Report of a mission to

SIKKIM

and the Tibetan Frontier

1884

by

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RATNA PUSTAK BHANDAR
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INTRODUCTION.

I was deputed to Sikkim and the Tibetan frontier by the Lieutenant-Governor in October last with a triple object. (1) To discuss with the Maharaja certain pending questions concerning the administration of his State and his relations to the British Government; (2) to visit the Lachen valley to see if a trade route could be opened up in that direction, with the province of Tsang in Tibet; (3) to endeavour to meet, and to establish friendly relations with, the Tibetan authorities of the district adjoining Sikkim on the north. The first and third points have been discussed in separate reports, and I am conscious that the diary of my tour, apart from the record of the proceedings at Tumlong, the capital of Sikkim, and at Giagong, on the frontier, contains little of practical interest. As, however, photographs were taken on the journey, and the diary may possibly be found of some use as an itinerary, I have, by the Lieutenant-Governor's desire, published the latter as it was written. I must ask for indulgence for the shortcomings of the diary on the ground of the difficulties under which it was written. Owing to the very limited time at my disposal, I was obliged to make the longest marches I could induce the coolies to undertake, and, except at Tumlong and at Giagong, I was unable to halt for a single day. The diary was written, *currente calamo*, every night after a long journey, which, owing to the necessity of moving as rapidly as possible, had afforded few opportunities for observation. Incidents of little interest to any one not concerned in them, were recorded while they were fresh in my mind, and it is only because I am aware that if I once began the process of excision, I should leave but

REPORT OF A MISSION

TO

SIKKIM AND THE TIBETAN FRONTIER.

TEMI, *Monday, 20th October.*

We made a very long march today from Darjeeling over the shoulder of Tendong to Temi (4,770). We crossed the Rungeet by the cane suspension bridge, and rode up to Keadom, the first village in Independent Sikkim. About a hundred yards below the village we were met by the principal villagers with drums and fifes, and some men and women who sang and danced before us till we reached an arbour which had been prepared for our reception. Here we had some oranges. This was the fourth time I have enjoyed the hospitality of Keadom, and I have always welcomed the rest there after the stiff and hot pull up from the Rungeet. From Keadom we rode on up the valley of the Mongpoo, which seems more lovely every time I see it. At the shoulder between Silokevoke and Namtchi we were met by my old friend the Lasso Kazi, looking in excellent case, the lord of half a hundred villages and many a mile of forest. His band was in full force, and the men were dressed in smart red jackets and new striped Lepcha chudders of white and blue. They struck up as soon as we appeared at the bend in the road. In the arbour we had each a choonga full of murwa beer of my friend's own special

:ap. I gave the Kazi a robe of honour. As we rode along he shoulder, preceded by the band playing and drumming vigorously, we all enjoyed the lovely view of the Rungeet like a streak of light blue paint, far down in the valley between Rinchinpoong and the Timbi La, as it flowed south after its junction with the Ratong under Tassiding. At Namtchi we were met by the Lama and the full chapter of monks, dressed out in their smartest mitres, and blowing trombones and trumpets, and clashing cymbals. Some of the trombones (like those I saw last year at Tassiding) were many feet long, and gave forth most sepulchral tones in response to the vigorous efforts of the performers. The Lama, an old acquaintance of mine, presented me with a scarf, and led the way into the Gompa, where prayers for our safe journey were chanted, as we sat on Tibetan rugs and sipped murwa. Drops of rain began to fall as we rode up the steep side of Tendong above Namtchi, and I became aware of a tall, gaunt, hard-featured person in a monk's dress, who offered to hold an umbrella over my head. On reaching the summit of the shoulder, I ascertained that this was a Lama of Pemiongchi monastery, who had joined us at Namtchi and wished to go in our train to Tumlong. I recognized, as we marched along the shoulder, the path by which I ascended in 1882 and 1883 to the cone of Tendong (8,676), where the head Lama of Namtchi spends the months of the rainy season. The tradition is that in a great flood the whole world was immersed except the top of Tendong, and that a Lepcha man and woman, the only survivors of the deluge, took refuge there. At the beginning of the rains accordingly, the Lama proceeds to the summit and prays continuously that a repetition of the disaster may be averted. Food is supplied to him at intervals from the monastery, and it is said that he has the power, at this time and place, of curing grievous diseases of pilgrims who visit his lonely cell. As we reached the point where the path to Temi leaves the road to the Timbi La, and descends the northern side of the mountain, night was closing in fast and a heavy mist was coming up. We had 3,000 feet to descend, and the path, though not very steep, was incredibly slippery,—far more so than it was seven years ago when Croft and I struggled down the

same descent at the close of the same march. The Lama,—who had been staring at me with an expression of mingled curiosity and reverence at every available opportunity, since our parley at the top of the rise from Namtchi,—began to pray vigorously in a monosyllabic chant ending every now and then in a long drone. Alpenstocks were soon found to be a delusion, and hobnailed shooting boots a snare. The flicker of the lantern only served to illumine our mishaps. Every two or three minutes one of the party would be seen suddenly accelerating his pace, and brandishing his alpenstock as he staggered forward into the darkness: then the Lama prayed louder and louder, till a double-knock on the ground announced that the performer of the involuntary evolution had finally come to grief. It was past 9 o'clock when the unearthly yells set up by Furchung and Dadji reached the camp, and men with lanterns and torches set out to meet us. We found that Oldham had sent to meet us two hours before, but that the men had returned saying it was impossible for us to get beyond the Namtchi monastery tonight.

LINGMO, *Tuesday, 21st October.*

Hot and uninteresting march to Lingmo. Before leaving Temi, I sent for the son of the Barmie Kazi, who had taken much trouble in laying out the camping ground, and presented him with a robe of honour. The descent from Temi to the Teesta valley was slippery, but the morning was bright and clear. The bridges over the different streams in the valley had been repaired. I noticed that the flat of Shingchu Thang (*Shing* wood; *Chu* water; *Thang* flat), which had been cleared for cultivation in 1877, was overgrown with low jungle. The mundle of Ben met us here with the usual preparation of an arbour, and oranges, milk and murwa. He explained that what I had noticed was due to the dispute about the settlement of the Nepalese between the Phodang Lama and the Pemiongchi Lamas, which has now been set at rest. Under Yangang an arbour had been prepared by the Lamas of the Gonpa. Ugyen Gyatso, who is himself a Lama, is the great man here,—he owns the living, in fact, of the monastery,—and he introduced the

a letter to be written by the Tehsildar to the Kangsa Dewan, saying that I should proceed to Kubbi next day, and that, unless a satisfactory explanation was there given, I should consider whether I should visit the Raja at Tumlong at all. Oldham fully concurred in the advisability of this step, and the Tehsildar said that it would have a very salutary effect.

TUMLONG (5,290), *Thursday, 23rd October.*

Rather an eventful day. Paul took a photograph from Sillingthang, with the Lama in the foreground, before we started. Magnificent cliffs above the road before the descent to the Dikchu is reached. Saw some gigantic black bees' nests far up on the face of the precipice. No leeches; in 1877 they gave us a great deal of trouble at this part of the march. At the Dikchu we found ponies from the Raja, which, however, I declined to use yet. After a sharp rise from the Dikchu, we reached the rich slopes of Kubbi, the brazen crest of the Raja's house at Tumlong gleaming in the sun far up on the opposite hill across the Ryott. Here we found a deputation from the Raja waiting for us. We sent the Tehsildar forward to ascertain their message. He returned with the information that the Kangsa Dewan himself had been sent by the Raja to convey to me his apologies for the ignorance and remissness of his officers which he much regretted, and to beg that I would overlook it. I thought it as well, under the circumstances, not to see the Dewan at this stage; so we sent back the Tehsildar with an intimation that, in view of the explanation offered, I would proceed to Tumlong, after luncheon, and would see him there. The Dewan and his party, after the indispensable preliminary of sending us choongas of murwa, then went off down the hill, the former a very picturesque figure. He was dressed in a Tibetan hat, and a sort of jacket of purple satin over his long robes, and an attendant held a crimson umbrella over his head. Shortly afterwards we went down to the Ryott, where I remembered a clear pool for bathing. We nearly lost Oldham here. The stream was much higher than it was when I was here before; the clear pool had become a boiling eddy, and below it the water was rushing down among and over the huge rocks

in a furious torrent. He seemed, as he entered the shallow water, to rush forward (he had really stumbled) in order to get into deep water. He steadied himself for a moment, and then again moved forward. Could it be that he was mad enough to try to swim against that raging flood? In another moment we were horrified to see him swept out into the current and carried towards the first rapid. With admirable presence of mind, he kept his feet with the stream, and only used his arms to steady his course. Down he went over the first fall, and onward through the foaming waters below it. About 30 yards further on was a large rock out in the stream, of which the top was not fully submerged. If he could grasp that we might save him: if not, he must be dashed to pieces in a few seconds. We saw him catch the rock and swing round with the force of the current. The hungry river made another effort to hurry him on with it to death; but his hold was firm, and the only question now was whether he could maintain it in that icy water till we could come to his aid. Between the rock and the nearest rock of the shore was a distance of about 10 feet with a deep and rapid current between. In an instant two of his chuprassees had cut down bamboos with which they began, with the best intentions, to prod him and poke him in the eye. We delivered him from their hands and used the bamboos to pass him the end of two pugrees knotted together, and ultimately we dragged him by main force across. It was a bad quarter of an hour for all of us. After luncheon we crossed the spur between the Ryott and the Rathu which unite a few hundred yards further down, and then began the long ascent to Tumlong. We were met by people with murwa three times. A few hundred yards below the palace we were met by the Kangsa Dewan with a score of soldiers, dressed in uniform of red jackets and the plaited hats (like the brimless tall hat which the Irishman in Punch always wears), and armed with muskets, and a very enthusiastic band of drummers, fifers and cymbal players. He presented me with a scarf. A tent had been pitched for us to change our clothes, at the place where we put on our uniform in 1877. Here I had some conversation with the Dewan and his brother, the Lama of the royal monastery of Phodang (the Richelieu of Sikkim). As it was

already dark, I proposed that we should defer our visit to the Raja till tomorrow. They readily agreed. As we passed the gate of the Maharajah's house a salute of bombs was fired. As soon as I reached my tent, a letter was brought to me from the Maharajah, wrapped in a scarf of flowered blue silk, begging that I would excuse him for the shortcomings of his officers, and accept his hospitality. I replied that I would pay him a visit in the morning.

TUMLONG, *Friday, 24th October.*

Spent the morning in preparing the presents. Fixed 11 o'clock for formal visit to Maharajah. At this hour the Kangsa Dewan came up from the palace to conduct us. We formed procession, and entering the palace enclosure marched round it by the left. The Sikkim army was drawn up to receive us in the courtyard. At the door of the chapel, on the ground floor, we were received by the Maharajah and his half-nephew, the son of the old Chanjed. After we had shaken hands with him, and Oldham and I had received scarves from him,—and Evans, Paul and Gordon from young Chanjed,—the Maharajah led the way to the chapel on the upper floor, where the interview was to be held. On the left of the altar we sat in order—myself, Oldham, Evans, Paul, and Gordon. Opposite to me on the other side of the altar the Maharajah sat cross-legged on a high throne, young Chanjed occupying a low seat on his right. To his right again were the Kangsa Dewan, the Bir Gnerpa and others, all standing. As we took our seats a salute of bombs was fired outside. At my request the Phodang Lama, who can speak Hindustani, acted as interpreter between the Maharajah and myself. I made the usual formal enquiries after his health and his mother's health and about his journey from Choombi, and answered similar enquiries regarding my health and our journey. I then said that the Lord Sahib had asked me to make special enquiries regarding his health, and to present some tokens of his friendship. The presents were then brought forward and displayed. I explained the use of the graphoscope, and first showed him through it a photograph of the Lieutenant-Governor. He expressed much satisfaction. During the interview an attendant kept filling our cups with some

speak out their minds frankly and unreservedly. The first question discussed was the appointment by the Maharajah of a representative to administer the State during his absence. I ascertained that the appointment of Kangsa last year, and this, was only temporary, and I could see that he himself was indisposed to accept any permanent appointment. The reasons were soon apparent. In the first place he was unwilling permanently to supersede young Chanjed, who, though now too inexperienced, must be counted with hereafter. In the second place he and the Lama were both evidently averse to any arrangement which would stereotype the present system of an annual sojourn of the Maharajah at Choombi. I asked them to speak their minds quite openly and fearlessly on this point. They then with marked eagerness said that if I could persuade the Raja to reside permanently in his own territory there would be a great improvement in every respect. They urged that his influence is weakened in Tibet by his residence there as a private individual, that his money is squandered there by Tibetan underlings, and that he loses both the opportunity and the inclination for looking closely into the administration of his own State by these periodical absences. They said every one would be gratified, if he could only be induced to reside among his own people, and that he would be much better able to promote our views in regard to the development of trade and of friendly relations with Tibet. I suggested that he might make his summer residence in the uplands of the Lachen or Lachung in his own territory, and they eagerly supported this view. They assured me that, if we were firm, we could get the Raja to agree to the abrogation of the Choombi clause in the treaty, and that if this were done the whole administration would work cordially for the promotion of the good of the State and the policy of the British Government. In the course of this conversation they referred several times to the views of the other leading men and to their custom of consulting one another. I accordingly asked them how a small Council consisting of themselves, the Purba Dewan, Lama Tulku and ultimately Chanjed, with Kangsa as President at first, would work under the Raja. This suggestion gave them evident satisfaction, and they said that if they could

1-THE TEESTA VALLEY FROM SILLINGTHANG.

2-MAHARAJA'S HOUSE AT TUMLONG. CAMP ABOVE.

that before such a step could be taken we must see some substantial advance towards the accomplishment of our wishes and know who would be the delegate. This, like other matters, I said, rested in the Raja's own hands. Let him show his willingness to make a real new departure and to help us, and our Government would not be backward in helping him to place a suitable representative in immediate and constant communication with us. The initiative, however,—and a substantial initiative,—rested with him. The Dewan expressed his satisfaction with this reply. He said that as for Tibet we should soon see that they were really doing something, and that they would hold a council to nominate a suitable representative. I asked him why the Sikkim leaders did not send their children into Darjeeling to be educated. He said they could not pick up English, though he greatly desired it. I got Tendook to describe his wonder and astonishment at his visit to Calcutta. They said they would see if some of the sons of the leading men could not be sent in, and I said that if they would write to me, through Sarat or Tendook, I would see what arrangements could be made. They seemed much pleased.

I then called up the Yangtang Kazi and the Gnerpa of Samdong, and gave them each a robe. I said I wished to show that I had really pardoned them at the Raja's intercession. I said that I could not refuse any such request made at his own capital by the Raja himself, who had shown us so much attention; but that I hoped that they and the other Kazis and officers would see that it was advisable in future to make proper exertions to receive, in the manner which the Maharaja himself would desire, any officer deputed by the Lieutenant-Governor to confer with him. This word in season had been privately suggested to me by the Dewan, and on being translated, caused a visible impression on the individuals addressed, and on the other officials who had joined the circle on these two being called up. I said I was myself sorry that it had been necessary to notice their remissness; but that nothing more would be thought of it. They were both rather dejected when they were called up; but they now beamed with smiles and withdrew.

I continued my confidential talk with the two brothers for some time, and they went away saying that, out of regard for me personally, they would work their best to show some results in regard to Tibet before many months.

RINGUN, *Monday, 27th October.*

Evans and I decided to go to Ringun by the longer road by Tingcham in order to take our ponies with us, Paul and Gordon going on foot over the Mafila. We had sent on some of the coolies the day before. The Dewan and the Lama came to say good-bye as I rode out of camp. We passed over the Phodang monastery and over the village of Rangong. As we were on the inner circle we were soon nearly opposite the junction of the Dikchu and the Teesta below Sillingthang, or rather Radong. We passed above the Gonpa of Dethang. At Namoo the Dingpen Kesong, who accompanied us, pointed out a road which branches off from Mangshi, and by which Tibetan traders from Lachen and Lachung go down to the Dikchu and up to Radong. The view here was very picturesque. On the opposite side of the Teesta we saw Singtam, and in the distance to the north-west the monastery of Giatong. After passing Tingcham, which is now inhabited, we had a terribly hot and trying climb to the spur above the Ron-Ron-Chu, which flows down a valley lined with landslips from the Mafila. At the top we saw the other party moving along a path below and west of a huge landslip near the village of Nampatam. The descent to the Ron-Ron was very difficult, as the black soil was greasy and slippery to the last degree after the rain. After a not very difficult ascent from the Ron-Ron, we found the Tatang Kazi's son waiting with murwa at a place where a most comfortable bench of bamboos had been prepared for us at the top. Thence we rode nearly all the way into Ringun, where we found the tents pitched on an open fallow piece of ground below the monastery. The camping ground was covered with short wormwood, and everything was cheerful and clean.

of the snow-covered flat of Yeumthang with the yaks in the snow and the corner of Donkia looking over the shoulder of the bend up to Momay. While I was absent the Darjeeling and Lachung men had a row (the former being the aggressors), and word was sent to me. I found that Gordon had only just saved one of the former, who had assaulted the old Phipun with a stick, from being beaten to death. In the object which I saw sitting dejectedly near the fire in the ante-room of our hut I recognized with grim satisfaction the ringleader of the mutineers at Nangama. A present of a bottle of rum to the Phipun and an order publicly given that the two ringleaders (the second had also tried to promote the escape from Nangama) should be dismissed at Choonthang settled the matter. On our return Gordon and I crossed the river to visit the hot spring. The Kazi, the Lama and Dadji jumped right into the basin in the hut about 8 × 6 and 3 feet deep and began to drink freely. We tasted the fluid, which was like a mixture of bad eggs and hot water. I resisted the Kazi's entreaties to wash in it and drink freely of it and thus be young for ever. He said it was better than any doctor's medicine. Above the hut there is a cleft whence the stream issues. Smoke was coming out of it and the rock was coated with a salt sulphurous powder. Within 10 feet is an icy cold rivulet. The bridge across the Lachung was very ricketty and had no rail. It was made in the usual fashion of these large plank bridges, the centre span resting and lashed to two others which project upwards.

We could enjoy the view down the valley better than we had been able to do on the up journey. At Ponie flat we waited for the photographic apparatus and got a picture. We could not, however, take in the magnificent Pulpit Rock on the right, as it rose too sheer from the flat. We lunched at the south end of the flat on the bank of the Ponie-Chu. Our Lachung men, who were attending the ponies, begged hard for our bottles. I gave my attendant, a particularly shrewd good-humoured good-looking fellow, a tot of whisky, which he forthwith divided with the others to their great satisfaction, so I gave a larger supply. After lunch we offered them some Pilsener beer. The Lama tried it first, but at once pulled a wry face and spat it out. The others took it

religiously, because it was drink, but they evidently thought it very poor stuff. When we reached Lachung the sun was nearly setting. I counted 110 yaks on the hillside to the west. They were being driven down for the night, and the way the more lively ones came down the steep slopes at a run, larking with one another, was very amusing. While the tents were being pitched, we challenged the village to "put" a heavy stone, and beat them easily, the best of the Lachung men being a bad third. Then Paul and Gordon each picked a man for a match at spear throwing. They did capitally and got each a tot of rum.

CHOONTHANG, *Sunday, 2nd November.*

This morning at Lachung I went after a flock of snow-pigeons and got three. A shikari, who has attached himself to us, remarked to me, after I got a right and left, that I should kill a great number if I would only fire at them sitting. This piece of information is the only service he has yet rendered in any capacity. Afterwards the Phipun came with the villagers to pay their salaams and present a sheep, a basket of red potatoes and some most excellent butter. I gave him in return two bottles of Exshaw for himself, and Rs. 20 for the general benefit. Much lolling out of tongues and salaaming followed. I then had a long talk with him about trade. He said very few through traders from Tibet to Darjeeling passed that way, as the Donkia is a bad pass, and it is easier to go by the Lachen. He said all the Lachung people generally go to Tibet twice a year. They have not yet been this year because cattle disease has been specially bad in Tibet, but they mean to go next month as soon as the snow has melted and hardened. They will take timber (shing) (I saw many trees cut into planks by the roadside), tchen (Paharia "Manjit") (a creeper which gives a red dye) and some cinnamon, to Shigatse and Gyantse. I saw baskets of tchen made up as loads. They get Rs. 5 a load for tchen at Shigatse. They will fetch back tea (cha), salt (tcha), wool (pe), blankets (nambu), some pottery (tamoo), sheep (lug) and goats (rha). Some may take sheep and wool to Darjeeling *direct* from Gyantse by Phari and the Jeylep, and will fetch back to Lachung

has in his cup to pour the contents into his servant's cup. Every one carries a wooden cup in the folds of his dress. The Jongpen took very little brandy, and after I had given him the two orthodox pressings to take some more, he looked round, a hand appeared under the wing of the tent, and the remains of his brandy were poured into the cup which it held. The Dingpen had disposed of his first supply, an electro-plated champagne glass full, and it had been renewed. He saw that the time had come when he must follow the Jongpen's example, and a hand was similarly produced; but as the Dingpen turned to go through the remainder of the ceremony, we saw that he emptied his glass as quick as lightning, and then pretended to pour the contents into the servant's cup. Things had now been placed on a much more satisfactory footing, and the Jongpen promised to pay me an informal visit next morning. The interview broke up by my presenting him with a scarf. At going he made profuse apologies for being unable to ask us to dinner, as his camp equipage was too small. It was now near sunset, and bitterly cold. After dinner Sarat came to tell me that the Jongpen had made him share his meal, and that he, Sarat, had told him about his previous visit to Shigatse. The Jongpen, he said, was delighted with all that had passed, and had asked many questions about us all. Sarat had told him that Evans was the great law officer of Government, and got Rs. 10,000 a day, while Gordon had been transformed into a General, and Paul had been promoted to be Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling. No words could be found to describe my greatness as the head of an expedition so composed. He had told the Jongpen about our photographing, and the Jongpen had sent him to ask if I would have a photograph of the group taken in the morning. Of course I gladly agreed.

SIPHU ROCKS, *Sunday, 9th November.*

This morning I kept my tent standing in order to have a photograph of the group taken. The others were struck very early, as we had a long march before us to Siphu rocks. The Jongpen and his people all took the greatest interest in the proceeding, the Dingpen particularly arrang-

ing himself and his belt of reliquaries with much care so as to make a good show. Kunchuk and the Sikkim Dingpen and his brother stood behind us. First Paul took a picture, and then he joined the group, and Sarat became photographer. In the interval between the two sittings the Jongpen's matchlock, with a sort of pennant fixed to the muzzle, was brought to him. He was evidently very anxious to be taken with the matchlock in his hand. Afterwards I had a long talk with him in my tent, Sarat only being present to interpret. I asked him first what was the cause of the suspicion with which the Tibetans regard us, and why they were so anxious to avoid all contact with us when we only sought their friendship and the promotion of trade which must be profitable to one side as well as to the other. He said that there was no real dislike or suspicion of us among the people, and that, on the contrary, the knowledge is spreading every day that the "Maharani's" subjects are governed with justice and are very rich and happy. I asked him why, under these circumstances, the policy of isolation was so rigorously maintained. He said that there were two parties in Tibet, and that the views of one party were in the ascendant. When I pressed him to give me further information, he said that a man might have different ideas in his private character from those which he had to adopt and support in his official capacity. I said that my object was to learn what were the real views on this important question of a man of intelligence and culture, as I saw he was, and that if he would speak out his mind quite freely, he might be under no apprehension of any harm coming to him, as I would regard what he said as confidential. I myself, I said, took a very keen interest in all that regards Tibet and its people, and in its religion and customs, and, in particular, in the line of the Penchen Rimboochay, and I asked him to speak to me as one private individual to another. He said that he was very gratified to find that I took so much interest in his country, and that he would speak as a private individual and not as an official. He then said that most of the officials and all the people would like to see all restrictions on communication with us removed, and that every day the desire for intercourse with India was increasing. They were beginning to know what wonderful things we were able to

mentioned Sawang Ranpa, one of the Shaffés, and one of the grandees of Tibet. "Sawang" is a title only given to great landholders, apart from their official position. I had also a long talk with the Jongpen about the Tashi Lamas. He was well acquainted with the story of Bogle's and Turner's missions, and said that every villager in Tibet knew of the pearl necklace which the Governor of India sent to the Tashi Lama or Penchen Rimboochay. He also spoke quite seriously of the belief that Her Majesty is the incarnation of the Divine Mother Tara, who is the special protectress of the Penchens. The monks at Lhassa, it may be observed, have tried to spread the belief that she is the incarnation of Mag-jorgyamo, the Goddess of War, but throughout Tsang, and in a great part of U, the other view is held. He was very much surprised and pleased at even my limited stock of information regarding Tibet and its religion, but he was aware that the Indian Government are tolerant towards Buddhists, and that it had even expended money on repairs of Buddhist monuments He also knew that Warren Hastings gave the Tashi Lama a piece of land on the Hooghly for a Buddhist temple. My interview with the Jongpen was cordial in the extreme, and he repeatedly asked Sarat Baboo to say that he had never hoped to see a Peling (European) with so much sympathy for Tibet and its people. He promised warmly to do all that he could to promote correspondence between me and the Minister, and said that any letters that I might send to him he would always have duly forwarded to Tashilunpo. He suggested that if I ever wanted to send him a private letter, I should send it through the ex-Phipun of Lachen, in whom he had full confidence. He was very anxious to know how soon I could send him copies of the photograph, and I promised to lose no time. He said he would let me know at times news of interest about the reappearance of the Penchen, and any other matter of importance. About half past nine our interview came to an end. The Jongpen's attendants, many of whom were armed with short swords, were standing in a crowd some way from the tent when we emerged. I ascertained that they were 106 in number, and I ordered them a present of a rupee each. When they heard this they set up a lusty cheer. We then all

Choonthang, or to pay taxes to him, or to send their sons to be monks of the monastery, or to cultivate any land connected with it. Then they streamed towards the monastery shouting and beating drums and cymbals. Larip Dechan, however, had come to know what was going on, and did not await them. He escaped down the other side of the hill and fled across the Lachung to Chakoong, and thence to Ringun, where he now lives. He has never since set foot in Choonthang. For six years the monastery and the village were deserted. Last year the Raja and the Lamas of Pemiongchi sent the present Lama to re-establish the Gonpa and to try to win over the people. The Phipuns say that they have consulted the Lamas of their own little monasteries at Lamteng and Lachung, and that it is generally agreed that their oath is not binding on them now that Larip Dechan has been rooted out and a good man has been appointed Lama. They showed me the very spot where the ceremony took place, and my friend Kunchuk, who had officiated on the Lachen side, grew very earnest in the graphic description he gave me of what occurred. I could see that the Lama and he were really on friendly terms, and I fancy the example made of Larip Dechan will not soon be forgotton. I gave the Phipun a robe of honour for his services and then bade farewell to these good people, and to these two lovely valleys, with much regret. After crossing the Lachung by the usual bridge of branches, I cleared a space whence I took a photograph of the meeting of the waters. Lunched at Chakoong. A bridge, with about 35 feet of waterway, would be required across the Chakoong Chu, which comes down from Gnaream. Good foundations on each side. Between this and the Rhi Chu, I took a photograph of the river. Magnificent rocks in, and on the banks of, the stream. The Rhi Chu would be easily bridged. There is a huge boulder in the middle of the stream, and the larger space would not be more than 20 feet. Good foundations on both banks. At Nangama the old Mundle, with his three wives, had a seat ready for us with murwa. Evening was coming on, so we pushed ahead. At the top of the sharp rise above the Meong Chu, it was nearly dark, and rain began. Further on, Evans and I, who were the last, were met by men with torches. Pouring in torrents when we reached Sinchik.

LETTERS RECEIVED FROM THE MINISTER OF THE GRAND LAMA, OR PENCHEN RIMBOOCHAY, OF TASHI LUNPO.

[*See pages* 41 *and* 78.]

A.

[LITERAL TRANSLATION.]

To the great and most opulent Governor, who turns the wheel of power all over this wide world, Ruler of Asia and Pillar of the Faith, to his Throne.

WITH reverence and with the full three mundane essentials (the heart, the speech, and the body)—

This most humble and insignificant self, who from his infancy, applying himself to study, has acquired only a minute jot of learning, such as may be compared with an insect's mouthful of water, has been favoured with a golden robe of honour that there is a reward of Rs. 2,500 for him, for which he presents his most cordial thanks.

This year there has appeared the incarnation of that divine personage who is the crown ornament of this world of men and gods. Next year His Holiness' incarnation will be identified. This humble self has been discharging with the utmost zeal and devotion all the religious duties of the Penchen Rimboochay as the Minister of the Great Buddhist Church, and moreover as the representative of the late all-knowing Penchen, in upholding, protecting, and propagating the religion of the Victor. Together with this piece of news he respectfully sends scarves and the mitre of the late Penchen for acceptance.

Dated Tashi Lunpo, the 5th of the 10th Lunar Month, Wood-monkey year.

[*Corresponding with the 22nd November* 1884.]

B.

[LITERAL TRANSLATION.]

To the lotus chair of the GREAT SAHEB MACAULAY, the Minister (Chanzo) of the Lord Governor of Bangala (which is in the Eastern quarter), who turns the wheel of power.

WITH the three essentials, body, mind and speech—

This humble self has been as it were decorated with a golden robe, being presented with a fine jade stand with three bottles in it, a magnifying glass with very handsome and excellent pictures, 87 in number, and a binocular of superior quality, with case, for which he offers many many thanks.

This humble self is devotedly engaged in the work of propagating the sacred and undefiled religion of the Victor as the representative of the late all-knowing Penchen Rimboochay. The religious services of the entombment of the remains of the late Penchen are favourably progressing. This year the incarnation of the Penchen has been born. Next year it will be identified. With this piece of news about the Penchen for the great Saheb, this humble self of Maha Singhe presents the neck amulet of the Penchen and scarves for acceptance.

Dated the 5th of the 10th Lunar Month of the Wood-monkey year.

C.

To his Most Precious Greatness LORD DUFFERIN, Great Governor of India in Bangala, whose exalted dignity and great power are recognized by all dwelling between Heaven and Earth. —To His Exalted Majesty's lotus feet.

WITH profound salutation and great respect begs to petition. On receiving the Great Viceroy's most gracious letter containing the news of his precious honour's health, the information that his great honour continues to rule with moral merit, like Kansika (the Lord of Heaven), and his kind presents,* this humble Sing-chen has been thrown into great ecstacy. He receives the precious commission on the crown of his head.

* String of pearls (110), emeralds (13) and Rs. 2,500.

As regards the land near Calcutta on the bank of Ganga which was formerly granted to Kyab-Gyan Paldan Yeshe (Tashi Lama) by Lord Hastings, it was his (Sing-chen's) greatest desire himself to apply spontaneously for its restoration; but this being a matter in which the Lamas and Ponpos (chiefs) of the country of Tibet are concerned, and he (Sing-chen) having to remain in Tibet as the basis of his religion, felt it difficult to risk the opening of the question, as such interference on his part might offend them, and as there is no certainty if it would not create religious enemies. Now, however, the time is not far distant when he may be able to discuss the details in a personal interview. Graciously forgive, graciously forgive.

With the enclosures, an image of Senge-da, the God of Lion's roar, a sacred silk fringe, and a scarf with figures of Gods.

Dated the 3rd of the 2nd Lunar month of the Wood-bird year, from the capital sanctuary of Tashi Lhunpo [*19th March* 1885].

MEMORANDUM ON OUR RELATIONS WITH TIBET.

I

IT is difficult for those who have always been accustomed to look upon Tibet as a closed land for Europeans, to realize that a century and a half ago a Christian Mission was established at Lhassa. Now-a-days a solitary English traveller, approaching any of the passes, finds himself confronted by a party of guards who point to an inscribed board planted on the frontier pillar, and proceed to execute a pantomime, of which the unmistakeable purport is that, if he crosses the boundary, their throats will be cut. The number of Europeans who, since the beginning of this century, have set their eyes, much less their feet, upon Tibetan ground,—at any rate in the provinces of U and Tsang, or Tibet Proper,—might almost be counted on the fingers of the two hands. Yet in the beginning of the last century, missionaries passed freely backwards and forwards between India and Tibet, and for many years preached the gospel under the very shadow of Potala. Two Jesuits, named Desideri and Freyre, travelled over the Mariam-La pass to Lhassa in 1716, and Desideri remained there till 1721. In his journal, which was discovered at Pistoia in the end of 1875, Father Desideri states that he openly gave out at Lhassa that he was a foreign Lama come to convert the people; that he was received with much toleration; and that the king [*i.e.*, the Nomenkhan or Gesub Rimboochay, the head of the temporal Government of the Talé Lama] was so much struck with a pamphlet of his that he arranged for a religious discussion to take place between him and some great Lamas. A revolution, however, intervened; the "king" was assassinated; and the discussion fell through (Geographical Magazine, 1st September 1876). Again Father Horace della Penna, with 12 Capuchins, reached Lhassa by way of Nepal in 1719. In 1735 he returned to Rome for reinforcements, and in 1740 he again reached Lhassa with nine companions.

He died in Nepal in 1747, but other missionaries remained at Lhassa, till they were expelled about 1760. As Mr. Clements Markham, in the admirable introduction to his edition of the Narratives of Bogle and Manning, says:—"The way in which Horace della Penna passed to and fro between Tibet and India proves that the intercourse was free and unrestrained, and that the traffic was protected by the enlightened policy of the Lamas of Tibet and the Newar Kings of Nepal." It was the supersession of these two authorities,—the extension of Chinese influence in Tibet, and their assumption of the control of the foreign relations of the Lamas on the one hand, and the conquest of the peaceful and enlightened Newars by the turbulent and ignorant Goorkhas on the other,—that led, first to the discouragement, and then to the prohibition, of intercourse. These two causes acted and re-acted upon one another till the present state of affairs was brought about, and while Nepalese and Cashmeerees hold their own in the market places of Shigatse and Lhassa, British subjects, Indian or European, are, as such, unceremoniously turned back almost within sight of the smoke of our locomotives.

2. The event to which Desideri refers when he speaks of a revolution occurring, was the first of a train of circumstances which led to results more disastrous to European intercourse than his own disappointment at the loss of a triumph over his Lama opponents. The storming of Lhassa and the murder of the Gesub by the Zungarians in 1717 was followed by Chinese intervention, and from 1720 two Chinese Ampas were permanently stationed at Lhassa. At first they do not seem to have had very much authority in Tibet. Their presence, in fact, would appear to have called into being a national party, headed by the Gesub, which jealously watched all their attempts to assert the authority of China. At length a catastrophe occurred which, though fatal to the actors in the tragedy itself, led to a great increase in the influence of China. About the middle of the last century the Ampas, Pou and Li, wished to increase the Chinese garrison, on the pretext of a movement among the Nepalese tribes, and interfered more and more in the government of the country. The Gesub and the national

party offered an uncompromising opposition to them, and the Ampas had the Gesub assassinated before their eyes. The result was an outburst of popular fury; the Ampas were torn to pieces; and a general massacre of the Chinese in Tibet ensued. The Emperor Kien Lun sent an army to re-establish Chinese authority, and for some time afterwards the Gesubs, instead of leading a national party of opposition, were completely the creatures of the Ampas. Mr. Clements Markham gives 1749 as the date of this revolution. Huc and Gabet say it occurred in the 35th year of Kien Lun, which would be 1770. It is to be observed, however, that Bogle, who visited Tashi Lunpo in 1774, refers to it as antecedent to the death of the Talé Lama, Lossan Kalsang, which took place in 1758. Mr. Markham's date would therefore appear to be correct. At any rate it is clear that the change in the relations between the Ampas and the Tibetan Government was closely followed by the expulsion of the European missionaries. As long as there was a party to keep the Chinese in check, the missionaries were unmolested. As soon as the Chinese got the power into their hands, they were expelled. It is curious to note the points of resemblance between the position of Huc and Gabet in 1846, and the position of the Capuchins a century earlier. In both cases we find tolerance and kindness from Tibetans, and bigotry and hostility from the Chinese. Huc and Gabet were treated with marked attention and respect by the Regent Pe-Chi, or Shaffé, Shété, who did his utmost to protect them. It was Ki-Chan, the Chinese Plenipotentiary, anxious to regain credit after his disgrace at Canton, who insisted on their expulsion.

3. While Chinese influence was thus gaining a remarkable accession at Lhassa, events were in progress in Nepal, which were destined to culminate in the complete severance of Indian intercourse with Tibet. As long as the chiefs of the Newar dynasty ruled the petty kingdoms of Kathmandoo, Patan and Bhatgaon, a flourishing trade was carried on through Nepal between High Asia and the plains. Mr. Clements Markham notices that as early as 1583 a traveller named Ralph Fitch gave an account of it. Mr. Bogle, writing in 1775, says:—"Every encouragement was given

he displayed much curiosity and interest in the things presented or shown to him, and finally he himself asked me to have a photograph of the group taken. Next morning I had a long confidential interview with him, only Sarat Baboo being present as interpreter. He begged that I would treat what he said as confidential, and I trust, therefore, that this portion of my memorandum may be regarded as such. To my enquiry what was the cause of the suspicion with which we were regarded, he answered that there was no real dislike or suspicion of us among the people, and that on the contrary they were now well aware that the "Maharani's" subjects are governed with justice and are very rich and happy. This knowledge is spreading every day, and a stronger and stronger desire is growing up for further communication with India. The only party really opposed to us are the monks of the monasteries at Lhassa,—Sera, Depung, Gahdan, Mulu, and the four "Lings" (Kenduling, Chemeling, Checheling and Tankyaling),—who are afraid of losing their influence, and also afraid of losing the profits of the practical monopoly which they now hold of the trade through Darjeeling. The monks have hitherto had their own way, but he and most of the officials, and all the people, would like to see all restrictions on communication with us removed. I asked him what he thought of the proposal of constructing a road through the Lachen valley for the convenience of traders. As an official, he said, he could not say he would like to see it made; as a private individual he would be glad. I asked him if it would lead to increase in trade. He said that it would certainly do so, if traders were allowed to pass. People are now most anxious to trade with India, and are most eager to get English goods, particularly broadcloth, cutlery, and piece-goods. "Now-a-days," he said, "whenever a man gets an article of English manufacture, a hundred people come to look at it." He said, however, that there would be no use in making a road while the present policy is upheld, as he would be forced to prevent people from using it in large numbers. I asked him if he levied any duty now on traders, such as I had met in the Lachen valley. He said, he had no orders to levy duty, but he had strict orders not to let many people pass Kamba Jong, and he had had before this to turn people back for

fear of getting into trouble. In the same way at Phari, he believed it was a matter more of prohibition than of taxation. He did not believe in the pretext of the Bhootanese and Nepalese difficulties so far as the question of the trade by the Jeylep (the eastern pass) was concerned. The Sera and Depung monks are keen traders, and they have influence enough to cause difficulties to be thrown in the way of their competitors. I asked him if he and others of the same views had any hope of seeing a change in the policy of exclusion. He said that if we could only get China on our side, the present was an excellent opportunity. The riot of March 1883 occurred during the grand prayer meeting, when the police of Lhassa is every year given over for a month to the charge of the monks under a Provost called Tshog-chhen-shal-no. The quarrel originated in the maltreatment of a Tibetan lady by some Nepalese shopkeepers. The Sera, Gahdan and Depung monks all took part in the disturbance because the Nepalese are rival traders. The Sera and Gahdan monks had the additional incentive of a desire to discredit the Depung monks, who, they complain, monopolise the appointment of Provost. The Gesub, who tried to quell the tumult, had to take refuge in the Talé Lama's palace and afterwards tendered his resignation of the office. The outcome of the matter was that the Lhassa Government had to pay Nepal an indemnity of 10 lakhs of rupees. They have this year asked China to send four Ampas instead of two, in order to support their authority against the monks. This, the Jongpen said, was an excellent opportunity for us. The Lhassa Government, he assured me, are themselves liberal and friendly, and if the Chinese would allow us to approach them and the monks were suppressed, trade, he was confident, would be freed from all restrictions. I had also a long talk with the Jongpen about the Tashi Lamas. He was well acquainted with the story of Bogle's and Turner's missions, and said that every villager in Tibet knew of the pearl necklace which the Governor of India sent to the Tashi Lama. He also spoke quite seriously of the belief that Her Majesty is the incarnation of the Divine Mother Tara, who is the special protectress of the Penchens. The monks at Lhassa, it may be observed, have tried to spread the belief that she is the

classes of coarse teas called Chupa and Gyépa, he fails to observe the instructive meaning of the words themselves. *Pa* in Tibetan corresponds to the Hindustani word *walla* for which we have no precise English equivalent. *Chu* means *ten* and *Gyé* means *eight*. Chupa simply means "ten-walla" and Gyépa "eight-walla." Now it happens that these classes of brick tea are actually used in Tibet as currency. The terms used to describe them merely indicate their conventional value in *tankas* (six annas). The conventional value therefore of a brick (about 5 pounds) of Chupa is Rs. 3-12-0, and of a brick of Gyépa is Rs. 3. Besides these there are fine teas, made up, some in bricks of different sizes, some even in leaf. The first quality of "Duthang," for instance, is sold at Lhassa at 4 srong or Rs. 10 for a brick of 6 pounds, and the second at Rs. 7 for a brick of 5 pounds, or at about Rs. 1-10-0 and Rs. 1-6-0 a pound respectively. I am informed by the merchants that at present the cash price of Chupa varies at Lhassa from 8 to 9 tankas a brick ($9\frac{1}{2}$ to $10\frac{1}{2}$ annas a pound), while that of Gyépa varies from 6 to 7 tankas a brick (a little over 7 to about $8\frac{1}{2}$ annas a pound). I can add a curious piece of confirmatory proof. One of my native assistants was presented with a brick of Gyépa tea by the Rajah of Sikkim when I visited Tumlong. He sold this to the coolies when we were in the Lachen valley, and they readily gave him Rs. 2-12-0 for the brick, or $8\frac{4}{5}$ annas a pound. The actual price when payment is made in Indian rupees, or in gold dust, varies at times, but the value of the tea for the purposes of barter is the value expressed by its name. The conventional value of Chupa is therefore 12 annas a pound, and that of Gyépa about $9\frac{1}{2}$ annas a pound. The price actually paid for Gyépa in the Lachen valley was just under 9 annas a pound.

21. In the face of these figures the only question of practical importance that remains, in regard to the price of China tea at Lhassa, is the margin of profit which it allows. If the trade were a monopoly, the present price would be no measure of the price at which the tea could be sold in competition with Indian tea. It may at once be answered that it is not a monopoly. The Chinese officials used, it is said, to get their salaries sent to them in tea on the pretext

that no tea could be procured in Tibet: this tea was carried free under *lam-yig* (road order) along the Shung-lam (or Government road), and was afterwards disposed of by them at its conventional value, and of course at an enormous profit. This practice, however,—partly, it is reported, because the villages on the route were becoming deserted in consequence of the perpetual harassment to which the inhabitants were subjected,—has long been stopped. A certain quantity, said to amount to 3,000 mule loads, is still imported annually by the Lhassa Government along the Shunglam, and the people of the villages on the route have to furnish carriage free. But this tea is used to supply the chief officials and the monasteries about Lhassa, and is not sold. The bulk of the trade is carried on by the Do-pa, and no restriction whatever is placed on their operations. I understand that they complain that competition has brought about the reduction in price below the conventional value of the bricks and leaves them a very small margin of profit. Some have even abandoned the tea trade and taken to commerce, in their small way, with India. It is quite clear, then, that the prices I have given represent the actual commercial value of the tea at Lhassa. I may add that, as we go westward to Gyantse and Shigatse, the cost of carriage brings the price of the tea nearer and nearer to its conventional value. Every year 300 mules are said to be despatched from Tashi Lunpo to Darchendo to fetch tea for the establishment of the Tashi Lama and the monks. The journey takes nearly eight months. If the Lachen route were opened, Tashi Lunpo would be brought within 15 days' march of Darjeeling.

22. Let us now see what would be the cost of laying down Darjeeling tea at Lhassa. Mr. Hennessy's estimate of the cost of carriage is unduly favourable. He puts it at Rs. 4-9 a maund. This allows for $1\frac{1}{2}$ maunds being carried by a cooly from Darjeeling to Phari, which is taken to be 90 miles. But a Darjeeling cooly will not carry more than one maund on a journey, and the Jeylep pass, which is three days' march this side of Phari, is 96 measured miles from Darjeeling. A pony can carry $1\frac{1}{2}$ maunds to Lhassa in 20 days. The journey would cost Rs. 10, at the rate of 8 annas a day, or 1 anna 4 pie a pound. To be absolutely