

on my way the ruins near the outlying village of Ch'iao-tzŭ, about which a Turki Muhammadan trader of An-hsi had given me information; and this became an additional reason for delay in effecting the needful arrangements.

Fortunately I was able to use the six days which it cost to surmount these obstacles not only for many tasks of writing, but also for interesting archaeological observations in the neighbourhood. I had every reason to believe that the line of the ancient *Limes* which I had traced in April from Tun-huang to within thirty miles or so of An-hsi continued past the latter place eastwards. The large towers, which on approaching An-hsi we had sighted due west, proved of more recent origin. But when I subsequently inspected two smaller towers which the Surveyor had come across in the course of a reconnaissance tour, about four miles to the south-west of the new town, I soon convinced myself that in dimensions and method of construction they corresponded exactly to the watch-towers so familiar from the Tun-huang desert.

The remains of an *agger* connecting them and still rising in places to four or five feet furnished conclusive evidence of this being indeed the line followed here by that ancient *Limes*. The mound on being cut through showed the usual layers of Toghrak branches embedded in earth and gravel. The preservation of these traces of the Han wall was manifestly due to the bare gravel of which the ground just at this point consisted, while elsewhere, to the east and west of that stretch, it was scrub-covered loess. The moisture reaching the latter from the overflow of canals had sufficed to efface all traces of the wall, and when revisiting this neighbourhood in October I found, in fact, much of the broad belt of waste flooded. The extant towers of stamped clay stood at about one mile's distance from each other, and near them low mounds of clay seemed to indicate the position of quarters. But I vainly had the soil searched for any datable relics apart from ancient potsherds.

Curiously enough, where the line of the old wall still traceable in places strikes the present main road from Tun-huang to An-hsi, I found a much-restored tower with