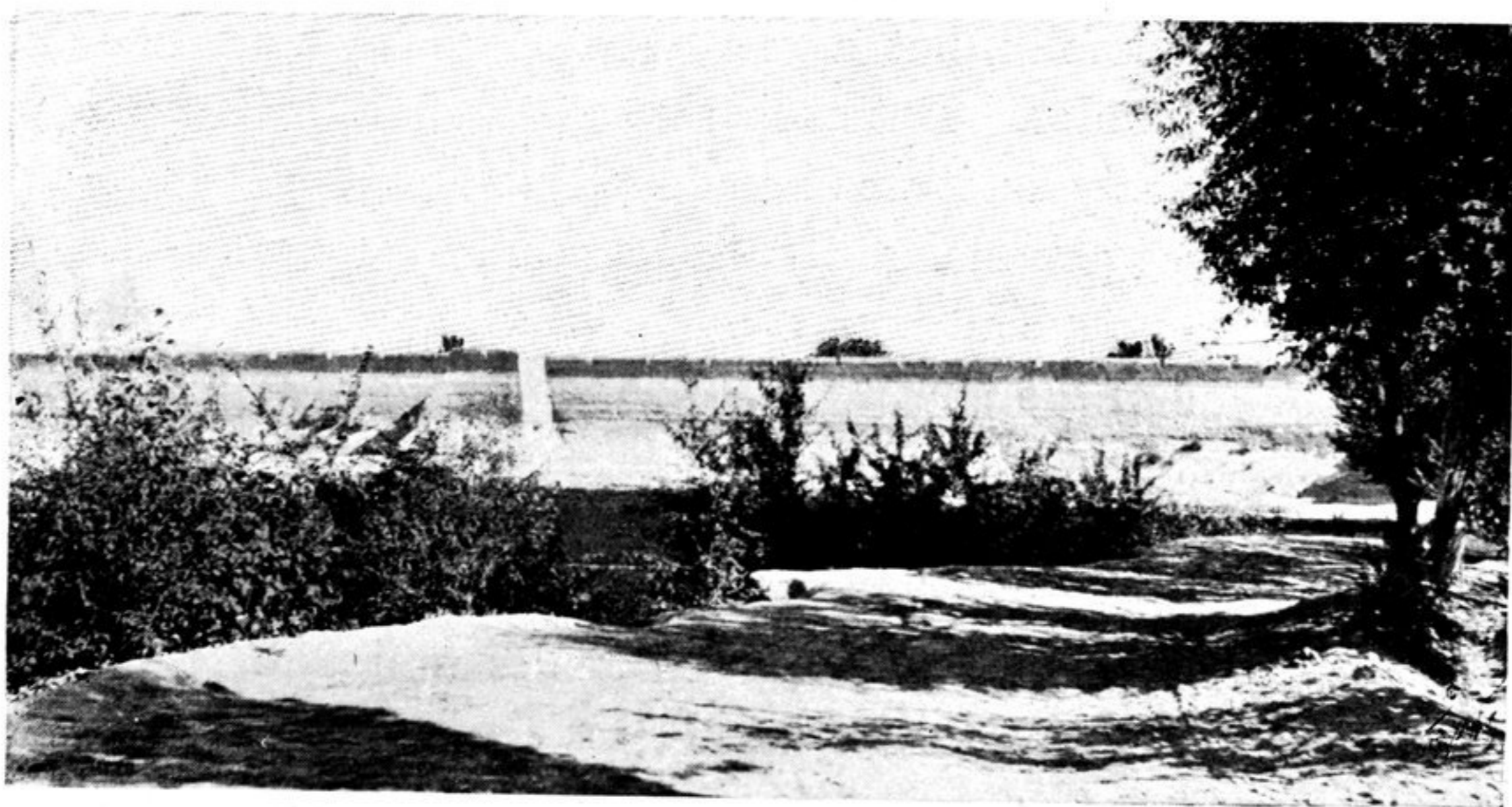


Beyond it we wound along dusty suburban lanes where the women with quaint caps of imposing height sat in groups enjoying a chat in the twilight.

It was almost dark when the walls of the city suddenly rose before me. Mud-built as they are, they looked massive and imposing, while the quaint regularity of their battlements and square bastions vividly reminded me of many a picture of mediæval towns seen in old books of travel. Outside the city walls all was quiet and dark. The gates were already closed. At last Sadak Akhun struck off to the left, along a short,



ROAD TO MR. MACARTNEY'S HOUSE, WITH CITY WALL.

poplar-lined avenue, and the light of a lantern showed me the outer gate of Mr. Macartney's residence that was to offer me a home for the next few weeks. Belated as I was, my arrival was not unexpected, and as I descended from the spacious court to the terraced garden I found myself welcomed in the heartiest fashion by Mr. and Mrs. Macartney. Comfortable quarters adjoining the garden were awaiting me, and when after a needful change I joined my hosts in their dining-room, there was every little luxury to favour the illusion that I was in an English home far away from the Heart of Asia.