



Fig. 33. Tower in the Great Wall, January 10th

We pitched camp No. 155 at San-shih-li-p'u, »Thirty li Village«. It was thought safer to camp within the walls of the village than out in the open. But our policemen from Suchow always enlisted a couple of night-watchmen.

We continued our journey to the south-east with an almost isolated mountain-spur, Ta-huang-shan — »Rhubarb Mountain« — standing up ahead of us.

It is said that 90 per cent of the population of Kansu is addicted to the pernicious vice of opium-smoking. Is it surprising that they are so poor and that life is a burden to them?

The Great Wall followed our road, not far to the left, with unshakable fidelity. Three watch-towers were in sight at the same time. To the right was a mountain peak called Yen-tze, »The Red«, after a red colouring substance with which Mongol women formerly painted their lips.

Now the old Imperial Highway led us into a narrow gravel valley shut in between low mountains. The Great Wall meandered over a hilltop to our left and then ran down steeply to the valley bottom. The road preferred the mountains, as there were men's habitations and water there. The level country in the north was empty waterless desert.

Higher and higher we climbed, and were soon 2,500 m up. The Great Wall was once more winding about the mountain peaks immediately to our left. One admires the patience of the builders.

Our highest altitude was 2,700 m. More open country followed, with a wide and extensive view. The sun sank, and dusk fell on that romantic country, with its ancient towers and its endless wall. At camp No. 156 we had descended to 2,400 m.

After a temperature of -17.4° C. in the night we continued our journey on January 11th. We steered south-east, and soon reached Shui-ch'üan-yi, »Water-spring Station«, a decayed village with picturesque gates, now ruined. Sixty families comprised the population.

A peak to the right of our road was called Ch'ing-lung-shan, »Green Dragon Mountain«. The country was broken; at times we were driving among low hills. The watch-towers did not stop, but the Great Wall was interrupted in places. The road was good in some parts, but often ruined by heavy rains and by deep cart-ruts. We drove up hill and down dale, over troublesome erosion gullies running across the road. Now we were in desert or steppe, now again in cultivated land