

journey overland to India would take us through the entire length of Chinese Turkestan, the condition of which was still unknown since the Chinese had reconquered it by one of those long-sustained efforts for which they are so remarkable. We should be able to see those secluded people of Central Asia, dim figures of whom I had pictured in my mind from reading the accounts of the few travellers who had been amongst them.

Then, too, there was the fascination of seeing the very heart of the Himalayas, as we should have to cross their entire breadth on the way to India. And all combined was one grand project—this idea of striking boldly out from Peking to penetrate to India—that of itself inspired enthusiasm and roused every spark of exploring ardour in me. No excitement I have ever experienced has come up to that of planning out a great journey. The only drawback in such a life is the subsequent reaction when all is over, and the monotonous round of ordinary existence oppresses one by its torpidity and flatness in comparison. The project before me was a journey in length nearly as great as one