

thousand inhabitants. In the only real street are a few shops, small, but clean, in which are sold ordinary articles of dress and consumption. Some are kept by Chinese, and some by Turkis. The Turkis here seem more well-to-do than at Hami; they are better dressed, and their houses are larger and cleaner. The women usually wear a long red gown and trousers. They tie a bright-coloured cloth round their head, but I have seen none of those big globe-shaped caps they wore at Hami. Started at 1.40 p.m., leaving Pi-chan by the north gate, and passing for two and a half miles through a very pretty, well-cultivated country, through which ran a charming little stream, its banks lined with graceful poplars and willows. Numerous little irrigation ducts were carried through the fields and straight across the road, rather to the hindrance of traffic; but now it is a positive pleasure to hear the cart splashing through water. There are a number of little hamlets dotted over the plain, and many mosques, all built of mud like everything else in the country. Many of them had piles of *Ovis argali* and ibex horns on the ledges of the roofs, but I saw no *Ovis argali* as fine as those which I obtained in the Gobi. At two and a half miles from Pi-chan the delightful piece of country came to an end abruptly, and we were on the same dreary old gravel desert again. From a piece of rising ground I obtained a good view of the country we had been passing through. It was extremely pretty. The plain, some six miles in length from east to west, and three or four from north to south, was covered over with trees, beneath the shade of which nestled the little Turki hamlets. About a mile to the south of Pi-chan was a range of sandhills like that which I saw in the Gobi, but of a darker colour and not so high. The afternoon was terribly hot on the gravelly desert, and, after passing over it for sixteen miles, we were glad enough to come upon another oasis. We halted at 8.15 at Liang-ming-chang (seventy li), a pretty village built on the steep bank of a little