



*Tangut women digging in the village of Tahlshi.*

on either side of the road. Having ridden about 3 miles, we crossed the river by a bridge in the village of Jehu chow lying on both banks. Here the river is greatly compressed between small rocks and is not more than 10 fathoms wide. The mountains, bare and grassy for almost the whole distance, have a thick little fir-wood here on the N slope. Another wood grows about 8 miles beyond close to the village of Taku-tsei. There are still a great many stones, and stone is generally used as an accessory material in building. The river flows mostly so far from the road that it is invisible, only approaching the mountains in the S at times, when it flows quite close to the road.

After a journey of about 16 miles we reached the town of Minchow, built near the foot of the mountains on the right bank of the river at a short distance from it. The long wall, 4—5 fathoms high, of pounded clay, was very dilapidated. It had a crenellated parapet of baked bricks, but had neither any moat nor outer protected space. The wall that faces S and E was very irregular in its direction. In the S and E it was enclosed by a fairly large suburb, but inside it was emptier than any Chinese town I had seen, not even excepting Ansi. The town area was no less than a mile in length and in width (S—N) about half a mile.

The American missionary station, built on a slight hill, overlooks the town. The site was formerly occupied by a Chinese temple that was bought for a song by the missionary society. The head of the station is a Mr Ekvall, a Swedish-American, who showed me great kindness and hospitality. In his house I met another American missionary, William Christie, a Scotsman, who was on his way home for 18 months' leave after several years' work among the Tanguts. His headquarters were at Dsjuoni and he told me a great deal about the life of the Tanguts. Severe rheumatism and a slightly sprained foot forced me to postpone my departure from Minchow for a couple of days and afforded me an opportunity of listening to Christie's impressions and interesting experiences.