

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 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,* which, considering that it is in the heart of the continent several thousand miles from any sea is a sufficiently remarkable fact.

After leaving Turfan and as we neared Karashar we entered a country thickly covered with trees, like a park, with long coarse grass in tufts, and many small streams, one of which was four feet deep and nearly covered the mules and flooded the bottom of the cart while crossing. The rainfall here must be considerably more than farther east. The soil is sandy and

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