

There are numerous records among the documents from the *Limes* containing indents for the issue of fresh arrows as well as for crossbows to replace others returned in a damaged state.

About five miles to the east of the site of the ancient 'Jade Gate' there rises close by the caravan road and well behind the line of the wall a very imposing ruin (Fig. 78). With its three big halls adjoining one another in a continuous block and extending over a total length of some 560 feet, this structure was at first very puzzling. Its very thick walls of solid stamped clay, though still rising to fully twenty-five feet in places, showed but few openings and those evidently meant for ventilation. There was an outer enclosure and an inner one flanked by towers at the corners. The structural peculiarities led us before long to guess that this strange pile had served as a supply magazine for the troops stationed or moving along the wall and for officials and political missions travelling by the desert route. This has been fully confirmed by the Chinese records recovered from refuse in a corner of an inner enclosure; for these tell us of deliveries of grain, brought from the Tun-huang oasis; of suits of clothing stored, etc. So here we had found that advance base of supplies, which was so much needed both for the troops guarding the desert border and for those using the difficult route to or from Lou-lan.

Here we may take our leave of this western portion of the ancient Chinese *Limes*. I had carried its exploration as far as the eastern end of the Khara-nor when, by the middle of May 1907, the increasing heat, scarcely relieved by recurring sand-storms, together with other trials of the desert and the exhaustion of the men, obliged me to regain the oasis.