

of men employed in making bricks at the rate of 70 or 150 *per diem*, perhaps according to their size; in shifting and piling up bricks; in plastering walls of quarters, the work performed being accurately estimated in square feet. A considerable amount of *corvée* seems to have been absorbed by the carriage of supplies and materials needed at the several posts. In such cases an elaborate calculation informs us of the number of days spent, the daily distances covered, and the weight carried by each man. No payments to such fatigue parties are ever mentioned; but careful record was kept, evidently for the purpose of making the distribution of tasks equitable.

The humdrum life of these petty garrisons must at times have been disturbed by serious incidents and alarms. Though the records of the main find at T. VI. B cover only a relatively short period (65-57 B.C.), they supply us with evidence of this. In one document, unfortunately for the greater part effaced, we have a report about "a barbarian horseman having been seen riding towards a watch-station with drawn bow; on a discharge from the cross-bows he retired." But a serious attack was evidently anticipated, since "the chariots and horsemen are directed to keep on guard," and "the men at the watch-towers to keep a sharp look-out for fire signals and to keep the border clear." Elsewhere we have an earlier event referred to "when raiders burned and sacked the quarters of a battalion, exterminating two hundred people."

That the guarded line was incidentally used to prevent the escape of deserters or others 'wanted' within the border is made clear by notices relating to such offenders. In fact, we know from plentiful Chinese texts down to T'ang times that to pass the 'barrier' outwards required special authorization. Of private letters, too, there is a fair sprinkling; but we must regret that, with their brevity and the exuberant indulgence in polite phraseology which Chinese epistolary style enjoins, they yield little of antiquarian interest. Yet short and formal as they are, it is impossible not to detect between their lines an expression of that feeling of weary exile which prolonged stay on this barren and trying frontier must have engendered.