

tion of the standard measure prevailing in the third century A.D. under the Western Tsin dynasty. As the standards of measure in Ancient China are known to have varied a good deal at different periods, and their determination from literary sources is difficult, this find possesses distinct archaeological interest.

By the side of so much evidence of a highly organized civilization, it was strange to come upon a small block of wood which had undoubtedly served for producing fire in the manner current at all periods among savage races. Along one side it showed four charred holes partially sunk through the thickness of the wood and communicating with the edge by means of flat grooves which were intended to convey the spark to the tinder. Threaded on a strip of white leather, and still attached to the block through a hole was a small peg, having at one end a blunt point which just fitted the holes. It was manifestly this peg which had to be revolved in the holes. But to do this quick enough for the friction to generate fire must have required a drill apparatus, and of this I could find no remains. However this may have been, it is clear from the fire blocks I discovered here and at the sites of Niya and Endere, and subsequently along the ancient frontier wall west of Tun-huang, that this primitive method of fire production prevailed during the early centuries of our era all along the line of Chinese advance westwards.

In none of the ruined dwellings, however, did we strike such a rich mine as in the large rubbish heap extending near the centre of the walled area, and close to the west of the 'Ya-mên' (Fig. 118). It measured fully a hundred feet across with a width of about fifty. On the south to a height of four to five feet, gradually diminishing northwards, lay a mass of consolidated rubbish consisting of straw and stable refuse. But we had scarcely commenced digging up this unsavoury quarry when Chinese records on wood and paper cropped up in great number, especially from layers two to three feet above the ground level. The careful sifting of all these accumulations of dirt occupied us for nearly a day. The odours were still pungent, with the icy north-east wind driving