

us to the farm of Besh-tam, with the last patches of Karez-cultivation. Beyond we came upon fields long abandoned, and then upon a shallow bed in which the water of the Lukchun canals, when left unused in the winter, endeavours to make its way down to the terminal lake bed. During the spring and summer, what with evaporation and absorption in the soil, not a drop of water would reach this point. Across this temporary overflow-bed there extended a wide sandy plain, with plentiful thorny scrub growing amidst rudimentary dunes; where the ground was left clear of drift sand the erosive action of the winds, here chiefly from west to east, had commenced to furrow small trenches and Yardangs.

To me it seemed but a petty desert, and I was rather surprised when less than four miles of it sufficed to bring us to the ruins of 'Chong-Hassar,' which the Lukchun people had declared to be a place very trying to stay at. The remains of the fortified townlet or village I found there exhibited several typical features of Turfan sites. Within an irregular oblong, about 140 yards from east to west, and about 100 yards at its widest, there was a perfect rabbit warren of small vaulted chambers and casemates crowded against the enclosing rampart (Fig. 260). Massive masonry abounded, and the débris of sun-dried bricks choked the rooms often to their vaulting. In places the chambers had been built in irregular tiers one above the other. It was not difficult to realize from what I saw in the extant towns and villages, that this peculiar construction was needed for protection from the excessive heat of the summer and the violence of the dreaded winds of the spring. Extremely massive construction with walls up to seven feet thick characterized also a large vaulted pile rising like a keep in one corner of what looked an inner fort.

To clear the whole of these vaults and cellars would have cost many weeks of labour. So I was not surprised to find that the digging done during the flying visit paid to the site by one of the German expeditions was confined to a partial clearing of the cella of a small Buddhist shrine which could readily be distinguished near the west wall of