

adequate protection from the snow which a very slight fall, experienced also by us after leaving Keriya, had deposited. Owing to the bitter cold it still lay in patches on shaded slopes. As it was, the sun of one year had bleached and partly effaced the writing of the topmost tablets where fully exposed. So I had a special reason to bless the good luck which had brought me to the site so soon after Ibrahim's discovery.

He at once showed me the spot where he had unearthed the tablets. It proved to be the corner of a small room situated in the northern wing of the building between other apartments. There, in a little recess between a large brick-built fire-place and the west wall of the room, he had come upon a heap of tablets by scooping out the sand with his hands. The 'treasure' he looked for was not there. So the ancient documents which he had found stored there, apparently with some sort of arrangement, were just thrown away into an adjoining room.

My first task was to get the men to clear the room where Ibrahim had come upon those precious tablets. It was an easy matter, as the room was not large and the sand covering its floor nowhere more than four feet deep. In the course of this operation two dozen wooden documents were recovered on the original earthen floor and on a raised sitting platform by the side of the fire-place. When I next made a careful search myself for the scattered remains of Ibrahim's haul, no less than eighty-five more tablets were recovered. The subsequent clearing of the adjoining rooms in the north wing of the ruined house added still further to their number. So I found myself before the day's work was ended in the possession of truly abundant materials.