

undertaking is contained in his *Serindia*, in four volumes, with a fifth containing his 96 maps. Only a few of the many sites examined need be mentioned here.

Before starting for the desert he made a survey up the Nissa valley of the great glaciers that feed the head-waters of the Yurung-kāsh river. This is where, two years later, his right foot became frost-bitten, causing the loss of the toes. Having completed the Nissa valley survey he started for the desert site of Niya, previously explored with such great results in 1901. After further discoveries there he travelled north-east to the oasis of Charkhlik in the region of Lop. Lop (or Lou-lan or Shan-shan) comprised, in Han times, the whole of the depression between the Kuruk-tāgh and Āltin-tāgh with Charkhlik and Mīrān as administrative centres. About fifty miles north-east of Charkhlik at the desolate ancient site of Mīrān, he recovered the wall paintings shown on plates I to III, and photographed others which he found it impracticable to remove at that time. The masses of important manuscripts, and other evidences of Tibetan occupation found in the ruins of an ancient fort nearby, are described in *Serindia* and *Innermost Asia*. From Charkhlik, the next site to be visited was Lou-lan in the Lop desert, where carved architectural woodwork, wooden writing tablets bearing Kharoṣṭhī script, Han coins, and many miscellaneous relics were found among the remains of ruined dwellings. Stone Age and Chalcolithic arrowheads, frequently picked up during the progress across the desert, afforded evidence of the use of the track from remote times. He also identified the line of the ancient Chinese wall, built to protect the trade routes that extended westward from the 'Jade Gate', its great age proved by the finding in one of the towers or block-houses built along the wall Chinese documents on wood bearing dates equivalent to the first century A.D. It is an attractive story, recorded in *Serindia*, but too long to recite here.

The third of Stein's Central Asian expeditions started from Srinagar on 31 July 1913. The route taken was different from those of his former journeys, passing through the recently formed kingdom of Darēl, never before visited by a European, through Yāsīn, and by way of the Darkōt Pass, 15,250 feet, the Tāgh-dumbāsh Pamīr, the valley of Tāsh-kurghān, and the Kara-tāsh river gorges to Kāshgar. The ever-hospitable house of Sir George Macartney, British Consul-General, again afforded him a welcome base at which to make the necessary preparations for the forthcoming desert journey. A Chinese secretary was engaged and at the end of a fortnight the expedition resumed its progress. Skirting the foot of the T'ien-shan range the Taklamakān desert was entered at its eastern end,