



*Tanguts in the market-place  
at Taochow (Sin-cheng).*

even generally among the townsfolk — wear shoes with an upturned, pointed toe — something like those of Turkish women.

The country we traversed to-day is a counterpart of the Chinese nation in its uniformity, its dress, forms, life, ideas and customs. Bare ridges and rounded mountains in innumerable terraces. If you look up, it seems as if you were climbing giant stairs. If you cast your eye down into a valley, again you see the same imposing stairs. Down in the valleys you see small river beds, the muddy red water often having cut ravines of several fathoms in depth. Close to them grey villages with flat roofs and many walls. A tree is a rarity.

The road goes up and down all the time. You climb laboriously to the summit of a ridge, and again down from it by a steep road. For long distances the narrow road is sunk deep in the soft earth and you scarcely see anything but its perpendicular sides, alternating between red and greyish-yellow in colour. There was a great deal of dust and the heat was already oppressive. Our course was easterly with a slight tendency to the ESE at times. We crossed 3 large ridge-like mountains of löss in turn, two of them in particular being considerable. The first one, immediately to the E of Sin-cheng, is called Shapo san. The other considerable mountain is the third you come to.

The last valley we crossed before reaching Sin-cheng looked rather more attractive than the others thanks to some trees that were planted in places along the road and in a couple of villages. From the top of the next ridge you get a fine view of Taochow-Sin-cheng lying at the bottom of a narrow valley embedded among hills. It is enclosed on three sides by a dilapidated wall of the usual type, the fourth side crossing the top of the hill, at the foot of which the town lies. A large part of the town area is bare and the little there is in the way of buildings is indescribably unpretentious. There is a small suburb next to the S wall, enlivened to-day by a large, noisy crowd of people. The first day of each month is bazaar day here. — Our distance to-day was 18—19 miles.