

people lived in holes underground. I never quite believed it, but to-day I found it was a real fact. Here in the inn yard is a narrow flight of steps leading underground. I went down them, and found a room with a kang, and a Chinaman lying on it smoking opium. It was perfectly cool below there, and there was no musty smell, for the soil is extremely dry. The room was well ventilated by means of a hole leading up through the roof.

Turfan consists of two distinct towns, both walled—the Chinese and the Turk, the latter situated about a mile west of the former. The Turk town is the most populous, having probably twelve or fifteen thousand inhabitants, while the Chinese town has not more than five thousand at the outside.

The town is about eight hundred yards square. As usual, there are four gateways—N., S., E., and W. These are of solid brickwork, with massive wooden doors plated with iron. The gateway is covered by a semicircular bastion. The walls are in good repair. They are built of mud, and are about thirty-five feet high, twenty to thirty feet thick, and loopholed at the top. Outside the main wall is a level space fifteen yards wide, and then a musketry wall eight feet high, and immediately beyond it a ditch twelve feet deep and twenty feet wide. Over the gateways are drum towers. At the corners are small square towers, and between the corners and the gateways are small square bastions, two to each front.

There are few shops in the Chinese town, and those not good. Turfan is a "Ting" town. This town and its neighbourhood lies at an extremely low altitude. My barometer here read 29.48. My thermometer was broken, so that I cannot record the temperature, but it may be taken at between 90° and 100°—say 95°. Turfan must be between two and three hundred feet below the level of the sea.\* It is very

\* This depression was also noticed by Colonel Bell before my visit, and its existence has since been confirmed by Russian travellers.