

perhaps approached nearer than they now do. More warlike occupations were indicated by broken shafts of reed arrows and iron arrow-heads. A sling of strong and carefully woven goat's hair had found its way there evidently after prolonged use.

But far more abundant were the relics of defensive armour in the shape of lacquered pieces of leather, varying in size, but all oblong (Fig. 138, 26). That I could recognize them at once, even though the first finds were quite detached pieces without any definite indication of their original position or purpose, was my reward for having years before correctly identified a small piece of hard 'green leather' from an ancient rubbish heap of the Niya site as having once belonged to scale armour. Subsequently, in a suit of mail brought to the British Museum from the Lhasa expedition, my devoted helpmate, Mr. Andrews, discovered scales, shaped and laced exactly after the fashion suggested by that single little piece of leather; and this had strikingly confirmed my conjecture. And now finds of scales, detached or still joined to their neighbours by the original fastening of narrow leather thongs, followed one another so rapidly that even without painted or rilievo representations of ancient scale armour to refer to, such as some of the temples excavated in 1901 had displayed in their frescoes and stuccoes, it was easy to reconstruct the appearance of the leather mail which had once protected those Tibetan warriors. Judging by the way in which the scales had been 'shed' in the different rooms and by their number, armour of lacquered leather must have been commonly worn at the period.

Though the scales undoubtedly belonged to a number of different suits of armour, and varied in size as well as in ornamentation, there was much uniformity in technical make and style as well as in methods of lacing. The slightly curving pieces of hard leather, perhaps of camel-skin, bore thick lustrous lacquer on both sides, generally applied in successive coats of brilliant red and black up to the number of seven. Decorative effects were produced by scraping small ornamental designs, such as rings, ellipses, double hooks and the like, through the various