

CHAPTER XXXIX

FINDS OF TIBETAN RECORDS

IT was hard to find time or the right mood for the examination of antiquarian details during the five days of trying work which the clearing of the old fort cost us. Icy gales, mostly from the north-east but veering at times to north or east, were blowing almost without interruption. The misery which they caused to all of us was severe. In order to watch the excavations proceeding in different places, I had to keep most of the time on the top of the dominating east rampart, where the force of the constant onslaught of the wind was felt to the full. Whenever I descended to the diggings I enjoyed my share of the blinding dust, made up largely of disintegrated filth, which that same wind was constantly blowing into one's eyes and all exposed parts of the face. It seemed hard to decide which was worse.

But for concentrated discomfort I shall always remember the time we spent in emptying the rich mine of refuse and records presented by two fairly large rooms near the south-eastern angle of the fort (Fig. 134). Here the protecting-wall curtain had fallen, and on the surface of the rubbish exposed in this breach the gale asserted its full force. To work or to stand here for any length of time meant worse than merely facing an icy blast which cut to the bones. With the fine gravel driven across the breach and the abraded particles of refuse which rose from the surface, it felt as if one were undergoing wind erosion in person. It was impossible to keep the dozen or so of men for whom there was room, at work here for more than half an hour at a time, and I arranged to have