go there first, while the corresponding under-tablets might be retained for reference or otherwise disposed of. In their detached state these pieces presented a puzzling appearance; but as soon as I had found the first of the four intact rectangular double-tablets (N. xv. 151, 155, 166, 196), all difficulty disappeared[15]. From the reproductions of two of them N. xv. 155, 166 (Plates XCIV, XCV), it will clearly be seen that the under-tablet was in this case provided with a raised rim, from $\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{1}{4}$ in. broad, on either of the shorter sides. Between these rims fitted exactly a covering-tablet, the obverse of which, in its raised centre, had a square or oblong socket for the reception of a clay seal.

Manufacture of rectangular tablets.

As the specimens in the Plates already referred to show, as well as the detached covering- and under-tablets reproduced in Plates XCVI and XCVII, the sizes in which these rectangular tablets were used varied greatly. The largest under-tablet found here (N. xv. 10 + 86), measured $9\frac{1}{2}$ by 4 in., while that of the complete and perfectly-preserved document N. xv. 196 (Plate XCIV) is only $4\frac{11}{16}$ in. long, with a width of $1\frac{5}{8}$ in. Among covering-tablets N. xv. 160 (Plate XCVI) is the largest, with a size of $8\frac{3}{4}$ by $4\frac{1}{4}$ in., another better-preserved one, N. xv. 154 (Plate XCVII), $7\frac{1}{2}$ by $4\frac{1}{8}$ in., approaching it closely. It is *a priori* probable that in order to assure exact fitting the pair of tablets was cut out of one piece, just as was done in the case of 'double wedges.' Of this direct proof is afforded by the identity of the grain of wood shown by both covering- and under-tablets in the complete specimens, as is distinctly visible in the reproduction of the obverse of N. xv. 155 (Plate XCIV).

Fastening and sealing of rectangular tablets.

The method of fastening provided for these rectangular double tablets was scarcely less ingenious than that of the wedge-shaped documents. Just as in the case of the latter, there were three grooves, communicating with the seal-cavity, cut through the rims which edged the latter towards the longer sides of the covering-tablet. These grooves are seen equally clearly in the covering-tablets N. xv. 155, 166 (Plates XCIV, XCV) which still retain their clay seals in the sockets, and in those which, like N. xv. 154 (Plate XCVII) and N. xvii. 3 (Plate CIV), display empty seal-cavities. A double-stranded string was passed over both tablets, drawn tight through one of the end grooves by means of a loop formed in the same way as previously described, and subsequently laid in double folds through this and the other two grooves. The seal-cavity of N. xvii. 3 (Plate CIV), which has lost its clay seal but retains the folds of the string, except the second diagonal fold parallel to the first one, will help to illustrate the arrangement. After having been folded twice through the third groove, the string was secured by a knot at the edge of the under-tablet, and its end allowed to pass loosely under the folds at the back of the latter, as seen in N. xv. 196 (Plate XCIV)—a neat little double tablet found in perfect condition and still unopened. When once the folds of string laid through the socket had been secured under a clay seal inserted there, it became impossible to separate the covering- and under-tablets without either cutting the exposed folds or completely breaking the seal. Thus any unauthorized opening and reading of the document written on the inner sides of the two tablets was effectively prevented. The method of fastening could not have varied materially in the covering-tablet N. xv. 334 (Plate XCV) which shows only two string grooves, or in N. xv. 159, which has four.

Arrangement of text in rectangular tablet.

The arrangement of the text within these rectangular tablets is fully demonstrated by the two complete documents reproduced in Plates XCIV and XCV, in both their closed and open condition. Of these N. xv. 155, showing two seal-impressions on its covering-tablet, was discovered with its fastening entirely intact. Opened in the British Museum, it shows the writing of the inner sides in remarkable freshness. N. xv. 166 (Plate XCV) had its string-folds

[15] Another complete document is made up of the pieces N. xv. 10 + 86 + 190 found in different places.