

## CHAPTER X

### TO TUN-HUANG AND AN-HSI

#### SECTION I.—THE LIMES LINE NORTH-WEST OF TUN-HUANG

FROM March 17th my work lay once more along the line of that ancient Chinese Limes which memories of fruitful labours in 1907 had so often brought back to me. I was very conscious of the gaps which circumstances had then obliged me to leave in the systematic survey and exploration of its remains, and the desire to fill these up as far as possible was one of the main reasons for my return to this region. The explorations I was now able to resume on the Tun-huang Limes were but the complement and continuation of those which have since been fully recorded and discussed in *Serindia*. Therefore in dealing with the results of my later researches I shall have the advantage of being able, for all general matters connected with the history, purpose and organization of the Tun-huang Limes, to fall back upon the detailed review of them already furnished in Chapter XX of that work. On the other hand, the account to be here given of my further explorations is necessarily hampered by the fact that translations of none of the Chinese documents obtained from the ruins of the sections of the Limes that were examined on this occasion are as yet at my disposal. [Since this and the next two chapters were written, M. Maspero has kindly supplied me with preliminary renderings of most of the documents recovered, accompanied by notes on essential points of their contents. With his permission I have added to my text and foot-notes such supplementary information of a direct archaeological bearing as could safely be gleaned from the materials made available in advance of the proposed publication of these and other Chinese records. Such additions have been distinguished by brackets.]

Renewal  
of Limes  
explora-  
tions.

My first two marches along the Limes, on March 17th and 18th, brought me from Toghrakbulak to the ancient Magazine T. XVIII and were extended by a reconnaissance of the secondary line of wall to the south of Yü-mên. They were the occasion of a variety of supplementary observations of antiquarian interest. But as these have already been duly embodied in the account I have given in *Serindia* of these sections of the Limes,<sup>1</sup> I may here content myself with indicating in a foot-note certain points of interest offered by the additional photographs I secured at some of the ruined watch-stations.<sup>2</sup> It may also be mentioned here that a number of small objects which I

First  
marches  
along  
Limes.

<sup>1</sup> See *Serindia*, ii. pp. 634 sqq., 656 sq., 692 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Taking the photographs from the westernmost Limes, we have first in Fig. 194 the much-decayed watch-tower T. iv. a, built on a clay terrace and overlooking the depression in which we may locate the terminal station of the wall and the 'Well of the Protector General'; cf. *Serindia*, ii. pp. 634 sqq.; above, p. 308.

Fig. 190 shows the reed-covered north-eastern corner of the great marshy basin in which the Su-lo-ho terminates, as seen to the south of T. iv. a. In the foreground, at the foot of the steep clay terrace, there is seen the beginning of the Limes *agger*, built of reed fascines and stamped clay. The figure of the man standing marks its foot on the inside. For sketches showing the construction of the *agger*, see Pl. 13.

Farther on, the line of the wall, decayed into a mere low

mound and overgrown with reeds, could be made out by the naked eye running straight south towards the large clay terrace on which my Camp 171 a. of 1907 had stood; cf. *Serindia*, ii. p. 635.

In Fig. 192 the view from the clay terrace bearing T. iv. a lies to the ESE. In the foreground the straight narrow mound, covered with reeds, marks the line of the decayed Limes wall. The middle distance shows faintly the high banks of earth in which, I believe, we may recognize the decomposed clay ramparts of an ancient Chinese *castrum*; cf. *Serindia*, ii. pp. 637 sq. Far away in the distance the watch-towers T. iv. b and c can just be made out, rising above tongue-like projections of the gravel *glacis*.

Fig. 191 shows the stretch of the Limes wall where it descends from the gravel plateau near T. III and extends in