

true difficulty in the matter. Had but one traveller gone through before me ; had I even now with me a companion upon whom I could rely, or one good servant whom I could trust to stand by me, the task would have seemed easy in comparison. But all was utterly dark before me, and the journey was to be made alone with a Chinese servant whom I had found in Peking.

That last night in safety and civilisation all these difficulties and uncertainties weighed heavily upon me. But with the morning they were forgotten, and they never troubled me again. The start was to be made, and the real excitement begun, and if the difficulties and uncertainties were great, the greater would be the satisfaction in overcoming them. An unalterable conviction came over me that somehow or other I should find myself in India in a few months' time.

Sir John and Lady Walsham and all the members of the Legation collected at the gateway to bid me good-bye, and, as they did so, I tried to thank them for all the many kindnesses they had shown me, and for the goodwill and interest they had taken in my plans.