

broken utensils, old boots, etc., which had survived in the refuse practically as fresh as when they were thrown down there, I can single out only one for special reference. It was a small closely tied bundle containing the broken pieces of a feathered arrow with the barbed bronze arrow-head packed away amongst them. The most likely explanation was that, in accordance with a system still in vogue in certain military departments over-anxious to check petty defalcation, broken arrows had to be returned 'into store' before new ones could be issued.

Our rich haul at this station was completed by April 25th, a perfectly clear day, when after long hours of work in a blazing sun I enjoyed in the evening a glorious vision of the snowy range far away to the south. What a vivifying contrast it was to the level expanse of gravel and salt marsh and the dreary bleakness of the low hills northward!

On the following morning I moved camp to the large ruin, some five miles eastwards, which when we first passed it on the journey to Tun-huang, had struck me by its palace-like dimensions (Fig. 156). My reconnaissances had since shown that this huge structure, T. XVIII., with a much-decayed watch-tower rising on the plateau edge immediately south of it, lay actually on the line of the *Limes* as well as on the old caravan route. An expanse of lakelets and impassable marsh land, some four miles long and two across, stretched on its north side and rendered defence by a wall quite unnecessary. But neither the familiarity I had gained with the general plan and arrangements of the *Limes* nor the close survey I now made of the imposing ruin could at first give me any clue as to its true character and purpose.

The building with its enclosing walls presented the imposing length of over 550 feet, and at first sight suggested a barrack or Ya-mên; yet the very proportions were enough to dispel such a notion. It consisted mainly of three big halls, each 139 feet long and $48\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide, which adjoined lengthwise and formed a continuous block facing due south. Their walls, five and a half feet thick