

the hereditary prince sends them to one of the king's wives, etc.

Most of these 'royal' personages are designated by name; but seeing that they probably belonged to the family of some small local chief ruling over but a few oases, it seems doubtful whether they will ever be identified from Chinese historical records. In the meantime it is interesting to find that one of the royal wives is described as 'the princess from Chü-mo,' the territory which, as we shall see, corresponds to the present Charchan, some ten marches away to the north-east. Was it from the large residence not far off and, unfortunately, thoroughly eroded that these quaint relics of a royalty as yet unrecorded found their way into this dustbin? Or did the latter, before it was covered up by stable refuse, belong to a more imposing structure of an earlier period which had completely disappeared?

Quite at the bottom of the enclosure there turned up a small heap of corn, still in sheaves and in perfect preservation, and close to it the mummified bodies of two mice which death had overtaken while nibbling at this store.

The clearing of these rubbish deposits continued during part of the second day of my stay, but even before it was finished the number of available men had enabled me to commence the excavation of the chain of smaller ruins stretching south, Naik Ram Singh supervising. When I was free to bring the whole of my men to this task the progress was as rapid as I could wish. Some of the dwellings had suffered a good deal from erosion, and within their broken walls but little sand had accumulated. Others had been better protected, and the clearing of the high sand which filled their rooms, in one or two instances to the very ceiling, cost efforts (Fig. 88). But the men wielded their Ketmans with surprising perseverance, and Ibrahim Beg's rough-humoured exhortations, together with the encouragement of small rewards paid for the first finds of value in each structure, sufficed to keep them hard at work for ten to eleven hours daily. The making of exact plans and the record of all observations and finds held me busy even longer.