

At the 7th mile we stopped for a few minutes outside a hovel built with a slight solitary rise in the ground as a back wall. There was no water there, but it was inhabited by an elderly, hunchbacked Chinese with a face as wrinkled as a withered apple. The old fellow has to fetch his supply of water from a distance of $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles and lives on bits of bread and scraps that he collects by begging. He fully expected me to believe that he often drank no water for three days at a stretch.

The ruins of an inn stand about 5 miles further on. Not far off on the left of the road we saw some dunes of pure, fine sand. The soil in general is sandy clay covered with a thin layer of gravel. About $\frac{2}{3}$ of a mile later the almost barren plain is covered sparsely with tufts of thorny grass.

We reached the river Su-lo Ho after covering about 22 miles. On the northern bank there is a temple enclosed by a wall built, according to a Manchurian and Chinese inscription on a stone, in the 19th year of the reign of the Emperor Kinlung. The caretaker had seen better days. During the war he had risen to the rank of tungling and had commanded as many as two or three ins. When fewer troops were required, he was dismissed, and according to the custom of the Chinese Government without so much as a djen's pension and now lives as caretaker of a temple more or less on charity. In Kashgar the watchman of the Chinese cemetery was a «tidu», formerly the commander of the troops of a military district.

The temple is sometimes visited by travellers who are forced to make a stay owing to the high water. In the spring and occasionally in the summer the river rises to such an extent that it is impossible to cross for 3 or 4 days. In the intervals it dries up and becomes a small river or even stream. Where the road crosses the river, the bed is about 150 fathoms wide, while the area that gets flooded may be estimated at fully $\frac{1}{3}$ of a mile, to judge by the ground on the S bank. A pile of earth on the bank indicated that an attempt had been made at some time to throw a bridge across the river. The necessary material is available about 2 miles to the south on the left bank of the river. The surface of the latter is uneven with large salt deposits as far as the town wall. Close to the wall there are some isolated houses and fields. A strip of forest extends far to the west on the S side of the town.

The town area is barely $\frac{2}{3}$ of a mile square with 9 bastions on each side, including the gateways and corners. After a journey of 11 days across the desert you cannot repress a feeling of disappointment when you pass within this very dilapidated wall. It is almost like entering another desert, the place is so deserted and wild. Almost the whole S part of the area is low marshy ground with strong salt deposits, not built on. The beginnings of two streets crossing each other are visible in the middle of the town, running from the four points of the compass in the direction of a «kulo» tower, the upper part of which has been demolished, probably by the Dungans. There is a well under the arch of the tower. What houses! Compared with Ansi, Barkul is a well-built town. The sarais are no better than the worst in the desert, the shops and other houses are hovels and here and there lie the ruins of a temple destroyed during the Dungan revolt. I had seen no such disconsolate town anywhere on my journeys through this territory, so far removed from the centres of China. — I estimated the distance covered that day at not more than 24—25 miles. The