



*The principal mosque at Si-an-fu: the courtyard and pagodas.*

where and the fields seemed to be in excellent condition. On this plain, which it takes several days to cross, the harvest is got in within 2 or 3 days with the help of thousands upon thousands of people who come from the adjacent mountains and from distant parts of Kan Su. — 25—30 li from the town we rode through Tsaotantzu, a village with a lively bazaar. It is said to be the principal coal store of Si-an-fu. Coal is brought there from Shansi in big barges. When we reached the bank of the Wei ho after riding for a couple of miles through deep sand, we saw a whole row of barges there with coal or coke and plough-blades of cast-iron, also from Shansi. A little lower down lively traffic was going on with 4 or 5 barges between the banks of the river. Its width here, too, was 235 yards or, perhaps, slightly more. The depth just now was slightly more than the height of a man. The loading of the barges proceeded to the accompaniment of singing, reminiscent of traffic on the Volga.

2—3 li from the bank of the river there is a rise of a few dozen feet which forces its way like a wedge between the Wei ho and King ho and becomes level with the surface a little E of the road, i.e., a little before the confluence of the latter river with the Wei ho. We cut through this rise by a valley that divided it into two. On the right, its edge was crowned with one of the small forts put up against the Dungans, visible a long way off like a beacon. We crossed the King ho a few li further on. It was 15—20 feet wide, and as the water only came up a little higher than the horses' bellies, we were not obliged to wait for the ferry. The current was very slight and the bottom consisted of firm sand. On the opposite bank we noticed a slight undulation of the ground which was, in other respects, like the part of the plain S of the river that I have already described. In the far distance to the left we could see the tall, narrow tower of Kingyanghsien, in many storeys, and halfway to the right another that indicated the approximate site of the town of Kaolinghsien. Both towns are situated at some distance from the towers bearing their names.