

was the strengthening of my cash reserves by taking over a quantity of silver equivalent to fifty-one 'horse-shoes,' or 2550 Taels, from the Keriya Ya-mên against money to that amount paid on my behalf by Mr. Macartney into the Tao-tai's treasury at Kashgar. It was a convenience to me to have been saved the transport of that heavy weight of silver, and equally also to the Keriya Amban, who could reduce correspondingly the cash payments due from him at Kashgar.

All through my stay at Keriya I had been kept hard at work writing up arrears in records and correspondence inevitable during the high pressure of the preceding weeks. So I felt relieved when on October 13th, after a night spent mostly over letters, I could set out for the two long marches to Niya. My next objective was the ancient site in the desert beyond Imam Ja'far Sadik, where on my first visit in 1901 I had made important discoveries among ruins deserted in the third century A.D., and where I knew of several ruins still awaiting excavation. Its great distance from any larger settlement, and the difficulty of assuring an adequate supply of water far out in the desert, demanded careful preparations. In order to gain time for them I covered the sixty odd miles from Keriya to Niya in two days, keeping ahead of the heavy baggage. What with fresh transport, accounts to settle, etc., a late start from Keriya was inevitable. So it was close on midnight before we got to Yes-yulghun, the tiny half-way oasis.

It was late, too, when next evening, after a twelve hours' tramp and ride over most desolate wastes of gravel overrun in parts by light dunes, I reached the familiar oasis of Niya. But my reception made me forget all fatigue and a dinner delayed beyond midnight. Rai Ram Singh, the Surveyor, had duly arrived there to join me for the new expedition, and the account he could give of the triangulation work successfully accomplished in the mountains south of Keriya and Niya since our separation at Khotan, was as satisfactory as I could hope for. Local help, too, was forthcoming with a will from the small oasis, thanks largely to the influence still possessed there by Ibrahim Beg, who had been in charge of Niya for two