

improvise out of carefully stored empty cases and to stiffen with thin iron bands, was slowly introduced with a saw-like action at the soft back of the broken panel, care being taken not to injure the frescoed layer behind. When once firmly held from front and back, the piece of wall plaster, however large, could be safely tilted forward until, with its painted surface downwards, it came to lie flat on the padded board, and could be moved without risk.

Thus layer after layer of frescoed wall-surface was recovered from the débris without widening even the cracks of centuries. Great was my joy whenever, behind the outer layer, there came to light additional portions previously unsuspected of some fresco composition. The brilliancy of the colours all painted in tempera was a treat for the eyes. But there was no time then, nor after, to indulge in enjoyment at this resurrection of fine art work, so wonderfully preserved on most perishable material amidst all this ruin. As little could I occupy myself with attempts at grouping and joining the fresco pieces which by position and subject were likely to have belonged together. With hands half-benumbed by the icy blast, and chapped fingers rendered doubly painful by constant contact with the salt-impregnated plaster and débris, I had to concentrate my thought and attention on the ever-recurring manual difficulties of our work of rescue. But at the same time careful record had to be kept of the position of individual pieces, and of indications furnished by the subjects, condition, etc. All these might help hereafter to determine details as to the original arrangement of the fresco decoration represented by these *disjecta membra*.

It was thus that I came to note down also a little find of quasi-pathetic interest, the discovery at the foot of one of the larger fresco pieces of the feathers and bones of a pigeon, together with the remains of a nest. The bird must evidently have been killed by the collapse of the higher wall portion in which it had built its nest, and the fresco pieces found near it had probably adjoined the vaulting. By a strange irony of fate the poor bird, destined to become an archaeological witness, had found