

I shall ever be grateful, and I shall always feel that it was to Mr. James that I owe the first start on my career of travel.

Both of us had an inclination towards China, and we at once decided in a general way that to China we should go. It so happened that in my leisure hours I had read up a number of books about Manchuria, Mongolia, and North China, and compiled itineraries from them. I was therefore able to give my chief, Sir Charles Macgregor, then Quartermaster-General in India, some little proof that I was serious in the matter, and he promised to help me and do what he could to smooth over difficulties about my leave.

Our plans now shaped themselves into a journey round Manchuria. It was a country of many interests, and was then but little known. It was the cradle of the present ruling dynasty of China; and the few travellers who had been there had described its lovely scenery, its noble rivers, its fertility and natural resources, and the healthiness of its climate. Reading all this in the heat of India, we were fascinated by such descriptions; and as its proximity to Russian territory on the one hand