

across Central Africa and back again, and, to me at least, far more interesting than any African travel—a journey through countries varying from the level wastes of the Gobi Desert to the snow-clad masses of the Himalayas; passing, moreover, through the entire length of an empire with a history of three thousand years behind it, and still fresh in interest to the present day. And with the chance of making such a journey who could help feeling all the ardent excitement of travel rising in him, and long to be started on it?

Colonel Bell arrived in Peking towards the end of March, and to my delight said he would be only too glad to allow me to accompany him; but he thought that it would be a waste of energy for two officers to travel together along the same road, so we arranged to follow different routes.

There were, of course, initial difficulties to be overcome—the chief one being the obtaining leave of absence from my regiment. But Sir John Walsham, for whose kindness on this occasion I could never feel too grateful, overcame this by telegraphing direct to Lord Dufferin, then Viceroy of India, and that diffi-