

But the paper was of a peculiarly flimsy kind, fit for writing only on one side.

These peculiarities and the predominant use made of wooden 'stationery' at that relatively late date suggested that paper must have been difficult to obtain, the supply not being local. This conclusion was strengthened by comparison with the rarer sheets of well-made strong paper, manifestly of a different substance, which by their regular big writing, the ample space between lines, and the string-holes, could be recognized at once as leaves from 'Pothis' containing canonical texts or prayers. I thought of how similar leaves discovered by me in 1901 in the fort of Endere as relics of the Tibetan occupation had, on Professor Wiesner's microscopical analysis, proved to be made of paper for which the fibres of the *Daphne* plant, quite unknown in the Tarim Basin, had supplied the material. So I wondered whether these relics of the pious reading practised by members of the Miran garrison, or for their spiritual benefit, had not also been brought from monasteries far away to the south adjoining the Himalayan watershed.

My want of Tibetan knowledge prevented any attempt on the spot to learn from this wealth of written remains about the local conditions prevailing at the site during the period of Tibetan occupation. But no information to be gathered from them could compare in convincing directness with the impression obtained at the find-spots as to the squalor and discomfort in which those Tibetan officials and braves must have passed their time at this forlorn frontier post. Evidence of a varied and often very unsavoury kind seemed to indicate that the rooms continued to be tenanted to the last, while the refuse accumulations on the floor kept steadily rising. Nothing but absolute indifference to dirt could have induced the occupiers to let room after room of their closely packed quarters be turned into regular dustbins, choked in some instances up to the roof.

It was indeed a thoughtful provision for the antiquarian interests of posterity to establish these big deposits of miscellaneous refuse and records in the place