

learning and critical acumen secured from the mass of very interesting but often exceptionally obscure records, I must refer to Chapter XX. Even that synopsis need be attempted only in so far as it may help to throw light on the history and general organization of the Limes and the daily life led along it.

Hsien-wei
and *Yang-wei* com-
panies of
Wan-sui.

Among the records found at T. xxvii particular archaeological interest attaches to No. 569 (*Doc.*, Plate XVII), a neatly written wooden label with the string still attached, which had evidently been taken from a bundle containing a soldier's outfit. From M. Chavannes' translation we now know that it mentions 'a cuirass and a pair of shoes in leather belonging to the *Hsien-wei* company of *Wan-sui* 萬歲'. That the latter name was that of a locality, and in all probability of the part of the Limes comprising, among others, the watch-station at which the label was found, is proved by two other records, also from this ruin, which mention the *Yang-wei* company quartered at *Wan-sui* (*Doc.*, No. 568, Plate XVI) and the appointment of a certain officer 'under the orders of the commander of the post of *Wan-sui*' (*Doc.*, No. 574, Plate XVI). That the *Yang-wei* company guarded the neighbouring watch-station T. xxviii in A. D. 75 is seen from No. 614. Three documents found at T. xxvii supply us with the names of other companies garrisoning this section of the Limes. In A. D. 35 it was the *An-t'ien* company (No. 562), in A. D. 50 the *An-han* company (*Doc.*, Nos. 563, 564; Plate XVI); in A. D. 53 the company called *Kao-wang* had succeeded (*ibid.* No. 565;). *Wan-sui* seems to have been connected in some way with 'the *Yi-ho* 宜禾 barrier'; but no exact indication of the position of the latter is furnished by the three records from this station (Nos. 567, 568, 572) which mention it.⁴ Nor can the 'eastern section', of which No. 570 names a certain post commandant, be located at present.

Blank
stationery,
pottery, &c.
at T. xxvii.

That the room by the side of the tower T. xxvii had seen a good deal of clerical activity was also proved by over a dozen blank slips of wood, T. xxvii. 0014, found here. Those that were complete were of the regulation size; many had become very thin, obviously by repeated paring after use. They, no doubt, belonged to the stock of wooden stationery kept ready at this little office. Finds of small miscellaneous objects, mostly fragmentary, were plentiful among the refuse lying within the room and strewn the slope outside. They are mentioned separately in the Descriptive List at the end of Chapter XX below. Apart from a small fragment of coloured porcelain, T. xxvii. 2 (Plate IV), which is likely to have been brought here in T'ang times or later, I may mention pieces of stoneware bowls, T. xxvii. 1. 5, 0024, which, on account of their brownish or greyish glaze corresponding to that also found on pieces from other portions of the Limes line, may safely be ascribed to the Later Han period. But here, as at all stations of the line, potsherds of the dark-grey, mat-marked type were found in far greater abundance, though owing to their very commonness the specimens that I brought away were few.⁵ Very frequently the rims had holes drilled in them for fastening up broken jars, etc., which, though no longer fit to hold liquids, would serve for keeping cereals and the like. The very coarseness of the fabric invests this practice with a special significance. Together with so many other indications, it helps to bring home to us the humble and penurious conditions in which the rank and file, if not the petty officers also, must have passed their days on this dreariest of desert borders.

Pottery
repaired.

Ink-seals
and mis-
cellaneous
finds.

Among several wooden ink-seals (T. xxvii. 003, 005-006) of a type also found at other stations I may mention one, T. xxvii. 15 (Plate LIII), as still retaining engraved on its bottom a Chinese character of ancient form, but as yet undetermined. Besides two wooden dice or counters, also

⁴ Regarding a military district of the *Yi ho tu wei* in the Tun-huang command, also mentioned in the Former Han Annals, cf. M. Chavannes' note on No. 61, *Documents*, p. 26.

⁵ This shortcoming of my first exploration has been made

good by the numerous specimens of the common pottery types which I collected in 1914 along the whole Limes line from its western end to the Etsin-gol.