

base, still stand to a height of over thirty feet. Its antiquity was suggested by the fact that, in spite of the great solidity of the clay, considerable portions of the outer faces had fallen. We found no datable remains within, but a small hillock less than a hundred yards off proved on excavation to be covered with the debris and refuse of an important ancient station. Abundant finds of Chinese documents soon proved that we had here struck the site of that famous 'Jade Gate' at which we know that in Han times all traffic passing along the desert route was controlled. Curiously enough many of the best-preserved tablets came to light on clearing a deep shaft which had probably long served as a dungeon and later on been turned into a dustbin. This is not the place to deal with the many curious details which the abundant documents found at this site reveal regarding the military organization, service, etc., of the *Limes*.

About three miles to the north, just where the transverse wall joins the old line, we hit upon the remains of a station which, judging from the plentiful records found in its refuse-heaps and ranging over two centuries, must also have been an important headquarters. There we found *inter alia* interesting relics of the ancient silk trade in the shape of strips of silk inscribed in Chinese and Indian Brahmi. They give exact details as to the place of production, size and weight of the bales from which they had been cut off. Equally curious it was to find here also a neatly tied up little packet containing a bronze arrow-head with the broken pieces of its feathered shaft. It was obviously, to use the proper official language as applied to the identical practice of modern military routine, a case of "one arrow (broken) returned into store in support of indent for a new one".