

pitched with a time-worn coffin tucked under its outer fly, felt obliged to seek another place of shelter, this time in a real temple not far off. Subsequently I learned with some amusement that the local official responsible had pointed out to Naik Ram Singh this little objection to his choice, but had politely given way when the innocent Indian assured him, through Ahmad the interpreter, that this was just the kind of quarters most acceptable to his 'Sahib'!

Kan-chou was from the first intended to be the easternmost goal of my journey, and when on September 3rd I again set out from it westwards, it was with the distinct feeling that my return to India and Europe had begun. But the immediate purpose of the long journey then begun was to take me back to the Tarim Basin for my second winter campaign. Several considerations, archaeological as well as practical, obliged me in the main to follow the great trade route which leads by way of Su-chou and An-hsi across the Pei-shan desert to Hami and thence to Turfan. The fact that this high road between China and Turkestan has been repeatedly followed by recent European travellers does not detract from its historical or geographical interest, since the greater part of it leads along a line to which Chinese expansion westwards has clung since ancient times. But many considerations oblige me to shorten my narrative from this point, and the fact that my return journey from Kan-chou to Kara-shahr in the north-eastern corner of the Tarim Basin lay over relatively well known ground is a special reason for succinctness.

After starting from Kan-chou I devoted a day to the examination of the ruined site of Hei-shui-kou, which the great route passes some ten miles to the north-west. I found it to consist of an extensive débris area of the regular Tati type, covered with small fragments of pottery, and showing, where clear of dunes, abundant signs of wind erosion. But this had lowered the ground level only by two or three feet at the most, and the plentiful débris of porcelain and the coin finds showed that the date of abandonment of this site was late, certainly subsequent to Sung times. For systematic excavation there was no