

stream. There was a bustling landlord at the inn, who came out to meet us, and attended to us more in the Manchurian inn-keeper style than in the usual listless way they have here.

I slept on the ground in the inn yard, as it was too hot even in the cart. There is one good point to be noted of this country—there are no mosquitoes or flies in number enough to trouble one. If there were, travelling in this heat would be almost unbearable. I should feel very much inclined to take myself off to the snowy Tian-shan Mountains which accompany us march by march, exhibiting their cool, refreshing peaks in the most tantalizing way to us perspiring mortals down below here.

*July 16.*—Started at 1.45 a.m., and entered the desert again at a mile from Liang-ming-chang. The road was very heavy on account of the sand. We passed several rows of holes dug in the ground. They were in long lines, the holes being about twenty yards apart, and from six to eight feet in circumference. The earth was piled up all round, and as the holes had been dug some time most of them had nearly filled up again. In some, however, the sides had been built up with wood, to form a well. It looked as if an army had pitched camp here, and had set to work to dig for water.

At seven miles from Liang-ming-chang we crossed some low hills and entered an extensive plain, well cultivated and covered with hamlets. This lasted for seven miles, and we then descended a narrow valley, the hills on either side being composed of clay, absolutely barren, and very steep and precipitous in places. A small stream ran at the bottom of the valley, but the banks were too steep to be cultivated. We passed a good many ruins of houses and mosques built up against the cliffs. They had evidently been destroyed by landslips.

Halted at 7.55 a.m. at Sang-ching-kou, an inn owned by a Turki. This was the first Turki inn I had visited. The