

CHAPTER XVIII

THE WESTERNMOST LIMES WALL

SECTION I.—FROM THE WESTERN END OF THE WALL TO T. VIII

Line of Limes wall towards T. III. WE may now return to the terminal western point of the Limes proper and proceed to survey in due order the remains of its wall and watch-stations to the east of T. IV. b. Close to this tower the ground is much broken by small Nullahs, and it would be difficult now to pick up the line followed by the wall of the Limes but for the conspicuous sign-post which is supplied by the tower T. III. Towards this the wall was directed in a straight line keeping close to the northern edge of the plateau. From about one mile onwards it could be followed running almost unbroken, but surviving only to the height of a few feet and embedded mostly in coarse sand or in light gravel.

Remains of tower T. III. The remains of the tower T. III (Fig. 149; Plate 36) and the interesting discovery made at the wall near it have already been so fully described in Chapter XIV, in connexion with my first explorations along the Limes,¹ that nothing remains to be added here. The Descriptive List below shows the few miscellaneous relics which were found on clearing the ground at the foot of this tower. In the same way I may refer to that chapter for a detailed account of the remarkably well-preserved stretch of the wall which I found extending almost continuously for a distance of a little over 3 miles in the direction of the next tower, T. VII.

Rut parallel to Limes wall. But I may here record an observation which adds considerably to the interest of this stretch of wall, but which was not made until I passed along it again on a later occasion with the experience gained through preceding explorations of the Limes. Then, with the slanting rays of the afternoon sun behind me showing up the line of the wall quite distinctly for miles, as it descends from T. III towards the depression near T. VII, the eye readily caught a curiously straight furrow-like line running parallel to the wall and keeping always at a distance of about 8 to 9 yards within it. I had first noticed exactly the same shallow little depression, stretching along the wall and at the same distance from it, to the east of the tower T. XIII, where there is a stretch of wall preserved to even greater height, as seen in Fig. 176. Subsequently I recognized it elsewhere, too, as e. g. near T. XII. a, and between T. XV and T. XVII. Close examination showed that the well-marked depression was always from 1½ to 2 feet wide and its bottom sunk to an average of about 5 inches below the hard gravel surface of the ground.

Ancient track traced along Limes wall. Repeated observations convinced me that this strangely regular rut marked the narrow but well-defined track worn into the gravel soil by the patrols who tramped along the wall for centuries. There was no possibility of individual illusion, because this line and its character were recognized independently by different members of my party and along widely distant sections of the wall, not only in the course of the explorations of 1907 but also when I revisited this westernmost portion of the Limes seven years later. Significant, too, was the fact that this strange uncanny track was

¹ See above, pp. 568 sqq.