

large surface was to be covered with my wide-angle lens and bad distortion avoided. As I grovelled amidst the sand and clay débris on the floor adjusting the levels of the camera, focusing the lens, etc., the temporary protection from the wind which the focusing cloth secured for my face seemed but a scant comfort; but even for that I felt grateful.

It was no easy task to complete these preliminary records within the short hours while the winter day gave adequate light low down in the confined passage of the ruined temple. In the meantime the men from Abdal had been kept busy under old Mullah's direction in dragging from the riverine jungle trunks of dead Toghraks which were to be sawn up and turned into serviceable cases. The carpenter included in the crew from Charklik had, with some of the more handy labourers, been made to set up his workshop on the bare Sai by the ruin, and there planks, etc., were being manufactured as rapidly as the limited outfit of tools and the men's natural slackness would permit. I had big bonfires lit to give light and warmth to my improvised craftsmen, and encouraged them by handsome 'overtime pay' to continue their labours after nightfall. So next morning I had a sufficiency of tolerably well joined boards at hand to commence the clearing of the fallen fresco pieces.

There still remained the ticklish question how to lift these terribly brittle panes of mud plaster on to my boards without letting them break into fragments or injuring the delicately painted surface. Any attempt to handle them direct would have meant almost certain destruction. Naik Ram Singh, in spite of severe attacks of fever and the bitter cutting wind, roused himself sufficiently to come to my assistance for part at least of these days, and utilizing his professional skill I soon arrived at a system which answered remarkably well. A board lightly padded with cotton wool, under large sheets of that tough Khotan paper, which I never ceased blessing as the best packing stuff produced in Central Asia, was pressed gently and evenly against the front surface of the fallen fresco. Next a large sheet of stout tin, which Ram Singh had managed to