

about one-third of these consisting of complete text rolls, and about two-thirds of detached records and fragmentary texts.

“The former in their great majority belong to works of Buddhist literature contained in the Chinese and Japanese editions of the Buddhist Canon. Being the oldest manuscripts the complete rolls are, of course, very valuable for a future detailed study of those canonical texts; but on the whole they yield relatively little new information which can be immediately utilized. It is very different with the detached records, acts of ordination, bans, accounts, etc., often exactly dated; these illustrate all the varied aspects of local life, and represent a category of documents of which, until the Tun-huang discoveries, practically no ancient specimens were known to exist. Finally, it is among the fragmentary manuscripts that there are found most frequently those texts of secular literature, historical, geographical, lexicographical, etc., which are of the greatest importance for the advance of learned Sinologist research.”

M. Pelliot's brief preliminary report, from which I have just quoted, gives assurance that philological instinct had guided me rightly when I fixed my attention from the first upon those bundles of 'miscellaneous' papers. But I have even more reason to feel grateful for the fact that the intrinsic interest of the manuscripts thus secured has induced him to offer his labours for the preparation of a systematic inventory, a task for which no scholar living could possibly be better qualified by learning and critical experience. It is a comfort to know that the publication of the inventory is assured by the Trustees of the British Museum, in which this portion of my collection is to find its final resting-place.

I have left mention of the Tibetan manuscripts (Fig. 192, 9) to the last because, owing to a variety of causes, including their great mass which is second only to that of the Chinese, no sufficiently extensive examination has as yet been possible. But from what information I have been able to obtain through the kindness of my friend Dr. F. W. Thomas, the learned Librarian of the India Office, and of Miss C. M. Ridding, an accomplished Tibetan