



Fig. 34. Landscape with watch-tower

or villages. Here the Great Wall swung away to the north-east in the direction of Chen-fan. Near the village of Shih-li-p'u there was an unbroken line of trees on the right-hand side of the road — memorials of the energetic TSO TSUNG-T'ANG.

At the western gate of Yung-ch'ang-hsien we were stopped by soldiers, who asked the usual questions. They were not satisfied with cards, and demanded to see our passports. While the commander went into the town to report our arrival we had to wait at the gate, guarded by soldiers with fixed bayonets. After twenty minutes' delay permission was given for us to enter, and we drove past a few *p'ai-lous* and through the drum-tower to the yamen.

After passing a few more arched gateways and another party of arrogant soldiers, we at last came out of Yung-ch'ang and encamped at a farm. The name of the town means «Eternal Prosperity». Five hundred families lived inside its walls, and about a thousand outside. No prosperity was noticeable — everything was poor and run to seed.

The next morning it was blowing hard, just as on the previous day. Visibility was bad, and the compass-bearings for the map-making were again short. The road was excellent, however. It had been laid down in 1928—29 by the troops of the «Christian general», FENG YÜ-HSIANG. His principle was that the soldiers should always be kept at work. A few of TSO TSUNG-T'ANG's trees, but only a few, were still standing near a couple of old watch-towers. The dust of the road was flung up in whirling clouds by carts, donkeys and camels. We did not see them till they were quite close, and the camel bells rang out melodiously through the howling of the wind. The faces of cart and caravan drivers whom we met were ash-grey from the whirling dust. For long stretches the road had been washed away by heavy rains. All the bridges were broken down, and at times we had to make troublesome detours off the road proper.

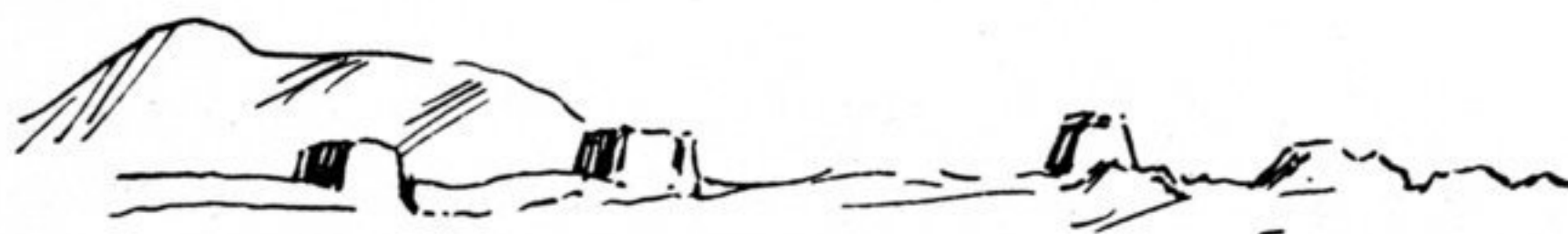


Fig. 35. Wall with towers