

when the first strokes of the Ketman laid bare regular files of documents on wood near the floor of a room about twenty-six by twelve feet adjoining the central hall on the south (Fig. 93). Most of them were 'wedges,' such as were used for the conveyance of executive orders; others, on oblong tablets, were accounts, lists, and miscellaneous 'office papers,' to use an anachronism. Evidently we had hit upon files from an official's 'Daftar' thrown down here, and excellently preserved under the cover of sand which even now lay five to six feet deep. In rapid succession over threescore documents of these kinds were recovered here within a few square feet, and a subsequent careful search of the rest of the room added to the number. Some emerged from the top of the mud-flooring, having been thrown into corners and below the walls probably long before the abandonment.

The scraping of the floor was still proceeding when a strange discovery rewarded honest Rustam, the most experienced and trusted digger of my 'old guard.' Already during the first clearing I had noticed a large lump of clay or plaster, looking like a fragment of a broken wall, close to the north wall of the room just where the packets of tablets lay closest. I had ordered it to be left undisturbed, though I thought but little of its having come to that place by more than accident. Now when Rustam extracted between it and the wall a well-preserved double wedge, still retaining its clay seal and fastening, I could not prevent its removal; and scarcely had this been effected when I saw him eagerly burrow with his hands into the floor thus laid bare, just as when my little terrier is at work opening rat-holes. Before I could put any question, I saw Rustam triumphantly draw forth, from about six inches below the floor, a complete rectangular document with its double seal intact and its envelope still unopened (Fig. 94). Rustam's fingers now worked with feverish energy at enlarging the hole, and soon we saw that the space towards the wall and below the foundation beam of the latter was full of closely packed layers of similar documents.

It was clear that we had struck a hidden archive, and my excitement at this novel experience was great; for,