

told elsewhere the story how that bold enterprise at the outset nearly cost the pious pilgrim's life, when he lost his way in the desert to the north and narrowly escaped dying of thirst before reaching the distant oasis of Hami.

After depositing my collections of antiques in the safe keeping of the forlorn Ya-mên of An-hsi, I moved towards the great snowy range south. On my way there I discovered a large ruined site near the little village of Chiao-tzŭ, between the lowest two of the barren outer ranges. Desiccation, whether due to some local change in climatic conditions or to a gradual reduction of the glaciers which the last glacial period has left behind on the high watershed range towards the northernmost Tibetan plateaux, has worked great changes in the physical conditions of this lower hill region. This was illustrated by the fact that the stream from which a canal still traceable had once brought water to the ruined town and the cultivated area around it has completely disappeared.

Archaeological evidence showed that the walled town had been occupied down to the twelfth or thirteenth century A.D. All the more striking was the proof which its walls afforded of the effects of wind erosion since that period. In spite of very massive construction all lines of walls facing east have been completely breached and in many places practically effaced by the driving and scouring sand, while the walls facing north and south, and thus lying parallel to the direction of the prevailing east winds, have escaped practically uninjured.

When I subsequently ascended the cañon-like valley in which the stream of Ta-hsi cuts through the second outer range, I came upon a very picturesque series of Buddhist