

On November 18th I divided my party, sending off Lal Singh for survey work along the foot of the main range, and Chiang with Ibrahim Beg to Turfan to secure for us quarters and fresh transport. I myself commenced a series of rapid excursions which was to acquaint me with the well-known sites of the Turfan district. The area into which they are crowded, mainly along the outer hill chain separating the gravel glacis of the mountains from the depressed basin, scarcely covers more than thirty-five miles from east to west, with a greatest width of about ten miles. Yet so numerous and extensive are the ruins that their rapid survey kept me busy till the close of the month. For the same reason I cannot find space here for more than a few general observations.

Starting from the east, I first visited the cañon-like gorge above the picturesque little township of Toyuk, where the steep cliffs of reddish sandstone on either side are honeycombed by numerous small caves, or show ruined temples built on their ledges (Fig. 262). Much in the situation and general aspects recalled the 'Caves of the Thousand Buddhas,' though on a reduced scale. There was unmistakable resemblance, too, in what survived of the fresco decoration *in situ*. But its condition attested only too plainly the destructive effects produced by the immediate vicinity of a large community of good Muhammadans, whose iconoclastic zeal could find ready vent here, especially after the first conversion. A different religious spirit had prevailed in Uigur times; for among the numerous finds of manuscripts which rewarded the German archaeologists, there were fragments of Manichæan and even Nestorian texts in early Turki and Sogdian. Other finds, too, in the Turfan region show that Christians and followers of Mani then lived peacefully among a population that was preponderatingly Buddhist.

The close association of the ruined past with the thriving life of the present, to me a novel experience, was even more striking when I visited the remarkable ruins of the Turfan capital of Uigur times at Kara-khoja, some seven miles to the west of Toyuk. Here a cluster of populous villages surrounds, and is partly built into, the massive clay walls