

from the general style of his movements, they thought it extremely improbable that he would wait for me there more than three-quarters of an hour. As it turned out, we never met again till we arrived in India, and then Colonel Bell told me that he really had waited for me a whole day in Hami—this place in the middle of Central Asia, nearly two thousand miles from our starting-point—and, astonished at finding I had not arrived punctual to time, had proceeded on his way to India!

Meanwhile I had to remain in Peking to await the reply of the telegram to the Viceroy, and occupy myself in sundry preparations, and in the search for an interpreter. A favourable reply arrived, and then Sir John Walsham, with his usual kindness, interested himself in procuring for me the best passport it was possible to obtain from the Chinese, and, having been successful, April 4, 1887, was fixed as the date of my departure from Peking.

The evening preceding was one which it will be hard indeed to forget, and I think I then for the first time clearly realised what I was undertaking. Lady Walsham asked me after dinner to mark for her on a map the