

when the first strokes of the 'Ketman' laid bare regular files of documents near the floor of a narrow room adjoining the central hall. Their number soon rose to over a hundred. Most of them were 'wedges' as used for the conveyance of executive orders; others, on oblong tablets, accounts, lists and miscellaneous 'office papers', to use once more an anachronism. Evidently we had hit upon office files thrown down here and excellently preserved, under the cover of five to six feet of sand. The scraping of the mud flooring for detached pieces was still proceeding when a strange discovery rewarded honest Rustam, the most experienced digger of my 'old guard'.

Already during the first clearing I had noticed a large lump of clay or plaster near the wall where the packets of tablets lay closest. I had ordered it to be left undisturbed, though I thought little of its having come to that place by more than accident. Rustam had just extracted between it and the wall a well-preserved double-wedge tablet, when I saw him eagerly burrow with his hands into the floor just as when my fox terrier 'Dash' was at work opening rat-holes. Before I could put any questions I saw Rustam triumphantly draw forth from about six inches below the floor a complete rectangular document with its double clay seal intact and its envelope still unopened. When the hole was enlarged we saw that the space towards the wall and below its foundation beam was full of closely packed layers of similar documents.

It was clear that we had struck a small hidden archive, and my joy at this novel experience was great; for apart from the interest of the documents themselves and their splendid preservation, the condition in which they were