

pervading smell of ammonia brought home the fact that each of these little rooms, after being used as quarters by dirt-hardened Tibetan soldiers, must also have served them intermittently for purposes far more offensive.

The rooms and half-underground hovels which had sheltered the Tibetan garrison during the eighth to the ninth century A.D. were all rough in design and construction. In those which extended along and near to the east wall of the fort, and the clearing of which kept us busy for the first three days, it was possible to discover attempts at some regular planning and disposition. But as our excavations extended farther towards the centre of the circumvallated area and along the north face, the agglomeration of hovels, built quite irregularly one against the other with thin walls of mud or coarse brickwork, and often showing considerable differences of floor-level, was apt to remind one of a rabbit-warren. Many of those on the north side showed no entrances, and had evidently been approached from above; some with bottoms four or five feet deeper than the rest had probably served as places of storage for the supplies and chattels of the motley collection of soldiers and petty officials which the stronghold had sheltered. In these archaeological 'finds' were often scanty. But it was different with the rooms which had served as living quarters at some time or other; and the refuse accumulations contained in them proved in some respects the most remarkable it has ever fallen to my lot to clear.

The rubbish reached in places to a height of close on nine feet, and right down to the bottom the layers of refuse yielded in profusion records on paper and wood. With one remarkable exception to be described farther on they were all in Tibetan. The total number of documents amounted in the end to more than a thousand. The seal sockets attached to many of the wooden 'slips,' and the seal impressions in vermilion often found below the better-preserved pieces of inscribed paper, made it clear to me at the outset that the majority of these Tibetan records were likely to contain official correspondence. The paper documents showed sizes up to eleven inches in length, and all were closely covered with lines of often very cursive writing.