested that the signing should be done at the Amban’s residence, on the grounds that Tibet was China’s vassal. But Younghusband knew his Tibetans, and refused.

The Throne Room, where the Dalai Lama would have performed the act if he had remained in Lhasa, was decided upon by the Mission as the proper place for the final ceremony. On the day, the route to the Potala was lined with troops. There was bustle and excitement, and a positive holiday spirit invested the city. Troops lined the way up the steep slope of the Potala and across the courtyards, and through the painted halls and dark passages, dimly lighted by little butter lamps held by shadowy, shaven monks, with inscrutable, impassive faces.

Every military detail of this pageant was designed for dramatic effect and protection. If there were a last minute uprising the troops would be ready for it. The guns, detailed to fire a salute, were strategically sited. There were blanks for the salute, but there were high explosive shells in the limbers.

The text of the Convention had been written in three vertical columns side by side on one large sheet of parchment, in English, Tibetan and Chinese. Five original copies were prepared. They were for the Tibetan Government, the Chinese Government, the British Government, the Indian Government, and the British Ambassador in Peking.

Colonel Younghusband's own camp table was brought to the Throne Room. To be used for the actual signing and sealing of the Convention, this modest table looked somewhat incongruous in the colourful Throne Room. On it was spread the Union Jack which had flown over Younghusband's headquarters and throughout the long march from India. This flag bore on its centre the Star of India, and below it the motto, "Heaven's Light our Guide," and is known as the Viceroy's flag. Today Younghusband's Union Jack hangs in

the central hall of Windsor Castle, and was placed there by order of King Edward VII.

The five parchments of the Convention were borne into the Throne Room on a large silver tray carried by Younghusband's Bengali head clerk, Mr. Mitter, who had accompanied his master all the way from Indore with unfailing cheerfulness.

Soon after three o'clock in the afternoon Colonel Younghusband arrived at the Potala with his staff, where he was received by the Amban.

“The scene, as we entered [Younghusband reported back to India] was extremely picturesque. On the left were all the British and Indian officers and men; on the right were the mass of Tibetans, the Councillors in bright yellow silk robes, and many others in brilliant clothing, together with the Bhutanese in bright dresses and quaint head-gear; and in front the Amban and all his staff in their fullest official dress advanced to meet me, with the Acting Regent by him in the severely simple garb of a Lama. The pillars and cross-beams of the roof of the hall were richly painted. An immense silk curtain was hung immediately behind the chairs to be occupied by the Amban and myself. And the whole scene was rendered curiously soft and hazy by the light entering, not through windows at the sides, but through an immense skylight in the centre of the hall which was covered with coloured canvas.”

Two hundred Mission troops were in the Throne Room. Some were on duty, the remainder were spectators. They were English, Sikhs, Pathans, and Gurkhas, their uniformed figures mingling with the brilliant-hued background of the painted wall frescoes and bright mosaics. The Tibetan monks wore robes of a light ruby colour; the lay officials wore dark

magenta, with yellow woollen hats rather like tam-o'-shanters. The Dalai Lama's throne was hidden behind the great hanging curtain, which was of crimson silk magnificently embroidered with a great five-clawed dragon. There were also about one hundred Chinese spectators and the same number of Tibetan.

The Amban took the centre seat in front of the dragon curtain. The Ti Rimpoche sat on his left, and Younghusband on his right. Tea was served, and dried fruits were set before them.

After these were disposed of, the Convention was read out in Tibetan. Colonel Younghusband then asked the Tibetan officials if they were prepared to sign it, to which they all answered in the affirmative, and the process of affixing the seals began. The seal of the Council was placed on the parchment, then those of the De-pung, Sera, and Ga-den monasteries. Then was affixed the seal of the National Assembly.

As soon as that was done, Colonel Younghusband and the Ti Rimpoche left their seats and advanced to the table together. At the same time the Amban and the whole Durbar rose to their feet. The Ti Rimpoche merely touched the Dalai Lama's seal with the tips of his fingers; the seal itself was then applied to the parchment by a monk in attendance. Lastly, Colonel Younghusband affixed the seal of the Tibet Frontier Commission, and then signed his name, F. E. Younghusband, Colonel, British Commissioner. The Convention between Great Britain and Tibet was completed.

Younghusband then handed the document to the Ti Rimpoche and said that a peace had now been made which he hoped would never again be broken.

The ceremony of sealing was repeated for the four remaining original copies. The second one was handed to the Amban as representing the Chinese Government, while the remaining three, for the British and Indian Governments and the British Ambassador in Peking, were retained by the Commissioner. The whole ceremony lasted nearly an hour and a half and was conducted in the greatest good humour and some laughter during the sealing of the parchments.

Colonel Younghusband then addressed the assembly, in which he formally declared that Great Britain and Tibet were now at peace. He emphasized that the Convention left their lands intact; that their liberties and religion remained untouched; that it recognized the suzerainty of China; and did not interfere with Tibet's internal affairs. He concluded by saying:

“I trust that the peace which has this moment been established, will last for ever, and that we may never again be forced to treat you as enemies. As a first token of peace, I will ask General Macdonald to release all prisoners of war, and I shall expect that you will set at liberty all those imprisoned on account of dealings with us.”

The speech was translated sentence by sentence into Tibetan by Captain O'Connor, and into Chinese by the Amban's interpreter. At the conclusion of the Durbar, Colonel Younghusband presented the Lamas of the Potala with the gift of a thousand rupees. Afterwards, the Tibetan officials crowded round to shake hands with all the Mission officers.

It was agreed that the indemnity of Rs.7,500,000 was to be paid in yearly instalments over a period of seventy-five

years, during which time a British force should occupy the Chumbi Valley. As it transpired, the British occupation was concluded after three years, and the payment of the indemnity, which was reduced to a third, was taken over by the Chinese Government and paid in three instalments. There was a motive behind this move. It enabled China to sever the contact between Tibet and India, and it caused much heartburning. But that is another story.

On the following day all the Tibetans who had been made prisoners of war were released by the Mission. During their captivity they had been employed as camp servants and porters. They were now paraded for the last time, and each man, greatly to his astonishment, was handed five rupees for the work he had done—a bonus which left each ex-prisoner grinning and “kowtowing” in delighted amazement.

On the Tibetan side, the Sha-pés produced four emaciated prisoners with glazed eyes, sunken cheeks, parchment skin, and a look of fixed horror on their faces. They were more like spectres than living men. Their discovery had been made by Captain O'Connor, who had not rested until he had secured their release. Two of them, father and son, had been chained in separate dungeons for nineteen years as a punishment for having given assistance to the Indian explorer Sanat Chandra Das. The other two wretches had suffered similar treatment for having helped the Japanese Buddhist monk, Kawaguchi. All four men were in abject terror of the Tibetans, cringing and bowing before them.

After the exchange of prisoners, Colonel Younghusband returned to the Sha-pés the sum of Rs.5,000 which had been exacted from the De-pung monastery when the monk had

attacked and wounded the two officers. He also released the four hostages.

Younghusband then demanded back the sum of Rs.1,000 on account of the torture of two of the Mission's servants, one of whom had died, who had been taken on the night the Tibetan forces attacked the Mission at Gyantse. This money was to be handed over to the families of the two servants.

For Younghusband, the final two weeks at Lhasa were busy ones. He made official visits to the principal monasteries and the Cathedral. He distributed presents on a liberal scale. He entertained. A race meeting was organized, at which he presided. There were farewell parties given by the officers of the various regiments. Sightseeing was the order of the day. Colonel Waddell satisfied himself that the golden roofs of Lhasa were of gilded copper, but Percival Landon was almost certain that the central canopy of the roof of the State Oracle was of solid gold.

A telegram came from the Viceroy of India conveying to Younghusband the personal congratulations of the King. It should here be recorded that on his return to England Younghusband was honoured with a long private audience with King Edward VII. Shortly afterwards he was made a Knight Commander of the Indian Empire. Later, when the high quality of his service in Tibet was better recognized, Younghusband received the highest order of knighthood in the Indian Empire, that of a Knight Commander of the Star of India.

On the eve of his departure from Lhasa, Colonel Younghusband exchanged farewell visits with the Chinese Amban, who was cordial but reserved. It subsequently transpired that

matters were not going smoothly for Yu-tai. He had received a severe reprimand from Peking for, in their opinion, having shown too great a partiality for the British. Later, he was recalled, and on his arrival in Peking he was degraded and put in chains.

On the morning of the departure of the Mission, 23 September, the Ti Rimpoche made a farewell visit to Colonel Younghusband. He then presented him with a little image of Buddha, which was an unprecedented honour from the Ti



The farewell gift of the Ti Rimpoche to Colonel Younghusband—
a little image of Buddha

Rimpoche, especially as the recipient was not a Buddhist. Younghusband was deeply touched.

“As the reverend old Regent rose from his seat and put the present into my hand he said with real impressiveness that he had none of the riches of this world, and could only offer me this simple image. Whenever he looked upon an image of Buddha he thought only of peace, and he hoped that whenever I looked on it I would think kindly of Tibet.”

The last order was given; the Mission moved off. A mile outside Lhasa a large tent had been set up by the roadside by

the Tibetans for a last farewell. There the Mission found the whole Council, together with a number of leading men of Lhasa, and the Amban's first and second secretaries, awaiting them. Tea was served, and there were final handshakes and mutual good wishes, then those who had fought their way to the Forbidden City now rode away in an atmosphere of warmth and friendship.

The great Tibetan adventure was over, and India was nineteen days march away. O'Connor, however, was not yet returning to India. He was proceeding to Gyantse, where he was to take up his new duties as Trade Agent under the terms of the Convention. Thus, by coincidence, O'Connor, who had been the first of all that army of men to enter Tibet, was to be the last to leave it.

For Younghusband, this was the final farewell.

“When I reached camp I went off alone to the mountains and gave myself up to all the emotions of this wonderful time. My task was over and my anxiety had passed. The scenery was in sympathy with my feelings; the unclouded sky a heavenly blue; the mountains softly merging into violet; and as I now looked towards that mysterious purple haze in which the sacred city was once more wrapped, I no longer had cause to dread the hatred it might hide. From it came only the echo of the Lama's words of peace. And with all the warmth still on me of that impressive farewell message . . . all nature and all humanity were bathed in a rosy glowing radiance; and life for the future seemed nought but buoyancy and light.”

That last memory of Lhasa and the Lama's image of Buddha were to remain with Younghusband for the rest of his long life.

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