

Among implements may be mentioned a painted wooden block, T. VIII. 0010 (Plate LII), apparently intended to hold tapers or sticks of incense; a padded block probably meant for grinding paint, T. VIII. 0025 (Plate LIV); and numerous wooden seal-cases, of which the varying types will be found classified and described in the Descriptive List under T. VIII. 5. Two of these types, as illustrated in Plate LIII by specimens from other Limes stations, have the same arrangement of grooves to hold the fastening string as we have seen in the seal sockets on the 'envelopes' of Kharoṣṭhī tablets. That the men stationed on guard had, after the Chinese fashion still to be observed nowadays, employed their leisure in homely occupations was made clear here by a variety of implements. Among them may be classed the wooden apparatus, T. VIII. 001 (Plate LII), roughly made, but in perfect preservation, which according to the information of Tila Bai, my observant Turkī follower, resembles an instrument used about Yārkaṇd for reeling cotton.¹⁰ The numerous slightly curved wooden bars, of which T. VIII. 0026, 0027, are specimens, were provided with holes at regular intervals and may have been used in making ropes or thread. Of homely use, certainly, was the wooden spinning whorl, T. VIII. 0038. The purpose of the curious wooden stick, T. VIII. 0039 (Plate LIII), painted to represent the head and neck of an animal, apparently a snake, remains doubtful. Finds of textile fabrics, T. VIII. 0041-46, were few and mostly of coarse material, including goat's hair and even reed shreds. But the pair of woven string shoes, T. VIII. 002 (Plate LIV), is well made and its technique is of interest. The fact that the resources of civilized life, even if of a humble kind, had to be treasured at these distant posts of the Limes was curiously illustrated by the pieces of a large jar of hard grey pottery found in an outer room on the north. It had been broken, and then patched up again by means of leather thongs passed through holes.

Seal-cases,
wooden im-
plements,
&c.

Before leaving this desolate watch-station, now about 6 miles away from the nearest water, I may refer to a curious observation made outside it. To the south-west, not far off, I noticed two stumps of wood just emerging from the gravel surface and at about 20 yards distance from each other. On clearing the ground, the end of a stout rope made of reed strands, still about 4 feet long, was found twisted round one of the posts. Though massive enough, measuring fully 6 inches in diameter, they had been worn down by the wind-driven sand and gravel almost to the surface of the soil. It was easy for me, accustomed as I was to see the same practice adopted by my men at our camps on bare desert ground, to realize that the thick rope, once stretched from post to post, was used for tethering the horses and camels of those who were stationed at the place or happened to halt there.

Posts and
rope for
tethering
horses.

SECTION II.—THE TOWERS T. IX, X AND THE MARSH SECTIONS OF THE LIMES

In the account given in Chapter XIV of my first passage along the westernmost portion of the Limes proper I have already described the stretch of wall which extends unbroken from T. VIII eastwards to T. IX, and also the latter tower itself (Fig. 173).¹ It was certainly the best preserved of all the watch-towers I have seen on the Limes. This may be accounted for partly by its very solid construction, the details of which have been recorded, and partly by its position on a knoll rising above the steep eastern edge of the gravel plateau that is crossed all the way from T. VII. Owing to this position, which is clearly seen in Plate 33, but little of wind-driven sand or fine gravel from the east or north-east could attack the foot of the tower. In consequence erosion had nowhere

Well-pre-
served
watch-
tower T. IX.

chinoi, p. 18 note, from whom I take the reference, has justly expressed doubt as to the reliability of these latter measurements.

¹⁰ My notes record an exactly corresponding find having been made at T. VI. b.

¹ See above, p. 572.