

company commander is duly recorded. The mention of an 'undress costume' of white silk in one soldier's kit agrees curiously with the abundance of silk rags of varying texture which the refuse heaps of the border-stations have yielded. The inclusion of a tent in the same list may help to account for the fact that the accommodation still traceable at the ruined watch-stations would have been quite inadequate to give shelter to the whole number of the garrison we may reasonably assume to have been quartered there. The Government store lists often include reserve strings of silk and hemp for cross-bows; axes, hammers, and other implements; and here I may mention that a big hammer of wood for tent pitching, which we found in the débris of the station nearest to T. VI. B, was in such perfect condition and so useful that I could not resist my men taking it into daily use for its original purpose during the rest of my journey.

There can be no doubt that the main duty of the detachments echeloned along the *Limes* was to provide guards for the watch-towers who would give timely alarm by signals to the rest of the line in case of the approach of raiders. The numerous wooden slips which accurately register the time and other details of fire signals received, or else refer to arrangements made for lighting them, would alone suffice to prove that this means of optic telegraphy was in regular use along the border. But the abundant information from early Chinese texts collected by M. Chavannes shows that the system of fire signalling was known and practised along the frontiers of the Empire long before the time of the Hans. The distinction which those texts indicate between signal fires visible at night and smoke signals intended for use by day is distinctly mentioned in one of the records on wood. In another, neglect to transmit such a signal received from one side of the line by immediately lighting a fire in turn is acknowledged as a grievous delinquency.

We are not informed by our records as to any devices by which such fire signals could be varied to convey more definite news along the guarded line. But since later texts quoted by M. Chavannes refer to a method of