

After this unexpected commotion we could not induce any woman of Khur to sit at any price. But they could stare; they sat like magpies on a neighbouring roof and talked, chattered, and laughed under their dirty white veils.

A youth of twenty years named Taghi found his way into my sketch-book; he had clearly-cut Aryan features, a handsome oval face with straight eyes and eyebrows, a well-modelled aquiline nose, finely curved, moderately thick lips, a high forehead, and, as is common in Eastern Persia, a parting in the middle of the forehead from which the long dark hair hung down on either side like curtains. On his head he wore a cylindrical felt head-dress, had slippers rather than shoes, and a light and airy dress in blue and white, much worn and begrimed.

Nadir Kuli was an old man of seventy in a white beard and a turban. Faraj Ullah may be described in much the same words as Taghi, but his felt cap was dome-shaped. Abbas was fifty-four years old, with a handsome distinguished appearance. Kodret, sixteen years old, stood leaning against a doorpost while he was drawn. Hussein, a boy of ten, was the next model, and he was followed by the camel-owner, Kerbelai Mirza, seventy-five years old. Rahmet Ullah carried his head high, and was sixteen years old, and Hassan of Khur was of the same age.

The women of the oasis were quite as closely veiled as their sisters in Teheran. The larger the place the more strictly is this custom observed. In small villages, such as Kerim Khan and Alem, the women are more independent of the veil. It is really also to hide the women and preserve the peace of family life that all the houses and courts are closed to the streets. Gulam Hussein had his father, his brother, his wife, and a five-year-old son in Khur, and the whole party dwelt in three dark rooms between mud walls and under beehive cupolas of the same material. My honest Gulam was given permission to devote himself to his family during our stay in Khur, and at starting he begged to be allowed to stay a day more; he could easily overtake us by making two days' journey at a stretch. He had not seen his family for a long time, and had heard no news of them, but he showed no sign of excitement when