

local Beg's deputy, and found decent quarters prepared in a Bai's house close to the entrance of the Bazar. It was the weekly market day of Niya, and though it was getting dark in the narrow street overhung by awnings, there was still busy life in front of the booths that line its sides for about a furlong. There were plenty of dried fruits, plums, raisins from Khotan, with tea and various condiments of Chinese origin. Excellent walnuts and fair red grapes were local produce. People seemed busy buying such little luxuries on account of the Id festival, marking the close of the Ramzan fast.

My people had as travellers taken dispensation from the observance of Ramzan, yet they were anxious to celebrate the day in due fashion as good Muslims, and hence asked for a halt on January 22nd. I could not well refuse the request, particularly as arrangements had to be made for the labourers and the supplies which were to be taken to the desert site I was bound for. All Niya was in holiday attire, and the prayers from the mosque sounded sonorously into my room. I was busy with making up my mails for India and home, but used the bright midday hours to take photographs of local people. There were plenty of fine-looking greybeards to choose from, and no want of nicely-dressed children. Shy at first, the little ones were readily enticed before my camera by the present of a few coppers for sweets. 'Diwanas,' too, or wandering mendicants, in fantastic rags showing patches in all colours of the rainbow did not object to giving a sitting in return for my alms. The rural population here, as at Khotan, shows on the whole remarkably good features—of course, Caucasian as the popular term has it. Noticing the thoroughly European appearance of physiognomies in the great mass of this Turki population, I feel inclined to wonder at all the efforts that have been made to account for the same fact in the Western Turks and their kindred in Europe.

Niya is an ancient place. Hiuen-Tsiang, travelling towards Lop-nor and China, duly notices the town of Ni-jang, *i.e.*, Niya, which "the king of Khotan makes the guard of his eastern frontier." Niya remained, indeed, the easternmost of the smaller