

to these tablets, and as he subsequently seemed to regret not having himself made a haul of them, I had him watched *en route*, and after our arrival to prevent his escape or any possible interference with the spot. The mingled feelings of expectation and distrust with which I now approached it soon changed to joyful assurance. About a mile to the east of the camp I sighted the ruin towards which Ibrahim was guiding us, on what looked like a little terrace rising high above the depressions of the ground caused by the erosive action of the wind. On ascending the slope I picked up at once three inscribed tablets lying amidst the débris of massive timber that marked wholly eroded parts of the ruined structure; and on reaching the top, I found to my delight many more scattered about within one of the rooms, still clearly traceable by remains of their walls.

Only a year had passed since Ibrahim had thrown them down there, and the layer of drift-sand was so thin as scarcely to protect the topmost ones from the snow that still lay on the ground. Ibrahim at once showed me the spot where he had unearthed the relics he had treated in such utter ignorance of their value. It proved to be the south-west corner of a small room, which was situated between other apartments in the northern wing of the building, and is seen on the left in the photograph showing this ruin (N. I.) after excavation. There in a little recess, about 4 feet wide, between the large brick-built fireplace, well recognisable above the sand 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, and the ancient documents which he found, apparently still lying in horizontal rows with some sort of arrangement, were thrown away into the next room. I blessed the good luck which had brought me to the site so soon after this discovery. For, fully exposed to wind and sun, these thin wooden boards could not long have retained their writing in such wonderful freshness as they had during their safe interment of many centuries beneath the drift of sand. As it was, the sun of one year and perhaps the recent snow (patches of it are seen on