

the last tower westwards. They looked distinctly like the remains of earth ramparts meeting at right angles, and their position within the bend of the wall and near its westernmost point at once suggested an entrenched camp.

Naik Ram Singh, who had taken the labourers to the ruin while I was reconnoitring, had already noticed these curious lines. Subsequently, on riding over the ground, I found that in spite of much 'Shor,' or salt efflorescence, scrub of various sorts and reeds were covering it in profusion; and so it was difficult to follow the lines up. But rows of little mounds, eight to ten feet high, and thickly covered with dead Toghrak trunks and branches, could even thus be made out at what from above I had taken for the south-west angle of the enclosed area. On going up a steep terrace a short distance to the north, the lines of ramparts showed up again, forming an oblong about five hundred yards long and half that across. With its short side on the north this oblong seemed to approach closely the line of wall connecting the two westernmost towers (T. IV. A and B).

Were these then the remains of an entrenched camp established at some time at the very point where the ancient route from the Tarim Basin passed within the walled line of the *Limes*? Would this not have been the most likely position to select for the original 'Jade Gate'? Here at the foot of the plateau there would have been some shelter from bitter winds and no difficulty about reaching water by digging. A larger station for troops was here justified by the risks to be guarded against at this exposed corner. At the same time its existence would furnish adequate explanation both for the extension of the wall to a point beyond the tower T. IV. B, and for the construction of a third tower (T. IV. c, Fig. 181), which we found overlooking and guarding the site from a plateau tongue about one and a half miles to the south-east. For the complete decay of the rampart and the total absence of structural remains inside I could account by the vicinity of abundant subsoil water. In fact, eight months later I had occasion to acquaint myself with the exactly corresponding results which