

long centuries kept open for China the routes to the distant West?

I was thus in the right mood to appreciate what Chiang was relating of the feelings which the gate of Chia-yü-kuan arouses in modern Chinese exiles. What sighs it must have heard from those whom duty, ambition, or more frequently *saeva paupertas* sends forth annually to the 'New Dominions'! Like many others, my good Ssü-yeh had here said good-bye to true China with tears in his eyes when he passed through seventeen years before. He was sharing now my elation at approaching the famous Gate again. But bravely as he carried himself, I could not help noticing an undercurrent of wistful regret; for he felt that this return *intra murum*, or 'kuan-li-t'ou,' 'within the Barrier,' as the Chinese phrase puts it, was not the final one. Fully three months' journey still separated Chiang from his Hu-nan home, where he had then left behind his wife and newly-born son; and with years still needed to raise his savings to the standard fixed for retirement, he had resolutely put aside all idea of returning to them until the period of exile had come to its appointed end.

Four miles of stony waste, slightly but steadily rising, brought us at last to the top of a broad plateau-like ridge which bears at its eastern edge the closing wall of Chia-yü-kuan. From a distance of about two miles the many-storied gate tower built in wood first became visible (Fig. 224); then, as we got nearer, the clay wall which stretches away on either side of the square fort guarding the great gate. On the south it was visible for a distance of some seven miles to the foot of a projecting buttress of the Nan-shan. Northward for over four miles the wall was hidden by the scarp of the ridge on which we stood. But on the slope of a rugged spur close to the eastern end of the Hao-shan-k'ou gorge I could again pick up its line lit up by the setting sun.

There could be no doubt that the position for a barrier, intended to close approach from the barbarian West to the oases along the north foot of the Nan-shan, had been chosen with true topographical sense. The broad glacis between the snowy mountains and the desert hills of the Pei-shan could