

too, the Surveyor, in the course of his reconnaissance, came upon dry ravines cut by floods into the glacis. The springs which we found rising in marshy beds within the larger bays also supplied proof of such drainage.

But it was equally certain that in forming those curious strings of isolated clay terraces another powerful agent had been at work, wind erosion. Again and again I observed how the crest of the narrow but still continuous ridges was being gradually sapped and scooped by wind-cut trenches mainly starting from the north-east. It was, of course, the direction from which since the winter we had learnt to expect the most violent gales. The ridges, stretched more or less at right angles across the line of the prevailing winds, were thus bound to be gradually broken up into terraces by the cutting force of the wind and the grinding produced by the driven sand which it uses for its instrument. But as I looked at the towers and saw how relatively little their bases had suffered by erosion in the course of two thousand years, I could judge what countless ages were needed even for that powerful agent to carve out those terraces from the hard clay, and finally to plane them away altogether.

I had before me the clearest illustration of that interaction of water and wind erosion which must have produced the maze of detached clay terraces I had before encountered, both at the north-eastern end of the ancient Lop-nor lake bed, and again in the terminal basin of the Su-lo Ho, and around Khara-nor. In the light of the evidence here gathered I was able to understand better the powerful rôle which wind erosion had played in this region as a geological factor affecting surface formations. Its effects upon the work of man were marked with equal clearness. Again and again I noted, in the course of my surveys on the *Limes*, how relatively well preserved the wall often rose along those sections which lay parallel to the prevailing direction of the winds, while where the line had been drawn across and in any way barred the progress of dust and fine gravel, wind erosion had badly breached or practically effaced the rampart.

I had ample occasion to convince myself that the winds