

succeeded in lowering the ground more than about one foot below the original level, as indicated by the lowest brick course (see Fig. 173). The observation is of special interest as confirming by negative evidence a statement that I have already made several times about the peculiar, erosive force of the winds blowing from the east and north-east.

Outlying
watch-
station
T. IX. a.

The tower T. IX, placed as it was on a knoll rising some 60 feet above the gravel plateau, commanded a complete view to the west and over the sandy scrub-covered depression eastwards. But it was far less favourably situated for watching the ground to the north and a deeply sunk Nullah which extends from T. IX to the north-west. This area could not be effectively observed from the posts T. VIII and T. IX, as it was screened by a series of very steep clay terraces which, rising in this part of the depression, might have allowed raiding parties to approach the line of the wall unperceived. It was, no doubt, this tactical feature of the ground, indicated by the map in Plate 33, which induced the designers of the Limes to protect this weak point in their line by the outlying watch-station T. IX. a, placed to the north of the Nullah just mentioned and about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from T. VIII. Whether owing to the atmospheric conditions prevailing or from the peculiar lie of the ground, both the Surveyor and myself had on successive occasions failed to notice the tower T. IX. a, until it was sighted on April 30, as we proceeded south-west of T. IX over the gently rising Sai.

Features of
T. IX. a
and en-
closure.

Subsequently, on my return from the south-west flank of the Limes, I was able to visit this tower and convinced myself that it represented a picket thrown out beyond the line for its better protection. The tower rose on a low plateau tongue to a height of about 20 feet. It measured 18 feet square at the base and was built with bricks, 18 by 9 inches and $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick. Just as at T. IX, the sun-dried bricks were fairly hard, though containing no straw. After every 5 courses a thin layer of reeds was inserted. There were scanty traces of brick walls, of small rooms adjoining the tower on the north and east, and also of steps once leading up along its north face. But there was very little débris and no refuse of any sort, which explains the absence of 'finds'. It seems probable that this post was occupied only occasionally and for short periods when raids were expected. Its isolated position accounts for the additional defence provided in the shape of an enclosure round the tower, forming roughly a square of 34 yards. The rampart of clay and gravel of which it consisted had decayed to a height of 4 or 5 feet only, and in places had become completely effaced. No other towers could be sighted to the north or west, though Rai Rām Singh also had approached the ground closely on a reconnaissance north of the Su-lo Ho, and this prevents any conjecture that a line of posts had been pushed out further on this side.

Post occu-
pied for
short
periods.

Limes wall
traced past
T. x.

The stretch of wall running from T. IX across the broad scrub-covered depression to the north-east has been followed by us already in Chapter XIV.² Neither it nor the curiously truncated watch-tower T. x (Fig. 174), with its salt-permeated layers of clay, needs any further description. But I may add that, as this heavy salt impregnation of the clay clearly proves, the small stream crossed half a mile further on was in ancient times as salt as it now is; for there, no doubt, the water for the pisé was obtained, while the clay itself must have come from the ridge, at the northern end of which this conspicuously placed tower rises. Except for a short break at this salty streamlet which comes from springs further south, the line of the wall with its layers of reeds could be traced from T. x right up to the salt-encrusted southern shore of the small lake which is shown by the map north of Camp 155.

Limes line
along
marshes.

It is at this point that the Limes, coming from its western termination, first enters a topographically very interesting and well-defined portion of its line, which extends eastwards as far as

² See above, p. 572.