

rough boarding had replaced missing folds of the neatly carved window screens. But I soon found a cosy little room looking out on the garden. How Western all its shelves and cupboards appeared to me, unaccustomed to such luxuries ever since leaving Chini-bagh!

Then while a carpet and some small felts were being spread, I hurried out into the garden to look for the ruins there promised. After traversing a few hundred yards of terraced orchards I found myself suddenly before a series of cellas, carved from the live rock of a bold little ridge, which had once contained colossal images (Fig. 259). The stucco masses in which the latter were sculptured had almost completely collapsed; but in one of the shrines which still retained part of its roof vault, at a height of nearly fifty feet, the outlines of a colossal seated Buddha had survived. The remains of fresco decoration in the corners of the stuccoed walls showed close resemblance to the designs familiar to me from the Ch'ien-fo-tung shrines. It was clear that the ruined shrines dated from the time of Uigur dominion (9th-12th century A.D.), when Buddhism had flourished here.

Eagerly I explored the less imposing remains of brick-built cellas and dwellings which covered the north face and the top of the little ridge. But when I was proceeding to extend this first hurried inspection to the ruins rising boldly on the crest of a higher ridge to the west of the orchard, the Beg now playing the cicerone raised so meek and plaintive a protest that I felt ashamed for having in my antiquarian eagerness quite forgotten the bodily cravings of a pious Muhammadan pining for food after the daily fast of the Ramazan. So reluctantly I left the ruins as dusk was setting over the prettiest bit of scenery that has ever offered me a chance of archaeological work. The impressions of that evening, so rich in glowing colours, haunted me as I wrote by the cheerful fire of my princely quarters till a late hour.

Alas! the ruins did not prove as fruitful for the excavator as their picturesque setting would to the artist. Even in the ruins of two large cellas which I found occupying the top of the ridge westwards, the clearing effected in the