

me with a series of old Buddhist cave temples at Ma-ti-ssü (Fig. 115) and with other interesting Buddhist remains. They included fine bronze statues of large size which somehow had escaped Tungan vandalism in the temples of the pretty little town of Nan-kou-ch'êng at the foot of the mountains. We were now near a dividing line of distinct geographical interest. While to the west, cultivation, whether in the plains or along the foot of the mountains, is possible only with irrigation, we now came upon large terraces and alluvial fans which rainfall alone suffices to render fertile. The marked change in climatic conditions indicated approach to the watershed of the Pacific Ocean and the great river valleys of true China. In pleasant contrast to the manifold signs of destruction which the great Tungan rising had worked along the main route, it was pleasant to find examples of typical Chinese architecture surviving in these verdant foothills (Fig. 118).

Following the route towards Hsi-ning and ascending through picturesque gorges to the pass of O-po, we reached the wide valley where the easternmost feeders of the Kanchou river gather at an elevation of over 11,000 feet. Thence we were making our way westwards over high alpine grazing-grounds frequented in the summer by Tangut herdsmen and horse-breeders when I met with a serious riding accident which might well have put an end for ever to all my travelling. My Badakhshi stallion suddenly reared and, overbalancing himself, fell backwards upon me, with the result that the muscles of my left thigh were severely injured. Two weeks passed in great pain before I could raise myself from my camp-bed and use improvised crutches. Fortunately the arrangements already made enabled my