

and east for at least sixteen miles, has been scooped out and sculptured, by the same powerful east wind which we had seen at work in the Su-lo Ho basin, into innumerable small ridges and trenches invariably showing the direction east to west (Fig. 210). It was the desolate scene so familiar from the Lop-nor sites that I found reproduced here with surprising fidelity. Only the scourings of the ground were less deep, generally varying from two to five feet. This was obviously due to the fact that the time which had elapsed since the disappearance of the protecting vegetation was here fully a thousand years less. The corrosive action of the coarse sand carried down from the detritus-covered hill range must have powerfully aided deflation, *i.e.* wind erosion pure and simple. Yet none of this sand was left on the broad belt of eroded loess stretching away eastwards as far as the eye could reach.

But within the massive town walls, enclosing a quadrilateral of about 530 yards on the east and west faces, 620 yards on the north, and about 500 yards on the south, the sand lay heaped up in almost continuous dunes covering the original ground in places up to twenty feet. The east wall, just as in the old town of An-hsi, had been cut through in a succession of huge breaches. But the dunes which had thus accumulated within the enclosed area had so far succeeded in protecting the west wall from similar breaching, though its top already showed incipient cuttings. When once these are carried to a sufficient depth, the wind will regain full play over the sand now filling the interior and quickly drive it out westwards. Then erosion will do its work within the walls as thoroughly as it already has outside, and of the enclosure now half-smothered under dunes nothing will be left but an eroded Tati with remains of the clay ramparts facing north and south. It was curious to note how little these two wall-faces, protected by their direction parallel to the destructive wind, had suffered so far, another striking illustration of the conditions observed at the ancient walled station of 'Lou-lan.'

Of the bastions, and other protective structures of So-yang-chêng, as the deserted town is still known to the people of Ch'iao-tzũ, I need not give details here. They