

with a group of houses, the curved roofs of which stand out well against the dark wall of rock. There is a small church with red poles decorated with baskets, on the rock. A similar column stands on the hill on the opposite bank. If the stony river were not used for anything rather than shipping, one would be inclined to take them for a couple of beacons. They are supposed to have been erected to prevent the mountains »growing» and joining some day, thus cutting off the river. Immediately to the W of the hill with the second column the ruins of Urumchi, destroyed during the Dungan revolt, can be seen in the plain. The wall, which is clearly visible, enclosed a considerable area. You do not see much of the river, except perhaps during the season of high water. It winds in several small arms along a stony bed, fully  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a mile wide in some places. The town itself covers an area 2 miles long and  $\frac{2}{3}$  of a mile wide at its broadest. The N part consists of the Chinese fortress, the irregular hexagonal wall of which encloses an area about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of a mile in extent. The outer part of the town adjoins it in the S and its wall encloses the SW corner of the fortress. This is adjoined in the S by a suburb inhabited chiefly by Sarts, the southernmost part of which is occupied by the comparatively well laid out and well built Russian factory. With its broad street, flanked by shady trees, its pavements and neat little houses the latter presents a striking contrast to the rest of the suburb. There are many flourmills along the bank of the river, the noise of their stones and wheels indicating that they are kept busy. The fortified area is divided into many sections, very irregular in shape and size, which is due to the irregularity of the outer walls and the presence of numerous official residences of highly placed mandarins with their spacious gardens. A main street runs from S to N, but ends before reaching the N wall. About 300 fathoms from the S gateway it is intersected by another big street which also fails to reach the outer walls. The richest Chinese shops are grouped along these two streets, and contain very fine displays, in which Russian painted tin goods etc. rub shoulders with Japanese cigarettes, toilet articles and so on. Genuine Chinese goods preponderate, however. Inside the fortress there are 8 large Chinese shops that order their goods direct from Peiping and about 80 smaller ones. There are 24 »restaurants», 15 of which are owned by Chinese, the rest by Dungans. The shops of the Dungans and Sarts, a few dozen in number, are all situated in the outer town in the S. There are about 15 sarais of which 7 are inside the fortress walls. The population of the town and suburbs together is said to be 80,000, quite a respectable figure, when you consider that there are no two storeyed houses and that a large part of the area is occupied by churches, meeting rooms, government offices, barracks and the houses of the mandarins. There is a primitive attempt at drainage in the form of gutters covered with boards along the principal streets. In several places there are cab stands. The vehicles are mostly clean and in good order down to the smallest detail. The majority use mules, though this increases the cost of their harness. To protect the animals from flies, of which there do not seem to be very large numbers on the whole, blue cotton is bound round their forelegs and fastened to the harness by twine and a piece of the same kind of cloth is tied under the belly.

A police force was organised a short time ago and an apparently excessive number of constables, dressed in black with a red inscription on their chests, patrols the streets.