

Three years later, when I was at Kashgar, I heard that two Russian merchants residing at Hami had been imprisoned by the Chinese authorities, and treated in the most terrible manner. A European in the employ of the Chinese heard of this, brought it to the notice of the Russian Minister at Peking, and I believe their release was obtained, but not before they had undergone the most fearful sufferings from hunger and imprisonment in foul, pest-stricken dungeons. I have often wondered whether my hearty, good-natured guest was one of them.

Besides the native town of Hami there is also a Chinese walled town, about six hundred yards square, with four gateways, each surmounted by a massive tower; and I subsequently found in travelling through the country that it is the unvarying custom to have the open native town and the Chinese walled town close beside. Every town in Turkestan is therefore double.

We halted four days at Hami, and made a new start for Kashgar—the second great stage of the journey—on July 8. It appeared that carts could be taken the whole way, so the slow