

them relieved in shifts. But documents were constantly emerging, and for most of the time I had to keep close at hand in the breach to note finds of importance and prevent loss or theft. While cleaning and opening documents my hands had necessarily to be exposed, and my fingers felt as if they were frost-bitten. Yet it had to be done, if only that the lucky finder of specially well preserved records might be rewarded on the spot—and *pour encourager les autres*.

How glad I felt that at least ever alert and devoted Chiang-ssü-yeh was ready to take my place at intervals! The Surveyor was down with rheumatism and passed painful days lying in his tent under whatever extra furs and rugs could be spared for him. Soon after I was obliged to let him depart for Abdal. Naik Ram Singh suffered from attacks of fever, and when not actually on the sick list could not be expected to do more than look after the labourers in some better-protected corner. Matters stood equally badly with the servants. Muhammadju had remained behind at Charklik like a worn-out veteran looking out for a convoy homewards. Ibrahim Beg, the most trustworthy of my people, was, as already related, sent off to distant Kara-shahr to bring fresh horse-shoes of silver. Ramzan, my dusky Kashmiri cook, was prompt to take the cue, and on a declaration of illness in general settled down to hibernate among his furs for the rest of our stay at Miran. As he was at the time suffering from a fresh outbreak of a malignant skin disease of old standing, I should have less minded the cessation of his cooking functions had Aziz, his *soi-disant* substitute from Ladak, developed the slightest capacity for turning out tolerably digestible food. But no amount of association with Ramzan's work could teach that tough young pony-man the modicum of skill needed for the humblest European *cuisine*.

In the shelter of my little tent, which the gale was shaking and more than once nearly brought down, I used to be busy till late at night cleaning and as far as possible numbering the day's finds of records. While handling them with half-benumbed fingers I often thought of the