

Finds at  
ruined  
tower  
T. XLVI. h.

collapsed bodily towards the east. It appeared to have measured about 16 feet square at its base ; the size of the bricks was  $13'' \times 7\frac{1}{2}'' \times 4''$ . Some quarters, of which brick-built walls were still traceable for 24 and 16 feet respectively, appear to have adjoined the south-east corner. From the refuse found here we recovered fourteen Chinese records in the form of wooden slips, several complete, and a considerable number of miscellaneous articles described in the List. Among these may be specially mentioned the curved iron knife, T. XLVI. h. 04 (Pl. XLVII) ; the lacquered wooden disc, 06 (Pl. XLVI) ; the small fragment of a beautifully made wooden object, with black lacquer, 08 ; a piece of twisted canvas, 02 (Pl. XLVI), apparently used for a torch ; the wooden comb, 01.

[Among the wooden documents partly translated by M. Maspero several have proved to contain military records or orders of exactly the same type as recovered at watch-stations of the Tun-huang Limes. Thus in T. XLVI. h. 2 the number of men detailed for particular kinds of ' fatigues ' are mentioned ; T. XLVI. h. 021 indicates the course to be followed ' if bandits besiege the post and straw cannot be secured to light as a signal '. T. XLVI. h. 022 contains an order to the officer of ' the military agricultural colony of *Yü-mên* ' to allot certain lands to seventeen men condemned to forced labour. Of direct antiquarian interest is T. XLVI. h. 016, which bears an exact date corresponding to A.D. 69 ; for it proves that this portion of the Limes was actually occupied during the years just preceding the Chinese conquest of Hāmi, A.D. 73, and the first opening of the trade route which gave direct access to the oases along the eastern extremity of the T'ien-shan.]

Limes  
towers  
T. XLVI.  
i, j, k.

Of the next three watch-towers, all found at a distance from each other of about one mile, T. XLVI. i was of the same construction as the last named ; but having been repaired outside with layers of stamped clay it still stood to a height about 12 feet. It occupied low ground and curiously enough was not visible from its eastern neighbour, T. XLVI. j. This, too, was built of bricks of the same approximate size as used at T. XLVI. h, but had decayed badly. A bronze arrow-head found at its foot is of the regulation type of Han times. Near this tower the cart-track from Chin-t'a towards Mao-mei, which crosses to the left bank of the Pei-ta-ho near the patch of cultivation at Hsi-yo, approaches quite close to the line of the Limes. So it did not surprise me to find that the next tower, T. XLVI. k, just below which the road passes, had quite a modern appearance. In all probability the remains of an ancient watch-post had been by successive repairs enlarged to its present considerable size. Owing to its size and commanding position it serves as a conspicuous landmark for travellers to and from Mao-mei.

Arrival at  
Mao-mei  
oasis.

The mound marking the Limes could be seen from here stretching eastwards across the Sai for several miles. But in view of the approaching dusk and the distance still separating us from Mao-mei, I was obliged to leave the line at this point and to take to the cart-road. I regretted this diversion the less that our glasses showed the only tower still visible eastwards in the direction of the line of the Limes, T. XLVI. l, to be also modern in appearance. This was subsequently confirmed, for in September Lāl Singh had occasion to pass close by it and ascertained its name to be *Hung-hsia-tung*. We had to follow the cart-track for seven miles before the western edge of the oasis of Mao-mei was reached, and close on five more before we had made our way, in the darkness, to the desolate-looking walled town forming the administrative centre of the small district. On the way we crossed the bed of the Kan-chou river. Though still almost dry at the time, it showed by its width of nearly a mile how great is the volume of water which during the flood season descends in it to the confluence with the Pei-ta-ho, a few miles farther down.