

means 'granary'. This proves that local tradition was in T'ang times still fully aware of the true character of the ruins. That both texts should speak of the big ruin as an old 'town' can cause no surprise to any one familiar with the fact that every ancient ruin, however small, is spoken of in Chinese Turkestān as a *kōne-shahr*, or in the Kan-su marches as a *chiu ch'êng* ('old city').

SECTION VIII.—THE LAKE SECTION OF THE LIMES, T. XIX—T. XXIII

The position chosen for the great magazine of the Limes was rendered particularly secure by the wide marsh-bed which, as already mentioned, extended to the north of it and made a defensive line of wall quite needless on that side. But on the east I found the wall reappearing on a tongue of firm ground which separates that marsh bed from a lake about 3 miles long and about half as wide. The gap between the marsh and the lake was not much over a mile in width, but care had been taken to close it by means of two watch-towers, T. XIX and T. XX, and a connecting wall. The wall was badly decayed, but the towers were conspicuous ruins (Fig. 190), being perched on the top of isolated steep clay terraces up to 100 feet in height, of which a number lay scattered over this stretch of ground. A reference to the map, Plate 33, shows that the cluster of these Mesas forms here, as elsewhere, but the continuation of a narrow plateau projecting from the gravel 'Sai' on the south, which the interacting forces of water and wind-erosion have broken up at its northernmost end. The same obvious explanation applies also to similar formations of isolated clay terraces which the line of the Limes crosses near T. IX, XIV. a, XXII. b, c, and which in each case we find guarded with special care. This is accounted for by the facilities which such broken ground would otherwise have offered for unobserved attack.

Limes walls
to north-east
of magazine.

The tower T. XIX (Plate 36) occupied a naturally strong position at the northern extremity of a steep-faced clay ridge commanding a full view of the lacustrine depression through which the Su-lo Ho passes here. From its height I first clearly sighted the deep, well-defined channel by which the river enters the above-mentioned lake from the side of the Khara-nōr and again leaves it westward to feed the marsh-bed north of the magazine. The tower, built of bricks of the usual size with intervening layers of brushwood, measured 22 feet square at the base, and contained a small guard-room, i, 8 feet square. On the east a narrow apartment, ii, adjoined, which may have served as a place for stores. On the same side the slope over which the tower was approached from a narrow neck of the ridge was covered with plentiful refuse, containing *inter alia* a quantity of chopped reed straw still green and fresh looking. Here, too, were found scanty remains of a room partly cut into the live clay, and a stack of fascines made up of Toghrak twigs, together with a big coil of twisted reed rope, about 1½ inches in diameter, the use of which remained doubtful. Among the miscellaneous objects found in this refuse and within the little guard-room I may mention three feathered arrow-shafts, T. XIX. i. 6, 006-007 (Plate LIII); the well-preserved barbed arrow-head, i. 005 (Plate LIII); and the implement of hard wood, i. 003 (Plate LII), which may have served for applying and smoothing wall plaster.

Watch-
tower T. XIX.

Of the wooden records recovered from the débris of the ruined tower, the neatly written label T. XIX. i. 6, *Doc.*, No. 693 (Plate XIX), is of antiquarian interest. It specifies that the bag or box to which it was originally attached contained a hundred bronze arrow-heads of a particular kind belonging to the 'Chu-chüeh company at P'ing-wang' 平望, and thus makes it appear very probable that the section of the Limes bearing the latter name extended so far eastwards. The name of the 'Chu-chüeh company of P'ing-wang' had already been found in T. xv. a. ii. 9, *Doc.*, No. 484.¹

'Chu-chüeh
company at
P'ing-
wang.'

¹ See above, p. 699.