

*kang* was covered with a very handsome, though rather old, carpet.

Started again at two, leaving the gorge, and passing over the open desert again. The stream from the gorge flowed in a south direction, and its banks were lined with villages. About ten miles to the south was a range of hills running in an apparently east-by-west direction, and on the side of them was a strip of cultivated land running up as far as Turfan. At seven or eight miles from Lang-ching-kou the desert was covered with hundreds of wells, said to have been dug by Chinese soldiers. Line after line of them we passed, each line a couple of miles or so in length, with wells dug at intervals of twenty yards. These wells were not circular, but rectangular, about two and a half or three feet broad and seven or eight feet long. We could not see the bottom, but we halted at a house where one of these wells was in use, and this was one hundred and ten feet deep.

The origin of these wells I find it hard to explain. My boy told me that they had been dug by a Chinese army besieging Turfan. This army had not been able to obtain water otherwise, and had dug these wells. I am inclined to doubt the truth of this story, though. I would rather say they were what are known in Persia and Afghanistan as "karez," and intended to lead water obtainable below the surface of the ground along underneath it down the slope from one well to another, and so on till the level of the land to be irrigated is reached, and the water appears at the surface.

We stopped at 8.15 p.m. (sixty li) at a Turki house, as we should not be able to get into Turfan at night. The water from the well was delightfully cold, and the house clean and cool. Half the courtyard was covered over, and in this covered part was a low platform, on which sat the inmates of the house at table. I spread my mattress on the floor of the