

of the remaining rooms of the north wing still further added to their number, I found myself before the day's work was done in possession of materials far more abundant than I could reasonably have hoped for.

The remarkable state of preservation in which a considerable portion of the wooden tablets was found made it easy for me, even during a first cursory examination on the spot, to acquaint myself with the main features of their use and outward arrangement. With the exception of a few oblong pieces, all tablets found that day were wedge-shaped, from 7 to 15 inches long, and showed evidence of having been originally arranged in pairs. These pairs had been held together by a string which passed round the square ends of the wedges, usually from from $2\frac{1}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches broad, and also through a hole drilled into both tablets where their left end tapered to a point. In the case of many such double tablets, even where the two pieces had got detached, portions of the ancient string were still intact, and on some also the clay sealing which had been inserted over the string in a specially prepared square socket. But it was only by the subsequent discovery of practically perfect specimens that I was able to ascertain all details of the ingenious method of fastening adopted for these ancient documents on wood. I therefore leave their full description, as well as that of other technicalities connected with their use, for a later chapter.

The text, invariably written in Kharoshthi characters, and running from right to left parallel to the longer side, occupied the inner surfaces of the tablets, *i.e.*, those originally turned towards each other when the tablets were still fastened in pairs. On the outside surface which bore the clay seal, and soon proved to have served the purposes of a kind of envelope, there usually appeared brief entries in the same script, forming a single line. Their very position and form at once suggested that they were intended either as records of the contents or else to convey the names of the sender or addressee. It was naturally with intense curiosity that I examined the writing of each tablet as it was extracted from the