

cohesion in spite of the coarse material full of gravel and small stones. The reed bundles, of about the same thickness, were strongly tied, and with their neatly cut stacks and careful anchoring resembled rows of fascines. The average thickness of the wall was between eight and nine feet.

The wall farther east had become eroded in many places. Yet the remnants of the reed layers could be traced in the sandy, scrub-covered depression to within a quarter of a mile of the next tower. This proved of similar construction to the last, though more injured. A special feature here were vertical pieces of Toghrak set into the brickwork to strengthen the corners, and held at short intervals by ropes of twisted reeds which again were embedded in the masonry. The whole, like the materials used in the wall, seemed to tell plainly how little the surrounding physical conditions and the resources of this desert ground had changed since the line of towers was erected. Incidentally light was thrown on the purpose of the latter when I noticed on the southern face a line of rough footholds spared from the masonry, as if to assist a person climbing to the top by means of a rope. Manifestly the small space on the top was meant to be occupied by a man or two for watching and signalling.

Beyond this tower the continuation of the wall seemed to be lost completely. Crossing the bare gravel plateau to the north-east, we then regained the caravan track leading eastwards in the direction of the next tower which now came in view far away. We had followed the track for scarcely more than a mile when the Surveyor's keen eye caught a slight swelling of the gravel soil running parallel to the route, and half-petrified reeds cropping out from its side and top. By merely scraping the surface I made sure that we were moving once more by the line of the old wall, the reeds clearly belonging to the foot layers of a portion now almost completely eroded.

Farther on the almost imperceptible swelling grew into a perfectly straight ridge, six to eight feet high, where the extant wall lay covered under heaped-up gravel and drift sand. At a point about three miles distant from the last