

youthful Beg of the oasis, guided me. The comfortable-looking homesteads, the plentiful but young orchards, and the abundance of well-dressed men and women I passed on the road, riding home from their Bazar 'Corso,' all told the same story of prosperity and expansion. What else could be the main cause but a rise in the economic conditions of the whole Tarim Basin brought about by peace and tolerably good administration?

The case of Charchan illustrates in a striking fashion the *péripéties* to which isolated settlements along the southern edge of the great Turkestan desert have been particularly liable at different periods. In the Annals of the Han dynasty Charchan is described as a petty chiefship, with a population of two hundred and thirty families, the Chinese rendering of its name being Chü-mo. It is probably meant also by the 'Chalmadana' repeatedly referred to in my Kharoshthi documents from the Niya site as a place of some consequence. When in A.D. 519 Sung Yün, a Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, passed here from Lop-nor to Khotan, he found the oasis, which he calls Tso-mo, inhabited by only a hundred families. Hsüan-tsang, following the same route more than a century later, mentions in a position exactly corresponding to Charchan "the old kingdom of Chê-mo-t'o-na which is the territory of Chü-mo." He saw there the walls of an old town still standing, but there were no longer any inhabitants. Yet when Chinese rule had been re-established soon after his passage, Charchan or Chü-mo figures once more in the T'ang dynasty's Annals as a place duly garrisoned. In Marco Polo's description of the 'Province of Charchan,' fully verified on other points, we read of "numerous towns and villages, and the chief city of the Kingdom bears its name, Charchan." But cultivation had completely disappeared by the end of the eighteenth century and probably long before.

It was only after the first third of the last century that the Chinese commenced to settle Charchan once more as a small penal station. The growth of the new settlement seems to have been slow at first, and the disturbed conditions during the Muhammadan rebellion must have sadly