

village surrounded with orchards, the trees of which were covered with apples.

There were so many ruined houses that it is hard to say how many inhabited dwellings there were—probably about twenty. The inhabitants were both Chinese and Kalmaks. The inn was a very poor one, the rooms being low and dirty, with no windows or doors, and only an open doorway. The kang was very dirty and made of mud, and not even covered with matting. The roof was composed of grass laid across beams of wood, which let both rain and sun through.

Cloudy day and slight rain during the night of 7-8th. Thermometer—max., 90°; min., 66°.

*July 9.*—Started at 2.30. A thunderstorm delayed us for half an hour. The desert began again almost immediately after leaving Eurh-pu, but it is not so bad as the Gobi. There was a fair amount of grass and scrub, but it was unfitted for cultivation. Nearer the mountains there appeared to be villages, and, after going a few miles, we saw on the left a small green plain, with a fair-sized village and several streams running down towards it.

At forty li we passed the village of S'an-pu, which also had the ruins of a barracks, and on the western side were two tombs of Chinese military mandarins, who had died in the war. They were not handsome tombs, but they were very conspicuous, as they were from fifty to sixty feet high. They were built of brick, and in good preservation. All other buildings were made of mud. For the rest of the way we passed over desert, occasionally passing a house on a small stream or spring in a hollow. There is a sort of half-dead air about this country; for every inhabited house, at least two in ruins are to be seen. In passing through villages, scarcely an inhabitant is met with, and in the fields no one seems to be working. If I had come from anywhere else but the Gobi, I should probably have found it extremely depressing.