



ROOM OF MONASTIC DWELLING, D. III., DANDAN-ULIQ, FIND-PLACE OF ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS.

CHAPTER XIX

FIRST FINDS OF ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS

It had not needed the discovery of the pictorial representation of 'Pothis' to make me eagerly look out for finds of ancient manuscripts. None had turned up during the excavations of the first three days. But as if to revive my drooping hopes, a painted tablet, badly defaced by decay and accretion of siliceous matter, which was found in the last cleared cella, displayed a narrow strip of paper with three lines of Indian Brahmi characters sticking to the top edge and running transversely across the panel. The paper, which, as it covers part of the painting, is plainly proved to be a subsequent addition, had decayed even more than the tablet itself. While on the latter two female figures, each holding a swathed infant, could just be made out, it was impossible to read more than a few detached characters in each line of the rotten paper. But these letters were in a bold literary hand, very