



Fig. 32. A ruined watch-tower, January 10th

### ALONG THE GREAT WALL

Parts of the Great Wall now began to appear on the southern slopes of the hills in the north, and at their foot. The stretches of wall became plainer to see as we advanced; but they were often interrupted, probably by floods from the mountains.

We pitched camp No. 154 at the village of Mi-huang-tien, 1,700 m above sea-level. We were here on the banks of the Shan-tan-ho, which runs to the Kanchow-ho.

After a run of an hour and a half we crossed the river, which had two narrow arms spanned by bridges. Soon after the crossing we had the foot of the mountains on our right. The picturesque temple Ta-fo-ssu, »Temple of the Great Buddha«, stands low down on the mountain-side. We stopped, and entered its courtyard, where stood vessels containing incense. In a pavilion were three images with altars. The main building of the temple houses the giant Buddha image, 21 m high. Pl. 55.

We moved farther away from the mountains again, presently reaching the town of Shan-tan-hsien. We drove along the main street, which had an open canal down the middle, spanned by many bridges.

Just outside the town we came up to the Great Wall. It is built of sun-dried brick, double in places, but usually single. It is about 2 m thick at the base and 1 m at the top, and nearly 6 m high. These measurements, however, vary a great deal. A little farther on the thickness was about the same but the height rather less. At this point a large watch-tower was built into the wall itself.

Throughout the day we saw the Great Wall on our left as a straight yellow line, interrupted here and there. I never tired of looking at this fantastic piece of building, which had risen deep in the desert tracts of China's interior at the bidding of mighty emperors. It ran sometimes higher, sometimes lower; its shape varied at times according to its varying power of resistance to wind and weather and running water; the lights upon it changed as the hours passed, as did also the position and shape of the watch-towers.