

culty—generally the greatest which military explorers have to encounter—was at once removed.

Colonel Bell and I meanwhile spread out our maps and discussed operations. He was anxious to see the more populated parts of China in order to be the better able to judge of its condition and resources, and so decided upon going through the provinces inside of the Great Wall to Kansu, and then striking across the Gobi Desert to Hami, following throughout the main route between Peking and Chinese Turkestan. To my lot fell the newer and more purely exploring work, and it was determined that I should follow the direct road across the Gobi Desert, and, if possible, meet Colonel Bell at Hami on the opposite end.\* He then left Peking, after fixing a date for our meeting at Hami. My friends in the Legation said that, judging

\* This route had never previously, nor, as far as I am aware, has it since been, traversed by a European. It lies midway between the high road to Chinese Turkestan and the route which the late Mr. Ney Elias followed in 1872 on his way from Peking to Siberia, and for the exploration of which he obtained the Gold Medal of the Royal Geographical Society.