

## CHAPTER LXVI

### A WALLED-UP LIBRARY AND ITS TREASURES

It would serve no useful purpose if I were to attempt to describe in detail how the search was continued day after day without remission, or to indicate in quasi-chronological order all the interesting finds with which this curious 'digging' was rewarded. From the first it was certain that the contents of the hidden chapel must have been deposited in great confusion, and that any indications the original position of the bundles might have afforded at the time of discovery, had been completely effaced when the recess was cleared out, as the Tao-shih admitted, to search for valuables, and again later on for the purpose of removing the big inscribed slab from its west wall into the passage outside. It was mere chance, too, what bundles the Tao-shih would hand us out.

Nor was that hurried search the time for appreciating properly the import of all that passed through my hands. The systematic study of the materials I was most eager to secure was bound to take years of specialist labour, and what this has so far revealed as regards the main classes of relics, I shall endeavour to sketch in a subsequent chapter. Here I must content myself with a rapid review of those discoveries which at the time struck me most and helped me to form conclusions as to the history of this whole *cache* of antiquarian treasures.

After the experience of the first day it was easy to recognize the special value of those bundles filled with miscellaneous texts, painted fabrics, ex-votos, papers of all sorts, which had evidently been stored away as no longer needed for use. By their irregular shape and fastening