

crop of small objects in metal, glass, or stone which were collected that first day from eroded soil in the immediate vicinity of the ruins (Fig. 117). This was a happy hunting-ground for the few attendants who were not kept busy digging; and they were eager to earn some pocket-money by rewards for chance finds. There were fragments of bronze mirrors in abundance, sometimes showing excellent relieve decoration at the back, rings and pieces of buckles, clasps and other well-worked personal ornaments in bronze, stone seals with geometrical designs, neatly finished small bells of the 'grelot' type, etc.

The rich harvest in beads, made of glass, paste, or stone, and often of brilliant colours, pointed to the fair sex having been amply represented at this station from which life and all its pleasures had departed so long ago. But still more striking, perhaps, was the profusion of Chinese copper coins, square-holed, and all without exception belonging to the types which were current during the Earlier and Later Han dynasties. It was impossible to escape the impression that this settlement, small in its extent and limited in its local resources, had yet seen a plentiful circulation of petty cash and that lively traffic which this usually indicates.

But on the spot I had little time to spare for such antiquarian trifles. As soon as the clearing of the isolated structure was completed, I moved my band of labourers across to the south-west, where, at a distance of about one hundred yards from the Stupa, there rose the ruins of a larger structure. It occupied the easternmost portion of a terrace-like piece of ground, about two hundred yards wide, which, owing to the protection afforded by these ruins and the remains of half-a-dozen less substantial dwellings, had escaped being cut up into Yardangs and now stood out as the centre of the whole ruined area. All around it the soil was eroded to a depth of twelve feet or more.

In the main structure, which appears to have had an enclosure of large sun-dried bricks, the thick walls of three narrow apartments still rose to a good height. I easily recognized the spot where Hedin had come upon his 'find' of Chinese records on paper and wood. He had recovered forty-two narrow tablets or rather 'slips,' and about two