

side and the width of the rubble-filled bed itself, fully a mile across, attested the great volume of water carried down at times by the Pei-ta Ho. Past rich fields of wheat and the omnipresent opium we rode to a little suburb outside the north gate of the city, where the former Ya-mên of Lin Ta-jên, the late Belgian Mandarin Springaert, had been prepared for my quarters. It was a rambling structure of imposing dimensions, with several big courtyards and halls. Although but few years had passed since the first occupant had left Su-chou and his office of Collector of Customs on the Turkestan high road, the whole place looked so shaky and tattered that the prospect of several days' stay in it was far from inviting. Not even the sensible disregard of orthodox Chinese fashion which allowed the courts and main quarters to face northward could make up for the total absence of trees and needful shade. So I quickly turned my back on this pretentious jerry-built mansion, with its wall-papers all in rags and its roofs swarming with bats, and rode round the north wall of the city to the only temple that was mentioned as a possible camping-place.

A delightful surprise awaited me at the end of the dusty ride. On terraced ground, above a large reed-filled basin filled by the limpid water of a bubbling spring, I found a fine arbour and garden lined by temple halls and airy colonnades connecting them (Fig. 228). For a moment I felt in doubt whether I had been suddenly carried back to the shore of a Kashmir lake or to an old Moghul country-seat in the Lahore Campagna. Features of both these surroundings, which happy times of the past had endeared to me, seemed to mingle in the pleasantest fashion at Chiu-ch'üan, the 'Spring of Wine,' as this charming spot has been known since ancient times. Once it gave its name to the city itself.

There was the cool clear spring in its stone-lined tank overgrown with mosses and maidenhair, a worthy brother of the Nagas, which lend charm and life to every favoured nook of Kashmir beloved by gods and men. But the temple halls with their gaily painted stucco, the tumble-down galleries and belvederes built in timber, and the