

for rest or for work, and, as the position can be varied, what sunshine and heat passes in may be dodged.

For day and night such a spacious Atrium—and those I resided in usually measured from thirty to over forty feet square—seemed delightfully adapted to the climate. Again and again in my subsequent excavations I discovered exactly the same architectural arrangement in the ancient residences of sites abandoned to the desert, and always felt sure from personal experience that much of the daily life, long dead and buried, must have passed in those ruined Aiwans.

Whatever the owner's wealth, the modern country residences of the oases show little or no art about their construction; whether the walls are of stamped clay as about Yarkand, or of plastered timber and wattle as in the Khotan region. But an enticing air of comfortable simplicity always pervades them, symbolic, as it were, of the lives of nonchalant ease which they witness. A very moderate income suffices to make one a 'Bai' or capitalist in Turkestan; and as long as there is plenty of food and something to spare for fine clothing, these favoured ones of a materialistic race see no reason to trouble much about things of the past, present, or future.

On the night of July 2nd there fell a shower of rain. No meteorological station could have measured its quantity; yet with a fresh breeze from the north-east it was sufficient to render pleasant the short march next morning to the right bank of the Tiznaf River. The village lands of Kuma, Khan-arik, Öch-köl passed on the route seemed exceptionally fertile, and the grand avenues of poplars and almost equally high willows were a feast to the eye. The Tiznaf River, which flows here for a considerable distance parallel to the river of Yarkand before being absorbed in it near the large oasis of Merket, was in flood, and the crossing by the single small ferry-boat took hours for the baggage. The river flowed in a narrow but rapid channel, about one hundred and twenty feet broad, with a velocity of about two yards a second. Its depth was from ten to over fifteen feet. Yet, as we subsequently discovered, there was a ford scarcely a mile off where the spread-out