

channels, though dry since Tungan days, were still well preserved, and came to resumed cultivation near the flourishing little village of Chuang-lang. Its homesteads were established mainly amongst the ruins of more substantial dwellings built before the Tungan inroads. Most of the trees in avenues and orchards were quite young, proving recent reoccupation. But here and there big old ash trees had survived the period during which this tract had remained without people and its timber at the mercy of wood-cutters from Tun-huang town.

After having crossed more stretches of waste land and covered altogether eight miles, we arrived at the last hamlet to which reoccupation has extended. Here the recent colonists were still content with the shelter of mud hovels and reed huts. To the west we were now within view of the river bed of the Tang Ho, and immediately to the north we had to cross a deep channel taking off from it, which was manifestly an old canal of importance. Beyond this there extended a wide steppe covered with reeds and scrub, and cut up by numerous shallow channels of water. Clearly this ground for its reclamation needed drainage even more than systematic irrigation. And, indeed, as we marched on we met a large party of poor cultivators who had been engaged in reclaiming abandoned fields for spring sowing. At last, after wading through a good deal of flooded ground, I caught sight of the 'Kone-shahr' or 'old town' of which Zahid Beg had first told me at Tun-huang. Shih-pan-tung, as our Chinese companions called it, proved indeed a town, but its ruins not older than the last Tungan rising. Nevertheless this deserted site offered me a good deal that was instructive.

Within a square of crumbling clay ramparts, about 375 yards on each face, we found the remains of a typical small Chinese town. It had been sacked by the Muhammadan rebels about forty years before, and had since fallen into complete ruin. The enclosing walls had in many places decayed into a mere *agger* or mound. The interior was for the greatest part filled with heaps of débris; but the usual alignment of streets at right angles, somewhat after the fashion of a Roman castrum, could