

east. I promptly directed the caravan to move on by the well-marked track to the springs where our next camp was to be, while I rode off straight for the ruin, taking along the Surveyor, Chiang-ssü-yeh, Tila Bai, and two of the men provided with Ketmans.

The distance was greater than I thought, the apparent flat level of the Sai being broken by a broad depression which showed luxuriant tamarisk scrub and many dead poplars. From its bottom we had to ascend a steep scarp of about a hundred feet to the edge of the gravel-covered plateau where rose the ruin we had sighted. It proved a solid square tower built with carefully set courses of hard sun-dried bricks, and at regular intervals thin layers of reeds inserted between them. The ruined watch-tower, for only as such could it have served, still rose to a height of over twenty feet. Except on the north side the wall faces had suffered little; but as they receded slightly inwards, this gave to the whole the look of a truncated pyramid as seen in Fig. 153. Except for some scanty traces of broken brickwork adjoining the south face, there was no indication of any structural remains besides the solid tower itself, and all round spread a uniformly flat gravel surface.

But, as I prospected around, my attention was attracted by a line of reed bundles cropping out from the gravel soil about twenty yards north of the tower and close to the plateau edge. As I followed this eastward to the top of a low knoll close by, I saw the line stretching away perfectly straight towards another tower visible some three miles to the east, and assuming in the distance the form of an unmistakable wall. It was manifestly part of that early 'Chinese wall' for which M. Bonin's observation had made me look out, and a little 'prospecting' on the knoll soon revealed with clearness that I actually stood on remains of it!

On clearing away the fine gravel and the drift sand accumulated below on the side sloping towards the Nullah, we soon came upon a regular wall or *agger* constructed of horizontal bundles of reeds placed at regular intervals over layers of clay mixed with gravel. On the outside and placed in the direction of the wall, but at right angles to