

leading to Tung-chuan. But this road probably passed close to the tower (A), and left the main portion of the village to the south. Between A and J there was an open space, a sort of market-square, in which probably markets used to be held. There is no trace of any bazaar; but it is not improbable that the stalls and shops may have been grouped around the tower, which was no doubt the most conspicuous centre of the locality. Nor did we perceive any traces of either cultivated fields or gardens, though the discovery of wheat and wheat straw in the MSS building suggest that agriculture was possibly carried on here. Had there been no straw, it would have been easy to suppose that the corn had been brought thither from Tung-chuan, Turfan, Kara-schahr, or Korla. But certain of the MSS make it abundantly clear that agriculture was carried on here. The fields were no doubt irrigated by means of canals led from the lowest part of the Kuruk-darja. We discovered neither a burial-place nor any skeleton remains of human beings. Any Chinese who died here would no doubt have, as they always have in East Turkestan at the present day, a sum of money laid by sufficient to transport the body to China proper. Nor did we find Mongolian or Muhamedan graves either; but then the date which Mr. Himly assigns to the documents discovered makes it *impossible* that there could have been the last-named; the place was in all probability deserted before the era of Muhamed.

There are evident differences both in the style of the houses and in the care with which they were built. The best of the timber houses are D and M, and these are also the best preserved. Here I measured foundation beams having dimensions of 6 m. \times 0.34 m. \times 0.21 m., and there were others even bigger, though more cracked. The way in which the vertical posts are morticed into the foundation beams is exhibited in the accompanying fig. 281. There were no fragments to justify an inference as to the shape of the roofs; but we may take it, that these were in most cases horizontal, as they often are in the houses in the Chinese villages of Kan-su. The less solidly constructed houses, in which kamisch formed an integral material, probably in part belonged to the humbler villagers and in part were stables, sheep-folds, and outhouses, while the more pretentious dwellings would belong to Chinese officials and merchants, as well as to the post-horse keepers who maintained the traffic to Tung-chuan, provided travellers with carts and horses, and transmitted the post. The clay walls that survive point also to larger structures, and probably they may have been employed to support an upper timber storey with a turned up roof.
