

painting closely resembling that of the 'Thousand Buddhas,' though big gaps on the plastered wall showed where the best panels had been cut out to become treasures of the Berlin Ethnographic Museum. How much greater would be the chance for the survival of these art remains *in situ* if only Turfan still held such a pious image-loving population as Tun-huang?

When I subsequently transferred my headquarters to Turfan, the chief modern town of the district, I could see *en route* plentiful evidence of the severe struggle for water which now proceeds on this ground. Most of the barren steppe we crossed below the gravel Sai of the outer range was being overrun by big dunes. Yet the Karez, in spite of the fact that their pit mouths are exposed to the smothering drift sand, are pushed right across this broad zone over a stretch of eight miles to the head wells in order to secure water for part of the Turfan oasis. Everywhere we saw abandoned Karez which had run dry or collapsed and been replaced by others. The total number of pits on a single Karez was said to reach 200 in some cases, while the cost might rise to over £300. The level of subsoil water was declared to have sunk within recent times, and consequently the cultivation dependent on Karez had shifted farther south. The result was visible in the numerous abandoned farms we passed when approaching the old canal-irrigated part of the oasis.

Only exceptional fertility assured by climate and soil could account for so expensive a system of cultivation, and of that there was ample proof in the brisk trade which kept the Turfan Bazars ever filled with produce and throngs. Cotton, which is eagerly bought up and exported to the Siberian railway *via* Urumchi and Tarbagatai, is, no doubt, the chief factor of Turfan commercial prosperity. But also for all surplus produce in food-stuffs and fruit there is a convenient market in Urumchi, the provincial capital, and the other large settlements north of the T'ien-shan. The resulting return trade in imports from the Russian side is most striking. Nowhere in the Tarim Basin or in Kan-su had I seen 'Europe' goods so widely brought into use. What with kerosene lamps, chintz-covered ceilings,