

a dozen opium-smoking coolies, all the labour that could be raised.

In order to make sure whether the ancient border line continued to the east and there too, as I guessed, might lie more or less along the southern bank of the Su-lo-ho and its lagoons, I took my course first due north. But my search for two days failed to reveal the hoped-for remains of the ancient Chinese *Limes*. As subsequent investigations proved, the effect of extensive inundations from the Su-lo-ho and its large tributary, the river of Tun-huang, such as we actually encountered, has there effaced its traces. But when we extended our search farther to the east, I succeeded in hitting the line of wall and watch-towers again. My joy at this fortunate discovery was fully justified. Over a distance of some sixteen miles the line could here be followed practically without a break.

Where the bare gravel surface of the low plateau over which it had been carried, well above the flood-level, gave way in places to low dunes, we came upon a remarkably well-preserved stretch of wall. Eight feet thick and practically intact on its sides, it stood here still to a height of over seven feet, and the peculiar method of its construction could be studied with ease. The alternating layers of fascines and stamped clay had, owing to the salts contained everywhere in the soil and the water of the ground, acquired quasi-petrified consistency.

In such a region the wall could hold its own against man and Nature. Owing to the combined elasticity and cohesive strength of the fascines, it could withstand better than any other material the force of slow-grinding but incessant wind erosion. As I looked at the wall rising before me with