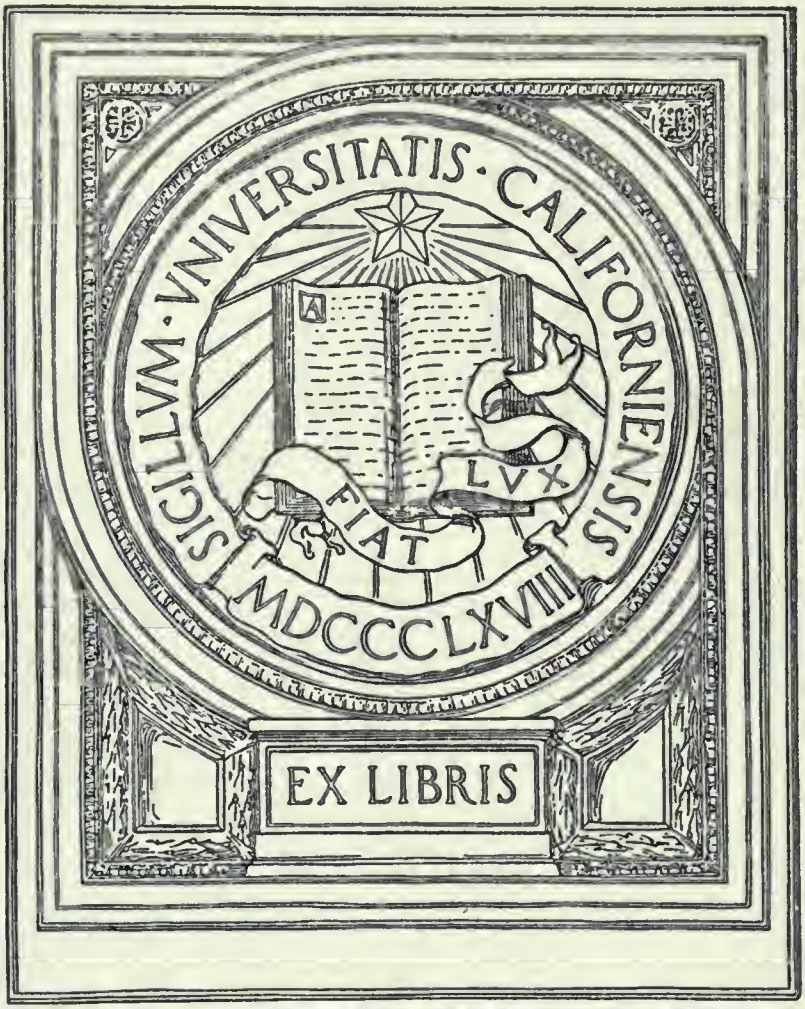

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THE

NORTHERN BARRIER OF INDIA.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

Medium 8vo, cloth, 42s.

THE JUMMOO AND KASHMIR TERRITORIES.

A GEOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT.

Illustrated by Six Folding Coloured Maps, numerous Plates, and Folding Sections.

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MOSQUE OF SHÂH HAMADÂN, SIRÎNAGAR.



DĀRDS.

THE

NORTHERN BARRIER OF INDIA.

A POPULAR ACCOUNT

OF THE

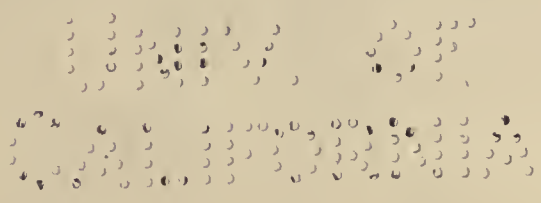
JUMMOO AND KASHMIR TERRITORIES.

BY

FREDERIC DREW,

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FORMERLY OF THE MAHARAJA OF KASHMIR'S SERVICE.

WITH MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS.



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PREFACE.

In the present volume, I have selected from my work 'The Jummoo and Kashmir Territories' those parts which are most likely to interest the general reader. To the other book I would refer any who may wish for more detailed information on such subjects as the physical condition of the country, the distribution of languages and faiths within it, its political organization, or the routes that traverse it. All of these are there more fully treated, and by the accompanying maps and sections illustrated.

The map accompanying the present work shows particularly the distribution of Races; but it will also be found a sufficient topographical guide through the descriptions of the country.

For both the text and the map, I have adopted, in spelling the native names, the new Indian system of transliteration. In this the ten vowel sounds which occur in the languages of Northern India are represented by the five vowels of our alphabet, by an accentuation (to denote elongation) of three of them, and by two diphthongs. The following table will make clear to anyone who speaks English the exact native Indian pronunciation of these vowels. In the middle column is an English

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word whose vowel-sound corresponds with that of the character to the left of it; while the third column shows the same word as it would be spelt on the Indian system, to retain its original sound.

Indian vowel.	English word to exemplify the pronunciation.	Indian spelling of the English word, the sound remaining the same.
a	bun	ban
â	palm	pâm
i	bin	bin
î	been	bîn
u	pull	pul
û	pool	pûl
e	day	de
o	bowl	bol
ai	fine	fain
au	fowl	faul

As to the consonants, it need only be said that *g* is always hard, *j* is to be pronounced as in the English word *jam*, and that *ch* has the power of *ch* in *church*. I have made an exception to the above rules in the name 'Jummoo,' which must be pronounced in English fashion.

F. D.

Eton College, *December*, 1876.

THE

NORTHERN BARRIER OF INDIA.

CHAPTER I.

THE OUTER HILLS.

I SHALL endeavour to picture to the reader the most northerly portion of the large mountain mass whose base skirts the flat and fertile plains of India, extending for twelve hundred miles in one grand curve and forming the northern boundary of our Eastern Empire. The northernmost portion, that which lies immediately between India and the nations who dwell in the heart of Asia, is occupied by a kingdom of which we shall visit almost every corner, the kingdom ruled by the Maharaja of Jummoo and Kashmir. Since the parts of the country governed by that ruler have no other bond of cohesion than the fact of his rule, no simple name for it exists; while for short it is sometimes called Kashmir, from the far-famed country which lies in its midst, a fuller, though not complete, designation is that which I have adopted, namely, "Jummoo and Kashmir Territories."

From the position of this kingdom at the extremity of the great barrier which separates our warm and well-peopled dominions from the bare and thinly-inhabited

plateaus of Tibet and Turkistan, its physical and other characters derive an importance beyond that which its size, or population, or value measured in revenues, would otherwise bear. Hence an account of it, such as ten years of familiarity with the country and its people justifies me in now attempting to give in this short and condensed form, may have an interest both for those who, looking to the wider questions of politics and of science, social or physical, make India but one item in their considerations; and for those who, caring to know all details of the country and people we directly or indirectly rule in Asia, will wish for a more minute knowledge of the many races who here dwell and of the homes which they have made, on plain or mountain slope, in fertile valley or in forest, or by pitching their narrow tents amid bare and stony expanses, such as are to be found among the varied and much-furrowed ridges of the great Himâlayan range.

It may be well to begin with a comparison of the size, both of India generally and of this part which we shall dwell on, with the countries of Europe, and for this purpose we may refer to the map of India at the end of the work. The space that is coloured represents all that is attached, by one tie or another, to the British Crown; of this the north and south measure (from Cape Comorin to the northernmost corner) is as far as from Gibraltar to Stockholm, while across India from west to east, from the mouths of the Indus to those of the Ganges, is a distance equal to that from London to the Black Sea shore. The little map of England, drawn to the same scale, will give an idea of its comparative area; and it will be seen

that the Jummoo and Kashmir territories themselves (coloured yellow on the map) are not less in extent than England and Wales together; they have in fact an area of about 68,000 square miles.

Perhaps never is the traveller in India more strongly impressed with the idea of its magnitude than in the journey from Calcutta north-westwards. Here the route is over the plain that separates the hills and table-land of the Peninsula from the Himâlaya; a plain that, with a width averaging fully a hundred and fifty miles, extends ten times that distance in length. As one goes through this—whether for days and nights in the railway train, or, as formerly, for weeks in the dâk-gârî—its unbroken flatness allows the great extent to impress itself on the mind, while the change from the fuller vegetation of Bengal to the clumps of trees scattered among continuous far-extending corn-fields in the North-West Provinces, and the yet more open ground of the Panjâb, induces a still better appreciation of the magnitude of the Plains of India. The Panjâb itself is the widest expanse of this great plain, though, from the comparative dryness of its climate, not the richest.

The mountain ridges, though seldom sighted by the traveller, had lain on his right hand all through the journey. Along the chief part of their course the land is held by native princes of various degrees of power and of dependence on the British Government. For more than 500 miles in length the Ruler of Nipâl holds a broad band of mountains. The next section, which includes Kumâon and Garhwâl, is ruled directly by our government. Then comes a collection of rajas, separately of small impor-

tance, in that part of which Simla may be counted the centre. This is followed by another district under British rule, that of Kângrâ, which is known afar for the fine flavour of its tea and is admired by those who have visited the spot for its scenery, combining the look of quiet comfort with bold mountain views. Lastly, edging that part of the Panjâb which lies between the Râvî and Jhelam rivers, lie the hills which we shall visit.

The reader should now turn to the larger map, which depicts, on a scale of 32 miles to an inch, the tract marked out by a rectangle in the smaller one. On this the colouring, of one tint or another, shows what is included in the Maharaja of Kashmir's dominions, while each separate tint denotes the tract occupied by one of the many races he governs.

From Lâhor, a city that was the old capital, and is at this day the seat of our government, of the Panjâb, a drive of 60 miles, still on the unbroken flat, brings one to Syâlkot, the last British Station. Here are the civil authorities of the Syâlkot District and a brigade of troops in cantonments. Six miles beyond Syâlkot we cross the frontier; on entering the dominions of the Maharaja of Kashmir, no immediate physical change is seen; for the last portion of the great plain makes part of the Maharaja's territories. We are still on the wonderful wide plain of India, where the eye tires in contemplating the unvaried level. As in the Panjâb, the trees here also are small and scant of foliage, either scattered singly or grouped round wells; here also the villages are clumps of low, flat-roofed, mud huts, not inviting in look, yet commodious for the people, with their kind of life. The soil, either clay or

loam, at certain times looks sterile and at others is covered with verdure. Dull enough is the aspect of this plain when the crops are off, and the ground is a bare caked surface of dried mud, when the hot-weather haze, hiding the distant view, makes the dusty ground shade off into a dusty air. But at other times of the year—as in March, when spring is well advanced, when the trees are in bloom, and the wheat over large undivided spaces is coming into ear—the prospect is bright and agreeable. At such a season the air is clear, and one sights the snow mountains from afar. As we approach, darker ranges of less lofty hills come more strongly into view; getting nearer still, we see that a succession of comparatively low ridges, some rugged and broken by ravines, some regular and forest-covered, intervene between the plain and the high mountains.

These constitute a tract to which I give the name of "Outer Hills." They edge the Himâlaya with great uniformity of character along its whole course. In these territories they extend for 150 miles, from the river Râvî on the east to the Jhelam on the west. Going inwards one has to pass over a width of them varying from fourteen to thirty-six miles before coming to the next higher class of mountains. Now among these Outer Hills live the men of the race called Dogrâ, who, headed by the Maharaja, himself a Dogrâ, rule all the territories; here also is the capital, Jummoo. As well for these reasons as for the sake of beginning with the skirts of the mountain mass, the first chapters will be devoted to an account of the Outer Hills, of their inhabitants, and of the Court of Jummoo.

* * * * *

The last portion of the plain before coming to the hills has here none of that luxuriant and swampy forest called Terai, which edges the Eastern Himâlayas; there are but patches of wood, of the trees characteristic of the dry Panjâb climate, in great part of a fine-leaved acacia. The plain, which is 1000 feet above the sea (having attained that level by an imperceptible slope from Calcutta upwards), is at this part cut into by gullies which lead down from the hills; these are what in India are called nullahs (*nâlâ*); most of them are dry for the greater part of the year, but in the rainy season they will often be filled by what for the time is a wide and swift river, discoloured by red mud washed from the hills above. One or two of the wider valleys thus made, as well as some tracts of the higher plain, are covered with a long tufty jungle-grass, among which black-buck or antelope abound. These animals, encouraged by the game laws of the country, which preserve the pursuit of them for the ruler, spread into the cultivated parts and even herd with the cattle.

The hills begin along a line that can be traced on the map by the words "Dâman-i-Koh, or Foot of the Hills." *Dâman-i-Koh* is the Persian phrase, which means literally "Skirt of the Mountain." The outermost ridge of all is one that for seventy miles bears one character. It rises from the flat with a regular and gentle slope which continues till a height of some two thousand feet above the sea is reached; this slope is indented with many drainage valleys, not cut steep, but making undulations of the ground transverse to the run of the ridge. The surface of the hills is very stony; rounded pebbles cover

nearly the whole of it, for the strata beneath are composed partly of pebble-beds. Still it bears vegetation; the hills are indeed clothed with forest; it is a close forest of trees twenty and thirty feet in height, mostly of two species of acacia and of *Zizyphus jujuba*,* with an underwood of *brenkar*, a shrub which grows to the height of three or four feet, and has a white flower that gives out a sickly smell. Thus clothed the slope continues up to a crest, beyond which there is a sudden fall along the whole line of it, an escarpment formed of sandstone cliffs of some hundreds of feet of vertical height. Within, for many miles, is a broken hilly tract.

On the outermost ridge, at the very first rise of the hills out of the plain, the city or town of Jummoo is built, on a slightly sloping plateau two or three hundred feet above the flat country and some 1200 feet above the sea. The ridge is here cut through by the valley of the Tavî River, which flows out to the plains at a level more than 200 feet below the town, between steep but wooded banks.

Coming from the Panjâb, one passes, while still on the plain, through two or three miles of the close forest of acacia-trees with bushy underwood; then one comes to the river-bed, an expanse of rounded pebbles, with the stream flowing in the middle—a stream usually shallow and gentle, but which is sometimes so swollen with floods as to rush with violence over the whole wide bed, at which times it is impassable. As one fords this Tavî

* The native names of the acacias are *Phulāī* (*A. modesta*), and *Kīkar* (*A. Arabica*); the latter is called *Babūl* in Hindostân. The native name of the Zizyphus jujuba is *Ber*.

River, one sees how, in coming from the upper country, it breaks through, so to say, the outermost range; on its right bank the hill on which Jummoo is built, and on its left a corresponding one, crowned by Bâo Fort, form, as it were, a gateway to the inner country.

To reach the town after crossing the stream, we have again to pass through the wood, along a narrow lane, at a turn of which we find ourselves in front of the principal gate, placed at the top of a short but steep ascent. At this spot travelling on wheels comes to an end; from here onwards carriage is performed by camels, pack-horses, elephants, or coolis. The bullock-carts that up to this point have been the great means of goods traffic are left here, and their contents are brought into the city mostly on men's backs.

After passing the entrance-gate, in doing which we come on to the plateau, we advance on more level ground, along a wide street or bazaar which gives the promise of a comfortably-built town; but a little farther, and one suddenly becomes lost in a maze of narrow streets and lanes of low single-storied houses and little narrow shops. But the way is crowded, and business is brisk, and most of the people have a well-to-do look. A mile or so of this, on a gradual rise, brings us to the centre of interest of the place—an open, irregular square, called the Mandî, or Public Place. This is the spot where all the business of the Government is done; it is a space entirely surrounded by Government buildings. On three sides are public offices, built with considerable taste; their lower stories have a line of arches that suit the native practice of doing business half out of doors. The farther side of the square

has a nearly similar building, where the Maharaja holds his ordinary daily Darbâr or Court; behind this is seen the more lofty pile of the inner palace.

The town, of which the area is about a square mile, and the population 40,000, is bounded on two sides by the cliff or steep slope that overhangs the river-bed. Some of the buildings of the Maharaja's Palace are placed at the very edge of the most precipitous part, and they command a view over the flat valley of the river, where it widens above the gorge, over alluvial islands covered with gardens and groves, on to inner lines of hill with a surface of broken cliff and scattered forest, and to higher mountains beyond, which are often snow-covered. The steep slopes close at hand, and those of the opposite hill, are clothed with the same forest that covers the plain through which the town was approached; it gives shelter to a good deal of game, chiefly pig, spotted deer, and nîlgâe, which, from the strictness of the game laws, are found up to the skirts of the city.

With the exception of the palace and the public buildings surrounding the square, there is not much that is architecturally attractive. Nearly all the city, as before said, is of single-storied houses, which one quite overtops in going through the streets on an elephant. But there rise up among them a few large houses, mansions so to say, which have been built by some of the Court people, or of the richer merchants of the place; the house of the family of the chief ministers, Dîwân Jawâla Sahai, and his son Dîwân Kirpâ Râm, especially, is a large pile of buildings. Then at one edge of the town, in a picturesque position overlooking

the river valley, are a few houses built after the fashion of those that Englishmen live in in India; these the Maharaja has erected for the accommodation of European travellers, whether stray visitors or guests of his own, who now and then reach Jummoo. Hindû temples also rise among the dwellings; their convex-curved spires are conspicuous objects; the principal one, in the lower part of the town, is a plain but fine, well-proportioned building; and in the same quadrangle with it is a smaller, gilt-domed temple, built in memory of Maharaja Gulâb Singh. New temples arise; of late years several have been built; one of these has been erected by the chief minister; as one approaches Jummoo through the plain, its tall spire and gilt pinnacle catch the eye from a distance.

Jummoo, though it is a good deal resorted to for trade and other business, is not usually liked by natives as a place to live in. The comfort of a native of India depends very much on the accessibility of good water, and here one is obliged either to use the water of the tanks, not really fit for drinking, or to fetch the river water from below. The position of the town, on a stony hill and enclosed by forest, prevents any pleasant way of egress from it. But a redeeming point is the beauty of the prospect. We have seen how, from the edge of the cliff, a wide view opens of the nearer ridges of the Himâlayas, with peeps of the more lofty mountains behind. From other points we can look south and west over the plain of the Panjâb, and from our elevation can command a great and beautiful expanse of it. Near at hand are rounded masses of the green foliage of the forest; beyond is more open ground, with villages scattered, and the waters of the Tavî, in its

various channels, shining between; in the distance the hues change to grey and purple, but the land ends off with the sharp line made by the earth's curvature, distinct as the horizon at sea.

Let us now turn again towards the mountains. I have said that within the outermost ridge there is an irregular, broken, hilly country; it is a country of ridges and sloping plateaus, cut through by narrow steep ravines, carved out of a sandstone rock. It is easy here to lose one's way and to find one's self separated by some inaccessible cliff or impracticable ravine from one's goal. To these rocks a noted prison-breaker once escaped, and, aided by an intimate knowledge of the ground, for long weeks kept clear of a whole regiment that was sent to capture him.

A great part of the surface of these hills is of the bare grey sandstone rock uncovered by soil, but in some places grass and bushes have got a footing upon it, and here and there is cultivated space enough to support a family or two, or a little hamlet, but of necessity it is a tract very thinly peopled as well as difficult of access; the paths from hamlet to hamlet are but tracks marked by the passage of feet over the sandstone, or sometimes down steps cut into it; from the inaccessibility of the cliffs, and the steepness of the ravines, the ways are tediously roundabout, and they are tiresome from the frequent rise and fall.

This irregular combination of ridges continues, as one goes on, to a distance of ten or twelve miles from the outer skirt of the hills; then we come to a wide longitudinal valley, such as is called in the more eastern Himâ-

layas a *dûn*. This varies in width from one to four miles; it is itself cut through by ravines; close by Dansâl a branch of the Tavî flows along in a steep-cliffed ravine at a level some two hundred feet below the flat of the main valley; the Tavî River itself flows in a similar ravine, and at that low level winds across the dûn.

The next range we come to goes by the name of Karâî Thâr, the latter word of which is the equivalent of "ridge." It has a steep face, an escarpment, to the south-west; near Dansâl, its height is 3000 or 3500 feet; eastwards it rises to 5000 feet, and then curves round and joins on to the higher mountains. This range, too, is traversed by the Tavî in a gorge, one so narrow and inaccessible that one of the main roads to Kashmir, that comes through this country, is unable to follow the river valley and has to cross the Karâî Thâr ridge by a very steep ascent.

Another dûn succeeds, that in which the town of Udampûr stands, a space some sixteen miles long and five miles wide, which may be described either as a flat much cut down into wide hollows or as a low vale with wide flat-topped hills jutting into it from the mountains. Beyond that comes the higher land which as yet we do not visit.

Eastwards to Basolî, and north-westwards to beyond Kotlî, extends such broken ground as has been described, varying indeed often, but still with a certain character which justifies one in bringing the whole under one heading. Only as we approach where the Jhelam River passes through this tract—from the latitude of Puneh downwards—we find yet more sudden falls of the streams

and steeper slopes of the hills; this river flows often between steep rocky banks several hundred feet high; anon it reaches a spot where a ravine coming down makes its margin accessible; again for a time more gradual slopes, or smaller cliffs that edge some plateau, form its banks; still again it comes between high cliffs, and in deep curves finds its way round lofty promontories, such nearly isolated spots being often fort-crowned; then, at last, some miles above the town of Jhelam, it debouches into the plain, where it is bounded by low banks and finds room to spread and divide, to form islands with its ever-varying channels, and otherwise disport itself as a river delights to that has escaped from the mountains that restrained it.

Before proceeding to tell of the people that inhabit this rugged tract, I shall say something of the two things which have so much to do in fitting or unfitting a country to be a dwelling place for man—its vegetation and climate.

Though as far north as 33° of latitude, and elevated on an average perhaps two thousand feet above the sea, yet these hills differ not greatly in climate from the northern part of British India. As in the plains, the year may be divided into three seasons; here they are thus distributed;—the hot weather, from April to June; the rains, from July to September;* the cold weather, from October to March. Taking the more inhabited portions of the

* The reader must not think that the time of the rains is one of coolness; true the temperature is some degrees less than during the "hot weather," but a hot moist air that makes everything damp renders the rainy months more trying to the constitution of both Europeans and natives than any other time.

tract, of which the altitude may be from twelve hundred to two thousand feet, we find that in May and June they experience a severe heat; the rocky surface of the ground becomes intensely heated, and gives rise to hot winds, which blow sometimes with regularity, sometimes in gusts. At night the temperature falls to a greater extent than it does at the same season in the plain of the Panjâb; for the rocky surface loses its heat again, and the irregularities of form produce currents which tend to mix the heated air with the cooler upper strata.

The rains, beginning first among the higher mountains, spread down to the outer ranges in the latter half of June, and, though often breaking off, seldom cease for the season without affording moisture enough for the bringing on of the summer crops.

The rains ending with September, the country is left dry for a time; its uneven form prevents the soil from retaining much moisture; by the drying of the country, and the decline of the sun's power, the cold weather is introduced. This is a delightful season—a pleasant bright sun and a cool bracing air make it refreshing and invigorating after the dry heat of the first part of summer and the warm moisture of the latter months. This bright cold weather is, however, varied by rainy days, which bring rather a raw cold of a degree that makes a small fire in a house necessary to comfort; showers may be expected about the 20th of December, or between that date and Christmas-time; and on the higher ridges, at three and four thousand feet, snow falls, melting almost as soon as it falls. It is this winter rain that enables the peasant to proceed with the sowings for the spring crop,

and on the occasional recurrence of such showers during the next three months he depends for that harvest which the increasing warmth of the months of March and April is sure to bring on well if the rain has been fairly plentiful.

The only part of the year at all unhealthy is the latter half of the rains; the natives date the beginning of it from the flowering of the rice; it may be said to extend through part of August, September, and part of October; during that time intermittent fever much prevails. The type of fever is somewhat worse than that which prevails at the same season in the Panjâb; it is more of a jungle-fever, less regular in its times, and less easy to get rid of. In some years fever is exceedingly prevalent over the whole of this tract. I have heard that Ranjît Singh's father once took advantage of the inhabitants of the lower ranges being stricken down with it to make a raid on Jummoo.

The vegetation of the Outer Hills, governed by the character of the soil and the circumstances of climate, is for the most part of the dry tropical character, the heat being enough to sustain many plants that flourish within the tropics, while the moisture is insufficient to enable them to grow with great luxuriance, and the cold weather of winter tends also to check them.

The very outermost ridge, as before said, is covered with a more or less dense forest of small-leaved acacias (*A. Arabica* and *A. modesta*), with some of the *Ber* tree intermingled, and an undergrowth of the shrub *Brenkar*. This forest, which on the hills occupies a dry pebbly soil, sometimes spreads down on to the loamy ground of

the plains; probably in former times it grew over a large area of the plain and has since been gradually cleared; the greatest space of flat ground now occupied by it is close below Jummoo, the forest having there been preserved by command.

Farther within the hills there is not such a growth as to make a forest; it is rather a straggling bushy scrub, partly of the same trees in a shrubby form, with Euphorbia (*E. Royleana*, or *pentagona*), which grows to a large size, and occasionally mango, pîpal, banyân, bamboo, and palm (*Phœnix sylvestris*). The streams that flow in the narrow ravines among the sandstone hills have their edges adorned with oleander bushes.

The long-leaved pine (*Pinus longifolia*, whose native names are *chîl* and *chîr*), a tree whose needle-foliage is of a light bright green colour, is usually first found, as one goes inwards, on the north slope of the outermost ridge. I have found it there at the level of 1400 feet, but only in a stunted form; on the broken plateau and dry hill-sides of 2000 feet elevation one sees fair-sized trees of it scattered about; at three and four thousand feet, in favourable spots, one finds whole woods of it, but even these are not so thick and close as the forests of *Pinus excelsa*, which cover the higher hills. The highest range of *Pinus longifolia* seems to be 5500 feet, or it may be a little more.

Of cultivated plants we have in these lower hills nearly the same kinds as in the Panjâb, and over the whole area the same succession of two crops in a year. The winter crop, chiefly wheat and barley, is sown in December (sometimes earlier, and sometimes even later) and ripens

in April; the summer crop, of maize, millet, and rice, is sown in June and ripens in September or October. At one or two places (as at Syâlsûî, near Râjâorî) rice is raised by rain-moisture alone, but most generally it depends on irrigation. Plantain and sugar-cane, though not largely cultivated, grow fairly well, and they have even been introduced into Pûnch, which is 3300 feet above the sea.

In the hilliest tracts cultivation can be carried on only in small patches of ground. Thus isolated cottages or small hamlets are frequent. The flats of the Dûns allow a wider space for tillage, and in them the larger villages and the few small towns are to be found. But the cultivated portion is small as compared with the whole; scrub, forest, and bare rock predominate.

CHAPTER II.

INHABITANTS OF THE OUTER HILLS.

Of the various races and subdivisions of races which inhabit the whole territories, the eight most important have their geographical distribution shown by the colours on the race map, and about these eight and their localisation I wish to say a few words before beginning a description of those of them which inhabit the tract described in the last chapter.

A considerable portion of the map is covered by the tint which denotes uninhabited country. This includes the loftiest mountain ranges—their inaccessible rocky peaks and their fields of perpetual snow—as well as three or four expanses of level ground at such an elevation as to be quite barren and uninhabitable.

The coloured spaces let into the grey denote the occupation of the valleys by the different tribes with whom we are to become acquainted; the less broken expanses of colour to the south-west show that there the people are able to occupy all the area; the narrow summit-line of one mountain ridge alone might have been counted as unfrequented ground.

The list of races underneath the title of the map may

here be repeated, with a classification that will give the reader some additional information.

ARYAN.	*Dogrâ*, *Pahârî*.	Hindû.
	Chibhâlî.	Muhammadan.
	Kashmîrî	
	Dârd.	
TIBETAN.	*Baltî*.	Muhammadan.
	Ladâkhî.	Buddhist.
	Champâ.	

From this table it will be seen that five of the eight races belong to one great subdivision of mankind, the Aryan, and the remaining three races to another, the Tibetan. The division according to faiths does not correspond to this ethnological partition; two of the Aryan races are Hindû, the remaining three of the Aryan and one of the Tibetan are Muhammadan; two of the Tibetan are Buddhist. This is true on the whole, but some exceptions must be allowed.

The ethnographical information conveyed by the map I collected in my journeys by noting, village by village, the characteristics of the inhabitants. As a rule the distinction of race is marked enough; not unfrequently the separation is made by some natural boundary, as where the Panjâl mountains separate the Kashmîrî from their neighbours; but in other places the races are more intermixed, colonies of one being found in the villages or towns of another; still these are recognizable, since they almost always associate in their own communities; I have denoted such colonies by square patches of colour, adopting that form to show that it is a conventional

representation of the presence of the race at that spot, not of the area occupied by it.

With respect to the division by religions, one important fact is here illustrated. From near the Nun Kun mountains, *and from no other spot in Asia*, one may go westward through countries entirely Muhammadan, as far as Constantinople; eastward among none but Buddhists, to China; and southward over lands where the Hindû religion prevails, to the extremity of the Indian peninsula. For from these great mountains one might descend on the Tibetan side and thread one's way through the valleys marked in red, among signs of the Buddhist faith—by the door of many a Buddhist monastery—to the Chinese territory; and every community passed, to the capital itself of China, would be Buddhist. On descending another slope of the mountain to the tracts occupied by Pahârîs and Dogrâs, we should find ourselves at once among Hindûs, in a country where shrines and temples dedicated to the Hindû gods abound, and thence we could pass at once to the Hindû portion of the Panjâb and on to the heart of Hindostân. In a third direction, due west, one would go through Muhammadan Kashmir, adorned by mosques and the tombs of holy Muhammadans, and on through a rough district of mountaineers, the Chibhâlîs, to the country of the Afghâns, to Persia and to Turkey, all among nations of that same faith.

Returning now to the Outer Hill Region, we have first to speak of the *Dogrâ race*, the one which, as before said, is the ruling race of all the territories.

Of the Aryans, who swept into India and colonized it till they became at last its main population, among whom

the Brahminical or Hindû religion grew up, a branch settled in the hills that edge the Panjâb; to those who settled in the lower hills and went not into regions where snow falls, the name Dogrâ belongs, and the country they inhabit goes by the name of Dûgar.

The Dogrâs are divided into castes in nearly the same way as are the Hindûs of India generally; these are partly the remnant of race-distinctions, and partly the outcome of occupations become hereditary. The following list gives the names of some of the castes in the order of their estimation among themselves:—

Brahman.
Râjpût; *divided into* { Mîâns. / Working Râjpûts.
Khatrî.
Thakar.
Jat.
{ Banyâ *and* Krâr (small shopkeepers). / Nâî (barbers). / Jîûr (carriers).
* * * *
Dhiyâr, Megh, and Dûm.

The *Brahmans* make of course the highest caste; to them, here as in other parts of India, is traditionally due from all other Hindûs a spiritual subjection, and to those of them who are learned in the holy books it is actually given. In these later times, that is, for the last ten centuries and more, Brahmans have taken to other occupations besides that of continual devotion. We find them in the Outer Hills numerous as cultivators; and in one part they form the majority of the inhabitants. In physique the Brahmans do not much differ from the next caste, who are to be spoken of with more minuteness.

The Brahmans are considered by the others to be in character deep, clever to scheme, and close in concealing.

The *Râjpût* is the caste next in standing. Râjpûts are here in considerable number; they hold and have held for many centuries the temporal power; that is to say, the rulers of the country are of them.

The Dogrâ Râjpûts are not large men; they are distinctly less in size than Englishmen; I should take their average height to be five feet four inches or five feet five inches, and even exceptionally they are seldom tall. They are slim in make, have somewhat high shoulders, and legs not well formed but curiously bowed, with turn-in toes. They have not great muscular power, but they are active and untiring.

Their complexion is of a comparatively light shade of brown, rather darker than the almond-husk, which may be taken to represent the colour of the women, who, being less exposed, have acquired the lighter tint, which is counted as the very complexion of beauty; the hue indeed is not unpleasing, but it is generally deep enough to mask any ruddy changing colour of the face. The men have an intelligent face, the character of which is represented in the accompanying woodcut; they have small features, generally well formed, a slightly hooked nose, a well-shaped mouth, dark-brown eyes. The hair and beard are jet black; the hair is cut to form a curly fringe below the pagrî or turban; the mustache is usually turned up eyewards. Thus the Dogrâ, and especially the Râjpût, is often decidedly good-looking.

In character the Râjpûts are simple and child-like; but this is not true of those who have come much into contact

with the Jummoo Court. If taken in the right way they are tractable, else they resent interference, and usually, if once committed to a certain line of conduct, they are obstinate enough in it. They stick closely to the prejudices they were brought up in, and are very particular to observe their caste regulations; these characteristics are common both to the Brahmans and Râjpûts.



A DOGRÂ SOLDIER.

In money matters many of the Râjpûts, and, indeed, the Dogras generally, are avaricious, and all are close-fisted, not having the heart to spend, even on themselves. This character is recognized as belonging to these hill people by the Panjâbîs, who in their turn do not spend with half the freedom of the people of Hindostân proper and the country below.

The Râjpûts, particularly that class of them called Mîâns, who will be distinguished farther on, have a great notion of the superiority of their own caste, engendered by their having been for so long the ruling class in these

hills. Individual conceit is common with them as well as this pride. It is frequently remarked that when a Mîân gets up in the world a bit he holds his head high and thinks himself ever so far above his former equals. They are indeed apt to be spoiled by advancement, and to some extent the Mîân Râjpûts have already been so spoiled. This is by their rule having become extended over such a width, and so many races having come under it. Maharaja Gulâb Singh, the founder of the kingdom in its modern extent, was of this caste, and the extension of his power led to the advancement of his caste-brethren, who were and are in great part the instruments of the acquisition and of the government of the dependencies of Jummoo.

Judged of in this capacity—that of agents and instruments of government—we must allow to the Dogrâs considerable failings. They have little tact; they have not the art of conciliating the governed, of treating them in such a way as to attach them. Those who are high in authority have not width enough of view to see that the interests of both governors and governed may be in a great measure coincident. As a rule, they are not liked by the dependent nations even to that degree in which, with moderately good management, a ruling race may fairly hope to be liked by its alien subjects.

Still we must admit that the Dogrâs show, by their holding such a wide and difficult territory as they do, some good qualities. Seeing how, in far-away countries, often in a cold climate thoroughly unsuited to them, sometimes in small bands surrounded by a population that looks on them with no friendly eye, they hold their

own and support the rule of the Maharaja, we must credit them with much patience and some courage. Some power, too, they have of physical endurance; they can endure hunger and heat, and exertion as far as light marching on long journeys is concerned; but heavy labour or extreme cold will knock them up. Faithfulness to the master they serve is another of their virtues.

All over Northern India the Râjpût is traditionally the ruling and fighting caste, that from which both the kings and warriors were in old times taken. In these hills, where social changes come slower than in the plains, this still holds. The rulers ever have been and are Râjpûts, and great numbers of people of that caste find a place either about the Court or in the army. It was, possibly, at one time the custom throughout India for people of the Râjpût caste to follow no other occupation than service such as this. Here, at all events, a considerable section of the Râjpûts hold aloof from every other mode of getting a living. But some have at different times fallen off from the old rule of life and taken to other ways. By this circumstance the Râjpûts of these hills are divided into two classes; the men of the first class are called *Mîâns*, while those of the second we will, in default of a general name, speak of as Working Râjpûts.

The Mîâns follow no trade, nor will they turn their hands to agriculture. For a Mîân to put his hand to the plough would be a disgrace. Most of them have a bit of land, either free or nearly free of land-tax, which they get others to cultivate on terms of a division of the produce. Their dwellings are generally isolated, either at the edge of or within the forest or waste; they are so

placed for the sake of hunting, which is their natural and favourite pursuit.

But their profession, that to which they all look for a livelihood, is, as they say, "service"; by this they mean the service of their chief or of some other ruler, either military service, or for attendance not involving menial work or anything that can be called labour. They make good soldiers; they are faithful to the master who employs them, and they have a tendency to be brave. The sword is their favourite weapon, and they are handy in the use of it, while those of them who have had the practice of sport are good shots with a matchlock.

The Dogrâ contingent of the Sikh army, which must have been composed in great part of these Râjpûts, did well in Ranjît Singh's time, and I doubt not that the same class, if properly led, would do good service again. But it is in the art of leading that the Mîâns fail; they seldom have those qualities which are necessary for the making of a good superior officer. Warmth of temper, quickness of action, and absence of tact, rather than steadfastness and power of combination and of conciliation, are their characteristics.

The *Working Râjpûts* are those whose families have, at various periods, taken to agriculture, and so have become separated from their former fellow class-men, and come down one step of caste. They are no longer admitted to an equality with the Mîâns, though still held by them in some respect. As agriculturists they do not succeed so well as the elder cultivating castes. Many of the Working Râjpûts follow arms as a profession, and are

to be found side by side with the more exclusively military Mîâns.

After the Brahmans and Râjpûts, come the *Khatrîs.* The Khatrîs, both in these hills and in the Panjâb, are the higher class of traders, and also commonly the munshîs, or writers. They are generally less good-looking than the Râjpûts, and are less inured to physical exertion, but they are much keener, and are men of better judgment and greater power of mind. From their being thus better fitted for responsible posts, and from their wielding the power of the pen, which, in the quietness of times that has come upon this country, is a more important instrument than the sword that formerly prevailed over the other, they have come to supplant, to some extent, the Râjpûts or Mîâns in place and power.

Next come the *Thakars,* who are the chief cultivating caste in the hills. I do not know with what class in the plains of India one should correlate them. In occupation they correspond with the Jats in the Panjâb (of whom there are a few in the hills also), but the two are not related; the Thakars are counted higher in rank. Their name of Thakar is undoubtedly the same word that in lower India is used for the Râjpûts, though it has the first *a* short instead of long. They are a well-looking and well-made race of men, a good deal like the Râjpûts, but of larger frame; they are more powerful in body but less quick in motion, and they have not an equal reputation for courage.

Next below in estimation come some castes whom I have bracketed together; their occupations are various, but in

rank they are nearly equal. These are *Banyâ*, *Krâr*, *Nâî*, and *Jîûr*, with some others. They include the lower class of traders of different kinds, shopkeepers for the most part small and pettifogging; they include the barbers and others whose business it is to minister to the wants of those above them, especially the carriers, called *kahârs* in the plains, but here called jîûrs, whose occupations are the carriage of loads on the shoulder, including the palanquin, and the management of the flour-mills worked by water.

Last come those whom we Englishmen generally call "low-caste Hindûs," but who in the mouth of a Hindû would never bear that name; they are not recognized as Hindûs at all; they are not even allowed a low place among them, and they are only Dogrâs in the sense of being inhabitants of Dûgar. The names of these castes are *Megh* and *Dûm*, and to these must, I think, be added one called *Dhiyâr*, whose occupation is iron-smelting, and who seem to be classed generally with those others. These tribes are the descendants of the earlier, the pre-Aryan, inhabitants of the hills, who became, on the occupation of the country by the Hindûs or the Aryans, enslaved to them; they were not necessarily slaves to one person, but were kept to do the low and dirty work for the community. And that is still their position; they are the scavengers of the towns and villages. Of Dûms and Meghs there is a large number at Jummoo, and they are scattered also over all the country, both of the Outer Hills and the next higher mountains. They get a scanty living by such employments as brickmaking and charcoal-burning, and by sweeping. They are liable to be called

on at any time by the authorities for work that no others will put their hand to.

A result of this class of labour being done only by them is that they are reckoned utterly unclean; anything they touch is polluted; no Hindû would dream of drinking water from a vessel they had carried even if they had brought it suspended at the end of a pole; they are never allowed to come on to the carpet on which others are sitting; if by some chance they have to deliver a paper, the Hindû makes them throw it on the ground, and from there he will himself pick it up: he will not take it from their hands.

The Meghs and Dûms have physical characters that distinguish them from the other castes. They are commonly darker in colour; while the others of these parts have a moderately light-brown complexion, these people are apt to be as dark as the natives of India below Delhi. They are usually, I think, small in limb and rather short in stature; in face they are less bearded than the other castes, and their countenance is of a much lower type than that of the Dogrâs generally, though one sees exceptions, due no doubt to an admixture of blood.

The Maharaja has done something to improve the position of these low castes by engaging some hundreds as sepoys, for the work of sapping and mining. These have acquired some consideration, indeed they have behaved themselves in time of war so as to gain respect, having shown themselves in courage to be equal with the higher castes, and in endurance to surpass them.

Thus we see that the great majority of the people of Dûgar are Hindûs, with the remnants of the old inhabi-

tants among them, who cannot be said to be of any faith. Here and there, but especially in the towns, are Muhammadans, following various trades and occupations; some of these were Hindûs of the country who have been converted to Muhammadanism; others have come from various places and settled in it.

The western part of the Outer Hills is inhabited by a Muhammadan race; they are called *Chibhâlî* from the name of their country, Chibhâl, which is the region lying between the Chînâb and Jhelam rivers. The Chibhâlîs seem to be for the most part Muhammadanised Dogrâs.

Several tribes of these Muhammadans have the same name as certain of the castes in Dûgar. Thus some of the subdivisions of the Hindû Râjpûts, as Chib, Jarâl, Pâl, &c., exist also among the Muhammadans; and the more general designation of Mussalmân Râjpût is commonly enough used.

Besides Râjpûts, there are many Muhammadanised Jats in Chibhâl; though the Jat is the prevalent cultivating caste in the Panjâb, it occurs but rarely in Dûgar. In the eastern part of Chibhâl are Muhammadan Thakars. In the western there are many races, whose origin it is not easy to discover. An important and high caste is one called Sudan; it prevails in the part between Pûnch and the Jhelam; it has a position among these Muhammadans nearly like that of the Mîâns among the Dogrâs. A general name for this and the other high castes of Chibhâl is *Sâhû*.

Lower down the Jhelam River, there is a caste or tribe called *Gakkars*. They were people who for long sustained their independence in the hills, even against

powerful enemies. They are most numerous, perhaps, on the right bank of the river, in the British territory, where are remains of buildings—palaces and forts—of the time when they had their own Raja; the fort called Râmkot, on the left bank, was, I was told, built by one Toglû, a Gakkar.

The Chibhâlîs, on the whole, resemble the Dogrâs, although the Muhammadan way of cutting the mustache (that is of cutting or shaving a portion in the middle) makes a difference that strikes one at first. The Chibhâlîs are, I think, stronger, more muscular, than the others, and are quite equally active.

Going back to the eastern part of Chibhâl, we are of course on the boundary-line of Muhammadans and Hindûs. A hundred years ago, probably, the former were encroaching, and the boundary was gradually coming eastward; but now, certainly, no such advance is being made. The Muhammadans on the border were not, and are not, very strong in their faith; they retain many Hindû fashions, and some even have an idol in their house. Till quite lately it was their custom to marry Hindû women of the same caste, and these remained Hindû, and did not adopt Muhammadanism. This is no longer done; but when I was in the country some of those women were still alive.

Before concluding this chapter we may visit some of the villages or towns and see what kind of habitations are those of the Dogrâs and Chibhâlîs.

A village in these parts is a collection of low huts with flat tops, mud-walled, mud-floored, and mud-roofed. The floor and walls are neatly smeared with a mixture of cow-

dung and straw. The roofs are timbered either with wood of one of the acacias or with pine. They are supported by one or more pillars, which are capped with a cross-piece some feet in length, often ornamented with carving, that makes a wide capital beneath the beam.

There is no light in the rooms but what may come in at the opened door, or through the chinks of it when closed, such a complete shutting out of the air being equally useful in the very hot and in the cold weather. The substance of the hut is a very bad conductor of heat, and this character tends to keep the interior of an equable temperature. I have often been glad to retreat to such a place from the scorching sun, against which a tent is but a poor protection.

In front of the cottage is a level and smooth space, nicely kept, where the people of the house spend nearly half their time, and where their cooking places are arranged. With the Hindûs, the whole cottage is neatly kept and carefully swept; the higher castes, especially Brahmans and Râjpûts, give, considering their appliances, an admirable example in this respect.

The larger villages and the towns have a double row of shops, each of which consists of a hut, with its floor raised two or three feet above the street, and with a wider doorway, and in front of it a verandah, where the customer may come and sit with the shopkeeper to transact business. Such a street is called a bazaar.

Of towns there are in the Outer Hills none besides Jummoo of any great size, and there are only one or two others that can be said to be flourishing, for the poverty and the thinness of the population of the country round

are against them. Since, however, some towns and some other places show features of interest, we will proceed to visit a few and note what has appeared worthy of observation.

Basolî was the seat of one of the Rajaships between which the low hills were divided before Jummoo swallowed up so many. A large building still remains that was the palace; it is now unkept and almost deserted. The town would ere this have decayed but for the settlement in it of some busy Kashmîrîs, who by their trade of weaving bring some prosperity.

Basolî is one of several places in the low hills, being at the edge of a wood that is seldom disturbed, where the red monkey abounds; the monkey, being respected by the Hindûs and protected by the laws, has here come to be most bold, so he invades the town in great numbers, clambering over the palace walls and scampering across the chief open space of the town, and often enough doing mischief.

Râmnagar, some miles north of Râmkot, is where the Outer Hills join the Middle Mountains. It is built at a height of 2700 feet above the sea, on a small triangular plateau, which is cut off on two sides by ravines, and connected along the third with the slopes of the hills that surround and shut it in.

This town has signs of having at one time been among the most flourishing in these parts. It was the capital of the country called Bandrâlta, which used to be governed by the Bandrâl caste of Mîâns. Their rule was displaced by that of the Sikhs under Ranjît Singh, who took the place and held it for a time, until, partly for the sake of

rewarding a favourite, partly because of the trouble of holding it against the hill people, the Thakars, Ranjît Singh made Suchet Singh (an uncle of the present Maharaja of Jummoo), Raja of the place. Raja Suchet Singh held it till his death. But I heard of a great effort made by the Thakars against him too, when some thousands came to assault it. The Dogrâs, however, held out in the fort, which is a well-planned work, until aid came from the Sikh army.

The town of Râmnagar bears marks of the presence of Raja Suchet Singh. He took a pride in the place and improved it and encouraged the growth of it. The two long masonry-built bazaars were in his time full and busy; merchants from Amritsar and from Kâbul were attracted to the place. Vigne, in 1839, remarked the great variety of races of people who were to be seen there; the bazaars were then being constructed. A large palace adorned with gardens, and the well-built barracks, show that Suchet Singh knew how to make himself and his people comfortable. On his death, which occurred about 1843, Râmnagar came under the rule of Jummoo, and there was no longer the presence of a Raja to keep up its prosperity, which was indeed short-lived; and now the palace is deserted, and the bazaars are but half inhabited. There are a good many Kashmîrî settled in Râmnagar; some of them are occupied with shawl work, executing orders from Nurpûr and Amritsar, and some in making coarse woollen cloth.

Udampûr is a small modern town situated on the innermost dûn, about 2400 feet above the sea. It was founded by Mîân Udam Singh, who was the Maharaja's eldest

brother. A new palace is now rising there, and the place may become more important. Its neighbour, *Kiramchi*, about four miles off, has probably at present the greater population.

Within a couple of marches from Jummoo, to the eastward, are three or four places worth seeing. One of these is *Babor*, in the Dansâl dûn, near the left bank of the Tavî; there are the ruins of three old Hindû temples, of what age I know not; the buildings were of great solidity and considerable beauty; the chief feature of one of them was a hall whose roof was held up by eight fluted columns supporting beams of stone ten feet in length; on these beams were laid flatter stones chequerwise, so as to fill up the corners of the square as far as the centre of the beams, and so make a new square cornerwise to the other; on this was laid another set of stones cornerwise to this, and so on till the whole space was covered; this square mass of stone was ornamented with carving. One of the stones measured in the building is as much as fourteen feet in length; no mortar was used in the construction; this must have been a predisposing cause of the lateral shifting of some of the stones one upon the other which is to be observed, the moving cause being, I take it, earthquakes.

These old temples, though clearly devoted to the same worship as that now followed—Ganesha for instance, the elephant-headed god, being among the prominent figures—are quite neglected by and hardly known to the people around. But we will now go to a spot that is in the bloom of repute as a holy place, that is resorted to on certain days both by the people of the hills and by many from afar.

This is *Parmandal*, a place of pilgrimage that the Hindûs visit for the purpose of obtaining a moral cleansing by bathing in its waters. It is situated in a nook among the low hills, far up one of the ravines that drain down to the plain. I went there with the Maharaja when he and all his Court made the pilgrimage—if so it can be called—on I forget what special day. It is two marches from Jummoo, and we went with a large camp; nor were we intent wholly on the religious ceremonies, for on the way the jungles were beaten and some good pig-sticking rewarded us.

We entered the hills by the winding valley of the Devak stream, the name of which denotes a sacred character. We encamped at Utarbain, which is a place but next in religious importance to the one that was our goal; here were two gilt-domed temples surrounded by cells for Brahmans to live in. The Maharaja gave food this day to all Brahmans who might come; a large number were collected in the quadrangle to partake of it, and presents were given—quantities of flour and other provisions, and money as well to those Brahmans who permanently stay here. From Utarbain we made the journey, to Parmandal and back, in an afternoon; we continued up the sandy bed of the same stream; as we went on, the valley became more confined and its sides more rocky; thus winding, we suddenly came at one of the turns in sight of a strange collection of buildings strangely situated,—a double row of lofty and handsome buildings with nought but the sandy stream-bed between them; there was the chief temple with a fine façade, and, behind that, numerous domes, one gilt one conspicuous; most of

the others are houses built by the courtiers of Ranjît Singh, who was attached to this place and occasionally visited it; they are now inhabited by Brahmans.

The whole place was alive with people who had come to bathe and to worship; booths and stalls, as for a fair, had been put up in the middle of the sandy space; the picturesque buildings, backed close by sandstone rocks, and the crowds of cheerful pilgrims, made a gay and pretty scene. It is only for a short time after rain that a stream flows over the sands, now they had to dig two or three feet to reach the water; numbers of holes had thus been made, and the people scooped up enough water to bathe themselves with; the atoning power of such a ceremony is considered in these hills to be second only to that of a visit to Harîdwâr on the Ganges.

A journey of not many miles from Parmandal, but by a rugged path over difficult hills, would bring us to two strange little lakes named *Saroîn Sar* and *Mân Sar*, the latter word of each name being the one used for "lake." They are eight or ten miles apart, but are on about the same strata, and are each about 2000 to 2200 feet above the sea, being situated high between parallel ridges of the sandstone.

Saroîn Sar may be said to cover a kind of platform, from which on two sides the ground falls rather steeply, while on the other sides are low hills; the lake is about half a mile long and a quarter of a mile broad, a pretty spot; mango-trees and palms adorn its banks, and cover thickly a little island in the centre, while the sandstone hills round are partly clothed with brushwood, and shaded, though lightly, with the bright loose foliage of

the long-leaved pine. Mân Sar is a larger lake, perhaps three-quarters of a mile long and half a mile broad; it is in a very similar position, at a high level, and nearly surrounded by hills, but at one side there is a great descent into a steep valley or ravine.

It is these two hollows that give a name to the country of the Dogras; the old appellation was Dvigartdesh, which in Sanskrit means "two-hollow-country"; this has become altered to Dûgar.

The country on the west of the Chînâb River we shall pass over in journeying to Kashmir, but one or two places away from the route may here be mentioned. A few miles short of the Jhelam is *Mîrpûr*, a good large town; it must be the next after Jummoo in size among those in the Outer Hills; it is a flourishing place, from, I think, its being a centre, or a place of agency, for an export trade in wheat that is carried on by the Jhelam River from these hills to the places in its lower course. Some spacious houses belonging to Khatrîs must have been built from the profits of this trade.

Pûnch is a place of more than common importance. It is the seat of Raja Motî Singh, who, under the Maharaja his cousin, holds a considerable tract of country in fief. Pûnch is a compact town, with a good bazaar; it is situated at the meeting of two valleys, which make a wide opening among the hills; the valley itself being somewhat over 3000 feet above the sea, we are here in a part that may be reckoned to belong either to the Outer Hills or to the Middle Mountains. There are here a fort and palace, lately added to and improved with much taste by Raja Motî Singh.

All over the low hills, on both sides of the Chînab, there are hill-forts in extraordinary number. They were built at the time when each little tract had its own ruler, and each ruler had to defend himself against his neighbour. These forts are commonly on the summit of some rocky hill, with naturally-scarped face; by their position and by the way they were planned, they were well protected against escalade. Though now they have all come into the hands of one ruler, they are still kept up, that is so far that a small garrison—may be only of a dozen men—is kept in each. Some of the most known are Mangla, on the Jhelam; Mangal Dev, near Naushahra; and Troch, near Kotlî; these are each on the summit of a rocky precipitous hill most difficult of access.

CHAPTER III.

THE COURT OF JUMMOO.

JUMMOO from time immemorial—the natives say for five thousand years—has been the seat of the rule of a Hindû dynasty of the Râjpût caste, as it is at this day. There is a great contrast between the narrow limits of the power of the earlier rulers and the wide extent of territory governed by the present one. A century ago the old régime was flourishing under Raja Ranjît Dev; he is still spoken of with the highest respect as a wise administrator, a just judge, and a tolerant man. At that time the direct rule of the Jummoo Raja hardly extended so much as twenty miles from the city; but he was lord of a number of feudatory chiefs, of such places as Akhnûr, Dalpatpûr, Kiramchi, and Jasrota, all in the Outer Hill tract, chiefs who governed their own subjects, but paid tribute to, and did military service for, their liege of Jummoo.

During a portion of the year they would be present at that city, attending the court of the ruler and holding separate ones themselves. At this day various spots in the town are remembered where each of these tributaries held its court on a minor scale. Doubtless there was some petty warfare, resulting sometimes in an extension and sometimes in a contraction of the power of the central ruler; but usually the chiefs were more occupied in sport than in serious fighting, and, in fact, the various families

had continued in nearly the same relative positions for great lengths of time.

From the time of Ranjît Dev's death the fortunes of Jummoo became more dependent than before on the world outside the rugged hills, the result being a change in, and at length almost a complete break-up of, the old system of government. At the time spoken of, the Sikhs had become rulers of the neighbouring part of the Panjâb. In the exercise of their love of fighting and of an increasing desire for power, they mixed themselves up with one of those succession disputes so characteristic of oriental dynasties, which arose at Jummoo; they attacked and plundered that city, and the old hill principality became dependent on the sect which now dominated the Panjâb.

When Ranjît Singh* became the chief ruler of the Sikhs and had established himself at Lâhor, he found the hill districts in a state of much disquiet, and bethought him of a plan for settling these affairs by establishing at Jummoo, Râmnagar, and Pûnch, three brothers, favourites of his, who were connected with the old rulers of Jummoo. These three, Gulâb Singh, Dhiyân Singh, and Suchet Singh, who, it is said, were descended in the third generation from a brother of Ranjît Dev, were young men at the time when Ranjît Singh's rise to chief power at Lâhor made that the most likely place for the advancement of those whose only trade was fighting. The brothers came to Ranjît Singh's court with the object of

* The title "Singh" used to be borne almost exclusively by Râjpûts; in later years it came to be used by men of the Sikh sect, of whatever caste they might be. Ranjît Singh was of the Jat caste, and was in no way connected either with Ranjît Dev or with any of the Dogrâ tribe.

pushing their way as soldiers of fortune. Gulâb Singh first became a *sawâr*, or trooper, under Jemadâr Khushiâl Singh, a trusted servant of Ranjît Singh's. It was not long before Dhiyân Singh attracted the attention of the ruler, for he was a young man of considerable gifts of person as well as mental talents. He obtained the special favour of Ranjît Singh, and before long was advanced to the important post of deodhîwâlâ or deorhîwâlâ, that is to say, chief door-keeper. In a native court, a place of personal government, the door-keeper, possessing as he does the power of giving or restraining access to the chief, has considerable influence; this influence Dhiyân Singh now exerted to advance his family, and it was not long before the fortunes of all three became well founded.

Gulâb Singh rose to the independent command of a troop, and, distinguishing himself in one of the hill wars, was rewarded with the rajaship of his own home, Jummoo, to be held in fief under the Lâhor ruler. This was about the year 1820. Soon Dhiyân Singh and Suchet Singh received respectively Pûnch and Râmnagar on the same terms.

Gulâb Singh spent most of his time at Jummoo and in its neighbourhood, occupied first in consolidating and then in extending his power, though, as occasion required, he would, as was his bounden duty, join the Sikh army with his forces, and take part in their military operations. His own immediate subjects had, by the continuance of disturbances and the absence of settled rule, become somewhat lawless; robbery and murder were common; it is said that at that time a cap or pagrî that a traveller might wear was enough for a temptation to plunder

and violence. With a firm hand he put this down, and brought his country to such a state of quiet and security as makes it at this moment in that respect a pattern. As to the feudal chiefs around him, he, in some cases—for what particular causes or with what excuses it is difficult at this time to trace—confiscated their fiefs and became direct ruler; in other cases he retained and attached to his government the nobles, while gradually lessening their political importance. The tendency of his government was always towards centralization. He was a man of stronger character than most of the rulers that had preceded him, and probably his experience in the wider area of the Panjâb had taught him both the advantages and the feasibility of relatively diminishing the power of feudal subordinates.

Gulâb Singh in later years came in contact with many Englishmen, and several of these have written their impressions of his character. I myself never saw him; he died before I came to Jummoo; but his doings and sayings were still much thought of there, and I endeavoured to form, from what I heard, an estimate of his character.

As a soldier he seems to have been thoroughly brave, but always careful and prudent. Though few great feats of arms are recorded of him, yet he was generally successful. He was more ready to intrigue than to employ force; but when the necessity for fighting was clear, he proved almost as much at home in it as he was in diplomacy. A great part of his success was due to the wisdom he displayed in recognizing the times when each could with most advantage be brought into play.

As an administrator he was better than most of those of his own time and neighbourhood, but yet the results of his rule do not give one the highest impression of his powers in this respect. He knew how to govern a country in the sense of making his authority respected all through it. For the carrying out of the further objects of good government he probably cared little; his experience had shown him no instance of their attainment, and possibly he had not in his mind the idea of a government different in kind from that which he succeeded in administering; for of all the governments within reach of his observation those were good in which the authority of the ruler was assured by force and the revenue came in punctually. On this principle he consolidated his power.

One of his chief faults was an unscrupulousness as to the means of attaining his own objects; he did not draw back from the exercise of cruelty in the pursuit of them, but he was not wantonly cruel. An avariciousness always distinguished him; in the indulgence of the passion he was unable to take the wide view by which his subjects' wealth would be found compatible with the increase of his own.

Some qualities had Gulâb Singh which mitigated the effects of an administration worked on the principles above denoted. He was always accessible, and was patient and ready to listen to complaints. He was much given to looking into details, so that the smallest thing might be brought before him and have his consideration. With the customary offering of a rupee as *nazar* anyone could get his ear; even in a crowd one could catch his eye by holding up a rupee and crying out "*Mahârâj, 'arz*

hai!" that is, "Maharaja, a petition!" He would pounce down like a hawk on the money, and having appropriated it would patiently hear out the petitioner. Once a man after this fashion making a complaint, when the Maharaja was taking the rupee, closed his hand on it and said, "No, first hear what I have to say." Even this did not go beyond Gulâb Singh's patience; he waited till the fellow had told his tale and opened his hand; then taking the money he gave orders about the case.

Without entering into the details of the extension of Gulâb Singh's power, I may say that in the next ten or fifteen years all the Outer Hill region and some of the mountain tract had become completely subject either to him or to his brothers, with whom he acted in concert. Then he turned his attention to wider fields. In the years from 1834 to 1841, a lieutenant of his, Zurâwar Singh by name, effected the conquest of Ladâkh and Baltistân, which are mountain tracts of great area but little population lying behind the Snowy Range. Fortune still favoured Gulâb Singh; by the death of his brother, Suchet Singh, the principality of Râmnagar fell to him, so that soon there was but one country left which he much coveted; that country was Kashmir, and the events of the winter of 1845-6 ended in its acquisition.

War broke out between the Sikhs and the British (whose frontier was then the Sutlej River) in the autumn of 1845, when Ranjît Singh had been dead some eight years, and there was no longer a strong ruler to keep in hand the turbulent Sikh nation.

Gulâb Singh had for some time kept aloof from Lâhor politics, and was not involved in the court intrigues that

led to the movement of the Sikh army into British territory; neither did he hurry down with his troops to help the Sikhs as he would have done in the time of his old master Ranjît Singh. He kept away until the decisive battle of Sobrâon was fought, at which victory declared for the British. Then he appeared almost as mediator between the two contending powers, for after the various revolutions and massacres that had lately occurred at Lâhor, and the late defeats of the Sikh army, there seemed to be none but Gulâb Singh who could shape events, who could guide the Sikh nation to any sensible course. The confidence of the British too he had before acquired; especially had Sir Henry (then Colonel) Lawrence, who was now one of the diplomatic officers employed in the negotiations, formed both a friendship for Gulâb Singh and a high opinion of his sagacity and of his usefulness to those who could enlist his interests.

The result was that Kashmir (which in 1819 had been conquered by the Sikhs from the Afghans) was detached from the Sikh territories and handed over by the British to the Raja of Jummoo, the higher title of Maharaja being then conferred on him; Gulâb Singh at the same time paid over to the British the sum of 750,000*l.* and acknowledged the supremacy of the British Government, and agreed to certain stipulations which are laid down in the Treaty, which was signed on 16th of March, 1846. Thus it comes about that the Maharaja of Jummoo and Kashmir is a ruler tributary to the Empress of India, with relations carefully defined by Treaty, the upshot of which may be said to be that he is obliged to govern his foreign policy according to the views of the Government of India,

while in domestic administration he is nearly independent.

In the year 1857 Maharaja Gulâb Singh died; he was succeeded by his son, the present Maharaja, Ranbîr Singh, being about twenty-seven years of age. To Maharaja Ranbîr Singh's Court I came in 1862, and for the next ten years I remained in his service. Several successive summers found me occupied in the geological exploration of the mountains, for which originally I was engaged; later the management of the Maharaja's Forest Department devolved upon me; in my last year of service I was entrusted with the governorship of the Province of Ladâkh. During almost every winter several months were passed by me at Jummoo in daily attendance at his Court, so that the ways and doings of the Darbâr became almost as familiar to me as the customs of my own country. Of these doings I will now tell something to the reader.

It is the Maharaja's custom twice daily to sit in public Darbâr, to hold open court, for the hearing of petitions. The Mandî, or public place of Jummoo, has then its liveliest appearance, for many are those affected by what goes on at such a court, and for all of a certain standing it is an occasion on which they pay their respects to the Maharaja, whether business requires their attendance or not. At the morning Darbâr the Maharaja will take his seat at nine or ten o'clock beneath one of the arches of the arcade that runs along the side of the Square, at a level a few feet above where the petitioners and the outer public stand. His seat will be the flat cushion that here answers for throne; on one side will be his eldest son, on the other

the chief minister, while other ministers and courtiers and attendants will be seated round the chamber against the wall, in order more or less according to their degree.

Each and all sit cross-legged on the carpet, only the ruler himself and his son having the flat round cushion that denotes superiority. Perhaps some readers require to be told that all natives of India doff their shoes on coming to a carpet or other sitting place; here, from the Maharaja downwards, all of them are barefoot; their shoes are left outside, and socks they are not used to. Thus seated and supported, with a guard drawn up outside, the Maharaja looks out down on the petitioners who stand in the Square. Each coming in succession, according as his petition, previously written on stamped paper and given in, is called on, stands in front with hands closed in the attitude of supplication, while the prayer is read out.

The subjects of the petitions are wonderfully varied; perhaps an *employé* will ask leave to return to his home, or to take his mother's ashes to the Ganges; next, may be, a criminal is brought to receive final sentence; then a poor woman, with face veiled, will come to complain of some grievance or other; or a dispute about a broken contract of marriage will have to be decided. These are all listened to patiently enough, and on the simpler cases the decision is given at once and written on the petition. The civil and criminal cases have usually been previously inquired into by judicial officers, in the courts of first instance, and perhaps have even been adjudicated on by the Appeal Court of Jummoo or of Sirînagar, but it is open to suitors and complainants to try their fortune with the Maharaja himself. The Maharaja does his best to

get at the truth; will examine and sharply cross-examine the witnesses. It frequently ends in his referring the matter to the magistrate for investigation; in which case it will be again brought before him for final decision.

During this time the Square is thronged by numbers of people of such variety of races as is not often seen even in India. There are men from all parts of the dominions. Some from the higher countries, come to find work at Jummoo when their own homes are deep-covered with snow; others are here to prosecute a suit, for which purpose they are ready, and sometimes find it necessary, to give up months of their winter. There are Kashmîrîs and Baltîs by scores, Pahârîs of various castes, Ladâkhîs occasionally; some recognizable at once by the cast of their features, others by a characteristic way of keeping the hair; the stalwart heavy frame of the practised Kashmîrî porter too is unmistakable. All these we shall in turn visit in their homes. Then from beyond the territories come occasional travellers, as Yârkandî merchants, or pilgrims to Mecca from, may be, farther off still; while from the west there is always a succession of Kâbulîs and other Pathâns or Afghâns. Horse merchants from Kâbul are always finding their way to Jummoo to sell their animals to the Government, while wild fellows out of the villages of that country or of the neighbouring Yûsufzai come eagerly to take service among the Irregulars of the Maharaja's army.

Thus till nearly noon the whole town is alive with business in the streets and with Government work in the Square. Then the Court breaks up, and the Maharaja goes in to his dinner; the ministers disperse to their

homes, each of them accompanied by a string of followers, or "clientèle," who will now be able to get a hearing from their patron in the half hour before dinner; the offices close, the guard of honour is dismissed, and in a very few minutes the Square is quiet and almost deserted.

So for three hours it remains; and for that time business is slack in the bazaars, till men, waking up from their siesta, bestir themselves again. At four or five o'clock the Maharaja comes out for a ride; his elephants and horses have been waiting at the Palace-gate; the ministers had gone in and now accompany him out, one of them probably mounting on the same elephant with him, or if the Maharaja chooses to ride on horseback, all will closely follow him. Orderlies run, some in advance to clear the way, and some at the Maharaja's very side, even holding on to his saddle-trappings. The natives of India are not ashamed of, and do not in any way dislike, this close attendance, which adds both to their state and their safety. They are puzzled to understand how it is that Englishmen like better to walk alone.

A three- or four-mile ride, a visit to some building in progress, or to one of the temples, perhaps flying a hawk, or paying respects to his spiritual adviser, the only person whose house he enters, these pursuits fill up the time of the Chief till dark, and then the evening Darbâr begins.

This will probably be a more private one; or the Mîân Sâhib, the Maharaja's eldest son, will hear petitions, while his father does business with some of the ministers apart. It must also be borne in mind that business is not

the only thought of a ruler while sitting in Court. The Darbâr is not like the Kachahrî of a Deputy Commissioner in our Indian Provinces, from which he runs away the moment he can get free. It is at the same time a social meeting; a chief opportunity for the ruler to see people from all parts, and to hear—if he will choose to ask, and they are straightforward enough to give—opinions on what is going on in the world. So conversation often alternates with work, especially in these evening Darbârs, which thus last on till eight or nine o'clock, when all disperse to their homes, to supper and bed.

Such are the every-day customs of the Court, which are followed with great regularity.

There are certain days, days of festival, when special Darbârs are held in somewhat different form. These four —Basant Panchmî, Nauroz, Sâîr, and Dasera—particularly should be noticed.

Early in our year, on the fifth of the Hindû month of Magh, the feast of *Basant Panchmî* is held in honour of the coming of spring, which by that time is thus near that the very coldest weather has gone by and the tide of the season has turned.

Everyone on that day wears yellow, some dressing completely in that colour, others only putting on a yellow pagrî.

It is the custom on this and on the other three days above named, for the Maharaja's servants to bring him a *nazar*, a present—usually of money—according to the means, or rather in proportion to the pay, of the giver. This has now become so regulated that everyone is on these days obliged to give from a tenth to a twelfth of his

monthly pay. These sums amount in the year to what is equivalent to a three-per-cent. income-tax, levied, however, only on Government servants.

To receive these presents and to do honour to the day, a grand Darbâr and parade of troops is held. The first time I was present it took place in the open, on a raised platform at the edge of the Parade-ground, beneath a large shâmiâna, or awning. The Maharaja and all the members of the Court came in procession from the Palace, on elephants and horses decked in their most gorgeous trappings; the elephants are almost covered with long velvet cloths embroidered deep with gold, upon which the howdahs are mounted.* The horses are handsomely caparisoned with velvet and gold saddle-cloths and jewelled head-stalls.

The Maharaja, dressed in yellow and silver, takes his seat upon a cushion covered with a silver-embroidered velvet cloth of the same colour; for yellow pervades the whole ornamentation. Then the troops, who were drawn up in line all round the Parade, in number from between two and three thousand, after a general salute, march past, and at the same time the presentation of nazars begins.

First the Mîân Sâhib and his younger brothers put before their father bags of gold coins; the chief Dîwân follows with a smaller number, and the other ministers and courtiers in succession give something, either in gold or rupees. The number of coins presented, when not

* Here are none of the canopied howdahs common in the states of Hindostân; ours are in the form of trays with upright sides; they are covered with silver or silver-gilt plate; there is room for three people to sit cross-legged in each.

calculated upon the income (as it is not with the few higher members of the Court), is always an odd number, as 11, 21, or 101. Then the servants of lower rank come forward, each being presented by the head of his department; the name of each is read from a list, and the amount of his nazar is marked down; those that are absent will have the sum deducted from their pay. So a large heap of rupees gradually accumulates in front of the Maharaja.

All through this time, besides the hum and hubbub of so many people pushing impatiently forward to come in front of His Highness that their salaam may be noticed, there is the noise of the bands of the regiments as they march past; or, when that is over, of the dancing and singing of the dance-girls, who from the first have been waiting in numbers. But with all this the Maharaja will find occasion to give a kind word to some old servant, or a word of encouragement to the son of one who may be presented for the first time, showing by his greetings how good a memory he has for people and for faces. Then, later, a few poor people, perhaps gardeners or such, on so little a month that the tenth of it would not amount to a piece of silver, will come with a tray of fruit or vegetables, and be happy if the Maharaja takes notice of it. When all have passed, a little time may be spent in watching the nautch, or dance, and then, the Maharaja rising, the assembly disperse.

The next periodical Darbâr is on *Nauroz*, a Persian festival introduced into India by the Muhammadan rulers, and now kept up even in such a thoroughly Hindû Court as this. It is here celebrated in just the same way as the

last, without, however, the prevalence of yellow in the dresses.

The third festival is called *Sâîr;* it is held in the autumn. In this, which lasts for several days, not only the Government servants are present, but heads of villages, tradespeople, workmen, and others, from many days' journey around, come in, bringing with them for presents specimens of their work, or of the products of their land or neighbourhood. On this day green is the prevailing colour worn.

The fourth and last of the nazar-darbâr days is *Dasera.* It is a great festival, celebrated all over India in memory of the victory of Râma, or Râm, one of the chief heroes of Hindû mythology, over Râwan, or Râvana, the King of Ceylon. The several incidents of the war, as told in the Mahâbhârata, are illustrated during a succession of days. Dasera is the last of these, when an immense image is placed to represent Râwan; Sîta, the wife of Râm, whom Râwan had stolen away, personated by a boy dressed up, is carried towards, and lets fly an arrow against him. This is the signal for a general assault, and in the midst of the roar of artillery the images of Râm's enemies are blown up, burnt, and destroyed. It is just before this climax that the nazars are presented.

As this Darbâr is held at the beginning of the cold weather, it is usually the first day of coloured clothes, pashmîna being worn in place of the plain white calico and muslin common through the hot weather; so the dresses are gay and varied.

There are a few other feasts held which may have an interest.

Holî is a strange festival, a carnival indeed, the object and origin of which are not very clear. It is a movable feast, and comes in February or March. While it continues the Hindûs free themselves, or at all events consider that they have a right to be free, if they choose, from the restraints of decorum, and indulge in fun. In some places and in some Courts the carnival is kept up with great spirit for many days. Ranjît Singh's Court was noted for its celebration of Holî. At Jummoo it lasts a week, during which time business is attended to in the mornings as usual, but each afternoon is given up to the rites and orgies of the Holî. All the courtiers, dressed in white, take their seats, with the Maharaja, in some open place; then there are distributed around handfuls of yellow, red, and purple powder, which the people throw over one another, till their faces and beards are completely covered with it, and become of a frightful hue; then syringes are brought, and coloured water is squirted about, till all, the Maharaja included, are in as good a mess as can be imagined. At certain times, at a word from the Maharaja, the two lines of people facing each other make a mimic attack, by throwing handfuls of the powder and balls of gelatine or glue filled with it, till the whole air is made dark with the clouds of it.

On the last day the licence of Holî is allowed in the streets as well; then no one can complain if, on going through them, he be pelted with colour-balls, or showered on with tinted water.

Diwâlî is held at the beginning of winter. It is a day for the worship of Lakshmî, the goddess of wealth; the characteristic of it is illumination. Lamps are placed in

long regular lines on the cornices of all the public buildings, and hardly a house is left without its own row of little oil lamps. The name of the day must be derived from the Hindû word *dîvâ*, a lamp. At this time merchants collect their money in a heap, and bow down and worship it. Gambling, too, is practised by nearly all on this day, under the notion that it will bring luck for the coming year. In the evening a dress Darbâr is held. It is the custom to begin illuminations early, almost before it falls dark, and they are over by the time that in England they first light up.

Lorî is a festival and religious ceremony, not, I think, general through India, but observed in these hills and in the Panjâb. The religious part of it consists in offering a burnt sacrifice, but to whom the sacrifice is made I never was able to find out. A large fire is made in the Square; the Maharaja and his people, having first made their obeisances in the temple hard by, standing round, throw in handfuls of grain of all sorts, the signal for this being the decapitation by sword of a white kid, the head of which they throw into the fire first. The people keep the feast as well; in passing down the bazaars on this night, one has difficulty, in the narrow streets, to avoid the fires that every here and there are burning for the sacrifice.

In these and all other festivals and rejoicings, the chief entertainment of the Darbâr is the nautch, or dance. Twenty or thirty dancing-girls are assembled, but the dancing is done by but one at a time. She—followed closely by two or three men, each drumming with his hands on a pair of small drums fastened in front of them,

end up—advances with short steps taken on the heel, almost without lifting the foot off the ground, so that the movement is hardly indicated by any change in the position of the body. This is accompanied by stretching out and posturing of the arms and hands in as elegant a fashion as possible; and the women of India have generally very well-formed hands and arms, which their tight-fitting sleeves show off.

Then the girl begins a song of a somewhat monotonous melody, plaintive in effect, but partly spoiled by the shrill and loud tone it is given in. Here the accompaniment of the men with drums comes in, and they join their voices, too, exceeding the lady in volume of sound and in harshness.

The women are dressed not untastefully, except for their fashion of high waists. They have a gown with a long skirt in many gathers, usually of coloured muslin; over their heads they wear a châdar, or long veil, often of muslin inwoven with gold; this is used by modest women to keep the face from the view of strangers; here it is held and moved about in graceful ways, and made of more service to set off than to conceal the beauties of the wearer. Over the forehead hang gilt or golden ornaments, and round the ankles are strings of little round silver bells, which are made to tinkle in time with the dance by striking the heels together.

There is no real dance, either of steps or figures; it is simply advancing and retiring to music; the end of it, apparently, is the display of the girl's face and of the graceful movements of the arms. Although for us, who are used to greater variety and activity of movement, and

are used to seeing women unveiled, these nautches are tame enough, and, after the first, hardly worth looking at, yet they are certainly much enjoyed by the people of India. The song, too, is much thought of and delighted in. At our Darbâr all sit gazing continuously; there is seldom any conversation held during the time; all solemnly look on and listen.

The Maharaja sometimes varies the really close labour of his daily courts, and the established periodical festivals, with a day given over to Shikâr or sport. For this he preserves closely for some twenty miles on each side of Jummoo, along the foot of the hills and over the plain. The game is chiefly pig, but spotted deer also are found. The hunting season is in the cold weather, from October or November till March.

In some parts, where there is no open ground, the coverts are driven towards a line of stages * made among the branches of the trees, on each of which sits a marksman, so as to be out of sight of the game. A large bag is usually got from a drive of this kind.

The more exciting sport, however, is pig-sticking, for which in some places the ground is well adapted. The following is the method. The rendezvous is from seven to twenty miles away from Jummoo; the kind of place chosen is where there is a good large covert, one thick enough for the pig to be at home in, or else a field of sugar-cane, with an open plain in front, and, if possible, no more cover for half a mile or more. Preparations are

* The stage is called *mannâ*, in Dogrî; in Hindostânî, *machân*.

made and orders are sent out the evening before. Through the night, sepoys and watchmen are going through all the villages that are to be called on for their services, giving notice, by crying out with a loud voice, of the place and time of meeting. It is incumbent on the inhabitants to send one man from every house, and before sunrise these take their way, stick in hand, and some with tomtoms and other equally musical instruments, to the appointed place.

The Maharaja may start from Jummoo about sunrise; he is accompanied by all his Court; they will, probably, ride to the meet on elephants. Then there is a long procession of followers—there are scores of led horses; then commonly a squadron of lancers from one of the regiments; numbers of the Mîâns, who are always eager for this sport; numerous attendants on the Dîwâns and the Wazîrs; bandûqis, or orderlies of the Maharaja, carrying long guns in a loose red cloth cover; men with dogs of various sorts coupled together; *bauriâs*, men whose business is snaring, with their short heavy spears and their snares; one or two *Hakîms*, or physicians, and many others who do not intend to take part in the hunting, but come because there is nothing doing that day at Jummoo.

On the party reaching the covert-side, the beaters—the villagers who had been collected, who are generally about 2000 in number—are placed close in a line along one edge of the wood, and the riders take up their places on the opposite side in such positions as to have a vantage-ground for following up the pig when they break, without letting themselves be seen till such time

as the animal's retreat is irretrievably cut off. Then, when all is ready, the signal is given by bugle, and the whole line of men enter the wood together; keeping as close and as well in line as they can, they advance, beating every bush likely to conceal game of any sort, and uttering various frightening cries. All this being accompanied by the report of blunderbusses and the discordant sound of irregularly beaten drums. This, if well kept up, effectually drives forward all the game. The progress is, of course, slow—slow enough to keep in impatience the riders at the farther side, who from the beginning of the beating have been watching, spear in hand, for a break. First come out, as a rule, the jackals; then, perhaps, a hare or two; and later, when the line of beaters are closely nearing the edge, and there seems no other chance for it but to run, the pig break, often doing so in a spore of ten or a dozen, and make across the plain for the nearest wood; and then begins the rush.

In this "royal" hunt, with such a crowd of people mounted, it is impossible to enjoy the sport at its best. Your run after the boar you have singled out may be interrupted by some horsemen who have been waiting half a mile off, for the bare chance of something coming their way; or after one pig as many as twenty spears may be coming from different quarters, giving him no chance for his life. However, there is something to be got from it; a man well mounted is pretty sure of a spear or two, and often enough a pig will steal away clear of the crowd, and give good sport to the one or two riders who may have seen him.

With such numbers in the field the pig will meet their fate in various ways; besides the spearing they are pulled down by dogs that are let loose on them; sometimes a sepoy on foot will cut down a pig with his talwâr, or sword; some, again, are knocked over by the bauriâs, with their heavy spears; and others are caught in the snares and there murdered. On an ordinary good day twenty or thirty are sure to be brought in.

If in the course of the beating any number of pigs have broken through the line—which they are very apt to do, as the men will often let them pass through in preference to facing them—the same jungle is beaten over again for a second chance, and then perhaps another covert is tried; and so on, with, may be, an hour's rest, for a picnic breakfast, till evening, when the whole party return in order as before to Jummoo; and the beaters, tired and hungry, take their way to their homes, having performed a service which may be said to be one of the conditions of tenure of their land.

A royal marriage was an event, not occurring often in Jummoo, at which I had the fortune to be present, in the beginning of 1871.

Such an event was unusual, because in former times, and down to only twenty-five years before, it had been the practice for people of the caste to which the Maharaja belongs—the branch of the Râjpûts which hold their traditional customs in purity, and allow their hands to be sullied by no labour but the work of fighting or hunting,—to destroy their female children immediately

after birth. The men, unable to find wives among their own caste-people, took them from the caste next below.

So it happened that for long there had been no marriage of a daughter of the house of the Rajas of Jummoo, though tradition spoke of such a thing as having, from some special circumstances, occurred eighty years or so ago.

This practice of infanticide coming to an end in 1846, Maharaja Gulâb Singh, a few years afterwards, opened his eyes to the fact that he had a granddaughter, and was at a loss to know to whom he should marry her. For it was no easy matter; the giving of a girl in marriage is acknowledging yourself to be lower in caste-standing than the family she goes to, and there were few in this part of India of whom he would willingly acknowledge that. But a neighbouring Raja there had been, the Raja of Jaswâl, near Kângrâ, whose family was ancient and descent pure enough to satisfy the Jummoo family. He, however, had been dispossessed of his principality by the British, on account of participation in one of those conspiracies and combinations that some of the Panjâb chiefs made against our power in the interval between the two Sikh wars. At the time we speak of he was detained a state prisoner in British India. Him Maharaja Gulâb Singh begged off, explaining his purpose that a scion of the Raja's family should marry his granddaughter. So for many years the Jaswâl Raja lived in the Maharaja's territory, and now had come the time for the marriage of his son with the present Maharaja's daughter.

It had been delayed later than had been expected, and the two were older than Hindû bride and bridegroom

commonly are. The bridegroom was about twenty, and the bride had reached fifteen; but now, at last, in the spring of 1871, all was ready.

I had an opportunity of seeing the *trousseau*, which was on view in the Palace at Jummoo. With it was put the dowry. Indeed, there is here no distinction between the two. The principle is that everything, including cash, that can be wanted in a household, should be supplied in quantity enough to last for many years.

The things were laid out in one of the large reception halls, and, overflowing that, filled also side rooms and verandahs, while the more bulky and rougher articles occupied the courtyard. It was really a rich display. In front of the entrance was a heap of money-bags—one hundred thousand rupee bags—making a lakh of rupees, the value of 10,000*l.* Close by, on trays, were gold coins to the amount of 2500*l.* Then, laid all over the floors in trays, were the dresses, eleven hundred in number, both made up and in piece, of muslin, silk, pashmîna, and gold brocade, some undoubtedly rich, and all more or less adorned with gold braiding or edging; with many of them were gold-worked slippers, these long and narrow, with the heel pressed down.

Next in importance was the jewellery, divided into two classes, one of plain gold and silver, and one with precious stones, besides necklaces of gold coins. Near these were silver dishes for household purposes, and a tray and cups of solid gold. Along one side were elephant and camel trappings, including much of massive silver; and there were some handsome ornamental saddlery, and silver bells and necklaces for cows, besides many miscellaneous

things—fans of various sizes and shapes; a large state umbrella, with gold-covered stick; drums and horns, and, strangely enough, dolls and balls for the bride to play with.

We must not pass without notice the dhola, or palanquin, in which she is destined to be carried away, covered with gold brocade; while five plainer ones are ready for the five attendants who are to go with her. Outside were pitched a set of tents and awnings, laid with handsome carpets, all part of the outfit; and near at hand were exposed the household utensils—cooking-pots in number, and some of gigantic size for feasts; iron spits, and other cooking contrivances; axes, shovels, and a variety of other things too many to enumerate; *numbers of horse shoes and nails.*

The wedding and feasting took up three or four days. On the first, the bridegroom, with his father, came in procession through the city, dressed in gold brocade, and veiled with a fall made of strips of gold tissue. At nine in the evening, accompanied by a great crowd, they reached the Square, where they were met and greeted by the Maharaja, who retiring, the bridegroom and his father were brought, amid the glare and noise of fireworks and bombs, to the Shîsh Mahal, or mirror-room, and there sat surrounded by their own chief people and a few of the Maharaja's, while a nautch was performed in front of them. After half an hour the Raja and others left, and his son remained and had a light meal—all this being fixed in their customs, even to what he should eat.

After midnight, the bridegroom was carried inside the Palace, and the marriage ceremony was performed. This

is done in great privacy; not even the bridegroom's father is present, only the Maharaja himself, one or two pandits (the officiating priests), and one or two of the Maharaja's near relations. This, of course, I could not myself witness; but I heard of a curious part of the ceremony. When the Maharaja is to give away the bride, as the gift should come from both him and his wife, the Mahârânî, being behind a curtain, is connected to her husband by a long piece of cloth, and so made partner in the rite. The ceremony lasted, I believe, two or three hours, and then the bridegroom, leaving his bride still in her father's house, returned to his quarters.

Another of the strange customs is that when the bridegroom comes to the bride's house, as at this time, he is assailed by the women of the household with abuse, and songs of reproach are sung at him; these, I believe, are composed of nothing better than the equivalents of the usual Indian abusive terms.

It must be understood that the occasion is not supposed to be one of rejoicing on the side of the bride's party, but rather one of grief; thus all the signs of enjoyment were on the bridegroom's side. The fireworks and salutes and all were prepared by his people only, and, on this same principle, we of the Maharaja's Darbâr wore no better or gayer clothes than our every-day ones.

The next day there was nothing doing, except that the bridegroom's people held high festival at their own place, in which none of our side joined.

The third day the Maharaja entertained the party at dinner. The preparations were made in a courtyard having arcades on two sides of it. The bridegroom and

his father first came and sat down for a while with the Maharaja, who was seated beneath an awning on the roof, at a spot which commanded a view of the whole; then these visitors were conducted below, and all their party (who amounted to 700) placed themselves according to their own arrangement. All this preparation took a couple of hours. At last all were seated, either under the arcade or in the open, on strips of woollen cloth (which is supposed to have some special character of purity as compared with other fabrics), or else, in the case of Brahmans and a few others who do not eat meat, on a platter, so to say, of leaves sewn together. Then the serving of the meats, twelve or fifteen sorts, to each person, took nearly another hour. They were put into leaf-cups, while for the rice a leaf-platter was laid. At last, when the rice was served, a heap to each man, the Jaswâl Raja began his eating, and all followed suit, and well made up for the waiting. For drink, water is the only thing given. Soon after this, the Maharaja, who had been looking on at the preparations, left, for neither he nor any of his people were to partake with their guests.

The next was the last day of the ceremonies. The bridegroom was to take away his bride. At two or three in the afternoon, he came quite quietly on an elephant, and went inside the Palace, while the courtiers congregated on the steps leading down from the Palace-door, and all the people of the city looked on. The procession, which was to be long, slowly began to file away. In speaking of the dowry, I had not mentioned that a number of horses, cows, camels, &c., formed part of it. These now headed the procession; first proceeded 51

cows, then 51 buffaloes, adorned with red and yellow clothing and with the silver necklaces; then 51 fine camels passed, with cloths of the same colours; 300 sheep and goats, too, were collected, but they did not go out in procession. Next came coolis, carrying the trousseau; all the goods described above they carried in covered baskets on their heads, about one thousand men walking regularly in pairs; these were followed by a hundred sepoys in full uniform, bearing each a bag of 1000 rupees, thus was the lakh of rupees carried; then the gift horses were led out, showy in action and gaily trapped, followed by three elephants, which also formed part of the dowry.

Immediately after these, appeared, from the gateway of the inner palace, the dhola, in which were the bride and bridegroom; so closely covered was it that not a glimpse of them could be got; this, too, was their first interview with each other, for they had only met once before, and that was at the marriage ceremony, when they were both veiled. The Maharaja accompanied the bride and bridegroom to just outside his doors, and no farther. Then joined in the procession, so as to precede the dhola or palanquin, the singers and players with their tomtoms and their squeaky instruments, while immediately in front of it walked five of the Maharaja's chief officers; then came the Mîân Sâhib, the bride's brother, on foot, holding the pole of the palanquin. The procession was closed by two of the Maharaja's treasurers scattering money from an elephant; first gold pieces, of which one saw handfuls glittering in the sun as they fell, and afterward rupees.

It should be told that a part, though only a small proportion, of the trousseau was of presents from the Maharaja's chief officers and dependents, and other natives of standing, who were invited from a distance. Estimating as near as was practicable, I concluded that the cost of what the Maharaja gave, including cash, goods, and animals, was about 70,000*l*.

The pair went at once to their new home, some twenty-five miles from Jummoo, where there had been assigned a jâgîr or estate for their maintenance.

CHAPTER IV.

REGION OF THE MIDDLE MOUNTAINS.

THE hills described in the preceding chapters are but the outer courts, so to say, roughly-paved courts it is true, of the Himâlayan fortress. Nor does the next tract belong to those lofty heights and mountain masses, which may be likened to its tower-encircled citadel. There is yet an intermediate space, one whose hills possess a certain character which the traveller at once notices, though it may be some time before he is able to define the distinction. For this I have adopted the name "Region of the Middle Mountains."

The map, having been coloured for another special object, cannot show clearly the boundaries, but for the reader it will be enough to know that the region includes the country around the following places: Bhadarwâh, Kishtwâr, Dodâ, Râmban, Râjâorî, Pûnch, and Muzafarâbâd. The tract is as much as forty miles in width on the east; it lessens to ten miles by Râjâorî, and spreads again towards the north-west, where its bounds are somewhat indefinite.

This whole space is occupied by hills whose summits are commonly eight, ten, or twelve thousand feet high, and whose slopes are covered either with pasture or with forest. It may be described as a hill mass cut into by the deep hollows of the great rivers, and indented by

innumerable valleys ramifying from them. From this cause there is hardly one flat piece remaining, whether plateau or valley-bottom. The form of the mountains bears a great contrast to that of the Outer Hills. These were sharp and rocky ridges more or less parallel, separated by flat valleys ; the Middle Mountains on the other hand we find to consist of ridges of varying irregular direction, branching again and again, whose slopes, but seldom rocky, lead down to narrow valleys closely bounded in.

The elevation of these Middle Mountains is sufficient to give a completely temperate character to the vegetation. Forests of Himâlayan oak, of pine, spruce, silver fir, and of deodar, occupy a great part of the mountain slopes ; the rest, the more sunny parts, where forest trees do not flourish, is, except where rocks jut out, well covered with herbage, with plants and flowers that resemble those of Central or Southern Europe. And cultivation has been carried to almost every place where it is practicable. Wherever, within the altitude that limits the growth of crops, the slope of the ground has allowed of it, the land has been terraced, and narrow little fields have been made.

But that more temperate climate which makes summer time so pleasant in this region limits also the productive power of the soil. It is only in the lowest parts that two crops can be got from the same land. The times of growth of the two sorts of crops, of wheat and barley on the one hand, and of maize, rice, or millet on the other, in most places overlap each other to an extent which varies with the height above the sea. Hence the wheat

does not ripen till it is too late to sow maize or millet. But some land being reserved for the first kind of crop and some for the other, they have, in a sense, two harvests.

Snow falls over all the tract. In the lower parts it just falls and melts; but in most it stays for months, and in some as long as five months. It is this circumstance of duration of snow that causes great distinctions between the inhabitants of these and of the Outer Hills, some details of which we shall presently look into.

I will now take the reader through one portion of this Middle Mountain region, whose description will serve to give him a true general idea of the whole. One year, after a long sojourn at Jummoo, which made a change to the higher regions more than usually welcome, I started in the early summer for a long march, of which the first two months were to be spent in that temperate clime. For in the neighbourhood of a great range of mountains one can move from a tropical heat to a temperature such as is enjoyed by Europeans in a few score miles; with a few thousand feet of ascent one experiences such changes as might be due to journeying through many degrees of latitude.*

My route was by way of Râmnagar. A three days' march from Jummoo, through the Outer Hills, brought us to that town. Behind Râmnagar rises a bold ridge, the first that belongs to the Middle Mountains.

* This fact the English in India were not long in profiting by when their authority extended to the Himâlaya. On ground which corresponds in character to the Middle Mountains, those well-known Hill stations, Simla, Masûrî, Dalhousie, and Marî, were built, which every year give relief to hundreds of our countrymen and women.

The path—one not fit for horses—rose up a long spur to the level of the ridge, which we crossed at a height of about 8000 feet.

From the surface of the ridge and of the spurs rocks here and there project, while the less steep portions are covered partly with pasture and partly with forest; the forest is of oak, with rhododendron and horse-chestnut among it, and, higher up, of deodar and pine. At this part and in the descent beyond, the general look of the hills reminded me of the Black Forest of Germany, of its darkly-wooded slopes and bare summits of the higher mountains.

A path led down, into the upper valley of the Tavî River, through a fine forest of spruce and silver fir (*Picea Webbiana*), and deodar-trees, with sloping glades of fresh grass, dotted with the young trees in such fashion that one might have thought one was in a well-cared-for shrubbery. In the valley we came to a village, on a flat surrounded close by the hills and shaded by walnut-trees; this is at a level of about 6600 feet; in a deep channel some 200 feet below, the river foams along.

The path, which now kept to the valley, was among deodar, silver fir, and spruce fir, with some pines of the species *Pinus excelsa*; each of these showed to perfection the beauties of their foliage; the pine-needles hung in light feathery sprays, the spruce boughs in graceful curves, with which contrasted the almost geometrical regularity of the silver-fir branches. The deodar, here, and wherever on the Himâlayas I have seen it, is much more like a Lebanon cedar than the trees, still young, growing in

England would lead one to suppose; the bending form of the boughs, as well as the particular light tint of green of the leaves of the young plant, are lost as the tree gets on in age, and the branches come to jut straight out and to make flat dark-leaved layers.

Following up the valley, we came upon snow. It was the beginning of May—hot summer in the plains and Outer Hills, spring in the region just past, but we came, as it were, to winter in rising; and it was with difficulty that we were able to find a space clear of snow on which the tents might be pitched, the elevation of this camp being 9500 feet.

We had now reached ground of somewhat different character. On the north was an amphitheatre made by rugged mountains of grey rock with snow-fields beneath; below the snow the amphitheatre enclosed a thick forest of alpine oak. This I saw when the evening sun was brightening the rounded masses of its foliage, from the midst of which rose here and there the straight forms of some dark fir-trees. The oak, *Quercus demicarpifolia*, is at this point the highest forest tree. Unlike the conifers, it flourishes on hills that have a south aspect; it grows certainly as high as 11,500 feet, and I think it reaches to close on 12,000, while of the firs the limit was only a little above 11,000 feet. The way led us to a part of the encircling ridge that was depressed, when a few hundred feet of steeper ascent brought us to a pass 10,900 feet above the sea. This pass is closed by snow for three months from the middle of December; later in the season than we came it would be practicable for ponies, which,

however, would have to be taken up the valley by a somewhat different road than ours.

The gaining of the summit opened to us a magnificent prospect as we looked beyond. On the right was a high peak, near at hand, brilliantly white with snow; from this mountain juts out a mighty spur, whose sides, that descend full 5000 feet, are clothed most thickly with fir forest. At its foot lies the Bhadarwâh Valley, a flat gently sloping to the north-west. The town and village that occupy it are in sight. Beyond that again rise hills like what we have near us, dark forest ridges, their spurs part grassy, part wooded. Last beyond—seen clear over these ridges—is a great snowy range, a serrated rocky line, with wide snow-fields in front of it, part of which is permanent snow. Some lofty sharp-pointed peaks rise from the general level of the range, the higher of which measure 17,000 and 18,000 feet.

Down from the pass was first a steep descent, which the snow made difficult for the laden men, and then a more gradual slope along a spur, through a forest of the same sorts of conifers, which, farther down, gave way to deciduous trees in their fresh spring colours.

When we had descended more than 5000 feet we reached the valley. This is a nearly flat-bottomed valley, a mile in width; in length it extends thus open for about four miles, above and below narrowing so as to leave hardly any space between the hill-slopes. The hills which bound it are the ends of spurs from the forest ridges. In this opening of the valley is the town of Bhadarwâh, which is a busy place, and, for a hill country, a populous one. I estimate that there are 600

or 700 houses, and about 3000 inhabitants. It is built almost entirely of deodar-wood; the framework of the houses is altogether of wood; only between the double plank-walls the spaces are filled in with stones, sometimes laid loose and sometimes cemented with mud; most of the houses have low gabled roofs roughly shingled.

Bhadarwâh has an open market-place, a long straight street leading to the Fort, two or three other bazaars, two mosques, and a large temple. The waters of one of the streams come through the middle of the town, and branches from it are brought through all the streets. Both in among the buildings and all round the place fruit-trees are growing—apple, pear, mulberry, apricot, and cherry, and there are poplars, and a few chînâr or plane trees.

More than half of the inhabitants of Bhadarwâh itself are Kashmîrî; these quite throw into the shade the original Hindû inhabitants; they have adopted almost all kinds of employment; numbers of them are shopkeepers, and numbers more are occupied in making shawls, on orders from Amritsar and Nurpûr. Some Kashmîrîs have land, and cultivate it themselves; some, indeed, do this for half the year, and follow shawl-weaving for the other half—during the long snowy winter. Around are several villages of Kashmîrîs; but outside the town, they are much outnumbered by the Bhadarwâhîs, the older inhabitants. Of these inhabitants of the Middle Mountains I now propose to say something, before speaking of any more places in particular. I shall call them by the same name, "Pahârî," which is given them by their neighbours: for although the word, meaning "mountaineer," is itself indefinite, yet it is restricted by the

Dogrâs to these particular races, and as there is no general name among the people themselves corresponding to what I want to express, I do not think we can do better than adopt it.

The Race Map shows the Pahârîs to extend over the tract I have called the Middle Mountains only as far west as Budil, by the Ans river; as to the part of that tract to the west and north-west, the people have already been described under the head of Chibhâlîs; the Muhammadanising of that country of Chibhâl preventing us from separating all the races that may have existed distinct in former times.

The space, then, coloured Pahârî on the Race Map, is occupied by mountaineers who have remained Hindû. Over the whole of it the people have a general resemblance. They are a strong, hardy, and active race, of good powerful frame. They have a straight forehead, good brow, with a nose markedly hooked, especially among the older men. Their black hair is allowed to grow to their shoulders; their beard and mustache are thickish, but the beard does not grow long.

The men all dress in a light grey thick woollen cloth, which is made in almost every house.* In some parts they wear a short coat, in others a long and full one, hitched up by a kamarband, or waistband, of a woollen sort of rope, wound many times round. Their pyjamas are loose down to the knee, but below that fit close; this is a very good form for hill countries.† Lastly, a lûî

* Pattû (puttoo) is the name for this coarse homespun cloth over all the hills and in Kashmir.

† See the cut on page 78 of some men of an allied race (the Gaddîs mentioned below), whose dress is the same as that of these Pahârîs, except as to the cap.

(looee) or blanket, of the same cloth, worn in many ways, according to the occasion, enables them to withstand all the severe weather they are exposed to.

The women have a long gown of the same homespun, and, like the men, wear a kamarband. In some parts the gown is of nearly black cloth instead of grey. Sometimes they wear a low round red cap.

The caste that among the Pahârîs prevails in numbers far over others is the Thakar, which was mentioned as occurring among the Dogrâs. The Thakars, indeed, have nearly all the land in proprietorship; they cultivate for the most part their own land; they are the peasantry of the mountains, as the Jats are of the Panjâb plain. The low castes, Dûm and Megh, are scattered about everywhere; they dress in the same way as the others, and have acquired something of the same general appearance, but are not such large men, nor have they as good countenances.

At the south-east end of this region, where it borders on the Chamba country, there is a race called Gaddîs (or Guddees), who seem to have come at some time or other from the Chamba Hills. They are Hindûs, and have the same subdivisions of caste as the others, but they do not keep their caste rules so strictly. They possess large flocks of sheep and herds of goats, and they migrate with them to different altitudes according to the season. When snow threatens on the higher pastures they descend, coming in winter to the Outer Hills, and even to the edge of the plains. In spring they turn their faces homeward, and step by step follow the returning verdure, by June reaching the highest pastures and the hamlets, where some of the family had kept warm their home.

The relationship of these Gaddîs to the other Pahârîs

cannot be a distant one. In physique they closely resemble the people we have described. It is likely that whatever peculiarities they possess have been acquired by specialisation of occupation through some centuries.

In dress they have one striking peculiarity in their hat, made of a stiff cloth, which is of a form indescribable, but it is well shown in the accompanying cut



GADDÌS: FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.

taken from a photograph. This gives a fair notion of the features of the Gaddîs, as well as of their dress, which, as stated before in the note, is the same as that of the Pahârîs, except as regards this peculiar hat.

As to the language of the Pahârîs; many separate dialects are spoken; every twenty miles or so will bring you within hearing of a new one. Places no farther apart than Râmban, Dodâ, Kishtwâr, Pâdar, and Bhadarwâh, have their own speech, which, though not incomprehensible to the people of the neighbouring place, still is very distinct from theirs. Counting all these together as Pahârî dialects, we may say that between Pahârî and Dogrî there is so much difference as to make Pahârî incomprehensible to a man of Dûgar.

From Bhadarwâh I made my way, in four days' march, to the town of Kishtwâr, which lies not far from the bank of the Chînâb River.

The Chînâb is one of the great rivers of the Panjâb. It rises in the country called Lâhol, in two streams, the Chandra and the Bhâga, the joining of whose names into Chandrabhâga makes the word by which the combined river is often known among Hindûs. The other name Chînâb, which is more usual, has, I think, the derivation that is so obvious and is commonly given to it, namely, Chîn-âb, the water of China, which name probably was given by the Muhammadans from a notion—by no means far from the truth—that it came from Chinese territory; for the sources of the river are very near to ground that was tributary (though by two removes) to China, and the tract it first flows through is inhabited by the Lâholîs, who are allied to the Chinese in speech, look, and religion. The river enters the Jummoo territories in the district called Pâdar, which we shall soon visit; from its entry it flows for a hundred and eighty miles through such country as we have been describing, in a valley cut

deep down in the mass of the Middle Mountains. I have either crossed or touched it at various points. At the great bend near Arnâs it begins to flow between steep inaccessible rocks. At Râmban the Jummoo and Kashmir road crosses by a wooden bridge of considerable span, where the river is about 2400 feet above the sea. Jangalwâr is the place at which, coming from Bhadarwâh, one reaches its banks; here the level of the water is about 3000 feet; a little farther up, the river comes through a narrow gorge formed by massive rocks; above, the valley opening, one approaches Kishtwâr.

My first view of Kishtwâr was from a commanding height. The view pleased the eye by displaying a plain in the midst of the mountains, not perfectly level, but undulating, everywhere cultivated, dotted with villages. This plain, which is about four miles in length from north to south and two miles across, is bounded on three sides by mountains, but on the west by a deep ravine where the river flows, the farther bank of this again being formed by lofty rocky mountains. The plateau is 5300 or 5400 feet above the sea. Nearly all is under cultivation. The villages are shaded by plane-trees and by fruit-trees; leading from one hamlet to another are hedge-rowed lanes, with white and yellow and red rose, and other shrubs, in flower. By the town is a beautiful piece of smooth, nearly level turf, half a mile long and a furlong broad, called the Chaugâm, a place in former times kept for Polo playing, for which the carved goal-stones still remain, but now only common hockey is played on it. When one has been travelling over rough roads in a mountain tract, and has not for many days seen any level ground, the sight of such

a plain as this of Kishtwâr gives one peculiar delight; the secluded space, so well adorned with verdure and with flowers, and enclosed by great mountains, has a pleasant restful look.

One conspicuous and beautiful feature is made by a waterfall of great height, which comes over the cliffs on the opposite side of the river. Of this fall it is impossible to obtain a near and at the same time general view, but by going some way down the slope we get a fair sight of it, though at the distance of a mile or more. The water comes down not in one but many jumps; the aggregate height of the falls within view is about 2500 feet, and above these are a few hundred feet more, which can be seen from other points. The first two falls are each of about 500 feet; these are conspicuous from the town; below them are two or three small ones, making up six or seven hundred feet more; then there are irregular drops and cascades, partly hidden by vegetation and by the irregularities of the channel, these extending for some eight hundred feet to the river; thus the two and a half thousand feet are made up.

In this waterfall there is every variety of movement. In the greater leaps the water—although in volume not little, for the roar is distinctly heard at a distance of two miles—becomes scattered into spray; again it collects and comes over the next ledge in a thick stream; in parts it divides into various lines, which, at the distance, seem vertical, immovable, white threads. In the morning sun the spray made in the greater leaps shows prismatic colours, visible even at the distance of our chosen point—a phenomenon attributed by the people of the place to

fairies who bathe in and display the strange hues of their bodies through the shower.

The small town of Kishtwâr is dirty and dilapidated. There are about two hundred houses, including a bazaar with some shops; but there was a complete absence of life, of the busy cheerfulness one sees in some bazaars.

The inhabitants are more than half Kashmîrî; the rest are Hindûs of the Thakar, Krâr, and other castes. The Kashmîrîs here, too, carry on their shawl work; there are some twenty workshops for it in the town. In this place, as in Bhadarwâh, they seem to have settled for some generations.

The climate of Kishtwâr is something like that of Bhadarwâh, but it is somewhat warmer, and must have a less fall of rain and snow. Snow falls during four months, but it does not stay on the ground continuously; it may do so for twenty days at a time. On the slope towards the river, 1000 or 1500 feet below, it stays but a day. The fruits produced are apple, quince, three kinds of pear, plum, a few apricots, cherry, peach, grape, mulberry, and walnut.

Kishtwâr used to be governed by Râjpût Rajas, who in early times probably ruled independent of all others.

The first whose name I can hear of is Raja *Bhagwân Singh*, who must have lived two hundred years or more ago. Three generations later came Raja Gîrat Singh. This one left his old faith and became a Muhammadan, being converted by the miracles of one Syed Shâh Farîd-ud-Dîn, in the time of the Emperor Aurangzeb, who gave him the new name and title of Raja Sa'âdat Yâr Khân.

This change of religion determined the faith of all the

succeeding Rajas; five more are recorded, who, curiously, received a name of the old Hindû fashion, and besides took a title and name that marked them as Muhammadans. The last independent Kishtwârî ruler was Raja Muhammad Teg Singh, called also Saif Ulla Khân. His territory was invaded by Raja Gulâb Singh, to whom Teg Singh gave himself up without fighting, and ever since then Kishtwâr has belonged to Jummoo.

Four days' march from Kishtwâr along the Chînâb Valley brings us to Pâdar. On the way the heights to which we had to rise, in order to avoid great cliffs that overhang the river, gave us some of the grandest views I had seen in the Himâlayas.

We looked across the valley, sometimes with a clear open view, sometimes getting peeps through the dense forest, on to great broken cliffs or rocky slopes that rose direct from the river for 6000 or 7000 feet; these were the ends of mighty spurs from the lofty ridge beyond, which we sighted, as we passed along, looking up the valleys that in succession opened between the spurs.

From one of the highest points reached, we saw as great a vertical height within a few miles as one can often see even in the Himâlayas. The summit was twelve miles off, and within that distance a height of 16,000 feet was visible. There rose a magnificent set of peaks, called the Brama peaks—five points in a sharp rocky ridge—20,000 and 21,000 feet high; some were so steep as to bear little or no snow; some were thickly clothed with it. A glacier occupied a hollow, and extended towards us for some miles, but ended off still high up. The rocky ridges and precipitous spurs that

lead down from the peaks are on a very great scale; a thousand-foot cliff would count for little among them. At the lower part of the slopes, wherever a little ledge has enabled the seed to lodge, deodar-trees crown the rocks. The river washed the foot of the spurs at a level of five or six thousand feet.

Passing on round mountain spurs on our own side, we suddenly come into view of the inhabited part of Pâdar, a number of villages occupying ground sloping to the river, backed by lofty, wooded and snow-capped, hills. The road brought us down to the level of these villages, and then led us along the river-side for a few miles to Atholî, which is the head-quarters of the district; this is situated on an alluvial plateau overlooking the Chînâb River. The river is here bridged in a way that is often adopted among these high mountains for the larger rivers, namely, by a suspension bridge of simple construction. First of all, a dozen or more ropes, more than long enough for the span, are made of twisted twigs, commonly of the birch, but other trees or shrubs are used as well; each of these ropes, rough, with the cut ends of the twigs projecting, is of such thickness that it can just be spanned with the finger and thumb. These are collected into three groups, each group of four or more ropes loosely twisted together; one of these cables is hung across for one's footing; the other two, a yard above it, one on each side, are for the passenger to steady himself. The passage of these rope bridges is usually not difficult; still, for some people, the seeing a torrent roaring beneath the feet, with only a few twigs for support, is nervous work; when, with a bridge of large span, there is a high wind

that sways it to and fro, it is really difficult to those unused, and even to those used to the work if they have to carry a load. Traffic is sometimes stopped for some hours by reason of the wind.

It will be understood that four-footed beasts cannot cross these bridges; ponies are sometimes swum over, aided by a rope held by a man who leads it across the bridge. This is a dangerous business for the animals, and it often leads to losses, for one mistake or a little hesitation will cause them to be drowned. I have met with one exception to the rule of four-footed animals not crossing rope bridges. I knew a dog that commonly followed his master over them; it was a spaniel of English extraction; he would deliberately, slowly, walk along the rough twig-ropes, steadying himself at every step; even when the bridge was swaying in the wind he never lost his nerve.

Such a bridge as this is renewed every three years, if before that it is not carried away by any unusual flood.*

The climate of Pâdar is severe. From its elevation, and the considerable moisture of its air, there is a great fall of snow in winter. I hear that snow gets to be three feet deep and stays four or five months, and that there is a good chance of it falling at unseasonable times besides. This and a want of sun make it difficult for the crops to

* In some parts of the Chînâb Valley another sort of bridge is in use; it is called *Chikâ*, which may be translated "haul-bridge"; a smooth rope of several strands is hung across, and on this traverses a wooden ring, from which hangs a loop in which you seat yourself; by another rope the ring and all are pulled across; down the curve the passage is quick, but the pulling up is a slow process, sometimes interrupted by the breaking of the hauling rope, when the passenger is left swinging in the middle.

ripen. The sunshine is intercepted, not only by the clouds that the mountains attract, but also by the mountains themselves, which shut in the valley so closely. At Atholî I found that the average angular elevation of the visible horizon—that is, of the mountain summits all round—was 18°. This want of sunshine affects the fruits, which do not ripen well, though some fruit-trees, especially walnut-trees, are common.

The district we are now in is one of those where deodar forests occur in such positions as make it practicable to fell the trees for timber, for use in the Panjâb. The necessary condition is that the slope on which the trees grow should be so near a large stream that without an extreme amount of labour the logs can be moved or slid, without fear of splitting, into the water, where they will float away down the stream.

In the course of years the most favourably situated deodar forests in the Chînâb Valley have been felled, and there now remain chiefly trees which either are of a less girth than can be used to the best advantage, or are at such a distance from the stream-bank that the transport of the logs to the water is difficult, or, may be, would involve a prohibitory expense. What was considered a good tree was one whose girth, a few feet above the ground, would be not under nine feet, and whose height, for useful timber, was sixty or seventy feet; now in the forests we passed through, from Kishtwâr hither, the common girth was five or six feet only.

The plan is to fell the tree with axes, and cut it into logs, of length varying, according to the use the timber is to be put to, from ten feet to twenty or more, and

to mark them in some distinctive way. The logs are then rolled or slid down the hill-side, or down some small ravine of regular slope, to the river. This work is done in the spring and early summer—or if deferred till the autumn, it would be but in preparation for the next year—so that, on the rising of the river from the snow melting, in May, June, July, and August, the logs may float away. In spite of some of them becoming stuck on the rocks or stranded on the shore, a good many will find their way through the mountain country to where the river debouches into the plains. What is done with them there we shall see when we come to Akhnûr, on our march to Kashmir.

Although nearly all the easily-reached deodar-trees of large size have been cut down, there still remain, in the valleys of the Chînâb and its tributaries, forests that may be made available by longer slides; and there are besides, in places very accessible, numbers of trees which, though not of full size, will yet produce much useful timber.

The people of Pâdar are in great part Thakars. There are also some low-caste people, chiefly of the Megh caste; of these there is an entire village near the fort. There are a few Muhammadans who probably are converted Thakars. The Thakars have just those characteristics by which we described the Pahârîs generally.

Besides the Hindûs and Muhammadans, there are two or three hamlets towards the head of Bhutnâ, eleven houses in all, inhabited by Bhots or Buddhists from Zânskâr, on the farther side of the great range. I here only mention their occurrence; the characters of that

Tibetan race they belong to will be given farther on, under the heading of Ladâkh.

The people of Pâdar seem a good deal given to serpent worship; they do not, however, separate it from their observance of the rites of the Hindû religion; the serpent is reckoned among the many devtas or gods recognised by that faith; one sees temples raised to different *nâg devtas*, or serpent-gods, which are adorned with wood-carvings of snakes in many forms.

In approaching Pâdar we really passed beyond the Middle Mountain region and came among mountains too lofty to be classed in it. Having come thus far, a few more words may be allowed, to tell of the ending of the valley we have been following. That of the main river continues, through a country closely resembling that part of Pâdar we have looked at, till the British territory is reached. A branch valley called Bhutnâ leads up north-eastward to the main snowy ridge; the successive figures on the map, from 6 to 15, which denote thousands of feet of elevation, show that the valley bottom rises with an increasing slope.

The highest village of any size in the Bhutnâ Valley is Machel (9700 feet above the sea), two marches, or twenty-two miles, from Atholî. At Machel Bhots predominate, though there are a few families of Hindûs. The Bhots seem to have been for long settled in this upper end of the valley. The highest inhabited place of all is Sunjâm, half a march beyond Machel; here is but one household, of Bhots, a hardy family; they are confined within doors by the snow for seven months in the year. We were

there on the 7th June and the snow had melted from the fields about a month before.

As we ascended the valley, the vegetation gradually diminished; at Machel the mountain side had become much barer; there were some stunted deodars, but at a height of 9800 feet the growth of that tree altogether ended; spruce and silver fir continued farther; birch, which had at first appeared at 8000 feet, grew higher than all the others. The last limits of forest trees that I observed, still along the valley, were 12,000 feet for silver fir and 12,500 feet for birch; but this was counting the last straggling trees.

At Sunjâm, 11,000 feet, they sow wheat, peas, buckwheat, and the kind of barley called *grim* (the grain of which becomes loosened from its husk like the grain of wheat) which I shall hereafter call "naked barley." Often the wheat does not ripen, but they sow some every year for the chance. Sometimes the whole harvest fails, and then they have to go to the Kishtwâr country for grain, taking down sheep to exchange.

Beyond Sunjâm is nothing but a waste of streams and bare mountains, of glaciers and of snow. But through it all a way will lead, by a difficult snowy pass, to Ladâkh. By this pass I took my camp, but I do not ask the reader to follow me; the account of Ladâkh must be deferred, and that country will be approached from another direction. Another country, not less interesting, must now have our attention.

CHAPTER V.

THE MARCH TO KASHMIR.

BEFORE commencing a description of Kashmir, which is the next country to be visited, I propose to give an account of one of the routes leading to it, for the sake of connecting in the reader's mind those parts which up till now we have dwelt on, with the countries beyond.

The three chief routes from the Panjâb to Sirînagar, the capital of Kashmir, are the following. First, the direct road from Jummoo by Banihâl; this is much frequented by traders, and has the advantage of being free from snow for more months of the year than some others; but it is not open to the English traveller on account of the difficulty in procuring along it the number of porters for carriage which the visitors to Kashmir require; it is indeed a way with many ups and downs, and by no means a good road. Secondly, from Bhimbar by the Pîr Panjâl Pass; this is the one commonly traversed by Englishmen, they following the steps of the Delhi Emperors, who yearly made the journey with their huge camps; otherwise, this cannot be called a good road, but for scenery it surpasses all the others. The third, from the British Hill-station Marî, is the best kept road of all, and the natural obstacles are less than in the others; the traveller must consider whether for these considerations he will make the detour to Marî, a place that can be reached

on wheels. Our own route will be, starting from Jummoo, to make a cross cut of some five marches to join the Bhimbar route at the town of Râjâorî, and thence to proceed by the Pîr Panjâl.*

A few words before starting, as to certain specialities of travelling in the Himâlayas.

The natives of India are good travellers. The poor man, one who gets his living by the use of his muscles, will make a bundle of his extra clothes (if he has any), of his bedding and his cooking-pots, and with that balanced on his head or slung over his shoulder, will make a long march without asking anything of anyone, except of the shopkeeper from whom he will buy his daily allowance of flour or rice. The class above him, those who get, say, their living by their pen, or by buying and selling, will surely have a pony for the march, probably a quiet, useful animal, one that ambles along at an easy pace; the bedding will be laid in folds on the saddle, and the rest of the baggage will be carried on the pummel or else made fast behind. Such a traveller, with his one servant running along at a jog-trot by his side, will be independent of porters or baggage-animals; he will do his march in his own time, and be satisfied at the end of it with any accommodation he can get—that of the mosque if he be a Muhammadan, of the Dharmsâla if he be a Hindû, or, in some cases, of the more general rest-house; or, in default of all of these, he will get the

* Some useful information about those routes which are open to European travellers will be found in Dr. Ince's 'Kashmir Handbook' (published by Wyman Brothers, Calcutta); and in Kashmir itself that book will be found very useful.

shelter of some cottage—freely given to a civil application —and there make himself at home.

It is different with the Englishman in India. His wants are not few, nor his demands either. Accustomed to numerous attendants, and to a complication of domestic appliances, he goes on the principle, when travelling, of taking with him such a large proportion of these as will give almost every comfort, except what the variations of cold and heat make unattainable, even in the wildest and most out-of-the-way parts. There is no doubt that to do this increases the difficulty and the trouble of marching; every diminution of impedimenta will make it so much the easier to get along. A traveller in the hills who requires but a few porters for his baggage will be so much more independent of set routes and of the local authorities as to have an absence of trouble that will counterbalance the loss of a good many material comforts.

The usual fit-out that we Englishmen carry with us in these hills consists of a tent, carpet, bedstead, table, chairs, bedding, clothes, and other paraphernalia; this for one's own tent. In the servants' departments there will be at least another tent, cooking things, plates, washing and ironing things, eatables, and beverages to any extent that one may choose to provide them, stable-gear, and various other things that each servant is sure to see himself provided with for his own particular work. These, with the addition of the bedding and clothes of half-a-dozen or more servants, make up a good amount of luggage to be carried, as it mostly has to be, on coolis' backs.

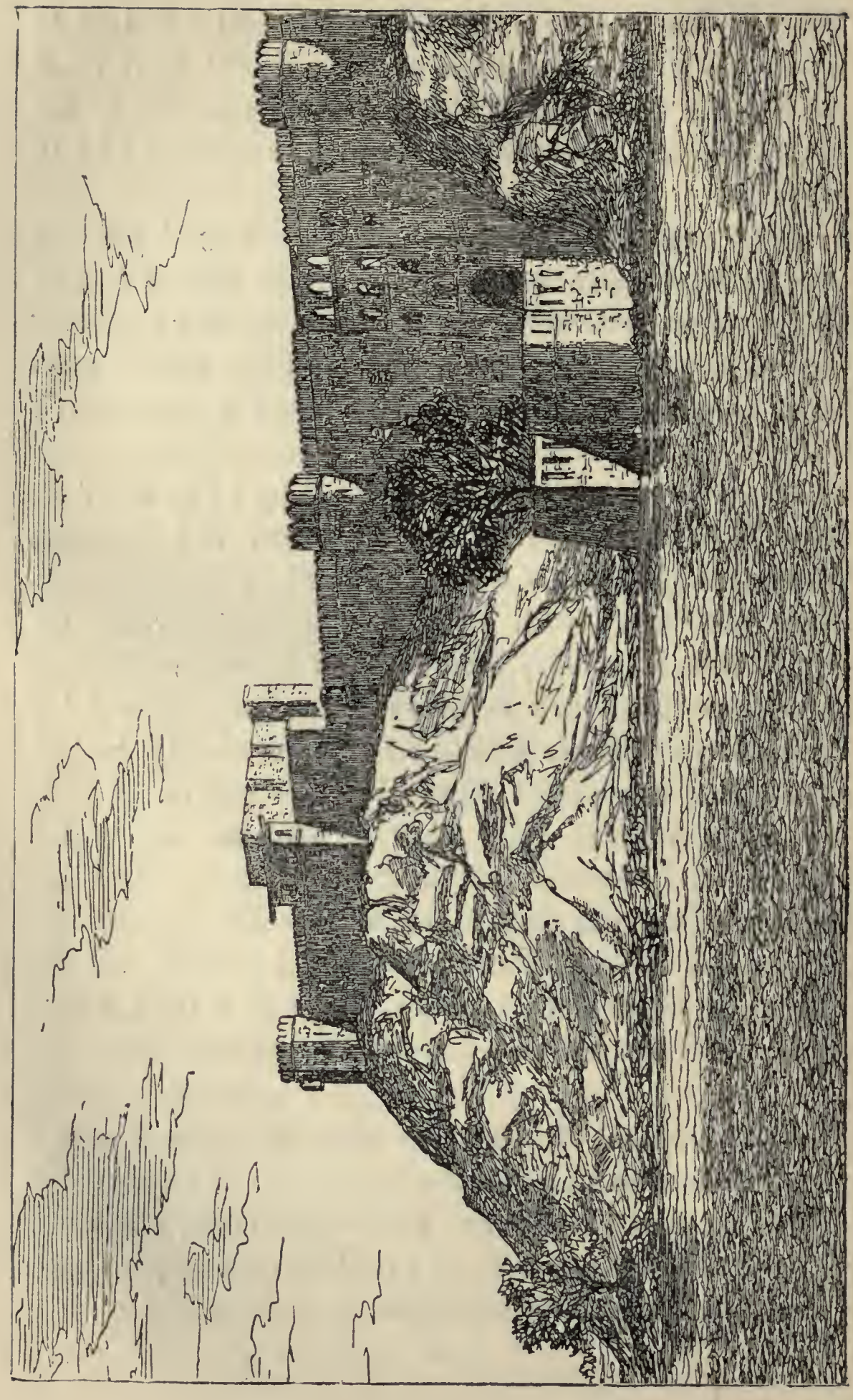
Very moderately provided after this plan one will

require some twenty coolis for porters. If one lays in stores for a march of some months, it will want great care and a stern though discriminating rejection of the unnecessary, to keep the number from running up to fifty or more.

With regard to carriage, it is the universal practice for an Englishman, or for any native of rank who may get a special order from the Maharaja, to take the coolis or ponies from stage to stage, changing them, getting fresh men or animals from the villages round, for each day's march.

Coolis are the chief carriers; for these 50 lb. to 60 lb. is a fair load. The daily pay for a cooli is four annas, that is sixpence; for a pony or mule twice as much. The coolis carry their loads in various ways. In the Outer Hills they carry them on their heads, first making a soft bed with their turbans; this certainly is not the best way for difficult ground; farther up, in the Middle Mountains, the people often carry the weight on their shoulders, bending their head forward and fixing the load on the shoulder and back of the neck. But the most business-like way of all is that followed by the Kashmîrîs, some of the Pahârîs, the Ladâkhîs, and the Baltîs, of loading the back by means of a light framework of sticks and rope, which is suspended from the shoulders.

Thus prepared with baggage and porters, we will now start from Jummoo for the journey to Kashmir; the distance is one hundred and eighty-four miles, which will be covered in fourteen days, a day's march varying commonly from nine to fifteen miles.



AKHNÛR FORT, ON THE CHÎNÂB.

From Jummoo to Akhnûr is one day's march of eighteen miles. The road is altogether in the plain. After the first few miles we emerge from the forest which surrounds the city and find ourselves well clear of the hills as well, with the view unconfined by the lower ranges. We see in one glance a great length of the mountains that lie between us and Kashmir, extending on the right. The folded isometric view at the end of the book will give the reader some idea of what ranges are now visible. The two or three low lines of hill are those of the outer tract, the gaps in them showing where some river from behind breaks through the line. The hills between five and ten thousand feet of height are the Middle Mountains, which seem to the eye but one ridge. Behind is the great Panjâl Range, a line of mountains reaching above 15,000 feet, that cuts off the country of Kashmir from all that we have yet visited. Though these mountains do not bear perpetual snow, in the early summer they show both rocky peaks and snowy ones projecting from fields of white snow; in front of them the Middle Mountains show dark with forest, while the outermost low ridges, the rocky character of their inner faces hidden, make a green foreground.

The road goes on, a well-frequented one, traversed by both carts and camels, over a fairly cultivated plain of rather dry soil, until we come to the low bank of the Chînâb River, and, looking across it, we see the town and fort of Akhnûr.

The river at this early summer-time is swollen with the melting snows. Every day of bright sunshine on the higher mountains makes itself felt in raising the level of

the water and increasing the force of the current. The passage across by the ferry-boat comes to be a serious matter; scores of people, who had been waiting hours for the opportunity, rush in on her coming to the bank, and with the cattle, ponies, and camels that have been forced on board over the bulwarks, soon fill her to over-crowding. When she puts off, weighed down and unmanageable as she is, the force of the current carries her a good half mile away in crossing the few hundred yards. Then, emptied of her freight, the boat is laboriously tracked up again for another trip. Two such journeys each way is as much as can be done in the day's work.

The appearance of Akhnûr from the left bank of the river is striking. The chief object is the fort, of which a sketch is given. It is a building of lofty walls crowned with battlements of the same form as one sees in the Mughal forts throughout Hindostân. Formerly the fortress of a tributary chief, it is now occupied by troops of the Maharaja.

The town is built on a terrace above the river, which is overlooked by a few houses of the better sort, while the part behind is mean and dirty.

Akhnûr is a place where timber from the mountains, that floats down the river, is caught and stored. This is a business that brings much employment and gain to the people. In the last chapter we saw how, far back in the mountains, the deodar-trees were felled and cut up, and the logs rolled down to the edge to await the rising of the river. It is in May that they begin to come down. No further care has been taken of them; they are left, in the first instance, to take their own chance of finding their way

down that long distance of from one hundred and fifty to two hundred miles.

From Riâsî, twenty miles above Akhnûr, to a place as far below it, this forty miles is the space along which the logs are caught and brought to land. Nearly the whole population of the places along the river bank, people of almost every caste, occupy themselves in the work, for it comes at a time when farm-work is slack. The plan is to provide what is called a *sarnâ*, a goat-skin blown out tight, with the end of the leg by which it was inflated fastened up with a bit of string; to the hind legs are attached loops through which the man puts his bare legs, and the stiff inflated goat-skin comes up in front of his chest; then, jumping into the river, the man balances himself on the sarnâ, lying almost flat along it; by aid of his hands and a peculiar motion of his feet he can swim along at a fine rate, and fears not to trust himself to the waves and the rapids of the swollen river. Standing at a spot whence he knows the current will force him out to mid-channel, he waits till a log of timber comes opposite him, and, dashing in, he soon reaches it, and then, by the exertion both of force and skill, guides it to a sheltered nook where it may be landed and hauled up.

There are some thirty stations for this work within the space mentioned, including several in the branch channels below Akhnûr. A log that passes the upper ones will pretty surely be caught below; even at night, between the late summer evening and the early dawn, the timber can hardly get through the whole space before some early bird is down upon it to bring it in.

In this way thousands of logs are caught every season;

20,000 logs, belonging to the Maharaja's Forest Department, have been secured in one year; these would average 20 or 25 cubic feet of timber, and would have a value of more than 20,000*l*.

Collected at Akhnûr, the timber is either sold there or made up into rafts, of fifty or sixty logs, of which the lower course of the river will allow the passage, and floated down some fifty miles, to Wazîrâbâd, on the Grand Trunk Road, whence it will be distributed over the Panjâb.

Now we must leave the gay scene of the swift river, dotted over with the swimmers on their strange-looking steeds, riding in pursuit of the logs—all which we can see beautifully from the windows of the Bâradarî on the summit of the fort—and face the burning sun for another march. Five hot marches await us over ground of one general character, over the rough country of the Outer Hills.

The road soon reaches the outermost range and enters it by a stony valley. The hills are covered with a brushwood forest, which harbours undisturbed many a peacock, whose scream sounds strange in conjunction with the voice of the cuckoo, who also at this time here makes himself heard, for our journey is made in early summer. After a bit we rise to the level of a broken plateau that occupies the space between the outermost ridge and the ridge of Kâlîthâr, which is one of the boldest lines of hill in the district; the road goes through a little nick in the edge of it, and then winds, or zigzags, down its steep escarpment, to a wide dûn, beyond which is another mass of hills, lower and more varied in form, covered all over with scrub.

At this time of the year the ground is dry, and all the way from Akhnûr the road has been hot and thirst-bringing. A good charitable custom of the Hindûs brings relief to the traveller. On many a spot in the hottest part, perhaps at the summit of one of the steep rises of the uneven road, will be found a hut where cool water kept in clean porous vessels is at the service of any who may ask for it. The man in charge is probably a Brahman, so that people of every caste can take water from his hands; he may have been placed there by some well-to-do Hindû, whose piety prompts him to this good work. It is the Brahman's business to bring the water from the nearest stream, which may be a long walk off, and distribute it to wayfarers. When the rains come and water is to be found in every pool and little stream, the establishment will be no longer kept up.

Threading our way through the hills for three days more, at last we got clear of them, and come into the valley of the Western or Minâwar Tavî, which is at this time a stream of moderate volume flowing over ridges of rock, often making deep pools between them, which are very favourable to the fisherman. Continuing up the valley by the left bank of the river, between low spurs of the hills, in a few miles we come opposite to the town of Râjâorî. An old royal garden, opposite the town, has become the halting-place for travellers, chiefly for the English. We have here come into the Bhimbar route to Sirînagar frequented by them, and from this place onwards our own road coincides with it.

As was before said, this route is also the one by which the Mughal Emperors used to journey to Kashmir in the

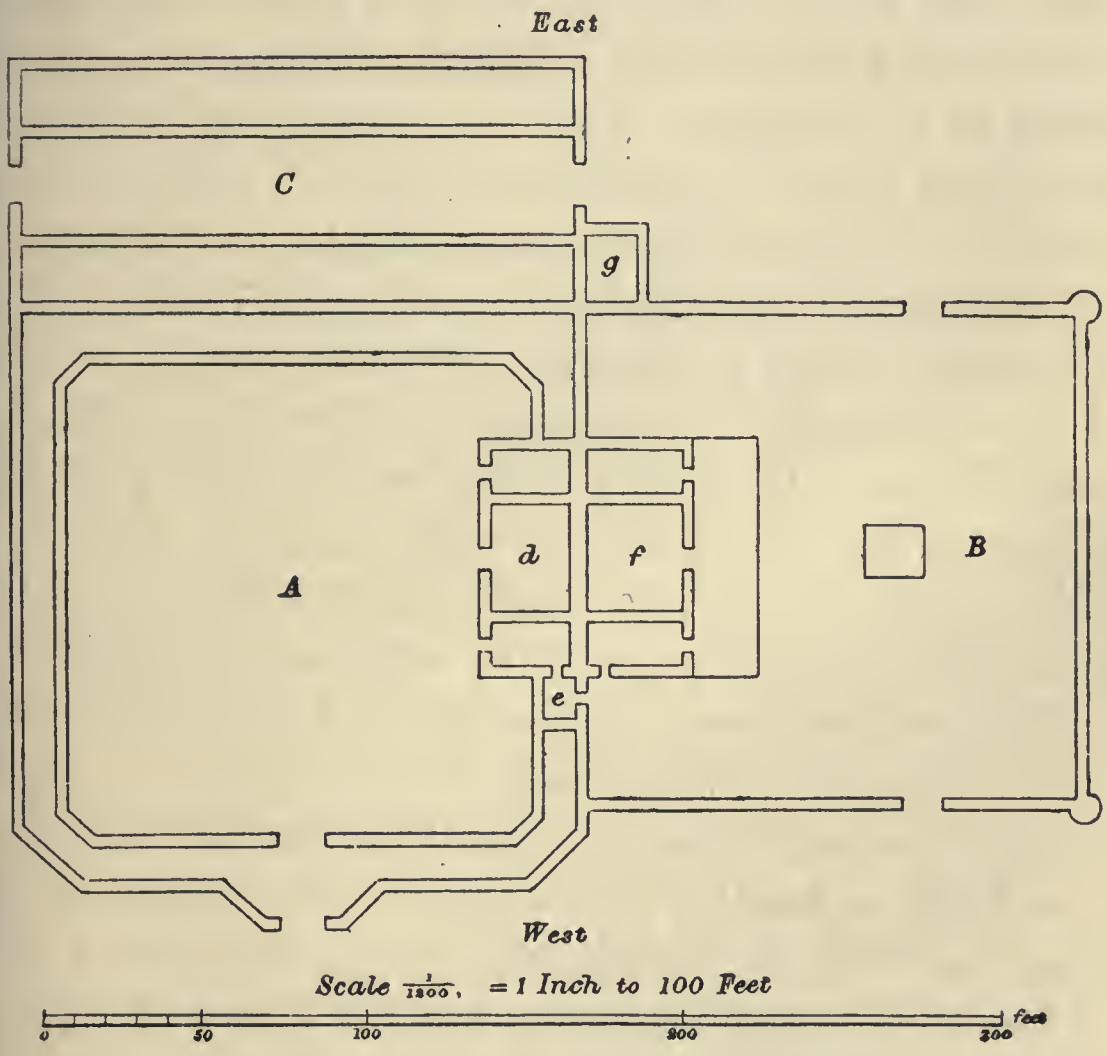
palmy days of their rule. The French traveller Bernier has given a life-like description of the progress, as witnessed by him in the reign of Aurungzeb.* Now it is difficult to imagine the quiet villages and halting-places filled with the crowds of courtiers and their followers as they were when the wealth and grandeur of India that had been concentrated at Delhi flowed each year by this route to Kashmir. Still we have some remains of that time in the *sarâes* or rest-houses that were built at every stage for the shelter of the camp. These, though large, could accommodate at one time but a fraction of those attached to the emperor's Court who had a claim to such shelter. Hence the camp marched in sections; day by day a fresh portion started from Bhimbar, and the move being made through the whole length at once, the travellers successively found room at each stage.

At Bhimbar, which is at the foot of the hills, there was a greater variety and extent of accommodation provided than at most of the stages, for here the camp used to concentrate. In the higher part of the town of Bhimbar, there is a sarâe built of brick and sandstone, a square of about 300 feet.

I do not think this sarâe was intended for the king himself, for there are no rooms larger than the rest. Down in the plain, where the present Travellers' Bungalow is, are remains of what I have little doubt was his own halting-place. There was a square enclosure (traceable by a few remnants of the wall); in the centre

* A sketch of the route and of Kashmir (taken from Bernier's account and my own) will be found in 'Revue de France,' Nos. 56 and 57, article "Le Royaume de Cachemire au 17me et au 19me siècle," by Baron Ernouf.

of one side of it was a suite of rooms raised above the level of the ground, with a terrace in front; there were other buildings in the middle of the two next sides of the square; in the centre was a chabûtra or platform: close at hand was a *hamâm*, a small building in three



ROUGH PLAN OF THE SARÂE AT SAIDÂBÂD.

compartments, with an opening in the roof of each, made for the escape of the steam of the hot bath. These I believe to have been the royal quarters.

The first stage from Bhimbar was Saidâbâd. Here is the finest example of all the royal sarâes. A rough plan of it is given above.

It has three divisions; the great court A, is entered by the chief gateway; on all sides of this quadrangle are small arched or vaulted rooms, and, besides, in the middle of the south side is a set of three larger rooms on a higher level, marked *d*. These are now unroofed; I think there had been an upper story above them; they were doubtless the king's rooms. From these a small passage, *e*, leads to a corresponding set of rooms, *f*, which, with a terrace in front of them, look on to the second court-yard, B. This must have been the zanâna, or the ladies' apartments, and their private garden; this quadrangle has no cells round it; the wall is plastered smooth inside. A third courtyard, C, not communicating with the others, has along each side of it a row of double cells. *g* marks the position of a small mosque.

The sarâe is massively built, and the vaulting has stood well. The third court is still used by travellers, but the two larger ones are empty, and the ground has been brought under the plough.

The next stage towards Kashmir is *Naushahra*, where is a large old sarâe, with inner court. Then comes *Changas*. This place I have never myself been to. I am told that it possesses one of the finest of the sarâes in the whole of the route.

Next comes Râjâorî, which we left to make the digression. Here the emperor's rest-place was the garden before mentioned,* on the left bank of the stream; it is a large oblong space, enclosed by a thick wall, and traversed by two stone water-ways at right angles to each

* In this garden are some fine chînâr or plane trees; the altitude, about 3200 feet, seems the lowest at which they will flourish.

other. There are two bârâdarîs, that is, bungalows or summer-houses, one of which overlooks the stream, and looks on to the picturesque old town on the opposite bank.

Thus, at most or all of the stages on to Kashmir, are some remains—sometimes but ruins—of the royal rest-places.

The town of Râjâorî shows a front to the river of large stone buildings, some of them ruinous. Besides the imperial works, are edifices of different sorts raised by the former Muhammadan Rajas of Râjâorî,* who were Muhammadanised Râjpûts. For it must be understood that the Delhi Emperors, though having their road to Kashmir through this part, still left the country in the hands of the native Rajas, who were bound to do all they could to facilitate the royal journeys and the transmission of the loads of fruit from Kashmir to the Delhi Court. The Bhimbar Raja held his country on the same terms.

Râjâorî has one conspicuous building raised by its last, the present, rulers. A large temple, elevated on a rock by the river, shows to all that Hindû power has again spread thus far west. As another sign of this, the Dogrâs have changed the name of the place to *Râmpûr*, thus designating it after one of their gods; this new name has displaced the old in official dealings, but not in the mouths of the commonalty.

After Râjâorî there still remain eight marches before the capital of Kashmir is reached. We have hitherto been among the outer, lower, hills, but in the next few marches we shall cross the middle and higher ranges.

* Probably these regions are the only part of India where Muhammadan rulers have borne the title of Raja.

To do this, we first go north, to Baramgalla, and then march east, to Shupeyan. This direction can be traced also on the isometric view; the 8000 feet ridge (see the scale at the two ends) being crossed in a line leading from the spectator, the foot of the Pîr Panjâl is reached, when the traveller changes direction to the right and gets through the great range by an easterly road.

In the first march, from Râjâorî to Thanna, we keep for fourteen miles in the same valley, following up the stream. The ground of the valley is all terraced and made into rice-fields, which at this time are flooded with water led from the stream in preparation for the sowing, which will be done a week or two later. The valley is closely bounded by spurs of hills, which change their look as we near the end of the march, for we then get among a higher class of hills, such as we have all along called the "Middle Mountains."

In the march from Thanna to Baramgalla we go over the Ratan Pîr or Pass. It is a good steep pull to reach the summit, which is 8200 feet above the sea; there is hardly any depression in the ridge at that spot. On some of the slopes the mountain is thickly covered with forest, a forest of much variety and beauty. Box grows here largely; it is cut and sent to the towns, where it is mostly used for making combs. On the higher parts of the ridge one meets with numbers of the great black and grey monkey, called *langûr*.

From the Ratan Pîr one looks north and north-eastward on to the Panjâl Range, and obtains grand views of its mountains. The descent also gives beautiful prospects, both of near forest views and of the more distant hills.

The road is rough and difficult; one's pony, that was useful for the ascent, had best be allowed to go down the hill without a rider.

Baramgalla, which is the halting-place, is in the valley of the stream that rises near the Pîr Panjâl, and with many others goes to form the Pûnch River. It is shut in closely by spurs of the mountains.

The next march, to Poshiâna, is along the bottom of the narrow valley, among the large rounded stones of the stream-bed, for the hill-sides are steep, so the traveller must keep close to the river, which has to be crossed about thirty times, as it nears alternately the right and left bounding cliffs. A series of little wooden bridges are prepared, which are good enough for foot-passengers and for an unladen horse, but ought not to be ridden over. At last we leave the bottom of the valley and rise by a steep ascent on the north, of some hundreds of feet, to Poshiâna, a small village, the highest in the valley; it is inhabited by Kashmîrî.

The march from Poshiâna to Alîâbâd leads us over the chief Pass. The road first contours to the base of the valley, and then ascends a steep hill-side to the gap.

In thus rising, we go through the stages of fir and birch wood, and come to where the slopes are grassy, and the hills above are of rock and fallen stone, with many snow-beds remaining yet unmelted. The Pass itself is 11,400 feet above the sea.

One time that I came here I found the ground, and the snow for two or three miles distance, strewn with dead locusts, which about the middle of May had been destroyed by the cold in an attempted invasion of Kashmir.

Between the Pass and Alîâbâd there intervene some miles of very gradual descent. From Alîâbâd to Hîrpûr, the next stage, the road makes an irregular descent of more than 2500 feet, over rough, and in wet weather slippery, ground. The hills rise up boldly from the bed of the stream (which here, of course, flows towards the valley of Kashmir) for some thousands of feet. Often broken by rock and cliff, elsewhere covered by forests of pine, spruce, and silver fir, they rise above where these can grow and show an unusually great extent of ground covered with birch-trees.

The stream, which flows a little north of east, receives other mountain-streams from both sides, and becomes an unfordable torrent. Descending and crossing it by a bridge we come to comparatively level ground, clear of the steep mountains. For the next few miles our way is along a charming woodland path where the ground is covered with wild flowers, among them violet, strawberry, forget-me-not, and buttercup, and the fir-wood is varied with many trees and shrubs in bloom.

The hills on each side get lower, and as we near Hîrpûr we find ourselves between what, as compared with the mountains, are mere banks that frame, rather than confine, the view, and let us see a portion of the long-looked-for country of Kashmir.

We look across the vale on to a mass of mountains connected with the great snowy range that bounds Ladâkh. One knows not how to call it—a wall of mountain—a serrated ridge—a rugged-edged mountain-mass; none of these express what one sees if after the first glance one looks, when the light may favour us,

carefully to find out the details of what comes to view. The nearest spurs are twenty-five miles off; they can hardly be distinguished from out the mass, though they project far in front of it. Behind them, nearly forty miles off, is a distincter mass of dark mountains which are some 12,000 feet in height; their projecting spur-slopes and the ravines alternating with them can even at this distance be made out. Above this dark mass we see a great extent of pure white snow-covered ground, from out of which rise great snowy peaks. One of these that stood prominent was fifty miles away, and some points within our view were nearly seventy.

This was the first great view of Kashmir. But when we reached Shapeyan, the next stage eight miles on, we came to where we could look back, and on, and all round, and still see mountains without a break encircling the vale. The range we had passed through with days of labour seemed strangely near; it bore great snow-beds, with bold rocky peaks projecting as it were through them; in front were dark forest-covered slopes. Opposite was the same great line of mountains we had seen from Hîrpûr. The bounding hills of the far ends of the valley, seen only at times of clear atmosphere, completed the ring-barrier of Kashmir.

From Shapeyan, Sirînagar lies north twenty-seven miles distant, a two days' journey. The road is now nearly level, only some low flat-topped hills are crossed. On each side fine prospects of the mountains extend; on the left, of the forest-clad hills overtopped by peaks of rock and snow: on the right, the farther mountain-range that lies beyond the plain; but in parts the road is among

the village groves where the eye, not reaching to the mountains, is content with the nearer homely beauties of shady plane or walnut trees, and wild rose-bushes luxuriant in their bloom. As we cross the last of the low hills we look from that higher ground over the low flat, and can see where Sirînagar is situated; the position of it is marked by two isolated hills, one of them surmounted by an ancient temple, the other crowned with the buildings of a fort. The last few miles of our ride are across the flat, between rows of tall poplars. We reach the city at the bridge that is the highest up of seven that span the river. As we cross it and see the boats plying up and down, the houses crowded on to the river bank, of irregular form and varied construction, whose low-sloping roofs with their wide eaves throw deep shadows, the spiry pinnacles of mosques, and the bulging domes of temples, at once we know that in this high valley a busy city exists of unusual aspect and rare picturesqueness.

CHAPTER VI.

KASHMIR.

THE country of Kashmir has justly a reputation for something distinctive, if not unique, in its character. Its position and form together are such that there is no parallel to it in the whole of the Himâlayas. It is a wide vale enclosed by mountain ranges, lying at such a height above the sea as on the one hand to be of a climate entirely different from that of India, being saved from the heat that parches its plains, and on the other hand to be free from the severity of cold that visits the more lofty plateaus of wide valleys that are found nearer to the centre of the mass of mountains.

An irregular oval ring encloses Kashmir. Measuring from summit to summit of the mountains, we find the length to be 116 miles, and the width to vary from forty to seventy-five miles; while the part, comparatively low and flat, which is called the Vale, measures about eighty-four miles from the north-west to south-east, and twenty or twenty-five miles in a cross direction, and has an area something more than that of the county of Kent.

The mountain ridges which thus surround Kashmir vary much in height. The loftiest points are on the north-east side, where some peaks rise to close on 18,000 feet. At the two ends 12,000 to 14,000 feet are common heights. On the south-west the great Panjâl Range for a

length of some eighty miles separates Kashmir from the Panjâb. The vale itself varies in level from 6000 or 7000 feet down to 5200 feet. In entering it from the Panjâb one ascends perhaps 10,000 feet and descends but 5000; thus it is a plain embedded, or set high, in the mountain mass.

There is but one gap in the barrier. Towards the north-west end of the valley, the drainage waters of the inside slopes of the hills, having collected into one great stream, flow out by an extremely narrow valley and flow in it for long before they reach the open plain of the Panjâb. In their course of 190 miles they will fall through 4000 feet of vertical height. The stream is navigable as long as it flows in the open valley of Kashmir, from the town of Islâmâbâd, where many streams unite, till the gorge before mentioned is reached. This river may be called the Jhelam, after the name given to the same waters lower down; the natives of the country call it the Behat or Vehat; an older name, still used by those of them who follow Sanskrit literature, is Vedasta.

By its banks lies a flat plain, extending along the north-east side of the valley for more than fifty miles, with a width varying from two or three to fifteen miles. This plain is just like the alluvial flats that make the meadow-lands by the side of our English streams; its surface has been formed, as theirs has been, by deposition of sediment on the water overflowing the banks at flood-time; here, however, it has not been kept in meadow, but has to a great extent been brought under the plough. The river, winding through it, is much used for naviga-

tion; it is the great highway of the country. The goods that come from India by the Jummoo road, over the Banihâl Pass, are brought by land carriage—by coolis, ponies, or bullocks, as it may be—as far as Kanebal; thence boats take them to Sirînagar. The boats float down with the stream at the rate of a mile and a half or two miles an hour. The course of the river is winding; often it touches the rocky spurs on its right bank; again turning off it may near the plateaus that on the opposite side bound the flat. When one has had many days of rough marching, over roads where every footstep has to be looked to, how enjoyable is the change to the smooth movement of the boats as they glide slowly down the stream, just helped or guided by the paddles of the boat people! Delightful then one finds it to travel in this easy way and watch the varying view as, in following the bending river, the boat now faces one mountain spur backed by loftier hills, now turns to another of different beauty, or else shows us the opposing line of snowy mountain-peaks.

The rest of the space included in the vale is occupied by what in Kashmir are called "Karewas." They are plateaus of alluvial or lacustrine material (mostly loam and clay), often divided from each other, cut into strips, so to say, by ravines of from 100 to 300 feet in depth; occasionally they are isolated, but more generally they are united to some of the mountains that bound the valley. Some of these Karewas are dry and bare of trees, and depend for cultivation on the rain alone; others are irrigated by mountain streams; and some as they join on to the Panjâl Range, bear forest of pine.

The mountain slopes are for the most part wooded on the south-western side where there is more moisture, and grass-covered on the north-eastern, but there even, wherever a turn of the hill gives a more shady aspect, forest abounds. Only at the heights above the tree-level does the rock show bare.

Kashmir about corresponds in latitude with the following places: in Asia, Baghdad and Damascus; in Africa, Fez, the capital of Morocco; in America, South Carolina. But the elevation above the sea, of five or six thousand feet, gives it a far more temperate climate than what any of these enjoy.

A rather cold and showery spring is succeeded by a summer a few degrees hotter than a warm English summer, with much more continuous fine weather. The four or five months from May to September are enjoyed alike by natives of India and of Europe. As compared with India in the hot weather, the advantage of Kashmir is enormous; at the worst the heat is of that stage when, in the plains, one would begin to think about using punkahs, and this heat is in most years soon reduced by storms.

Immediately about Sirînagar, which has lakes or marshes bordering on it in nearly every direction, the heat of July and August is apt to make the air somewhat feverish; a move of a few miles, however, will take one to drier parts, where the air is bracing and free from any tendency to give fever.

As to moisture, the country is intermediate in position between that which is deluged by the periodical rains and that which is arid from the want of them. The monsoon, which, coming from the south-west, breaks with

force on that side of the Panjâl Hills, is almost completely intercepted by them and prevented from reaching the interior of Kashmir. In July and August one sees the storm clouds collected around the summits of those mountains, and knows that they indicate that the season of the rains has commenced in the tract beyond. Now and then the water-bearing clouds force their way across, and precipitate their moisture on the slopes of the Kashmir side; for this reason the karewa country on the south-west, especially the higher part of it, receives a greater rainfall than the river-alluvium flat on the north-east. The mountains beyond again, those that divide Kashmir from Ladâkh, receive a good deal of rain.

The climate does not allow of a complete double harvest as in the plains of India and the lower hills, but still with some grains two crops can be got off the same land. Barley, sown about November, will ripen in the middle or end of June; after that crop, or after rape, maize or millet or some of the pulses may be sown. It is not, however, the common practice thus to take two crops from the land; those crops that belong to the autumn harvest are usually grown on fresh ground; but doubtless with a greater demand for land the first custom would spread, at all events in favourable spots. Neither wheat nor rice allow of a second crop the same year; they both occupy the soil for too many months. Wherever water can be got for irrigation rice is grown, and without irrigation it cannot be grown. Rice is in Kashmir the most important crop of all; though raised successively from the same ground, it yields a great return. It is the common food of the Kashmîrî, of those who live in

the towns, and of those of the country people who can grow it themselves; the cultivators who have no irrigated land must content themselves with what of the maize or of the other cheap grains falls to their share.

Soon after the autumn crop has ripened and been cut, come signs of approaching winter. Any time after the middle of October snow may fall on the surrounding mountains. Through November and December a haze covers the low country, which will keep off the night-cold, but at the same time prevent the sun's rays from brightening the land. The snow by repeated falls, each perhaps of no great thickness, gets lower on the mountains, and about Christmas time one may expect a general fall of snow over the whole country. With this winter has arrived, and there follows a time, usually about two months, during which snow hides the ground. The temperature, however, is not severe; the season, indeed, would be better if it were more severe, for the snow that falls is but just at the freezing point; it continually melts with the warmth of the ground, while fresh falls replace it from above; thus a thickness of from a few inches to a foot remains for the two months. The cold dampness of this time prevents the Kashmir winter from being a pleasant season. The fog from which the snow forms hangs over all the valley; only sometimes it may clear away, and a brisker, keener air is the result. But even when the fog so covers the vale the higher parts are commonly free. In rising, for instance, to the Banihâl Pass, one will get above the fog and look down on it as it covers in the hollow.

In coming down from Ladâkh one year I marched

through Kashmir and over the Banihâl Pass in January. Snow covered the vale, and whitened everything on the plain except the trees round the villages; at Sirînagar its depth was six inches, at Islâmâbâd it was something more, and at Shâhâbâd there was a foot and a half of snow on the ground. On the Banihâl ridge it was so thick one could not measure it. The Pass could not be crossed by horses, and for men it was very laborious. What struck me on coming down the other side as a thing worth noting was that the snow ended off in a sharp contour-line in the Banihâl Valley at a level of 6500 feet, which is 1300 feet above the level where snow was lying in Kashmir itself.

Towards the end of February, in general, the snow disappears from the vale, and spring comes on with a burst.

Thus for nearly half the year, from May to October, one part or another of Kashmir affords an air that it is a delight to breathe; this and the pleasant beauty of its scenery make it no wonder that Englishmen who can get leave throng to it as they do in summer time; and it is one of the charms of being in Kashmir that the independence of the kind of travelling there followed by all enables one with a map in hand, or by information easily got, to hunt out places that show varying scenery, and give numerous subjects of interest.

Deferring to speak of the city and its neighbourhood (which are first and most generally frequented by Europeans) till a later chapter, I will point out some of the country nooks which will well repay a visit.

Gulmarg is one of the summer retreats for those who

find the air of Sirînagar too hot. It is a grassy and flowery valley among the slopes of the Panjâl Range; a small valley two or three miles long by one mile in width, enclosed by low hills, spurs from the mountains, which are crowned by thick forest of lofty pine-trees that shut out all beyond and make the spot a most secluded one.' An elevation of 8000 feet gives an air that in the hottest time of the year is never oppressive. From the hill that forms the boundary towards the vale, one may look across the flat and see ridge after ridge of the farther mountains, as I have tried to show in the accompanying sketch, where also the lofty mountain called Nangâ Parbat is seen to rise behind, thick clothed in snow.

Lolâb is another place that at some seasons is delightful. Its altitude may be 6000 feet. It is a green vale, about six miles by three, studded with villages and encircled by hills, which are for the most part covered by pine and deodar forest. But here one sees, perhaps in greater degree than elsewhere, the not uncommon sight in Kashmir of much village land lying waste and neglected, and of houses dilapidated—the result of a harsh system of taxation.

Lolâb itself not being marked in the map, I may describe it as immediately on the north-west of the Walar Lake. This lake now deserves some attention; but not in the hottest time would it be well to pay the visit, for the marshes that surround it are breeding-grounds for mosquitos which at times are exceedingly troublesome. The lake is by far the largest piece of water in Kashmir, being as much as ten miles by six: the depth is but little; over a great part it is fourteen feet and in other parts still less.



The river pours itself in, and at the other end flows out clear of sediment. On the northern and western shores is sloping ground or spurs of hill; on the southern a flat, across which, through the marshy haze, one views the long line of snowy mountains more visible than the nearer hills.

At the south-east end of the valley, where the different streams that form the Jhelam come down in various branch valleys from the mountains, are many places where the eye finds relief from contemplating the beauty of distant prospects in nearer views of calmer effect. *Naubug* is one of these spots. Here a small valley is bounded by slopes of low hills that are long spurs from the high ridge behind, hills that rise only to 1000 and 1500 feet, well covered with grass and wood, the slopes not very steep, the hills rounded; these spurs branching make an ever-changing scene of nook, knoll, and dell. In the lower parts the valley bottom is cultivated in rice-fields, which alternate with orchard-shaded village-tracts.

From the hills above this place I obtained, by good fortune, a view of the Panjâl Mountains, of such beauty, of such splendour of colour, that it has ever since remained in my mind so distinctly that the image of it, after many years, can be recalled at will. It was almost an end view of the mountains, but our elevation enabled us to see a succession of the long slopes descending one behind the other to the plain of the valley. The evening sun that nearly faced us illumined the light haze which filled the air; still the distant spurs were seen through it, themselves seeming to be transparent; the distance between each was fully shown by the gradations of light, while

nearer the hills lost that aerial brightness and were clothed in rich dark purple.

Some of the finest scenery in Kashmir is to be found in the *Sind Valley*, which may be traced on the map by the name of the Sind River which flows in it. This valley leads up to the centre of the great snowy range of mountains that separate Kashmir from Ladâkh; along it goes the road to Leh, the capital of Ladâkh. It is a valley a mile or two in width bounded close by lofty hills of varied surface — richly clothed with forest or covered with thick herbage—broken by cliffs, and crowned with rocky peaks.

The mountains rise steep. On the left bank, for fifteen miles without a break, there is a great slope, extending up for thousands of feet, covered with dark forests of silver fir, spruce, and *Pinus excelsa*, with some deodar; here and there lines of lighter green occur, in the hollows maybe, where the conditions are more favourable to the growth of deciduous trees; along the lower edge, too, a growth of them makes a belt of brighter green beneath the dark conifers;—

"Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse."

For five or six thousand feet up, this forest continues along that whole length of fifteen miles; in some parts it reaches to the very summit of the ridge, in others the mountain rises above the tree-limit, and there is then a belt of green pasture above the forest, and above that rocky peaks and beds of melting snow.

On the right bank, the north side of the valley, the aspect of the hills is different. Their southern outlook

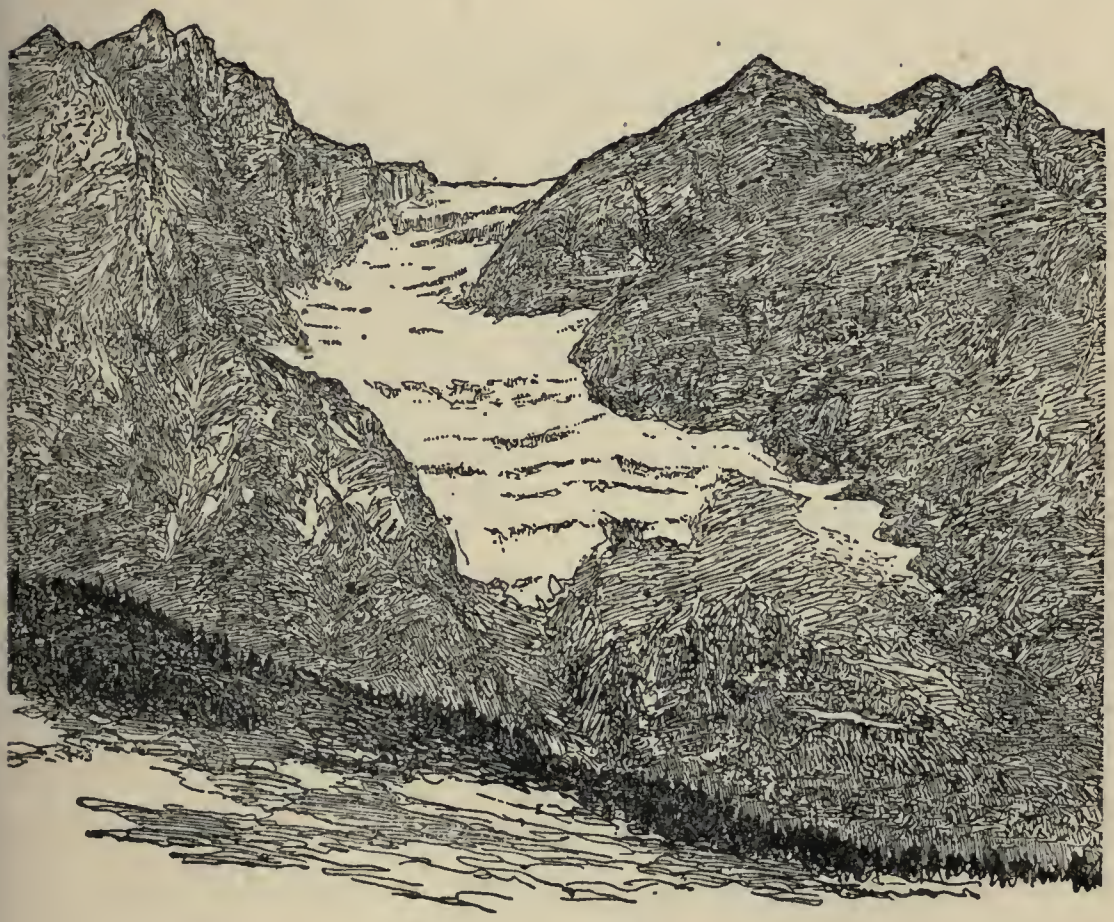
does not favour the growth of wood. For a great height up, their sides are of steep but grassy slopes, broken by rocks and lines of cliff. Still at every mile they show new forms, as, in going along, one opens the successive ravines, and one's view reaches to the higher parts, to the lofty precipitous rocks of the centre of the ridge.

Besides these grand beauties of the mountains there are more homely ones in the valley. The path lies through glades shaded by trees of rich and varied foliage, with flowers of jasmine, honeysuckle, and rose, delicately scenting the air; it passes by villages which are surrounded by and almost hidden in groves of thick-leaved walnut-trees. Each village grove cheers one by its homely, pleasant, look, and each wilder glade tempts one to stay and enjoy in its shade the combined beauty and grandeur of the mountain views.

Beyond Gagangîr a great rocky ridge on the north side approaches its opposite neighbour on the south, and the valley of the river becomes a gorge through which the waters foam, while the path is carried among the large fallen blocks that fill up the space between its right bank and the steep cliff that overhangs it.

After a few miles we pass clear of the gorge and emerge into more open ground. Crossing the river and rising up the farther bank to a level one or two hundred feet above the stream, we come to the plain called Sonâmarg, or "pleasant plain." This is a narrow grassy flat, extending some two miles between the hill-side and the river-bank; connected with it is a wider tract at the meeting of the side valley from the south-east. This latter is a space of beautiful undulating

ground, a succession of dells surrounded by hillocks or mounds, which are sometimes connected more or less into a line, and sometimes isolated. The dells are covered with long thick grass and numerous wild flowers, while the slopes of the hillocks have a growth of silver



GLACIER NEAR SONÂMARG.

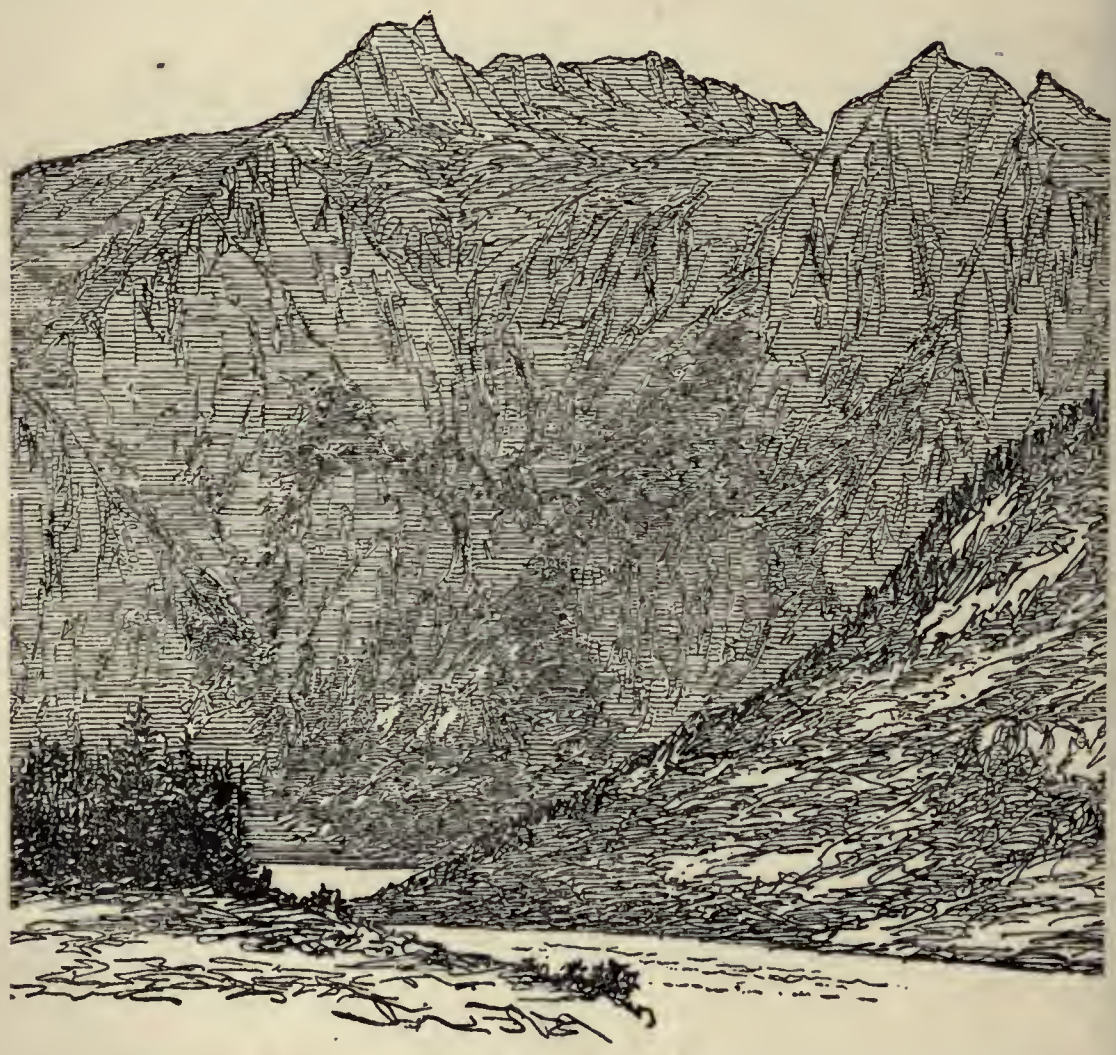
fir, with sycamore, birch, and other bright green trees beautifully intermingled; over the mounds are scattered masses of rock.*

To the south is the range we came through—a great mass of bare rock divided into lofty peaks by hollows,

* A geologist will not be long in discovering this hillocky ground to be the terminal moraine of an old glacier. The glacier must have had a length of twenty miles while it was depositing this moraine; it may once have extended farther.

in each of which lies a small glacier, such as is depicted in the preceding page, mere remnants of the great ice mass which once flowed through all the valleys.

From Sonâmarg to Bâltal the valley is immediately bounded by hills a few thousand feet high; on the north



VIEW APPROACHING BÂLTAL.

side they are covered only with grass; on the south they are varied with tracts of forest. In some places the fir wood spreads down to the part traversed by the road; when we get to Bâltal the plain again is bare, but some of the lower hill-slopes are covered with birch wood and firs.

Bâltal is the last halting-place before the Pass. Here the main stream of the Sind River turns off, almost at right angles, towards the south; a smaller, steep, stream comes down from the north-east, while right in front of us as we come up from Sonâmarg is a great precipitous rocky mountain, which I have tried to represent in the annexed sketch.

From here a path leads up to the Drâs Pass or Zojî Lâ, *Lâ* meaning Pass in Tibetan. This would introduce us to the elevated Tibetan ground which later we shall approach from another side.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PEOPLE OF KASHMIR.

THE Kashmîrî people are doubtless physically the finest of all the races that inhabit the territories we are dealing with, and I have not much hesitation in saying that in size and in feature they are the finest race on the whole continent of India. Their physique, their character, and their language are so marked as to produce a nationality different from all around, as distinct from their neighbours as their country is geographically separated. In face the Kashmîrî might be taken as the type of the Aryan race. They have a wide straight-up and high forehead and a fine-shaped head, with a well-cut square brow. With middle-aged and older people the nose acquires a decided hook of handsome outline; the mouth is often prettily curved with the young people, but it is apt to get straight and thin-lipped as they grow up. The eyes are of a not very dark brown. In figure they are, I should say, of middle height by our English standard, and not apt to run very much above it; they are a robust race, broad-shouldered and large-framed, and of great muscular power. The complexion is somewhat lighter than that of the Dogrâs.

Their clothing is simple; that of the poor people is entirely woollen. They wear short pyjamas, and a long, loose, large-sleeved gown, and a skull cap. Those who

have active work, like the shikârîs or professional sportsmen, hitch the gown up and fasten it round the waist with a kamarband. Anyone who may be bound for a long march will put on leggings of a peculiar sort, a bandage about six inches wide and four yards long, wound round from the ankle up to just below the knee, and then fastened by a long string.

In character the Kashmîrîs have qualities which make one to be interested in and to like them; but their failings and faults are many. They are false-tongued, ready with a lie, and given to various forms of deceit. This character is more pronounced with them than with most of the races of India. They are noisy and quarrelsome, ready to wrangle, but not to fight; on the least exercise or threat of force they cry like children. They have, indeed, a wide reputation for being faint-hearted and cowardly; still, I must admit that I have sometimes met with Kashmîrîs who as against physical dangers bore themselves well. In intellect they are superior to their neighbours; they are certainly keener than Panjâbîs, and in perception, and clearness of mind and ingenuity, they far outvie their masters, the Dogrâs. In disposition they are talkative, cheerful, and humorous.

As to their language, it may in passing be told that from Panjâbî and from Dogrî it is so different as to be quite incomprehensible to those nations; also, it is difficult to learn. The officials of the Maharaja's government, who have much to do with Kashmir, seldom master its language; if they do so at all, with rare exceptions, it is only so far as to understand, and not to speak it. The Kashmîrîs, on the other hand, are good linguists; nearly

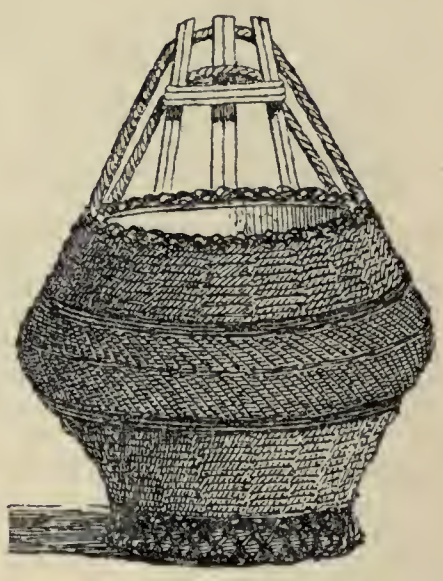
all the men and a good proportion of the women know either Panjâbî or Hindostânî, or, more likely, speak a mixture of both. So the Hindostânî language will well carry one through Kashmir, as well as through the country of the Dogrâs. The Kashmîrî language is rather harsh in sound, but it seems, to one who listens to a conversation without understanding it, to be expressive, and able to be made emphatic; those who speak it seem never at a loss to express every shade of meaning wanted.

The country people are but poorly off; I think, indeed, that they get a fair meal, but they can afford little beyond their simple daily food, and are unable to provide against a rainy day; so when a bad year comes, as, though not often, does sometimes happen, they are put to great straits, and will perhaps leave the country in numbers; for the isolation of the place is such that it is exceedingly difficult for any great importation of corn to be made to redress the failure of a harvest. Thus famines have, in former times, been the occasion of migrations of Kashmîrî, the origin of the settlements of them we met with in various parts of the Outer Hills, and of those in the Panjâb itself.

The Kashmir villages, though untidy in details, are very picturesque. The cottages are two-storied; in some parts they have mud walls, with a low sloping gable-roof of thatch or of rough shingle; in others, where wood is more plentiful, they are entirely of timber, made like a log-hut. They are sure to have some rooms warm and cosy, to live in in winter time; and a balcony sheltered by the overhanging eaves makes a good sitting-place in summer. The lower story of the cottages is used in

winter for stabling the cattle; their animal heat sensibly warms the house, and partly counteracts the coldness of the season.

But the Kashmîrîs have a plan that renders them very independent even of household fires for a protection against cold. Of all classes, and of all ages, they carry what they call a *kângrî*. This is a small earthen pot, about six inches across, enclosed in basket-work; it contains live charcoal. They hold this beneath their great gowns, against their bodies, and the heat from it, especially when they are seated on the floor, diffuses itself beneath their clothing, and makes up for the scantiness and looseness of it; for in winter they neither change nor add to their summer clothing. The kângrî is accurately represented in the adjoining cut.



A KÂNGRÎ.

The cottages are not clumped and crowded, as in the villages of the Panjâb and of Dugar, but are commonly detached. By the village, grow, unenclosed, numerous fruit-trees—apple, cherry, mulberry, and walnut—which form a wood or grove around and hide from view the dwellings. Looking from a commanding height we see the vale all studded with such village groves. In the early summer, when the fields are flooded for rice cultivation, there is the appearance of a chain of lakes and straits, the parts occupied by the villages themselves being the only dry land. In all such prospects, when

the eye has scanned the inhabited plain, it reaches beyond to the dark forests and shining snow-fields of the stately mountains.

In Sirînagar there is more variety in the inhabitants than in the country around; the people here are more divided up into castes, some of which are based on hereditary transmission of occupations, of which there is necessarily greater variety than in the villages.

First, standing out marked and separate from the rest, are the Pandits. These are the Hindû remainder of the nation, the great majority of whom were converted to Islâm. Sir George Campbell supposes that previously the mass of the population of Kashmir was Brahman. We certainly see that at this day the only Kashmîrî Hindûs are Brahmans. These, whatever their occupation —whether that of a writer, or, maybe, of a tailor or clothseller—always bear the title "Pandit," which, in other parts of India, is confined to those Brahmans who are learned in their theology.

The Kashmîrî Pandits have that same fine cast of features which is observed in the cultivating class. The photograph given, after one of Mr. Frith's, is a good representation of two clothsellers who are Pandits, or Brahmans. When allowance has been made for an unbecoming dress, and for the disfigurement caused by the caste-mark on the forehead, I think it will be allowed that they are of a fine stock. Of older men, the features become more marked in form and stronger in expression, and the face is often thoroughly handsome. In complexion the Pandits are lighter than the peasantry; their colour is more that of the almond. These Brahmans



KASHMĪRI BRAHMANS.

are less used to laborious work than the Muhammadan Kashmîrîs. Their chief occupation is writing; great numbers of them get their living by their pen as Persian writers (for in the writing of that language they are nearly all adepts), chiefly in the Government service. Trade, also, they follow, as we see; but they are not cultivators, nor do they adopt any other calling that requires much muscular exertion. From this it happens that they are not spread generally over the country; they cluster in the towns. Sirînagar, especially, has a considerable number of them; a late census shows that in that city out of a total of 132,000 inhabitants, 39,000 are Hindûs, most of whom must be these Brahmans.

The remainder of the citizens are Muhammadans. The Muhammadanism of the Kashmîrî in general is not of a strict sort. Their devotion seems to be most called forth by the traditional memory of various saints whose tombs abound in the valley, some of which are places of pilgrimage whither at certain times the people resort in numbers. I once was present at such a meeting, which, like that of the Hindûs at Parmandal, combines the characters of a fair. It was at Tsirâr, a place seventeen miles from Sirînagar; to this, during the latter months of our year, the Kashmîrî come to do honour to the saint, whom they call Shâh Nûr-ud-dîn, who is buried here. People come from the city, spend a day or two, and then return. Thursday and Friday are the fullest days; a fair is then held, when the bazaar and the temporary stalls are crowded. To the building which contains the tomb of Nûr-ud-dîn, and of some disciples and successors of his, access was most difficult

on account of the numbers. The guardians of the tomb, themselves faqîrs, greedily took from all. The people went though and paid each his mite, without seeming to bestow a thought on the religious character of the place. They threw much more heart into the fair itself. I had never seen Kashmîrîs so self-forgetful and given for the time to enjoyment. Everyone bought something, the value of a penny or two, as a fairing—a kângrî, perhaps, whose price here was something under twopence, or a carved wooden spoon, or coloured-glass armlets; something or other to take to those who had stayed at home. The Friday, according to their reckoning, had begun on our Thursday at sunset; during that night the religious object of the journey had been attended to; the next morning then they were ready for the return journey. Throughout the day they trooped back in thousands, people of all classes and ages crowding the path.

A large proportion of the town inhabitants are shawl-weavers, whose handicraft has made Kashmir to be familiarly known over the whole both of India and Europe. These men spend long days in the low, crowded, factories, where the air is very impure, especially in winter; they keep the rooms close for warmth, and in the absence of ventilation the atmosphere becomes very highly vitiated. This, and the constancy of the sedentary employment, has acted on the physique of the shawl-weavers; they are a class whose sallow complexions and weak frames contrast strongly with the robustness of most other Kashmîrîs.

One other class, which is a numerous and conspicuous one, shall be spoken of. This is the class of Hânjîs, or boatmen. It has been said that the river is the great

KASHMIRĪ BOATMEN.

highway of the country; it is navigable for two days' journey above and two days' journey below the city, and it forms the great artery of communication in the city itself. The class of boatmen, therefore, is likely to be important. They live, in some cases for months together, in some cases entirely, in their boats. A portion of the after-part of the boat is separated and covered in with matting, so as to make a dwelling-place not uncomfortable; even the winter can be weathered under such shelter, with the aid of the kângrî. By the help of plastered mud a fireplace for cooking is arranged, and the whole family—often three generations together—thus pass the greater part of their lives on board.

The Hânjîs are the class with whom Englishmen who visit Kashmir come most in contact, and from whom they are apt to form their opinion of the whole nation. They have, indeed, some of the best and some of the worst qualities of the Kashmîrîs intensified. They are men of active imagination, which is shown in their ready tales and in the lying legends they are always prompt to invent to amuse one. They are excessively greedy, never being satisfied as long as they think there is the least chance of getting more. The cowardice which is proverbially a characteristic of the Kashmîrîs is shown by the Hânjîs whenever they are overtaken on one of the lakes by a storm of wind. They have much of good spirits and of humour, and in energy and versatility they are behind none of their nation. The photograph of the group of Hânjîs (this also taken from one of Mr. Frith's) shows that in face and figure they are a race deserving admiration. Their body is well developed by their labour of

towing and of paddling; especially the muscles of their back become greatly strengthened by the latter. These boatmen use a single heart-shaped paddle, in the working of which they are exceedingly skilful. One of them, sitting in the stern of a boat, will both propel and guide by paddling on one side only; for a drawing of the paddle a little towards one, or a turn of the wrist outwards, will enable one to steer in the stroke itself. The women help in the paddling, but only for slow work. In towing, men, women, and children all take their turn.

Last in our description of classes shall come the caste called *Bâtal.* This division is one that has some ethnological importance. The Bâtal is one of those tribes whose members are outcasts from the community. Like the Dûms of the Outer Hills, the Bâtals have to do the dirtiest work; it is part of their trade to remove and skin carcases and to cure leather. I have heard that there are two classes of Bâtals—so apt are communities in India to divide and subdivide, to perpetuate differences, and to separate rather than amalgamate. The higher Bâtals follow the Muhammadan rules as to eating, and are allowed into some fellowship with the other Muhammadans. The lower Bâtals eat carrion, and would not bear the name of Musalmân in the lips of others though they might call themselves so. By the analogy of other parts, these Bâtals are very likely to be the remnants of inhabitants earlier than the Aryans. From among them are provided the musicians and the dancers; the dancing-girls whom one sees at the darbârs and festivals which the Maharaja holds at Sirînagar are of that race.

I have hitherto spoken of the men of Kashmir and not

of the women. In my accounts of other races, also, it will have been observed that I have said little about the women. The reason is obvious. One sees so little of them, except of the lowest classes, and so seldom meets them face to face, that it is difficult to generalise about their characteristics. In Kashmir there are one or two classes of whom one sees more than one would of corresponding ranks in other parts of India; still I do not feel able to give more than my general impressions of their appearance. Among the Kashmîrî the women, as a rule, are decidedly good-looking. A well-shaped face, good brow, and straight nose, with black hair coming rather low on the forehead; these are features not uncommonly met with. Sometimes one sees a thoroughly handsome face. The women are tall and well grown; as to grace of figure, the looseness of their dress prevents one from speaking; but I do not think that they have the delicacy and elegance of form that many women in India have, and the well-turned arm and small hand, there so usual, is not common in Kashmir. The two classes one sees most of are the Panditânîs, that is the women of the Pandit or Brahman caste, and the Hânjnîs, or women of the Hânjî caste. At certain times of the day a trip through the city by the river will show you specimens of both. The Panditânîs have a delicate look; they have a light, rather sallow, complexion. The Hânjnîs are used to exercise and work; they show in their faces a healthy brown and red, and I think more often have a pleasing expression than the others. The Hânjîs' little girls of five or six are as pretty as any I have seen anywhere.

The girls, until they marry, wear their hair hanging down behind in numerous plaits, joined together and continued by cords and tassels. The women wear, like the men, a long loose gown, hanging in one fall from the shoulders to the ankles. For head-dress they have a low red cap, with a white cloth hanging from it, mantilla-wise, down the back. The Panditânîs wear a white kamarband, or waist-belt, confining the gown. The dancing-girls of the Bâtal caste, from whom some Europeans are apt to form their idea of the women of Kashmir, and who, being least unwilling to undergo photography, are those whose pictures one can see in London, are by no means fair examples of the race; neither in figure nor in face are they so fine as the women of the other castes—of the Kashmîrî race proper.

CHAPTER VIII.

SIRÎNAGAR AND ITS ENVIRONS.

SIRÎNAGAR is tl e ancient and the present name of the capital. On account of its having a taint of Hindû mythology, the word was disused during the time the Muhammadans were rulers, and for some hundreds of years the city was called by the same name as the country, that is "Kashmir." But when the Sikhs conquered Kashmir, they restored the old Hindû name, and "Sirînagar" the town has since been generally called.

The city is situated about the centre of the valley as regards its length, but quite at the north-east side of it, near where the river Jhelam, in its windings through the alluvial flat, touches some of the projecting spurs of the mountains. Where the river makes a great bend, changing its course from north to south-west, there, along both banks for a length of three miles, the town is built, extending not more than half a mile on each side of the river. The stream is about like that of the Thames at Kingston in width and rate of flow. It is the chief artery of traffic; it is of much more importance as a thoroughfare than any of the streets; indeed, there are but one or two streets, and those but short ones, that have anything like a continuous traffic, while the river is always alive with boats.

The river aspect of the city is extremely picturesque. There is nothing like a quay or embankment, and there is

no line of regular buildings, but each house is built independently. In height uneven, of form varied, and in material changing as to the proportion of stone and wood, the houses nearly all agree in having a low sloping roof, with eaves extending, and much window-space in the front, guarded by movable wooden lattices of elaborate patterns. The base of each house is a solid stone wall, sometimes of rough masonry, sometimes better built of cut stone obtained from some old Hindû temple. This firm wall is raised to a level above the rise of the highest floods; it has in many cases supported several generations of superstructures. Above it is the wood and brick building of two, three, or at most four stories, often projecting several feet over the river supported by the ends of the floor-beams, propped, may be, from beneath. This upper structure is sometimes of brick columns, on which all above rests, with looser brickwork filled in between; but sometimes the framework is of wood, which confines the brickwork of the walls. These mixed modes of construction are said to be better as against earthquakes (which in this country occur with severity) than more solid masonry, which would crack.

The view of these buildings—uneven, irregular, but for that very reason giving in the sunlight varied lights and depths of shadow; of the line of them broken with numerous stone *ghâts*, or stairs, thronged with people, that lead from the river up to the streets and lanes of the city; of the mountain-ridges showing above, in form varying as one follows the turns of the river; of the stream flowing steadily below, with boats of all kinds coming and going on it, is one of remarkable interest and beauty. From



CITY OF SIRÎNAGAR.—(*From a Photograph by Frith*).

a height of tower or hill, that will command a bird's-eye view, the sight is still more curious, because of the great expanse of earth-covered roofs, which at some time of the year are covered with a growth of long grass, that makes the city look as green as the country. The frontispiece, which is a woodcut taken from one of Mr. Frith's photographs, faithfully represents these characters.

The public buildings are mosques, Hindû temples lately erected, and the Palace. This last is within the walls of the Sher Garhî, or Fort, which is large enough to include, besides, a bazaar of some importance, the Government offices, and the houses of the courtiers. To the river it presents a loop-holed wall with bastions, rising some twenty-five feet above the general level of the water, surmounted by these roomy but lightly-built houses. The Palace, at the lower corner, is an irregular building, of style partly Kashmîrî partly Panjâbî, while a new lofty edifice with a large projecting bow has traces of European design, though it was not in reality planned by an Englishman. Close by is a golden-domed temple, which is frequented for morning and evening service by the Court.*

Of one of the mosques a drawing is given on the title-page; it is the one called by the name of Shâh Hamadân; it is a good specimen of the indigenous architecture, which has indeed become adapted to mosques and shrines in a way both to suit the object and to give a pleasing effect.

The river is spanned within the city by seven bridges,

* It is the Maharaja's custom to visit Kashmir, accompanied by nearly all his Court, for a few months, sometimes every year and sometimes less often. The object is in both to avoid the heat of the lower land and to look more closely into the affairs of Kashmir.

whose structure of piers—built of alternately-crossing layers of poles (with intervals filled in with stones), widening above to shorten the span of the beam—will be understood from the view of one shown in the picture of the city. A few canals traverse the interior of the town. One of them is wide, and is overlooked by some of the best of the houses. One is narrow, passing through some of the poorest parts; low dwellings crowd on it that, albeit they are well peopled, seem to be on the point of falling; these are irregular, ruinous, places that it would have delighted Prout to draw. A third canal leads from the upper part of the city to the gate of the lake, and shows along its winding course groves of plane-trees on the banks that make a beautiful combination with the smooth waters at their feet and the mountains that rise behind them.

All these are highways for boats, which here do the work of the wheeled vehicles of other countries. In Kashmir there are no carriages or carts; the only things on wheels are the guns of the artillery; but every kind of vehicle is here represented in the varieties of boats. There is the pleasure-barge called *Bangla*, a large vessel, with, as it were, a house built amidships, which is only used by the rulers. *Parinda* is the name, metaphorically given, of a light, fast, boat, with a small platform forward and an awning over part of it; this also is for persons of consequence. These two may carry a score or two of paddlers. *Bahts* is the large-sized barge used for carrying grain, a heavy, cumbersome, vessel; it has a kind of thatched house at the stern for a living house. The *Dunga* is the ordinary boat for carrying miscellaneous merchandise,

and for carrying passengers to a distance; it is this which the English visitors take to with their establishment for the excursions up and down the river. In such a boat one can pass both days and nights very comfortably. These dungas are the home of the greater number of the Hânjîs. A *shikârî* is the sort of boat that is in daily use with the English visitors; a light boat, manned, as it commonly is, by six men, it goes at a fast pace, and, if well fitted with cushions, makes a comfortable conveyance. A *bandûqî shikârî* is the smallest boat of all; a shooting punt, used in going after wild fowl on the lakes.

His boat the visitor will always make use of to do business in the city. None traverse either on foot or horseback the streets and lanes—the dirtiest to be met with anywhere—except under dire necessity.* Happily most of the places likely to attract him are by the river-side. There the shawl merchants have their houses, and in comfortable rooms overlooking the cheerful scene of the river tempt one with the varied products of the Kashmir loom and needle. Nor is the shawl-work, though by far the most important, the only ornamental art peculiar to the place. The silver work and papier-mâché (with which the specimens shown in the various exhibitions have of late years made many familiar) display the same taste, the same artistic feeling, whether shown in simple beauty of form or in harmonious brilliancy of colour, which has made the Kashmir shawl, when of the best, a thing inimitable by other manufacturers.

* The repeated outbreaks of cholera that have of late years occurred in Sirînagar, and their prolonged continuance, show that the disease can flourish in a soil favourable to it, even though the climate be against it.

Of the environs of Sirînagar we may get a panoramic view from a little eminence projecting from the Takht Hill—a conspicuous rocky temple-crowned hill, nearly isolated from the last spur of the mountains, about a mile from the city. The view shows in the distance a long line of the steep snowy peaks of the Panjâl; in front of them, towards the plain, lie the forest slopes and the barer ground of the high karewas; then the low vale extends its length, through which, in deep-winding curves, flows the Jhelam River. The last reach of the river, before it comes to the city, is edged by the houses, nearly hidden in the orchards, where lodge the English visitors. Where the city lies, the river is hidden from our view by the buildings amongst which it finds its way; a great space is closely covered by the house-roofs; among them rise the spires of the mosques, and beyond them the fort-capped hill called Harî Parbat. On the right is marshy ground intersected by clearer water-channels; this melts or changes into the lake called the *Dal.**

First let us look at what may be called the English quarter. This is situated on the right bank of the river above the city. A row of bungalows has been at different times erected for the use of the English visitors; they are free to applicants as they come. After travelling about in a narrow tent one is glad to get a roof over one's head for a change; and these little places give enough of shelter in the favourable weather of the Kashmir summer; but, with the exception of a few, they are but poor houses, roughly and thinly built, such as no working man in

* This view is truthfully depicted (as to outline) in a panoramic sketch to be seen at the South Kensington Museum, on the staircase.

England is obliged to put up with. These bungalows being insufficient for all, many tents are pitched in the gardens close by, and the whole space, for the length of nearly a mile, is lively with the camps of the visitors and with the Kashmîrî who crowd to do business with them; while the river-side is occupied by their boats and resounds with the eager talk of the boat people. In a separate garden is the newly-built Residency, where the officer in special duty comes for a six months' tour of office, his duty being to take cognizance of what especially concerns the visitors and their followers, and to be the channel of communication at this time between the British Government and the Maharaja. The house is large and lofty; but it is built too much after the plan of our houses in India to be well suited to the Kashmir climate.

Around the Dal are some of the most attractive spots of all the neighbourhood. The Dal is a lake measuring five miles from north to south, and two miles from west to east; it is in part shallow, and inclining to be marshy; in other parts it is deeper, and everywhere it is of the clearest water. On three sides a mountainous amphitheatre backs it, whose summit is from 3000 to 4000 feet above the water. On the ground at the foot of these mountains, at the edge of the lake, are numerous villages surrounded by orchards, and the several renowned gardens constructed by the Delhi Emperors. Westwards, towards the open flat, are, first, the gardens that float—gardens made of earth and vegetable matter accumulated on water-plants; then the half-reclaimed marsh, alternate strips of shallow water and made ground; and then the

city. The three most delightful places on the lake are the Nishât, Nasîm, and Shâlamâr Gardens. These were all made, the buildings constructed and the trees planted, by the Delhi Emperors; and if the buildings have gone to decay and lost much of their original beauty, we may congratulate ourselves on being able to enjoy the shade of the magnificent chînâr or plane trees, which, while the Emperors' rule still lasted in Kashmir, had hardly reached their prime.

Nishât Garden, or *Nishât Bâgh*,* is situated on the sloping ground in front of the mountains. It is an oblong walled enclosure, of some 600 yards in length, reaching from the lake edge to the foot of the steep hill-side. It is terraced to the fall of the ground, and divided into five widths; the two outer are now in grass or orchard; within these are strips of ground in beds, an outer garden; in the centre the terraces have revetments, and a well-built masonry canal, with flower-beds along each side, occupies the whole length; the fall at each terrace-face is made over stone slabs carved in scallops to scatter the water, while each level stretch of the canal has a line of fountains. A bungalow (bangla), or pavilion, built over the running water, completes the line at each end; the beauty of the vista is much enhanced by the great plane-trees on each side; over these the eye looking downwards commands a lovely view of the lake, while upwards the great cliffs of the mountains shut closer the prospect.

Shâlamâr Garden † is a couple of miles to the north. It

* "Garden of Gladness."

† Shâla means "house," or "abode"; Mâr is the name of the Hindû goddess of Love.

is on a plain somewhat similar to that of Nishât, but the terraces are low on account of the ground being of a gentler slope. For the same reason the prospects are not so commanding. The chief beauty in this garden is the uppermost pavilion, which is supported on handsome columns of black and grey fossiliferous marble, and is surrounded by a tank filled with fountains, while plane-trees overhang it. The canal leads down in cascades and level runs alternately, and beyond the gates it continues through the marsh far into the lake.

Nasîm Bâgh, or the Garden of Breezes, is a place that never saw its prime. It was constructed by one of the Mughal or Delhi Emperors, with a great revetment wall, terraces, and masonry stairs. On the plateau, thirty or forty feet above the lake, a succession of cross avenues of plane trees was planted. The structure, which made one grandeur of the place, fell into decay before the trees reached to the height of their beauty. Now the masonry is in ruins and half hidden. The splendid avenues of chînâr-trees throw a shade over quiet grassy walks. From among the foliage the view over the lake is exquisite; the water has a glassy surface, reflecting very perfectly the circling wall of mountains; but these have often, especially in the morning sun, their details softened, as well as their colours harmonised, by the brightening of the delicate haze that intervenes.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ROUTE TO GILGIT.

In leaving Sirînagar, to penetrate among more lofty mountains than those as yet approached, it would be well to take a general view of the form of the country which lies at the back of Kashmir and which makes up the portion of the territories hitherto undescribed by us.

One of the most important of the mountain ranges is that which bounds Kashmir on the north-east; it is this we were penetrating when we followed the Bhutnâ stream in Pâdar, and, lately, the Sind River in Kashmir, towards their sources. The first wide extent of land marked as uninhabited, remains so from the height and width of this range, which bears many a peak over 20,000 feet, and snow that gives rise to many a glacier. I am anxious that the reader should understand that, beyond that range, whether north-eastward or eastward from Kashmir, the whole country is at a high level. The mountain-tops are very commonly 19,000 and 20,000 feet, while the level of the valleys varies from 15,000 down to 8000 feet. The Indus River, which drains all that country (having risen far to the south-east in Chinese Tibet), enters the territories at an elevation of 14,000 feet, and flows at a gradually decreasing height through the countries of Ladâkh and Baltistân, which are those whose inhabitants are denoted by the red colour on the map.

Not until that river gets near to the north-west corner of the country, and takes the sharp bend, does it reach as low as 5000 feet above the sea.

It is to this north-west corner that we shall now bend our steps. By following a route which leads to the place named Gilgit, we turn the flank of some of the highest mountains, and march in valleys cut in the sides of others, till we reach the Indus at that lower level that was mentioned; but still, as we shall see, we are among great lofty ranges, and though we may have passed one barrier another equally lofty looms in front.

Gilgit, which we make for, is about 130 miles from Sirînagar as the crow flies, but it is 230 by road, and the march takes twenty-two days. If the object were simply to reach the journey's end, it would be found a tedious road; in any case it is a rough and laborious one.

The way usually adopted is to drop down the Jhelam by boat and cross the Walar Lake to a place called Bandipûr, whence the start by land is made.

There is first to be crossed the ridge which intervenes between the Vale of Kashmir and the Kishangangâ Valley. To reach to the summit of this takes more than a day. The path zigzags up a spur for some thousands of feet; then it leads us to a part where the slope is more gradual and the ground is varied, being broken into sweet little flowery dells surrounded by fir-trees. Here, by the side of a little lake embosomed in a glade of the forest, is a halting-place 4000 feet above the Kashmir Valley. Thence a rise of between 2000 and 3000 feet more brings us to the ridge. On the other side, the road descends through somewhat similar but on

the whole more wooded ground; after a day and a half's march from the ridge, the banks of the Kishangangâ are reached. Thus then, in traversing twenty-four miles of road, or as the crow flies a distance of sixteen miles, and rising and descending some 6500 feet, we had crossed the northern bounding ridge of Kashmir.

The Kishangangâ River which rises forty miles to the eastward of this spot, among the mountains behind Drâs, has here become a fine swift stream. As it flows on, it receives tributaries that make it a river of equal importance with the Jhelam, which it joins at Muzafarâbâd.

Our way leads up the valley. A short march past pine-covered hills brings us to Gurez, a collection of scattered clusters of log-huts. This place, which gives its name to the district, is where, for some four miles in length, the valley somewhat widens. The height of Gurez is 7800 feet above the sea. This elevation, combined with a great amount of cloud and rain in summer and of snow in winter, makes the climate inclement. In this and some other respects the place reminds me much of the valley of Pâdar.

In reaching this upper part of the Kishangangâ Valley, we had already come into the tract occupied by Dârds; in the village of Gurez itself there is a mixture of Dârds and Kashmîrîs, but the former predominate. From there onwards the people are almost entirely of that race, and dialects of the Dârd language, a language quite different from Kashmîrî, are spoken.* We shall get to know more of these people as we go on; here we note that we are

* These ethnographical facts are denoted on the Map by the blue tint for Dârds, and the squares of green for Kashmîrî.

already in Dârdistân, if we keep that appellation for the country inhabited by Dârds.

From Gurez the road goes, for three days' march, along a tributary of the river, between mountain-slopes clothed first by pine but farther on by spruce and silver firs. The last halting-place on this side the ridge, which makes the watershed between the Jhelam and Indus drainage, is at Burzil. Thence we rise in five or six miles a height of about 2000 feet, to the Pass which is called Dorikun, 13,500 feet high; it is not a defile, but a neck between the two parts of a rocky ridge, which is of granite.

Having crossed the Pass we are in the basin of the Indus; we are on the eastern branch of the Astor River. The valley in which this flows we now descend; for three more marches down it is enclosed by not very steep mountains, after which we come to where the western branch of the Astor stream falls in; then another few miles and we reach Astor, thirteen or fourteen marches from Sirînagar.

On the north side of the ridge that we crossed, a slight difference in the vegetation was observed as compared with that of the Gurez Valley; the grass less completely clothes the hill-sides; the brake-fern does not so much abound, and the pine forests are less extensive. These are signs that the climate is drier; it is here of that degree which may be called semi-Tibetan; in this, though forest and grass clothe part of the mountain-slopes, the air is too dry for any crop to be raised without irrigation.

Coming down the valley we reach traces of cultivation at the level of 10,000 feet. First are detached hamlets and small villages, bare, with no trees about them. Then

we come to a village with some apricot-trees; at the next place are some small walnuts; while at Chagâm, which is 8500 feet, are many fine walnut-trees, and from there onwards the villages are mostly well shaded by fruit-trees.

But in that upper part it is chiefly traces of *former* cultivation that one sees; they are enough to show that crops will grow and ripen; but the fields are waste, the hamlets deserted. This state of things was brought about by the raids of the people of Chilâs. The Chilâsîs are a Dârd race inhabiting a long valley on the west of Diyâmir or Nangâ Parbat. Until about 1850 they used to make occasional expeditions for plunder, coming round the flanks of the mountain into this Astor Valley. The plunder they came for was cattle, and people to make slaves of; their captives they do not sell, but keep for their own service, making use of them to take their flocks and herds to pasture. But since it would be almost impossible to keep grown men as their slaves at such work, where opportunities for escape would be plentiful, they used to kill the men and carry away only the women and the young people.

It was these raids that determined Maharaja Gulâb Singh to send a punitive expedition against Chilâs; this he did in 1851 or 1852. The Dogrâs at last took the chief stronghold of the Chilâsîs, a fort two or three miles from the Indus River, and reduced those people to some degree of obedience; and there has been no raid since.

It is curious that while the people of Astor are all riders and keep many ponies, these Chilâsîs have none, and they

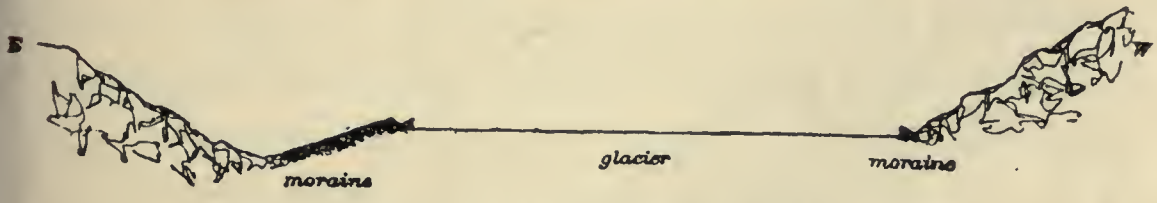
used not to attempt to take away any they met with in their raids.

The Astor people, who thus in later times have suffered so much, used formerly, when they were stronger, to do the same kind of thing. Gurez was liable to their attacks, and Drâs also.

The most interesting place I visited in the Astor country is the valley which leads up to the base of Nangâ Parbat. Just beyond the village of Tarshing, we reach, at a level of 9400 feet, the foot of one of the glaciers that spring from that great mountain.

Nangâ Parbat, whose summit is 26,600 feet above the sea, towers above in a great snowy and rocky mass that seems to be a gigantic escarpment. The glacier in its lower course has a slope of 4° or 5°, with a width of about three-quarters of a mile; it is much broken by curved transverse crevasses.

For some three miles along the left bank of the glacier, is a great side moraine, the surface of which is now grown



SECTION ACROSS TARSHING GLACIER.

over with forest. The annexed section across, if looked at closely, will show the relationship of the moraines and the ice. From the hollow next the mountain-side on the east, one ascends a very regular slope of perhaps 25° for a height of 400 feet; this is the old moraine, it is now covered with pine-wood. Beyond the crest of it is a little

hollow, and then a second moraine heap, which, on the farther side, is bounded by a vertical cliff of 100 feet, at the foot of which is the glacier. On the right bank there is a representative of the inner one only of these two moraine-ridges.

I heard from natives of Tarshing, close observers, of some curious changes in the state of the ice. It seems that up to 1850 it was jammed against the rock on the opposite side of the main valley to which it may be said to be tributary.

At the time spoken of, the whole surface of the glacier was smooth, uncrevassed; one might have walked, and indeed they used to ride, anywhere on it. The stream from the south-west, which drains other glaciers, found a way for itself underneath. Well, about that year or the next, in the winter time, the water-way got stopped up, and a lake began to accumulate in the valley above; as spring came the lake much increased; it must have been, at the last, a mile or a mile and a half long and half a mile wide, with an average depth of 100 or 150 feet, the extreme depth being about 300 feet. The people knew what was coming, and men were put on the watch; when at length the water reached the top of the glacier and began to flow over, word was sent down the valley, and all fled from the lower parts to the hill-sides; the water cut down a course for itself between the cliff and the glacier, and in doing so produced a disastrous flood that lasted three days.*

* Many other floods on the Indus have been produced in a similar way from other glaciers. The greatest known flood, however, was caused by a landslip. Details on this subject will be found in 'The Jummoo and Kashmir Territories,' Chapter XVII.

After this the glacier gradually sunk, at the rate of a few yards every year, till it came down to its present position, that is about 100 feet below its former level; at the same time it became crevassed, so that now it is difficult to find a road across. It is evident that at the time the glacier abutted against the rock, the ice was being compressed, and the crevasses that may have formerly existed were closed up; afterwards, the water keeping open a passage, the ice was cracked off bit by bit as it advanced, and the circumstances that cause crevasses (as inequalities in the bed) acted without opposition. Now again the space between the end of the glacier and the cliff is closed up; the waters at present find a passage for themselves beneath; probably the same process of compression has re-commenced, which may again end in a complete stoppage of the upper drainage, formation of a lake, and subsequent outbreak and flood.

Returning to Astor itself,* we find it a place that used to be the seat of a Dârd Raja, but is now a cantonment of the Maharaja's troops, the chief station for the Gilgit Brigade. It is a collection of hundreds of small huts, which the soldiers inhabit in twos and threes; these huts are huddled or crowded together in two or three separate clumps. The number of troops is about 1200; the object of keeping them here, rather than nearer the frontier, is to save carriage of the supplies, which mostly come from Kashmir; the force is on the right side of the snowy Pass, and is always ready to advance to Gilgit if required.

* The Dogrâs always call this place "Hasora," but its name in the mouth of a Dârd is Astor.

At Astor and for many miles on there is one general character of the valley; at the bottom it is very narrow; the river is quite confined between the ends of great spurs from the lofty mountain-ridges on both sides; the cultivation is on very small spaces, usually some hundreds of feet above the valley bottom. The hill-sides are partly broken into cliffs and partly of a smooth surface, grown over with grass in tufts, and with scattered bushes of pencil-cedar, while in places sheltered from the sun *Pinus excelsa* grows, of small size, and makes a thin forest; above, the mountains often rise to lofty, rocky, and snowy peaks.

Below Astor, as well as in the higher part of the valley, are deserted lands which again tell of the raids of the Chilâsîs. This part should be a country of fruit-trees, but when the lands were deserted these perished for want of water. On some of the terraced fields I saw forest trees growing which must have been one hundred years old; this shows that for long the same state of hostility and insecurity had continued.

A mile or two below the village of Dashkin, we enter an extensive pine forest; in this grows the edible pine (*P. Gerardiana*), this being the only other locality in the territories, besides Pâdar, where I have met with it.

Some miles more, and we get to the last spur, that which overhangs the valley of the Indus. It is a sharp spur-ridge, the Pass over which bears the name of Hatû Pîr. From this we look straight across the Indus Valley on to a great steep mass of mountains, the greater part of the surface of which is bare, either rock or talus, only in the upper part pine-trees are dotted here and there; a

ravine comes down in front, by the side of which is a small patch of cultivated land—the little village of Thalîcha. The river Indus winds through what, in a large way, is a plain between two mountain-ridges, but is really made of sloping fans on both sides — stony tracts—below the level of which flows the river, winding and leaving little stretches of sand in the hollows of its bends.

From Hatû Pîr there is a great descent, of about 5000 feet, by a zigzag road, steep and rough. We do not immediately reach the Indus Valley, but we go first to where the end of the Hatû spur nearly meets the mountain on the opposite side of the Astor River, leaving but a narrow channel for the water. Here the Astor River is spanned by two rope bridges made of birch twigs, and by a wooden bridge over which ponies can be taken; a tower has been built that commands the passage; the position is held by some forty soldiers, who keep a good look-out. The place is a strange one; the soldiers live in caves in the rock; the rock overhangs, so as to keep off the sunshine for the greater part of the day; still the air becomes burning hot in summer; in winter, though no snow falls, the cold is somewhat severe.

Here crossing and following down the Astor River we soon debouch into the Indus Valley and find ourselves on the stony alluvial tracts, over nine miles of which, with small ups and downs, we have to go before reaching Bawanjî. Down to this point, which is eighteen marches from Kashmir, laden ponies are not uncommonly brought, but there are many places very trying for them; the worst is the descent of the Hatû Pîr. As far as Gilgit

itself laden ponies are seldom taken, on account of there being a few spots where it would be very difficult, if not impossible, for them to pass.

Bawanjî is a place where at one time was a good deal of cultivation, and it is likely that fruit-trees once shaded it; but during the wars of two or three generations back it was laid waste and became entirely depopulated, and nought but bare ground remained. At the present time Bawanjî has a very small area under cultivation, but the place is of some importance as a military post, since on the holding of it depends the passage of the Indus on the way to Gilgit. There is a fort which was built by the Dogrâs; it is manned by about seventy men, and as many more are in barracks outside. There is here also a prison, where a gang of incorrigible Kashmîrî horse-stealers are detained; these men enjoy during the day some liberty for cultivating their plots of land.

The valley is warm and dry; with irrigation two crops can always be raised. In winter, snow seldom falls, but on occasional years it may do so to the depth of an inch, melting away with the first sun. The mountains round, lofty, rocky, and bare, increase the summer's heat.

The Indus is here a great river; it flows smoothly, with a breadth of 160 yards, and a depth that is considerable. In going to Gilgit one crosses it a mile or two above Bawanjî, the passage now being easily effected by a ferry-boat. At that point there comes down on the right bank the Se stream, and this one follows for some miles in preference to the valley of the larger Gilgit River that falls in higher up. But there is a 2000-foot ridge to

cross from one valley to the other; one march brings us to its foot, some twelve miles up the Se Valley; by the next (a difficult one for horses) we reach a pleasant village in the Gilgit Valley; thence a short day's journey, the last of the twenty-two from Kashmir, brings us to Gilgit itself.

CHAPTER X.

GILGIT AND THE FRONTIER.

From the mouths of the Dârd people, when talking among themselves in their own language, the sound of the name of the country we have come to seemed to my ear such as would properly be represented by the spelling *Gilyit*. But all people of other races who have had occasion to use the name—Kashmîrîs, Sikhs, Dogrâs, and Europeans—have caught the sound as *Gilgit*, and used this form until it has become so much known that it would be inconvenient, not to say useless, for me to attempt to change the name.

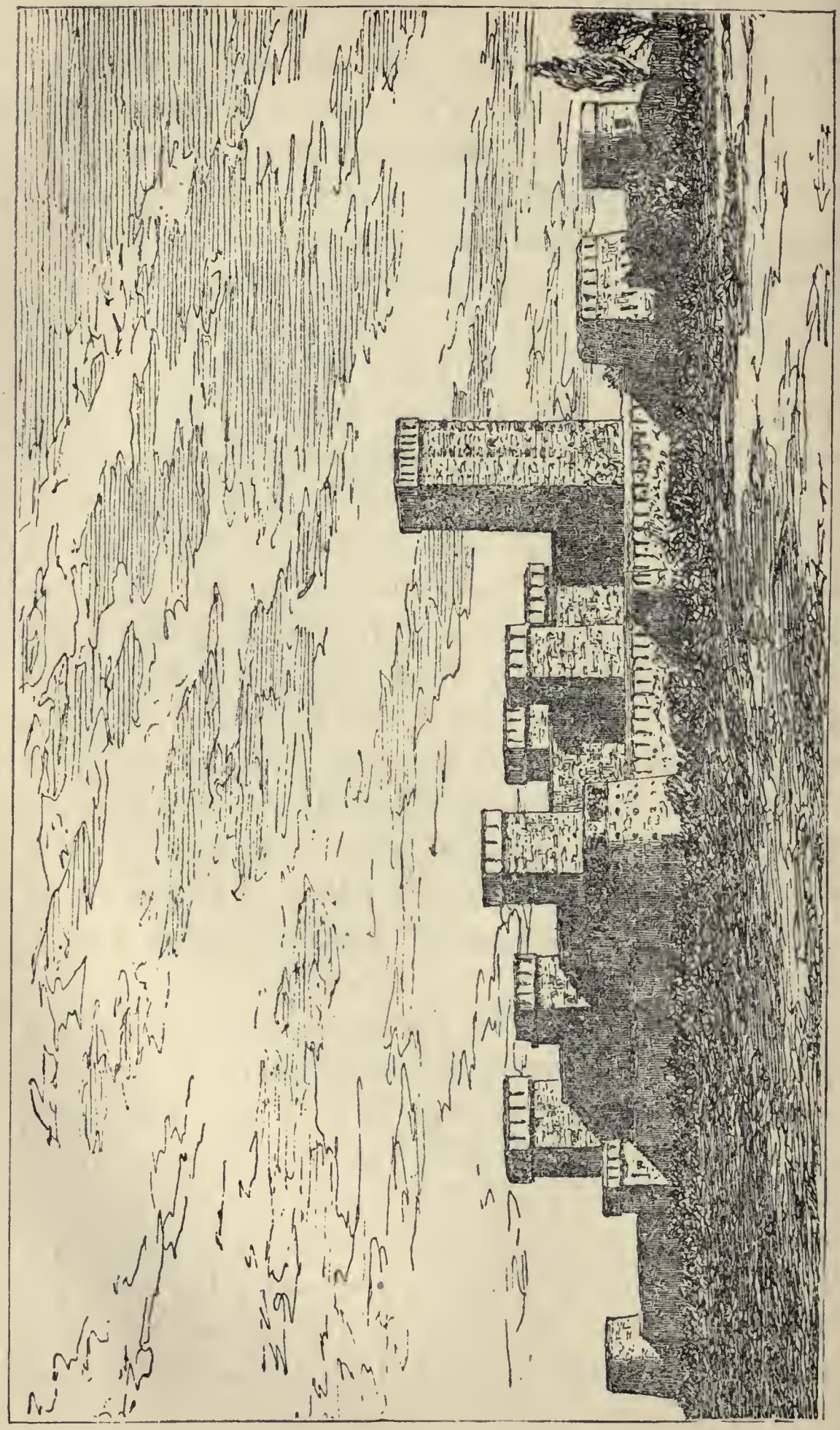
The district of Gilgit consists of the lower part of the valley of a river tributary to the Indus, which, rising in the mountains that bound Badakhshân and Chitrâl, flows south-eastward until it falls into the great river, a little above Bawanjî. The length of the course of this Gilgit River is 120 miles, which are thus divided,—Yâsîn includes a length of 60 miles, Puniâl of 25 miles, and Gilgit of 35 miles. Yasîn is beyond the Maharaja of Kashmir's boundary; Puniâl is within it, being governed by a Raja dependent on and aided by the Maharaja's power; Gilgit is administered directly by the Maharaja's officers.

The lower part of the valley is from one to three miles wide, and is bounded on each side by steep rocky mountains; the valley itself contains stony alluvial plateaus, the greater part of whose area is arid and barren, but in

front of each side ravine is a cultivated space, watered by the side stream, on which is a collection of houses. The line of mountains on the south-west side of the valley is divided most regularly by these ravines. On the north-east side the mountains are of an enormous size; they are well seen from the ridge separating the Se and Gilgit valleys; the rocky spurs lead back to lofty snowy peaks, one of which is over 25,000 feet in height.

The village of Gilgit is on one of the watered tracts on the right bank of the river; here the cultivated ground is not part of the fan of a side stream, but is on the flat plain of the river alluvium, which makes a terrace thirty or forty feet above the water. The cultivation occupies the space of a square mile or so, extending from the river bank to the mountains, the irrigating water coming from the nearest side stream. The houses here are flat-topped; they are scattered over the plain in twos and threes among groups of fruit-trees, having been rebuilt in this way after the destruction that occurred in the various wars to which Gilgit has been subject; it will take long for the village to recover the abundance of fruit-trees which used to prevail in it.

The fort of Gilgit is the Maharaja's chief stronghold in Dârdistân. It has been at different times taken, destroyed, rebuilt, added to, and altered. In 1870, when I was there, the appearance of it from the south-west was as represented on the next page. The central part with the high towers (one of them loftier than the rest) was built by the ruler Gaur Rahmân during his second reign in Gilgit, when the Maharaja Gulâb Singh's troops had been for a time dispossessed of it; this is built in the Dârd style, of



GILGIT FORT IN 1870.

a wooden framework for the wall, filled in with stones; it was really a strong work for the country. But since this sketch was made, since I saw the place, changes have occurred. In the spring of 1871 a severe earthquake threw down a considerable portion of the fort, and it has now, I believe, been rebuilt on a better plan.

Gilgit, by my reckoning, is 4800 feet above the sea. Its climate is warm and dry, drier than that of Astor, and snow seldom falls in the valley. The vegetable products are the following—wheat, barley, naked barley, rice (in Gilgit village only), maize, millet, buckwheat, pulse, rape, and cotton; and of fruits—mulberry, peach, apricot, grape, apple, quince, pear, greengage, fig (not in any perfection), walnut and pomegranate; besides musk-melons and water-melons. Silk is grown, but in very small quantity; the worm is smaller than that of Kashmir, and the cocoon is small.

Gold is washed from the river-gravels, as in many other parts of the Indus basin; here it is in coarser grains than I have seen elsewhere, and the return for the labour of washing is somewhat better. It would very likely repay working on a larger scale than that now followed.

In this valley (as in other countries that we shall come to) the contrast is great and sudden between the cultivated space, bearing good crops and various fruit-trees, and the ground beyond, which is bare and stony, the vegetation being closely limited by the supply of water for irrigation; nothing grows on the plain without its aid. Not only is the plain bare, but the mountains also are naked, of rock or loose stones without vegetation. Only at the summit of the cliff that rears its head above Gilgit

is some fir forest. The climate approaches to that degree of dryness which may be called complete Tibetan.

Let us now travel up the valley as far as we may, and see what there is at this extreme north-west corner of the Territories, which is also the extreme northerly point of the land affected by the sway of the British in India.

Four miles above the village and fort of Gilgit the valley narrows; still there is room for a few villages and sites of deserted villages. After a day's march one leaves the district of Gilgit and enters Puniâl.

Puniâl is a part of the valley which had long been held by separate Rajas, sometimes I think independent, sometimes depending on one or other of their neighbours—Yâsîn or Gilgit. The last result of the wars and disturbances that for some generations so much affected these valleys has been to leave Puniâl to a ruler of the line of its old Rajas, but under the protection of, and in close dependence on, the Maharaja of Kashmir. The district thus held has a length of some twenty-five miles; within it there are nine villages, the chief of them being Sher, on the left bank, where the Raja dwells.

A characteristic of this part of the valley is that often, after every few miles, one comes to a place where the space is narrowed for a short distance by spurs coming down, so that the passage along is extremely difficult; the name given to such places is *darband*, or "shut-door"; they are of much importance from a military point of view, since at each of them a few might stop an army for a time; but there are usually two roads by which they can be passed—a very difficult one along the cliff, fit only for agile foot-passengers, and a bridle-path

that leads a thousand feet or more above; again, in winter, they can sometimes be turned by twice fording the river.

That we have here come to a country exposed to the attacks, or at all events the alarms, of surrounding enemies, is shown by the arrangement of the villages. At Sher itself, and from that place onwards, all the villagers, with their wives and families and their cattle, live within a fort; village and fort are here synonymous. *Sher Fort* is the strongest hereabouts; it has one face to the bank of the river, whence its supply of water cannot be cut off; all four sides are lofty walls with towers. Inside, the whole area is covered, huts are built over it all; these huts are mostly of three stories, the lowest is occupied by the cattle, the second is the usual dwelling-place, and the third is the summer living-place; they are lighted by small openings in the roofs. The Raja has a nice set of rooms in one corner. Besides the country-people, there are a hundred irregular sepoys of the Maharaja's army quartered in the fort; they occupy the part next to the walls, while the villagers have the centre. Thus the place is very much crowded.

Bubar, which is also on the left bank, some fifteen miles up (six thousand feet above the sea), is in the same way a place where the villagers live in their fort. Fruit-trees are thick on the ground. The vine is much cultivated; it is grown in small vineyards with the plants at irregular distances, many being old trees; the whole of the vineyard is covered with a framework of sticks supported at a height of from two to four feet above the ground, and over this the vines are trained; some of these vine-

yards are immediately beneath the walls; they are considered as a good defence to the fort; I think it more likely that the fort is a good defence to the vineyards, which are apt to suffer in a war. Bubar Fort is not quite so strong as Sher, still it is reckoned one of those which cannot be taken by force—the alternative, treachery, is not an uncommon weapon in these countries. *Gulmutî, Singal,* and the other villages in this part of the valley, have the dwellings similarly enclosed in forts.

At evening, the people, who have been occupied in their fields during the day, all come with their cattle within the walls, and the gates are closed; all night sentries watch on the towers, and every half hour the "All's well" resounds through the stillness, though it may get less frequent towards the sleepy hours of morning. At dawn an armed party go forth and make the round of all places that might possibly harbour an enemy, and not until their search has proved that the village is clear do others issue for their ordinary avocations. At the time I marched up the valley the Maharaja's relations with the Yâsîn chief were in a doubtful state, on account of the murder of Mr. Hayward, for which we were trying to get reparation; these precautions, therefore, may have been more than usually attended to. I did not myself lodge within the forts, but, having an escort of two hundred men from Gilgit, we were able to keep such a look-out as effectually to prevent any surprise.

The highest point in the valley to which I went was Gâkûj. This is the last village in Puniâl; it is the farthest in this north-west corner to which the Maharaja's power or influence extends—and hence it is the farthest

to which the influence of the Government of India reaches. Gâkûj is, by my observations, 6940 feet above the sea; it is on a knob of rock behind which is a sloping plain. It is a cold windy place; snow falls there in winter to a depth varying from six inches to one foot six inches, and it stays three months; here only one crop is grown, while a few hundred feet down, two crops are got from the land.

There is a strong fort at Gâkûj, containing within it a spring of water; the garrison is composed of the villagers —about fifty fighting men. Part of the plain is cultivated, but beyond stretches a stony expanse, backed by mountains 3000 feet or so high, their sides dotted with pencil-cedar bushes with pine forests above; this strip of plain extends some eight miles up the valley, at which distance a spur from the mountains comes down and juts against the river, making a natural barrier. This spot, called Hûpar, is the extreme point of the Maharaja's territory; here the Puniâl Raja has a guard of six men, who, on signs of an enemy approaching, would light a signal fire; for this reason no cooking of food is allowed there, so the look-out party take a few days' provisions ready cooked, to last until their relief. To hold the position would require one or two hundred men. There are two roads past it, one of them only can be traversed by horses.

At three other places is a guard kept. One is on the left bank of the Gilgit River, a little lower down than Gâkûj; one is on the left bank of the Ishkoman River (which falls in from the north above Gâkûj), and one on its right bank, near, I think, its junction with the main stream;

while in summer a guard is pushed nearly a day's march up the Ishkoman Valley. The object is to reach the best look-out place at each particular time of the year, and this must vary as the rivers become fordable or impassable. The Yâsînîs, on the other hand, have a guard on the left bank, opposite to Hûpar.

It was in November, 1870, that I went through Puniâl. The ruler is Raja Isâ Bâgdur (a name sometimes corrupted by strangers to Bahâdur). We were together for several days; we travelled in company, and nearly every day I joined him in a game of polo; with such intercourse, we naturally became well acquainted. He is a man who has long been at enmity with the Yâsîn family, and now entertains the most lively hatred of them; in the various tides of invasion, he has had to flee from his territory and take shelter now in Gilgit, now in Chilâs, and now in Kashmir. On the re-conquest of Gilgit by the Maharaja (which will be related in another chapter) he was replaced in his own country, which ever since he has held in faithful dependence on the Maharaja's Government, often under difficult circumstances. Though an old man he is strong and active; he is a capital, even a renowned, rider. In character he is both brave and politic, and at the same time both cautious and enterprising. He is much feared by his enemies and liked by his people; these obey him implicitly; it is their custom, on meeting him, to go up and kiss his hand; this, I believe, to be the general old custom in Dârdistân, or at all events in that part of it where the government is monarchical.

Of the countries beyond the frontier I will now say a few words, though I myself did not visit them. Even

fragments of information about places that are at present inaccessible may have a value.

Hunza and *Nagar* are two small independent rajaships, situated opposite one another on that branch of the Gilgit River which falls in a little below the fort. Nagar has generally shown a desire to be on friendly terms with the Dogrâs at Gilgit, while Hunza has been a thorn in their side. The two are more separated than one would fancy, by the river and by its steep alluvial cliffs, which here are of considerable height, and down which there is hardly a path.

Of Yâsîn our information is that which was given by the traveller Hayward,* who lost his life by the treachery of the ruler of that place. It is much such a country as Gilgit and Puniâl—an alternation of small irrigated village-spaces with long stony tracts—the mountains in general rocky but with stretches of fir forests here and there.

Dârel is a valley to the west that has seven fort-villages, a valley about a mile and a half wide; here the air seems moister; deodar, pine, and oak grow on the hill-sides; the cultivation, I was told, is continuous along the whole length of it. Vineyards abound; kine and goat are plentiful. Most of the people during summer live up on the hills, where pasture is to be found.

The sources of the Gilgit River lie in the great range of mountains, called Mustâgh, or in the ridge that runs from it south to the Indus. Many of the streams have their beginning in glaciers, for the mountains are lofty, and bear perpetual snow. Every path that leads over the

* 'Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society,' 1870.

north bounding ridge must traverse a glacier. Such ways are little frequented. A horseman indeed may go from Yâsîn unto Badakhshân, but the road will be a continuation of the worst of such ground as we have come over. There will be narrow paths, rocky ledges, steep rises and a glacier pass beyond. One road there is which, by adding another Pass, will avoid the worst. From Gilgit by Yâsîn to the Chitrâl Valley (where Mastûj is marked on the map) and thence north-east to Badakhshân, the way has been traversed, not by armies, but by small bodies of horse and foot, of the hardy people of the country.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DÂRD PEOPLE.

THE existence of the Dârds as a separate race, as well as something of their language, have for a good many years been facts within the reach of readers of travels; but the information made known about them has till lately been extremely meagre. Dr. Leitner has collected and appended to his own work the previously published notices about this people and their country, and these show how very little knowledge there was on the subject. Dr. Leitner visited Dârdistân in 1866, and, having supplemented his inquiries of that time by investigations into Dârd dialects and customs made through men of the race whom he gathered round him at Lâhor, he has given the results in a work that is of the greatest value to, and deserves the hearty acknowledgment of, all who take interest in tribes that have long lived separate, unknown to all but their nearest neighbours, and a knowledge of whose relationships may throw light on some of the most weighty ethnographical questions.

Whether we judge from language or from physiognomy, the conclusion is inevitable that the Dârds are an Aryan race.

For physique; they are broad-shouldered, moderately stout-built, well-proportioned men. They are active and

enduring. They are good as mountaineers, and those who have been used to act as porters are strong and quick in the work; but in some parts they have never been trained to coolis' work, and will not undergo it. In face they can in general hardly be called handsome, but still they have a rather good cast of countenance; their hair is usually black, sometimes brown; in complexion they are moderately fair; the shade is sometimes, but not always, light enough for the red to show through it. Their eyes are either brown or hazel. Their voice and manner of speech is somewhat harsh; those who have learned Panjâbî have a particularly hard way of speaking that language.

The photograph given of a group of Dârds (after Frith) is an admirable representation of some men of the race who live in the neighbourhood of Drâs; these fellows are as hardy and enduring as any men I have ever met with; though living in the most trying circumstances of climate, they are not oppressed or weighed down by them, but keep such a cheerfulness as the inhabitants of the most favoured climes and countries may envy.

The disposition and bearing of the Dârds is independent and bold; they will not endure to be put upon, but stand out for their rights, and stand up against oppression as long as possible. They are by no means soft-hearted; but they are not disobliging when taken in the right way. For intellect, it seems to me that they are, as a race, decidedly clever; if not so ingenious as the Kashmîrîs, yet they are both clear-headed and quick.

Such qualities as these make them a people that one must sympathise with. A people who are bold and, though

not caring much for human life, are not bloodthirsty; a people who will meet one on even terms, without sycophancy or fear on the one hand, or impertinent self-assertion on the other; such are not so often met with in the East but that one welcomes and values them.

The dress of the Dârds is woollen, except among the higher people, who wear cotton clothes for the summer if they can get them; the dress consists of pyjamas, choga (or gown-coat), a waistband to confine this, and lastly, a cap and *chaussure*, both of peculiar construction. The cap is a bag of woollen cloth half a yard long, which is rolled up outwards at the edges until it gets to the size to fit comfortably to the head, round which the roll makes a protection from cold or from sun nearly as good as a turban. For their feet they have strips and scraps of leather put under and over and round the foot, and a long thin strip wound round and round to keep all these in place. The head-dress is thoroughly characteristic of the Dârds; wherever they are scattered, and with whomsoever they are mixed up—with the one exception of the Buddhist Dârds to be mentioned below—they keep that kind of cap.

There are certain subdivisions of the Dârd race which may be called castes, since they are kept up by rules more or less stringent against the intermarriage of those who belong to different divisions. To trace these out is a matter of much importance, for they probably give indications, if one knew how to interpret them, of the sources from which the present community has been compounded, and of the order of successive occupations of the country, and of the supremacy of different nations.

According to my inquiries,* the following are the important caste divisions in the order of their recognised rank:

(1) Ronû. (2) Shîn. (3) Yashkun. (4) Kremin. (5) Dûm.

As to the first, Ronû, I am not clear whether any importance may be attached to the division. In no other account have I seen the name mentioned, but in the Gilgit country it is certain that a small number of families are of a caste called Ronû, and that they are held higher even than the Shîn.

The remaining four castes are of undoubted importance in an ethnographical view.

Beginning with the lowest of the four, we find the *Dûms* acting as musicians, like the low-caste Marâsîs of the Panjâb and the Domes of other parts of India; and like also the Bems of Ladâkh and the Bâtals of Kashmir. It will be remembered, too, that the lowest caste at Jummoo —the outcasts to whom was relegated the lowest kinds of work—is called Dûm, though there the musicians and dancers are not taken from among them. Thus all through these hills, in all the different nations, we find a lowest caste, one everywhere treated as unfit for ordinary social intercourse, corresponding in all the cases either in name or in occupation, or sometimes in both. It is true that in each nation that lowest caste has something of the general characteristics of the nation as a whole. In every case their language is the same as that of those they live with, and has no connection with that of the similar caste

* The substance of this part of the chapter was communicated in a paper which I read to the Oriental Congress that met in London in September, 1874.

in the neighbouring nation. In form and features they are somewhat like and somewhat different from those who are in some measure their masters; we saw that the Dûms of the Outer Hills differ in form and complexion from the men of the higher castes, and that the Bâtals of Kashmir by no means equal the ordinary type of Kashmîrî. Of the Bems of Ladâkh and the Dûms of Dârdistân I hardly saw enough (for in truth they are few in number) to be able to generalise about them in respect of this. But even a resemblance more or less complete would not, in my opinion, outweigh the probability derived from the other facts, that in all these cases we have remnants of the early, pre-Aryan race that inhabited India. If this be so it is a new, and I think unexpected, fact, the existence of this race among the high mountains and in the snowy country.

The *Kremins* seem to correspond in function with the *Kahârs* of India (the Jîwars of the Panjâb), for they act as potters, millers, carriers, &c. Thus they are analogous in position to the Sûdras of India, and it seems likely that they had an analogous origin, that they are descendants (with some intermixture of blood) of those of the aborigines who earliest and most easily coalesced with the nation that overcame them. I do not find the Kremins very numerous; certainly there are not many in Gilgit.

The *Yashkun* is the most numerous of all the castes. In Gilgit and Astor they are the body of the people, whose chief occupation is, of course, agriculture. I think that they and the Shîn together made up the race (which we may call Dârd) that invaded this country, and took it from the earlier inhabitants. What may have been the

origin of that (probably previous) division into Shîn and Yashkun is a question which at present I see no way of solving.

We now come to the *Shîn*, the highest of the four generally-distributed castes. In some isolated places they make the majority, or even constitute the whole, of the community; but in Gilgit itself they are not so numerous as the Yashkun, nor are they so in Astor.

There is a peculiarity of manners most strange and curious attaching to some of the Dârds. It belongs especially, perhaps even solely, to this Shîn caste. They hold the cow in abhorrence; they look on it in much the same way that the ordinary Muhammadan regards a pig. They will not drink cow's milk, nor do they eat or make butter from it. Nor even will they burn cowdung, the fuel that is so commonly used in the East. Some cattle they are obliged to keep for ploughing, but they have as little as possible to do with them; when the cow calves they will put the calf to the udder by pushing it with a forked stick, and will not touch it with their hands.

A greater, more astonishing, contrast between *their* way of looking at a cow and the consideration which the Hindûs give to the animal, it would be impossible to conceive.

The Shîn occur, mixed with Yashkun, along the Indus Valley, and in those side valleys that immediately lead up from it. The Yashkun, without any Shîn, are found in more distant places, in the upper parts of the valleys of the Indus tributaries, namely, in Nagar, Hunza, Ishkoman, Yâsîn, and Chitrâl.

The Dârds are now (with the exception that will be

noted farther on) Muhammadan.* Formerly they had some kind of idolatry, of which we know not much; nor do we know at what period they were converted to Islâm. At the time the Sikhs annexed Gilgit and Astor, the people of those places were in some respects but very weak Muhammadans. It so happened that the Sikh commander, Nathû Shâh by name, was a Muhammadan and a Syed; he acquired over these Dârds a great influence, and he exerted it to make more strict Muhammadans of them, to get them to attend more carefully to the forms of their religion. It is a fact that before Nathû Shâh came (say in 1842) the Astor people used to burn their dead, and not bury them, as Muhammadans should. A curious remnant of the custom still remains there—when they bury they light a fire by the grave; it is true they will now tell you that they light the fire to keep off jackals; this may be in some sense true, that is to say they could hardly reconcile themselves to leaving the body in its grave undestroyed, so they lit the fire as they had been used to, and this satisfied them in giving some security as against the beasts of prey, and at the same time making a link with the past.

But it is not enough to say that these Dârds are Muhammadan; they are divided into three separate Muhammadan sects—Sunî, Shîa, and Molâî.

Sunî and Shîa require no description, as the division exists in almost every part of the Muhammadan world. The name of the Molâî must have its origin from the

* This must be taken without prejudice to the question of the relationship of the Kâfirs to the Dârds. It is true at all events of those who have as yet been definitely classed as Dârds.

Arabic *Maula*, God, they thus calling themselves "the Godly." In matters of prayer and fasting they follow the Sunî ways; but in creed (as regards the proper succession of Muhammad's successors to the Khalîfat) they are Shîas.

The Molâîs and Shîas will drink wine, the Sunîs will not. Of the different castes, it would seem that the people of each may belong to any of the three religious sects; the religious differences do not depend on the caste, but are more geographical.

I have now to record some facts as to an outlying portion of the Dârd race, which are of peculiar interest. In a narrow part of the Indus Valley, which lies about half-way between Skârdû and Leh, are some villages inhabited by Dârds who follow the Buddhist faith, who, though remnants left by a wave of immigration from the direction of Gilgit, have so far amalgamated with the Bhots that they obey the Lâmâs as spiritual leaders.

Muhammadan Dârds reach up close to these Buddhist Dârds, but the villages of each are distinct. The following places—villages and hamlets—are inhabited by the Buddhist Dârds: Grugurdo, Sanâcha, Urdus, Darchik, Garkon, Dâh, Phindûr, Baldes, Hanû, Lower and Upper.

That they *did* come from the direction of Gilgit they have a tradition, and many circumstances of language and manners show that in spite of their being Buddhists in religion they are one in origin with those Dârds we have been describing. But I think they belong to an earlier immigration; probably a small number reached their present seat and settled there, separated from the main mass of their tribe-brethren, at a time before the Dârds

were converted to Muhammadanism, so that the transition from their ancient faith to Buddhism was not difficult. At that time the neighbouring Baltîs also may still have been Buddhists. Later, when the Dârds had become Muhammadan, they spread again in this direction, and the new comers have become next-door neighbours to the earlier migrants.

These Buddhist Dârds are a dreadfully dirty people, far more so than any other tribe I have ever met with; their faces are blotched with black dirt, which they never think of removing. As a means of purifying, instead of washing, they burn twigs of pencil-cedar, and let the smoke and the scent from it come over them and inside their clothes; they do this before eating, not perhaps generally but on feast-days, and at other times when they think purification to be necessary. Their women, who are not shy of being seen, surpass even the men in dirtiness, and altogether are the most miserable of objects.

Their religion, I think, lies easy upon them; they are not so attentive to its ordinances as the Ladâkhîs; and I do not think that any of their young men are trained up to the priesthood. Their dead they burn, and the bones of them they stow away in holes in the cliff, closing up these with stones.

Leaving now the Buddhist Dârds, we will note a few facts that concern the race generally.

It has been seen from the map that the Dârds have spread, driven by want, or by oppression, or by disturbances, from their own countries across certain ridges into valleys that were occupied by other races; in these they often live side by side with those other races—as with the

Kashmîrîs and the Baltîs—sometimes in villages separate, sometimes occupying part of the same village.

At Rondû the Dârds nearly equal the Baltîs; the two do not intermarry. At Bâsho also the two races are about half and half, but here they have intermarried, and the distinctiveness has been broken up.

At Drâs the Dârds (who here are Sunîs) form more than half the community, the others being Baltîs, who are Shîas.

Wherever the Dârds are in contact with Baltîs or with Bhots, these others call them (whether they be Muhammadan or Buddhist Dârds) *Brokpâ* or *Blokpâ*. The word Brok or Blok means in Tibetan a high pasture-ground, and Brokpâ or Blokpâ must mean a "highlander." The origin of this appellation for the Dârds I take to be this, that they first came in contact with the Baltîs by coming over the Passes and settling in the higher parts of the valleys, parts that perhaps had been left unoccupied.

There is a colony of Kashmîrî among the Dârds at Gilgit, or rather there is an infusion of Kashmîrî blood in a certain section of the Gilgit people; many generations back there must have been a settlement of Kashmîrîs, who took unto themselves Gilgitî wives. The descendants have lost the language and the ways of Kashmir, and to a stranger's eye they are quite Gilgitî, but the Dârds themselves distinguish, and, as to intermarrying, keep separate from them.

There is one other peculiarity belonging to a class, which may be an ethnological variation due to a strain of the Dârd. In general the class of Rajas in Baltistân are not only better looking than the ordinary Baltî, but have

certain differences of cast of face. The Rajas are of several different stems, more or less connected by marriage; it is not uncommon to see them with a light complexion and light eyes and a hooked nose, in all these respects differing much from their Baltî subjects, and resembling the Dârds.

These Baltîs are the neighbouring race, of whom we shall learn something a few chapters on.

Returning now to Gilgit and the places round, where all or nearly all are Dârds, we find that the forms of government to which they have been used (putting aside the rule of the Sikhs and the Dogrâs) are different in different valleys.

In the valleys of the tributaries of the Gilgit River, and in Mastûj and Chitrâl, there is despotism—untempered absolutism; in those which lead to the Indus, watered by streams that fall in below Bawanjî, there are republics, free and democratic. The following places are known to me as having republican government: Dârel, Tangîr, Gor, Thalîcha, Chilâs, Kolî, Pâlus.

Thalîcha I may specially mention as being the smallest independent state in the world; it is a little village of seven houses, self-governed.

In these republics there is a general assembly of the people, called Sigâs, which decides on almost every matter. It is called together by beat of drum; men, old and young, attend it, but not women; none who have the right to attend are allowed to be absent, under pain of fine. In this assembly the rights of a minority are carefully guarded. I have been told that if even one man, supposing him to be of any consideration, object to a

policy, it cannot be carried out; the assembly is adjourned for a few days, and in the interval effort is made either to convince the objector, or to modify the proposal. Then meeting, they may perhaps have again to adjourn; but in time something or other is sure to be arranged.

The executive consists of a few men, perhaps five or six, chosen by the people in their assembly. These are called *Joshtero* in the Dârd language. They are chosen for their wisdom; but here, as elsewhere, wealth seems to have influence to convince the people of the wisdom of those who possess it. The office of Joshtero is not hereditary; the Joshteros must be in general accord with the assembly, else they will be displaced. The Joshteros deliberate together on a policy, but they cannot carry it out without the consent of the assembly of the people, which they themselves call together. The Joshteros are also arbitrators to settle disputes of water, wood, and the like.

Where the valley is large, as, for instance, Dârel, each village has its own Sigâs, or assembly, which settles the particular affairs of that village; for matters of more general policy the Joshteros of all the villages first meet, and make among themselves a plan to propose, and then a general parliament is called; that is, the people themselves of all the villages together meet to hear and decide. If all of the villages cannot agree on one policy, then each is free to pursue its own without severing the federal bond. Thus I have heard that some villages have joined with one power—have agreed to pay tribute—while others of the same valley have done the same to the rival power. But there must be some limit to this. They could not, of course, actively join on opposite sides.

My knowledge of the working of these institutions is very incomplete. On the whole, I incline to think that with the republics there is less of wars of ambition than with those valleys that are governed by an hereditary ruler; less of bloodshed on a large scale, such as is brought about by or for the dispossession of dynasties. But I do not think that the internal state is so secure and quiet as under a Raja; in the republics personal independence and liberty of action are so much the rule, that no one interferes to prevent even violence.

CHAPTER XII.

GILGIT HISTORY.

As far back as the time of any tradition known to me, Gilgit has been governed by Rajas; it has not been of those valleys ruled by a democracy, such as we have just described.

The early Rajas of Gilgit were called Trakane; that was the name of their caste or family. This caste is now extinct, except that the present titular Raja has a slight strain of that blood from the female side.

The last of the Trakane line was named Abas; with him ended the independence of Gilgit; henceforward the valley was devastated by successive invasions of the neighbouring Rajas, who, each in turn, first acquired the country, and then was defeated and killed by some other. In the twenty or thirty years ending with 1842 there were *five* dynastic revolutions in Gilgit, as follows:—

(1) Sulaimân Shâh, ruler of Yâsîn, of the Bakhte caste or family, conquered Gilgit.

(2) Azâd Khân, ruler of Puniâl, killed Sulaimân Shâh at Sher, and ruled in his stead in Gilgit.

(3) Tâîr Shâh, ruler of Nagar, displaced and killed Azâd Khân; he himself died a natural death, and was succeeded by his son, Shâh Sakandar.

(4) Gaur Rahmân, ruler of Yâsîn, conquered Gilgit and killed Shâh Sakandar.

(5) Karîm Khân, brother to Shâh Sakandar, who was killed, with the aid of a Sikh force, expelled Gaur Rahmân from Gilgit a year and a half after his acquisition of it.

This brings us to the year 1842, and from that time Gilgit history becomes bound up with Kashmir; from here onwards it is known in more detail.

But first I must speak of Gaur Rahmân, who, though expelled at this stage, will again appear on the scene in a prominent part. He was a man of bloodthirsty nature; as much so perhaps, though he had not the same opportunities of killing on a large scale, as Theodore of Abyssinia. There are many tales told of his ferocity and brutality; the Dârds generally are rather careless of life, but with his deeds they were disgusted. I believe it to be a fact that on one occasion at least he killed a young child by throwing it up and cutting it in the air with his sword. And I cannot doubt the truth of this that I heard, that, he stopping at Naupûra, on a village headman being brought before him on some complaint, or else coming to complain of his people, Gaur Rahmân beckoned him near, and then, with his sword, cut the man's head off with a blow; then he would let no one touch the body to bury it, but would have it devoured by the dogs. They say that when he was ill he would have some men killed for *niyâz*, that is, as a propitiatory sacrifice. He seems to have had a special enmity and spite against the people of Gilgit, who suffered terribly under his two reigns, but to have spared the Puniâl people.

Gaur Rahmân married first the maternal aunt of Imân-ul-Mulk, ruler of Chitrâl; secondly, the sister of the same

Imân-ul-Mulk; and, thirdly, the daughter of Azâd Khân, of Puniâl. From the first marriage he had two sons, *Mulk Imân* (named after his grandfather) and *Mîr Walî*; from the second marriage he had a son, *Pahlwân Bahâdur*, who is also called Ghulâm Mahai-ud-dîn; from the third marriage he had two sons, one was *Mîr Ghâzî*, the other (whose name I do not know) was killed by his half brother Mulk Imân.

Gaur Rahmân, as stated above, coming from Yâsîn, conquered Gilgit and killed the then ruler, Raja Shâh Sakandar. Shâh Sakandar's brother, Karîm Khân, having escaped to Gor, from there sent an agent to the Sikh Governor of Kashmir imploring aid. The appeal was responded to. A couple of Sikh regiments were sent under Colonel Nathû Shâh. This was about the year 1842. Up to this time the Sikhs had not occupied the intermediate country of Astor, but they had made it tributary to them; now on advancing they established a post there to make their communications sure.

Nathû Shâh encountered Gaur Rahmân (who seems to have relinquished Gilgit itself) at Basîn, three miles higher up the valley, and defeated him; Gaur Rahmân retired into Puniâl.

Shortly afterwards, in the same year, one Mathrâ Dâs, having boasted to the Sikh Governor of Kashmir that he could easily settle the whole country of Gilgit, was sent to supersede Nathû Shâh. Coming to Gilgit, Mathrâ Dâs went forward to the frontier by Sharot with part of the Sikh force, Nathû Shâh retaining the rest. Gaur Rahmân attacked Mathrâ Dâs and his force in the stony plain between Sharot and Gulpûr, and defeated them with

great loss, having here some horsemen to aid him. Mathrâ Dâs himself ran straight away to Kashmir; but Nathû, who was really a soldier, came up with his reserve from Gilgit and prepared to engage Gaur Rahmân. But before they came to blows negotiations were entered into, and the strange result was that it was agreed the Sikhs should hold Gilgit, the boundary being drawn where the two forces were confronting each other, that being, indeed, the usual boundary of Gilgit, and that Gaur Rahmân should give his daughter in marriage to Nathû Shâh, the commander of the Sikhs. Not only was this done, but the Hunza Raja (Ghazan Khân) and the Nagar Raja, who were there as allies to Gaur Rahmân, did the same thing; each gave a daughter to Nathû Shâh, and peace was made all round.

Of course Nathû Shâh did not give over Gilgit completely to Raja Karîm Khân, who had called in his aid, but there was a kind of joint government established. Karîm Khân had certain dues from the people allotted to him; further imposts were, I think, made for the Sikh Government; a small Sikh force was fixed at Gilgit, and Nathû Shâh himself returned to Kashmir, or rather (for reasons connected with the Sikh troubles which were then brewing) passed through Kashmir, avoiding Sirînagar, to the Panjâb.

Thus were things settled; and this was the state that Maharaja Gulâb Singh succeeded to when he received Kashmir in accordance with the two treaties made by the British, with the Sikh Darbâr in one case, and himself in the other.*

* See Chap. III.

On Kashmir, and with it Gilgit, being ceded to Gulâb Singh, Nathû Shâh left the Sikhs and transferred his services to the new ruler, and went to take possession of Gilgit for him. In this there was no difficulty. The Dogrâ troops relieved the Sikh posts at Astor and Gilgit. Most of the Sikh soldiers took service under the new rulers; they were few in number, those at Gilgit being perhaps not more than one hundred.

The state of peace did not long continue. It was broken by the Hunza Raja making an attack on the Gilgit territory and plundering five villages. Nathû Shâh led a force up the valley of the Hunza River to avenge this attack; but his force was destroyed, and he himself was killed, as also was Karîm Khân, the titular Raja of Gilgit, who had accompanied him.

Gaur Rahmân, too, who at this time governed Puniâl and Yâsîn, joined in against the Dogrâs; the people of Darel joined also. Gilgit Fort fell into the hands of these allies.

To put things right, Maharaja Gulâb Singh sent two columns, one from Hasora and one from Baltistân; there was some fighting, and then peace was made on the basis of the former state of things. After this a few years went by without any great disturbances, until events occurred which caused the Maharaja to lose all of Dârdistân that he possessed on the right bank of the Indus.

In 1852 Sant Singh was Thânadâr, or Commander, at Gilgit Fort; there was another fort at Naupûra, a couple of miles off, held by a Gurkhâ regiment of the Maharaja's, under Râm Dîn, commandant; and one Bhûp Singh was in command of the reserves at Bawanjî and Astor.

I do not know what it was that made Gaur Rahmân to perceive, and urged him to take advantage of, his opportunity. He suddenly brought a force that surrounded and separated the two forts.

Bhûp Singh, hearing of this, advanced to their relief with some 1200 men. He crossed Nîla Dhâr, the ridge which separates the Se and Gilgit valleys, and had reached to the bank of the Gilgit River, where there is a narrow space between the water and the alluvial cliff; the path here rises from the level of the stream to an alluvial platform, two or three hundred feet above it, by a narrow gully. But here he found the road stopped by the enemy; the Dârds had barricaded every possible channel of access, they had built sangars, or stone breastworks, across every gully that led to the higher ground. And the Dârds had also managed, by passing along difficult mountain paths, to get to the rear of the Dogrâs, so that their retreat by the way they had come was made equally difficult with their advance. The river by their side was swift and deep, there was no hope to be gained from that; at the same time the Hunza people assembled with adverse intent on the left bank opposite, within gunshot. In short, Bhûp Singh was caught in a trap. Thus encircled, he was helpless unless by main force he could push his way up one of the defiles.

The Dârds then began to play the game of double-dealing, in which they are adepts.* They promised Bhûp Singh provisions, for of these he was quite short,

* I do not mean to say that the Dârds are much given to double-dealing; I think that the Dârd character, at all events of the lower classes, is generally straightforward. But in war they would count such a weapon quite a fair one, and certainly they can make good use of it.

and a safe passage back if he would agree to retire. This he consented to do, and he waited for days in hopes of the food coming. The Dârds kept him in expectation, and fed his hopes; one might almost fancy that they had learnt a lesson from Akbar Khân of Kâbul. Thus for seven days the Dogrâs were kept without food; and only then, when they were so reduced in strength as to be helpless, did the enemy begin their attack. The Hunza people fired from the left bank, while Gaur Rahmân's army sent from the summits of the alluvial cliffs close above a storm of bullets and stones that soon overwhelmed the force. Near a thousand died on the spot; a hundred or two were taken prisoners and sold into slavery.*

While the Maharaja's reserve was thus being disposed of, a somewhat similar tragedy was being done upon his troops at Gilgit and Naupûra, who, we saw, had been separately surrounded. Naupûra is on a fan plateau, 250 feet above the Gilgit plain. An adjutant, with two or three hundred men, sallied from Gilgit Fort, in order to succour the garrison of Naupûra; they divided into two parties, those who went by an upper path were cut to pieces, the others succeeded in throwing themselves into the fort. But here, too, rations failed, and, besides, the supply of water was cut off by the enemy. Then began negotiations as before, and the force was allowed to retire. They were being passed down, when, as I hear, one of the Dârds made a grab at a gold earring which the commandant wore; this he resisted, and the affray was the signal for a general assault on the Dogrâ troops. These collected themselves into a walled enclosure—the

* One of these survivors is now, they say, a rich merchant in Yârkand.

place abounds with such—and defended themselves gallantly for a whole day, but they were at last overpowered; about three hundred were killed, and a few were made slaves. Eighteen years later I met one of these; he was a Râjpût, but he had been forced to become a Muhammadan for the sake of his life. He was taken into the household of one of the family of Gaur Rahmân, and grew into a position of great confidence there, and had become bound up in feeling with the Dârds.

Then came the turn of Gilgit Fort. I do not know exactly how it was managed (for where the destruction was so thorough it is not easy to get the evidence of eye-witnesses); but I believe that in somewhat the same way all the garrison came into the hands of the Dârds and were killed. The Gurkhâ soldiers in the Maharaja's army, as in the British, take their families with them on service. Their wives were in Gilgit Fort; these were all killed excepting one, who, throwing herself into the river that flows by the fort, managed to cross it and reach the Indus, and to cross that also to Bawanjî. They say that she swam the Indus holding on to a cow's tail. At all events she escaped to tell the story, and she now receives a pension in Kashmir.

Thus, as before said, the Dogrâs were expelled from all that part of Dârdistân which is on the right bank of the Indus. Gaur Rahmân again ruled in Gilgit.

From the time when these events happened, from the year 1852, onwards for eight years, the Maharaja's boundary, below Haramosh, remained at the Indus; above Haramosh, that is, in Baltistân, he possessed the country on both sides of the river. A considerable force was kept

at Bawanjî; and it seems to have been Gulâb Singh's fixed policy to advance no farther.

In 1857 the present Maharaja, Ranbîr Singh, succeeded his father, Gulâb Singh, and he soon formed in his mind the intention of regaining on the frontier what had been lost, and re-establishing the name and reputation of his army. At first, however, his attention and his resources were employed in the operations attending the Indian Mutiny; it was not until 1860 that he found opportunity for settling the affairs of Gilgit in the way he desired.

A force crossed the Indus and advanced on Gilgit, under the command of a man who was a thorough soldier, Colonel (now General) Devî Singh, Narainiâ. In the interval of eight years Gaur Rahmân had built the fort described in Chapter x., and this was thought by the Dârds to be a work quite impregnable; but the Dogrâs determined to attempt its conquest.

It so chanced that just before Devî Singh's force reached Gilgit, Gaur Rahmân himself died. The news undoubtedly disheartened his people in Gilgit; they did not make much resistance to the assault. A cannon ball which passed through the door of the fort killed the Wazîr. This decided them to give in, and Gilgit again belonged to Jummoo; and since then the hold of the Dogrâs on the fort itself has never been lost.

Reckoning, doubtless, on a general disorganization of the Yâsîn power from Gaur Rahmân's death, the Dogrâ leader determined to advance farther, to follow up the victory. He and his army were actually able to reach Yâsîn, which they took; but to hold it was no part of their plan, so after a few days they retired to Gilgit.

They had, however, placed on the gaddî, or throne, at Yâsîn, one Azmat Shâh, a son of Sulaimân Shâh, the old ruler of Yâsîn and invader of Gilgit; this Azmat Shâh being, as near as I can make out, first cousin to Gaur Rahmân. The idea was that Azmat Shâh at Yâsîn would remain on peaceable and friendly terms with the Maharaja's authorities at Gilgit. But the plan would not work; no sooner had the Dogrâ force turned their backs than the Yâsînîs expelled their nominee, and poor Azmat Shâh had to flee for his life. This was all done so quickly that when the Dogrâ army on their return reached Gilgit, which is but half-a-dozen marches from Yâsîn, they found Azmat Shâh already there a refugee, he having come by a mountain path in his flight.

At the conclusion of the war the state of things was this:—One of Gaur Rahmân's sons, Mulk Imân by name, had succeeded him, and was ruler of Yâsîn, of nearly the whole of the original family possessions. Raja 'Isâ Bâgdur held Puniâl, in dependence on the Maharaja. The Maharaja's own officers and troops occupied the country of Gilgit, that which of old belonged to the Rajaship of Gilgit. Nor have many changes taken place since; or rather the result of them has been to bring things nearly to the same state after the various events which we will now speak of. These may seem but petty, yet their relative importance is the greater the nearer they are in time to the present, since from them can be drawn considerations which may tell on the future politics of this frontier.

After the war, though for a time peace prevailed, there was a feeling of stifled enmity between the two sides, which was sure before long to show itself in action.

Various events occurred, among them the plunder and detention of a merchant sent by the Maharaja to buy horses, on his way from Badakhshân through Yâsîn, which determined the Maharaja to send a punitive expedition to Yâsîn. Early in the year 1863, a force was led by Colonel (now General) Hoshiyâra, a bold, dashing, perhaps rash, leader, to Yâsîn. Little resistance was made at the place itself. But the Yâsîn people and forces were collected at a fort called Marorîkot, about a day's march higher up the valley, the women and children also having taken shelter within that fort. Thither the Dogrâs followed; on their approach the Yâsînîs came out to give battle in front. The Yâsînîs were defeated and broken. Some fled to the hills, among whom was the Raja, Mulk Imân; others fled to the fort. These the Dogrâs in hot pursuit followed in before the gates could be closed, and there began first a hand-to-hand fight, and then the indiscriminate slaughter that is so apt to follow the taking of a place by assault.

This complete defeat brought down the Yâsîn leaders, and made them submissive. The Dogrâs, indeed, at once retired to their old boundary, but for a few years Yâsîn was in some sense tributary; that is, the chiefs sent their agents to Jummoo with presents, and they were anxious to keep on good terms with the Maharaja; and with good management this state of things might have been kept up till now.

But the want of political ability in those who were sent in command to Gilgit, as well as circumstances over which they themselves had no control, hindered a good understanding being kept up with the tribes.

I do not know on what special quarrel disturbances again began; but in the year 1866 the Gilgit authorities under the Maharaja found Hunza such a thorn in the side that they arranged an attack on that place, the Nagar people promising aid so far as to allow a passage through their country. This, indeed, was aid of the greatest importance; for the difficulty of approaching Hunza, on account of certain defiles to be passed, is probably greater than that of taking the forts when you reach them.

The Dogrâ force advanced on the Nagar side of the river, the left bank, and reached a place opposite to and within gunshot of one of the Hunza forts. But the way across to it did not seem easy—the river flows between cliffs of some height, probably alluvium or fan cliffs—and it was said that no practicable road could be found down and up them.

After a few days it seemed that the Nagar people were beginning to fall away from the alliance. The Dogrâs began to be suspicious of them, and this distrust very likely brought about its own justification. At last, one evening, a report spread among the Dogrâs that the Nagarîs were upon them. A panic struck them, and they retreated, or more accurately perhaps fled, though no enemy was attacking them. In this disgraceful way they returned to Gilgit.

Things did not stop here. This display of weakness on the part of the Dogrâs caused all their old enemies to combine to try and expel them. A most formidable confederation of all the tribes round was made. Wazîr Rahmat, the Yâsîn Wazîr, was, they say, the soul of this combination. A year or two before he had paid his

respects to the Maharaja at Jummoo, coming on the part of the Yâsîn Raja. He had now accompanied the Maharaja's force to Nagar, and for some time after its return had encamped at Gilgit; but one day, leaving his camp standing, he disappeared. He made his way to Yâsîn.

In a month or two a considerable army invaded Gilgit. The Yâsîn ruler had now looked for aid across the mountains to Chitrâl, and from there came a force of horse and foot, led by Imân-ul-Mulk, the Raja of Chitrâl. These, with the Yâsînîs and the Darelîs (from Darel, one of the valleys on the south-west of Gilgit), environed Gilgit Fort, while the Hunza and the Nagar people, now in conjunction, occupied the left bank of the river, opposite the fort. The Raja of Chitrâl was the man of most importance of all the leaders.

The invading force, either reducing or investing the forts of Puniâl, approached and surrounded the fortress of Gilgit, on the fate of which hung the state of the whole valley. The besiegers expected that it soon would fall, for they had heard that it had provisions to last for a week or two only; so they closely blockaded it, and were able to repel all sallies. But, in truth, the fort was better provisioned than they thought.

Meanwhile news of this state had reached Kashmir, and the Maharaja had sent off reinforcements with great expedition under the charge of Wasîr Zuṛâorû and Colonel Bîja Singh. At Bawanjî, on the river, they met with some opposition; but when once they had effected a landing on the right bank of the Indus, and the news had reached Imân-ul-Mulk, he and his troops and allies decamped and got safely back to their own countries.

The whole confederation had melted away. Thus different was the conduct of it from the energetic action of the Yâsîn troops, who, fourteen years before, succeeded in expelling their enemies from the Gilgit Valley.

The Dogrâ force now assembled in Gilgit was, for that barren country, very large; there were, I think, 3000 soldiers, and they were accompanied by a great number of coolis to carry supplies. The leaders began to revolve in their minds what should be done, what punishment should be inflicted, and on whom, as a retribution for the late invasion; but it was long before they could come to a decision. Wazîr Zurâorû wished to attempt something, but something that was sure of success; an old and trusted servant of the Maharaja's house, now declining in years, he did not wish that his reputation should be dulled at last by a failure. After much time wasted in hesitation, an expedition to Dârel was determined on.

The expedition started in September (1866).* The only opposition met with was from a barricade formed of felled trees and stones in one of the branch valleys of Dârel; this was defended by Mulk Imân of Yâsîn, with some of his own people, who were more used to fighting than were the Dârelîs. But the Dogrâs scaled the heights and turned the position, and the enemy had to flee. There was no more opposition; the country of Dârel lay open to the invaders.

As will be seen from the map, this Dârel Valley leads southward to the Indus. There are seven village-forts in it; the Dogrâs only reached four of them; the one

* It was while this expedition was on hand that Dr. Leitner visited Gilgit.

they came to first on descending from the ridge that they crossed was the highest in the valley. All the inhabitants had fled to the mountains; there was not even a woman or a child to be seen; the cattle even had all been driven off. The Dogrâs stayed a week. Some of the chief men of Dârel came in and made their submission; as snow was about to fall on the hills behind, it was convenient to make that a reason for retiring. So the force returned, with some losses by cold, chiefly among the accompanying Kashmîrî coolis. The Dogrâs certainly had shown the Dârelîs that their country was not inaccessible, and doubtless they left their mark on it. After this, a great part of the force returned to Kashmir, and the usual garrison was established in Gilgit.

Since then there has been one other attack on Puniâl by the Yasînîs, and a raid of the Hunza people on the village of Niomal, of which they took away all the inhabitants, selling some into slavery. Little else of importance has happened in the Gilgit territory.

But certain changes soon occurred at Yâsîn, which have an interest for us as affecting the fate of an Englishman who found his way there, bent on geographical exploration.

We saw that Mulk Imân, Gaur Rahmân's eldest son, succeeded to power on the death of his father, and had, during the later hostilities, led the Yâsîn forces. Soon after the events last described, Mulk Imân and his brother, Mîr Walî, fell out. Mîr Walî, getting aid from Imân-ul-Mulk of Chitrâl, expelled Mulk Imân, and himself became ruler in Yâsîn. At the same time he became a tributary to, or, more than that even, a

dependent on, the Raja of Chitrâl. Pahlwân Bahâdur, a half brother, received from the same chief the governorship or rajaship, whichever it may best be called, of Mastûj, on the Chitrâl side of the mountains. Thus Chitrâl, Mastûj, and Yâsîn became bound up together. The relation of all these to the Maharaja's officers at Gilgit consisted in keeping and being kept at arm's length. As a rule, the Maharaja's agents could not safely enter the other territories, but some messengers from Yâsîn or Chitrâl used to come to Gilgit, knowing they need not fear for their lives, and hoping to carry away some present worth having in return for the smooth messages they delivered.

In the beginning of the year 1870, Lieut. George W. Hayward came to Gilgit. He had been sent out by the Royal Geographical Society of London with the object of exploring the Pâmir Steppe. In prosecution of this object he had gone to Yârkand and Kâshgar, from which places he had, in the previous year, returned to the Panjâb, unsuccessful as to his main end, not having been allowed to approach the Pâmir from the side of Yârkand, but with a store of information about Eastern Turkistân. With an enthusiasm for his purpose that was characteristic of him, he determined to run the risks of a journey through Yâsîn and Badakhshân to the place which was his goal. Though warned by many of the danger of putting himself in the power of such people as the Yâsîn and Chitrâl rulers—I myself introduced to him men who knew their ways, and declared them to be utterly devoid of faith—he started on the journey.

The first thought was that there would be difficulty in

entering the Yâsîn country, that the chief would refuse admission to Hayward; but it did not turn out so. It chanced that an agent of Mîr Walî's had on some pretext come to Gilgit, and was there on Hayward's arrival; by his hands he sent a letter and presents, and in due time an answer came from Mîr Walî to the effect that he would be glad to see him. So he went, was hospitably received, and was taken about to some of the valleys for sport. This was in the winter when the snow was on the ground; there was no prospect, for three months or more, of the road to Badakhshân being open. Hayward, though on good terms with the ruler, did not think it wise to wear out his welcome by staying all that time, but determined to return to the Panjâb and make a fresh start in the early summer. It was almost a necessity that in return for such attentions he should give his host, who was well known as an avaricious man, almost all that he had that was suitable for presents. He promised, besides, that which was expected to be of more value. He engaged to represent to the Governor-General what Mîr Walî had persuaded him to consider his rightful claims to Gilgit.

The reader of the preceding pages will at once see that Mîr Walî had no more original right to Gilgit than the Maharaja had. His father, Gaur Rahmân, had conquered it from some one who had conquered it from some one else; and although, some four dynasties back (about one reign goes to a dynasty here), a relation of Gaur Rahmân's possessed Gilgit, yet he also only gained it by the same means as those by which his successor wrested it from

him. The Sikhs, the Maharaja's predecessors, had conquered Gilgit from Gaur Rahmân, and, after more struggles between the two powers, neither of whom had any better claim to it than the sword, it had finally remained with the Maharaja.

But little of this did Hayward know. He adopted the views of Mîr Walî, and promised his aid in getting them brought before the British Government. He did, in fact, bring them before the Governor-General; nothing was done about it; nothing could have been done about it. But Mîr Walî meanwhile was sanguine. He had, I believe, put down Hayward for a British agent, and he built upon his endeavours.

Hayward returned to Yâsîn in July (1870), and at once it was clear that the former cordial terms would not prevail. Mîr Walî was vexed at his having effected nothing for him, was vexed to see the now large mass of baggage, containing untold wealth in the very things he would like to have (for they had been provided as gifts for the people *beyond Yâsîn*), going out of his grasp, and was vexed at Hayward's not agreeing to the route (through Chitrâl) that he was desired to take; lastly, he was enraged at an encounter of words that took place between guest and host. For one used to have his own way within his own little country all this was sure to be more than annoying. For Mîr Walî, a man who thought little of taking life, it was enough to decide him to murder his guest and take possession of the baggage.

Hayward had started from Yâsîn, and had made three short marches on the road to Badakhshân, had reached a

place called Darkût, when he was overtaken by fifty or sixty men sent by Mîr Walî. These, however, gave no signs of enmity; the leader said he had been sent to see the camp safe across the Pass. But the next morning they took Hayward in his sleep, bound his hands, led him a mile into the pine forest, and killed him by a blow from a sword. His five servants, Kashmîrîs and Pathâns, met with the same fate.

Three months afterwards I recovered Hayward's body, sending a messenger with presents and promises from Gilgit, where I lay. We buried him in a garden not far from Gilgit Fort.

Efforts were made by the British Government and by the Maharaja of Kashmir, by application to Imân-ul-Mulk and otherwise, to get hold of Mîr Walî and the actual murderers, but success attended none of them; Mîr Walî, I believe, has died a natural death.

I cannot end this subject without saying something more of George Hayward. Led to geographical exploration by the journeys he had made among the Himâlayas in search of sport while in the army, a keen sportsman, a hardy, energetic, and courageous traveller, he had many of the qualities that make a good explorer. But he was more fitted to do the part of explorer in a continent like Australia than in Asia, where nearly every habitable nook is filled up, and where knowledge of human nature and skill in dealing with various races of men are at least as much wanted as ability to overcome physical obstacles. He was a man whom many friends admired for his pluck and his warm enthusiasm in his pursuits,

and liked for the agreeableness that they always met with in him. His fate, the fate of being at an early age barbarously, almost wantonly, murdered by the order of one whom he had made a friend of and tried to benefit, filled all with indignation as well as regret.



GEORGE W. HAYWARD; KILLED AT DARKÛT IN YÂSÎN, JULY 18, 1870; BURIED AT GILGIT, OCTOBER 27, 1870.

CHAPTER XIII.

BALTISTÂN.

FROM the extreme north-west corner of the territories described in the last few chapters, we will now travel north-eastwards, along the valley of the Indus River, upwards against the course of its stream. We shall thus be led past the most important of the inhabited places, which are strictly confined to the valleys and are thickest along the larger rivers. But detours to the right and left will be necessary for visiting the side valleys, the waste plateaus, and the mountain ridges, all of which will show us something of interest. In this manner we shall complete a survey of that large part of the territories which lies at the back of Kashmir.

The first country we come to is Baltistân. This was an ancient kingdom that occupied the Indus Valley from about where on the map the blue tint that denotes the Dârd race ends and the dark red of the Baltîs begins, reaching to a point a little south of Khartaksho. It included also the districts marked Khapalû and Chorbat, on the Shâyok. Skârdû was its capital.

For several days' march, the road from Gilgit is more than usually difficult; only on the right bank of the Indus can a pony be brought; on the other, the rocky, slippery, paths are hardly practicable for man. For here the

ends of mighty spurs on both sides confine the stream to a narrow gorge, and along the face of their steep slopes it is hard to travel. As we near *Rondû* the valley becomes more open in places, and at the openings some village or hamlet will be found.

Rondû itself, which has an elevation of 6700 feet, is a strangely situated place; it occupies little shelves, as it were, on the rock. A ravine that comes down from the southern mountains is here narrowed up to a deep gully of thirty feet in width, with vertical rocky sides; along these cliffs the water, taken from higher up the stream, is led in wooden troughs, supported in one way or another as the people have been able to manage; on coming clear of the gully it is distributed in little channels throughout the village, of which the whole area is but small. But over that small area crops bear abundantly and fruits grow in luxuriance. Apricots and mulberries are the most common, and, indeed, they flourish wherever in Baltistân water can be brought to freshen their roots; but here is added pomegranate, which is rare in these hills; weeping willow, too, lends its graceful form to the varied collection of trees that almost hide the fields from view. On a separate, narrow, nearly isolated plateau, is the Raja's house, which is called the Fort, a curious building, made of courses of stone and wood. The river flows past, some hundreds of feet below the level of the village, between perpendicular rocks of massive gneiss; in a narrow part it is spanned by a rope-bridge, made of birch twigs, which is 370 feet long in the curve, with a fall in it of some eighty feet, the lowest part being about fifty feet above the stream. The approach to the bridge is over slippery rocks; the

path to it is so narrow and difficult that one's steps have to be aided in many places by ladders.

We have here a phenomenon which is repeated in other parts of the Indus Valley; at Dâh, for instance, 120 miles up, there is the same. For a long distance the river flows in a narrow gorge; the vertical rocks that form it are over 600 feet high. This lowest part of the cross-section of the valley, perhaps even for a height of 1000 feet, seems to be distinct, as to slope, from that above, as if the latest down-cutting had been done with a different tool. This was noticeable in many places between Rondû and Katsûra.

Rondû was once a small rajaship, dependent upon Skârdû. The power of both has now been absorbed by that of Jummoo. The present Rajas are but pensioners, though still of chief social rank in their own neighbourhoods. It was a small kingdom that the Rondû Raja ruled over—no more than a few villages; and isolated and difficult of access was his home. We have seen how hard was the approach from below. To reach it from the side of the mountains is no easier task. From Astor, a high, snowy, range has to be crossed by a glacier pass, while on the north quite inaccessible ridges enclose it.

But we may, though with difficulty, follow up the Indus Valley to the centre of Baltistân. Zigzag paths, rough ascents and descents, in which one is exposed to the rock-reflected heat of the blazing sun, employ the traveller for some miles. Then he must rise over a spur, that prevents any passage near the river, by an ascent of 4000 feet. The spot can be fixed on the map as exactly opposite where the Turmik Valley joins that of the Indus.

Here Rondû ends and the district of Skârdû begins. It is a good natural boundary, one that might be made much use of to repel invasion from the south-east. When the Dogrâs, having taken Skârdû, were overrunning Baltistân, they found a defence work here thrown up by the Rondû people; but they were able to turn it by taking a higher path, which, for a good reward, a man from one of the neighbouring villages pointed out. The parallel of Thermopylæ cannot be carried any farther.

From such a position as this Pass we were sure to obtain a more complete view of the mountains than from below, especially of those on the right bank of the Indus. They were mountains of the grandest form. Facing the river were enormous cliffs, or steep slopes of bare rock, fining at their summits to peaks; sharp ridges separated the various ravines, and from them issued spurs ending in vertical precipices; all this on an extremely large scale. The steepness of these mountains is such that there are several quite inaccessible tracts, valleys into which no one can penetrate.

The village next reached is Bâsho, which occupies a small space enclosed between rocky spurs. The part that is cultivated is crowded with fruit-trees; these are mostly of the same sorts as those before met with, but here apricots do not grow to perfection. The speciality of the place is grapes; particularly is it noted for the small black currant-grape, which is grown in a few little vineyards.*

On the mountains behind Bâsho is a forest of pine, the *Pinus excelsa;* this begins about 9000 feet from the sea-level, and extends well above. I hear that there are many

* The height above the sea is 6900 feet.

places in the basin of the next stream also, that by Katsûra, where this tree is found. The occurrence of it marks a continuance of the semi-Tibetan climate; but the moisture that induces its growth seems to affect only elevations such as these, and not the base of the valleys.*

From Bâsho to Katsûra the road leads us, some hundreds of feet above the river, sometimes across taluses, sometimes on the face of the cliff, often being carried over frail wooden stages that have with difficulty been fixed. The way is rough and laborious.

Katsûra, situated at the mouth of a ravine whose foaming stream drains a great space of mountain country on the south, is a large village of like character with the last. Here of water for irrigation there is plenty, but ground fit to cultivate is scarce, for huge loose blocks of stone much fill up the space; but wherever watercourses run, there fruit-trees flourish and shade the fields. Apricot and walnut are in plenty, and the mulberry here bears a very fine fruit, resembling, but excelling, that which we have in England. The rough stony ground about is made in great part of old glacier débris; on the left bank of the stream is an enormous accumulation of large blocks, covering all the surface, except where a lake occupies a hollow in it, which extends three-quarters of a mile in length, with a width of 300 or 400 yards. This is simply a moraine lake, that is to say, the basin of it was made by the irregular shedding of the terminal moraine of the glacier that at one time ended at this spot. The glacier must have been of considerable size; it occupied all that valley which reaches up to the north-

* At the head of the Stok Valley (north of the Indus) *spruce-fir* is found.

west corner of the Deosai plateau, and it came down to the Indus Valley, at one time crossing it and abutting against the opposite mountains. An idea of the transporting power of such a glacier is given by the great blocks that one sees brought hither from the mountains within; rocks of 20 or 30 feet in diameter are in thousands, while those 50 or 100 feet across are many; and of one block, the part exposed to view measured 140 feet by 90 feet by 40 feet high.

Immediately above Katsûra the valley widens, and we find ourselves in the centre of Baltistân, where lies Skârdû, the capital. Here the mountains, opening, have in their midst a curving, crescent-shaped plain, in length twenty miles, in width varying from one mile to five. In the widest part are two isolated hills, about 1000 feet in height; between these flows the Indus. Immediately below, it receives the waters of the Shigar River, and with their addition becomes a river of great speed and volume; in summer time it flows, even through this level part, with a velocity of six miles an hour.

By far the most of the Skârdû plain is uncultivated; it is a waste of sand and stones. There is first the space in flood time covered by the waters; then, over some square miles, is blown sand, hopeless for cultivation; last are the stony tracts belonging to the alluvial fans of streams that flow down from the southern range of mountains. Cultivation, however, is limited more by the supply of water than by the barrenness of the soil; for where irrigation can be applied, very hopeless-looking ground will yield crops. The water of the large rivers is seldom available, but the side streams, coming from a high level,

can be led over the alluvial plateaus; these, then, make real oases, though of small area, surrounded by the yellow sands; plentiful crops come up, and innumerable fruit-trees flourish in them.

Bounding the valley on the south and south-west, curving round with its form, is a grand line, or broken wall, of mountains, rising into high-peaked rock masses. This crescent of hills extends from one narrow gorge, whence issues the river into the plain, to the other, lower, gorge, where the valley is again closed to the view. The mountains are of bare rock; here and there only, on the upper slopes, is a little grass, a patch of thin pasture. In all parts they are steep; in great part they are precipitous. These rise to 10,000 feet above the plain. High up on the southern hills, in hollows surrounded by great cliffs, lie small glaciers; these for the most part are not connected with perpetual snow-beds, though, from one of those in sight, a long mass of perpetual snow leads up to the summit.

Near the base of the hills, from 1700 feet above the plain downwards, lie the villages. In the distance they are but little green lines and patches, either embosomed in the lowest hollows or crowning some platform that projects from the spurs. The space cultivated looks strangely small compared with the size of the great mountains; looked down on from a height, the fields seem to be minute garden beds, and the groups of fruit-trees are like nursery plantations.

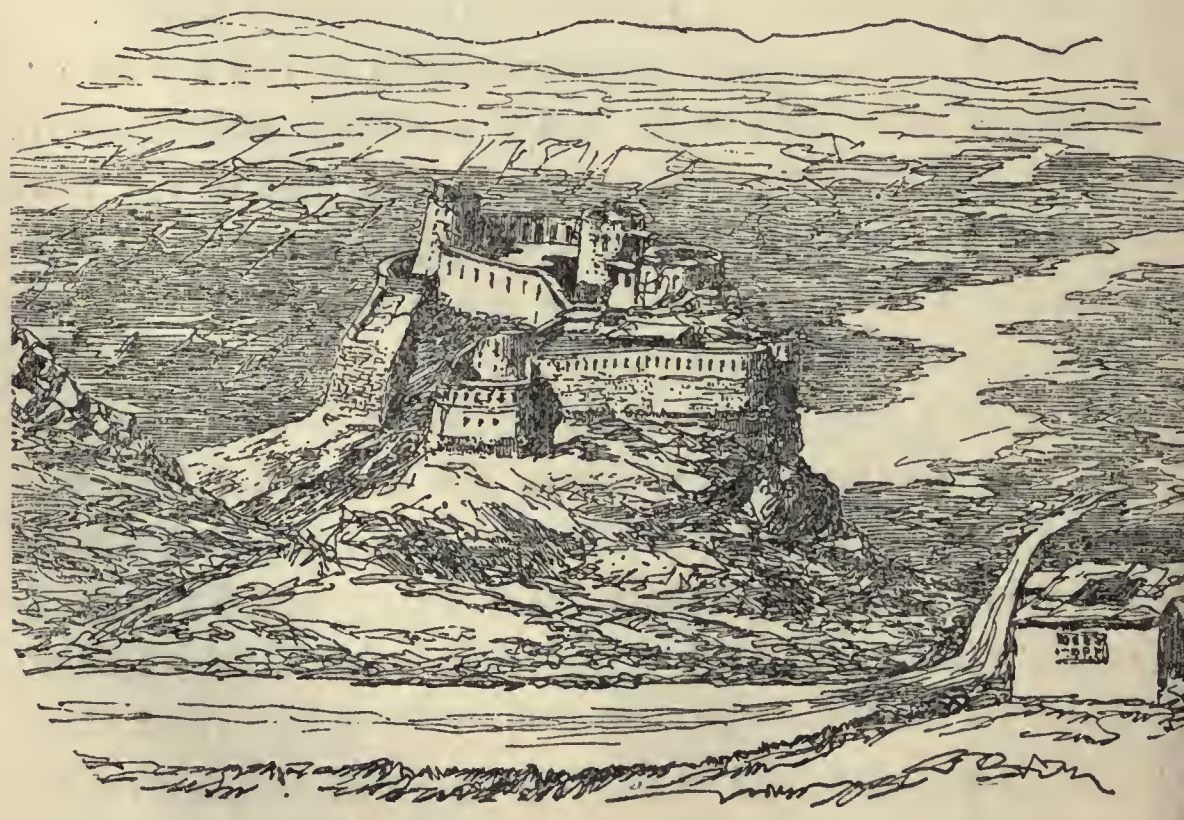
The extreme bareness of the mountains—even at elevations where, fifty miles to the south-west, forests would grow thick and wide—shows that here we are in a completely

Tibetan climate. It is a rainless and almost cloudless country; only at the times when snow may fall is the sun obscured; the rocks do not become decomposed into soil; the pieces shivered from the higher parts remain for long unchanged. The result is that grass can neither find root-hold nor moisture to flourish on; still less can any forest tree grow. It requires a considerable effort for the mind of anyone who has never seen the like to picture to itself such a state as I describe. I must be understood *literally* when I say that, in such places as this valley of Skârdû, the eye will see no green—nought but the brown, grey, and yellow of the hill-sides and the river-banks—save where water flowing from melting snows is artificially led over the ground. And this, with a few modifications which will be mentioned as we go, is true of all the country (east and south-east of Skârdû) which lies on that side of Kashmir, i.e. on that side of the Snowy Range.

Skârdû, which one knows not whether to call a town or a village, but which is in fact a scattered collection of houses and hamlets, lies at the foot of one of the two isolated rocks, on a part of the plain which is, rather, a plateau, of alluvial deposit, as much as 150 feet above the river, and 7440 feet above the sea.

Formerly the palace of the Rajas of Skârdû stood at the edge of the plateau, where the rock rises from it; now the ruins remain—little more than the foundations and some vaulted chambers. The palace was dismantled on the taking of Skârdû by Maharaja Gulâb Singh's troops. The rock itself was the stronghold; there was a fort built at the south-east end of it, at a part very steep and difficult of access; to this the Raja (Ahmad Shâh) retired on

the approach of the enemy. Though the fort was a weak thing, yet its position was such that it could have been held for long if the whole rock had been properly guarded as well. On the higher part of the rock was a smaller fort, in a position very difficult to reach from below. But the Dogrâ invaders were good mountaineers. One dark night they stole round from their position in front of the chief fort to the north-western corner of the rock, and, surprising the guards there posted, climbed the hill, and after a little fighting took the small fort near the summit. In the morning they began firing down, at an immense advantage, on the larger fort; and after two or three hours the Raja and his people took to flight, and the place was captured. All the garrison (except a few who escaped across the river) were either killed or taken; the Raja himself became a prisoner.



DOGRÂ FORT, SKÂRDÛ.

This deed was boldly done of the Dogrâs; it resembled somewhat, on a small scale, the capture of Quebec by the English. The strength of the position was such that it should never have been taken except by blockade and starvation. Soon after this victory, about the year 1840, the whole of Baltistân became subject to Gulâb Singh. According to their custom, the Dogrâs built a new fort, less dependent for its security on advantages of position. A sketch of this is given opposite, which shows that though it may be somewhat difficult to scale, yet it is not well protected against long shots.

The houses here in Skârdû, and in Baltistân generally, are low flat-roofed houses, of stone and mud, with, commonly, a second story built over a portion of the first roof. This upper story (which is for summer living only) is not unusually of wattle; towards Rondû, where timber is more plentiful, it is built of thick boards. In summer time one sees the roofs all strewn with apricots, which are spread out to dry in the sun. The abundance of fruit in this country makes up in a great measure—with respect to the economy of the peasants—for the scarceness of the pasture, and the consequent small amount of live stock that can be reared; by the sale of dried fruit, in place of the produce of flocks and herds, luxuries from outside are purchased, or the cash necessary for payment of taxes is acquired.*

Let us turn now to other parts of Baltistân. We must

* Of cattle, the Baltîs keep the common cow and the *Zo*, which is the half-breed between cow and yâk, the species which, as we shall see, is common in the higher parts of Ladâkh. Some of the villages have a bull yâk for breeding, which they keep on the cool upland pasture-grounds until the cold of winter makes the valleys endurable for him.

understand that this country is composed of enormous mountain chains, or masses of mountains. The map, if carefully looked at, will yield some information about them. Here the bright colours denote the inhabited valleys, and the grey the elevated masses inhospitable to man. Along the rivers the larger figures (as **8**) show the valley heights, while the smaller (thus, 15.7) denote the height of passes or of peaks, each in thousands of feet. The height of these, it will be seen, is not uncommonly 18,000 or 20,000 feet; while, in the north-easterly parts, peaks rise of 25,000 and 26,000, and one above 28,000 feet has been measured, these giving rise to the largest known glaciers out of the Arctic regions. Of the valleys, we shall now choose that of Shigar to visit, which, coming from the north, unites with the plain of Skârdû.

The valley of Shigar, from the village of that name upwards for twenty-four miles, is some three miles in width. Along both sides rise steep rocky mountains; the immediate peaks are 7000 feet or so above the valley; more lofty ones stand behind. The valley itself, at a general level of 8000 feet, is occupied partly by the sandy and stony bed in which the river channels are made, and partly by side alluvial deposits sloping down to that flat. On both sides cultivation occurs opposite each ravine-mouth, for there the waters of the side stream can be brought to irrigate the ground.

The village of Shigar is a long tract of cultivated land on the left bank of the river, where the ground slopes up gently to the base of the mountains. Here grow rich crops of wheat, barley, millet, and other grains; while all

around each corn-field, their roots watered by the same channels that are provided for the irrigation, is a most luxuriant growth of apricot-trees, which bear fruit of greater perfection than is met with in any other part of Baltistân, or of the neighbouring countries. This, to my mind, is the most delightful place in all Baltistân; after the sandy tracts of Skârdû one can thoroughly enjoy sitting in the shade of the fruit-trees, whose bright foliage is varied by that of some large Planes, through which the eye can quietly view the grand mountains that on both sides bound the valley.

At varying intervals, for twenty or twenty-five miles up, there are villages like this, but none of so great extent. Towards the upper part of this length, on the right bank, which is the least sunny, apricot and mulberry trees become fewer, and in their stead walnut-trees flourish. In the central flat are sandy tracts covered with the prickly shrub, *Hippophae;* through these the river flows with a large volume of water and great velocity. It can be crossed opposite to Shigar on rafts made of numbers of inflated goatskins fastened together by sticks. The force of the current, which here raises waves some feet in height, makes it a passage of some difficulty. In summer time it is impossible to get horses over, so that for some months there is no way of communication for them between the right and left banks. I had to leave my ponies behind at Shigar, and did not rejoin them for several weeks.

The Shigar River may be said to be formed by the union of the Bâsha and Brâldû streams, which meet at the top of this wide Shigar Valley. From there upwards,

the two branch valleys are narrow. I followed up both these branches in succession, beginning with the western, called Bâsha.

The bottom of this valley is confined, here and there we find a village, with walnut-trees scattered about it, while rocky precipices rise close behind. Three thousand feet or so above the level of the villages are commonly pasture-grounds, whither the flocks and herds are driven for the summer months; on these there is often a collection of small stone huts for the shepherds to live in. It is only at such heights that any pasture can be got, and this still is scanty; it must be nourished by the moisture from the melting snow.

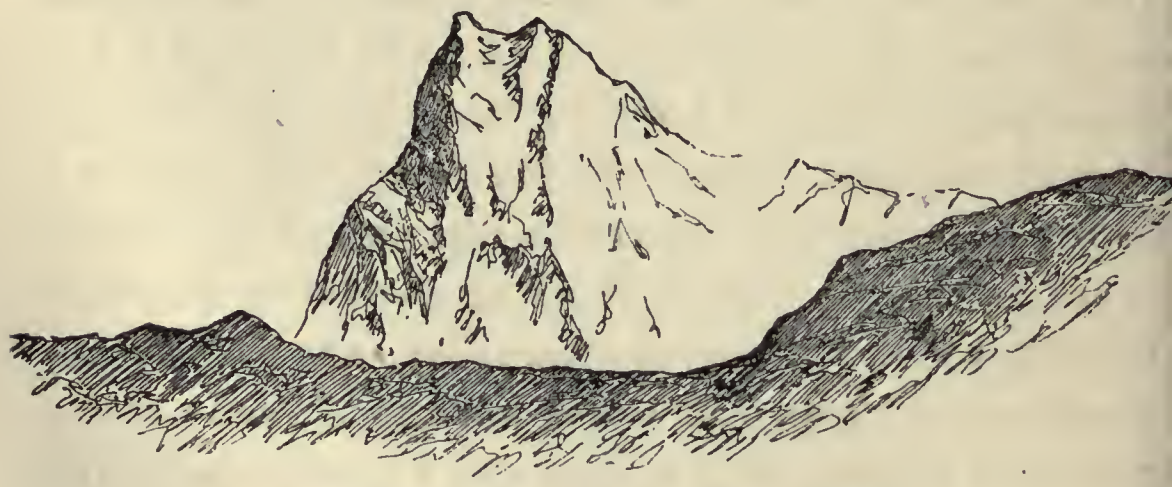
Following up the Bâsha Valley, we find the villages to become rarer; a tract of many miles is passed without one being met with. At last we reached Ârandû, the highest, which is close to the end of a huge glacier that fills up the valley with its great mass of ice, black with stone-heaps and dirt. The elevation of the village and of the foot of the glacier is between 10,000 and 11,000 feet. This is one of those largest glaciers, that come down from some of the highest mountains, and occupy a great length of the valleys. In making three and a half marches on it, or alongside of it, I obtained a fair knowledge of its form and character, of which some account will now be given, beginning from the foot and going upwards.

The valley thus filled with ice is a mile and a half wide; the height of the ice at the irregular ending off seemed about 200 feet; but farther up, the thickness probably was greater. Crossing not far above the end, we find a very irregular mass of ice, with ridges and hollows of no

even run, so covered with stones that in going over the whole mile and a half, which is the width of the glacier, hardly once do one's feet touch the ice; on the higher parts are thick mounds of stones; on the slopes there are less; in the hollows again are accumulations of them; all this is because the ice has been so much melted, as it nears its end, that the stones of the various moraines have slipped and become mixed together. Thus it is for some miles up; but when we go farther up still, then the moraine matter appears in lines, and strips of clean ice come into view between them. If, having passed along, say, fifteen or twenty miles of the glacier, one rises on the hill-side to gain a view over it, one sees the great ice-stream lying with its enormous length in the valley, with a very low slope of surface; at this part the incline is not more than $1\frac{1}{2}^\circ$ or 2°, though, below, the slope had been rather more; in the centre is a wide strip of snow-white ice moulded by melting into such forms as to give the appearance of waves of a rapid stream; on either side are lines of moraines; steep rocky banks make the boundary of all; above these are mountains with an immense spread of perpetual snow, from which spring glaciers, some ending off abruptly high above the main valley, others continuing on and coming down, with a steep slope, to join and coalesce with the large one. The highest spot I reached was in the centre of the glacier twenty or twenty-five miles from its foot; up to this place the width had been very regular, I should say from a mile and a quarter to a mile and a half, but here a greater expanse of ice was visible; the ice was white-surfaced, looking like a frozen and snow-covered lake, and here it was far clearer of débris than it

had been below, still moraine-lines lay along the centre. This wider part (which is about 13,500 feet above the sea) is where several glaciers meeting combine to form the great stream which thence, as before said, flows on with a gentle incline. From the foot of the glacier at Ârandû to the summit of the feeding glaciers the distance must be over thirty miles.*

The Valley of Brâldû contains the easterly tributary of the Shigar River. At the head of it are the highest mountains and the largest glaciers of any. The largest of all (which I myself did not visit) is the Bâltoro glacier, thirty-five miles long, which comes down between two extremely lofty ridges; it is described by Major Godwin-Austen in the paper before mentioned. The southern ridge has peaks over 25,000 feet, while the northern (which is part of the watershed) rises in one spot to the height of



K 2, 28,265 FEET; AS SEEN FROM TURMIK.

28,265 feet, the peak of that height (marked K 2) being the second highest mountain known in the world, Mount

* Major Godwin-Austen has given an account of this and other glaciers of the Bâsha and Brâldû valleys in a paper read before the Royal Geographical Society on the 11th January, 1864.

Everest only exceeding it. It is not easy to get a sight of this mountain; I once saw it from a distance of nearly seventy miles, standing up, in the form given in the sketch, clear above all the great ridges.

A way from Skârdû to Yârkand used in former times to lead travellers for some distance up the Baltoro glacier, and then across the range, here called Mustâgh, by one of the northern tributary glaciers. From certain ice-changes that road becoming too difficult, a new one was struck out up a more northerly glacier that leads to where Mustâgh Pass is marked on the map. This one I followed for some distance up the glacier, but not as far as the summit of the Pass, to which as yet no European has reached.

In following this road there was formerly—and may be even now—danger from the Hunza robbers, who, issuing from their own country and crossing the watershed by an easier Pass, used to attack the caravans where the two roads met on the farther side of the range. When I was in Brâldû, in 1863, I met with one of a very few men who had escaped from an attack that had been made a week or two before on a small caravan of Baltîs who were returning from their country after a sojourn in Yârkand; nearly all had been captured to be sold as slaves, and of the goods, horses, and cattle nothing was recovered. And the physical difficulties of the road are not small. The Pass is open for but a short time in summer; as soon as snow falls on it the crevasses are hidden and the journey becomes dangerous. In crossing, men are tied together, yâk-calves are carried; ponies of Yârkand—a useful breed—also used to be ventured, they were sometimes led over

the crevasses with ropes, held by eight men in front and eight behind. Even when safe over the Pass (on the hitherward journey) the horses and cattle could not at once be brought down to the inhabited parts; they had to be kept in one of the intermediate pastures, until, as winter neared, the streams got low and the passage along the valley became practicable for the four-footed ones. These combined difficulties have caused this road to be at present disused. From the time I was speaking of, 1863, up to 1870, when I again visited Baltistân, there had been no communication between that country and Yârkand.

South of Skârdû is the tract named *Deosai*, which, whether it can strictly be called part of Baltistân or not, may be as conveniently described here as anywhere.

Deosai is a plateau, a mass of high land, surrounded by yet higher mountains. There is a ring of mountains, irregular, but still of a general circular form, the diameter of which, from crest to crest of the ridge, is about twenty-five miles. These mountains make a rugged serrated barrier of a height of from 16,000 to 17,000 feet. Within this ring is flat, though not completely flat, country, made up of plateaus more or less separated by level valleys a few hundred feet below them. This flat part varies in height from 12,000 to 13,000 feet. As to the ring of mountains, though they are serrated, there are few low depressions in them; one towards Skârdû, over which (by the Burjî Pass) comes the road from Kashmir, is 15,700 feet high; and on the western side are one or two dips at an elevation of 14,000 feet. The most frequented route between Kashmir and Skârdû is over this plateau. In

coming from the side of Kashmir, one's best halting-place within the Jhelam basin is at a spot called Burzil, which, the reader will remember, is a stage on the road from Kashmir to Gilgit. Thence two Passes have to be traversed, 13,000 to 14,000 feet high, before one can enter the wide plateau. Then for five-and-twenty miles the road leads through it; the higher plains are dry and stony, the valleys have some little pasture. There are no human inhabitants. The living things one sees most of are the marmots. These animals, which are as much as $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet in length, live here in great numbers; they are always watching one, sitting by their holes upright on their haunches, with their knowing heads poked a little forward, and their paws held up in front of their breasts. They cry with a voice between a squeak and a whistle; when alarmed they dive into their holes with wonderful rapidity.

The passage of this table-land is easy enough in summer. The elevation of the road averaging perhaps 13,000 feet, the rarity of the air is felt, but not badly; some grass, fuel, and water can be found at every place required for a halting-ground. But with the first coming on of winter the Pass is closed by the snow, and it may be dangerous to be caught on the waste. Generally the end of September is the time; but in 1870, on the 8th September, such a fall of snow came as to cover the whole plain to a depth of half a foot or more; this snow lasted for a few days only, till the sun came out strong again; in this storm three Baltîs lost their lives,—they died of cold during the night; a Hindostânî servant of mine, who was coming with a pony and a mule, managed to find

shelter under a rock, and weathered it. All the spots frequented by travellers on Deosai have two names, one which the Baltîs call them by, and one originating with the Dârds of Astor or Gurez. Especially is this seen in the names of streams; one name always ends in *chu* and the other in *woi*, which words are respectively the Baltî and the Dârd for water.

The Skârdû road leaves this tract by a Pass of 15,700 feet over the northern part of the bounding ridge. In approaching this we see how the mountains are cut out into flat-bottomed amphitheatres, and we see clearly that these were the beds of ancient glaciers. Across the front of each of them is a stone-heap nearly level on the upper, inner, side, and sloping down on the outer; these were terminal moraines, on which the glacier had flowed, while it shot down its detritus to make the slope advance yet farther. The road passes by one of the most perfect of these amphitheatres; it was about a mile and a half long, and half that in width; on one side the rocks rose clear and precipitous for some 1500 feet, making a sharp-edged ridge; these curving round were on the other side more covered with stony taluses; the nearly level bottom was in great part occupied by moundy masses of stone; among these lay one small tarn, while a larger one reached to the foot of the great cliff, reflecting its crags. The narrow ridge divides this amphitheatre from a valley that leads direct to Skârdû, with the great fall of 8000 feet in seven miles, measured straight, or about eleven miles by the road.

At the summit there opened a view which produced an impression of grandeur as deep as I had ever experienced.

We looked from our great height right on to the mountains beyond the Indus and Shigar rivers. These, though distant forty and fifty miles, presented a magnificent spectacle. It was a combination of various lines of mountains, with lofty peaks rising from these ridges in great precipitous masses, or in pyramids ending in acute points, the snow thick upon them; these vary from 21,000 to 25,700 feet. Below this great region of snow mountains comes an enormous depth of rocky ones; in the upper hollows of these lie some glaciers that reach far below the level of the snow. We saw this in the morning sun, which lighted up the higher snows and threw dark shadows of the peaks over the lower snow-beds, but it made a soft haze in front of the nearer rocky mountains, which perhaps aided in giving us so great, so true, an idea of the size and grandeur of the range.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BALTÎ PEOPLE.

It was explained in a former chapter (see p. 19) that the Baltîs (who are the inhabitants of Baltistân) are of the Tibetan race, and of the Muhammadan faith. They doubtless came originally from the south-east and east, where now live the great mass of the Tibetans, and in their migrations the most westerly point they reached was Rondû. The wave of Muhammadanism coming from the west here met them; that faith had effect enough upon them to cause the conversion from Buddhism of all the inhabitants of the tract we defined as Baltistân, and of the villages a score or two of miles farther to the south-east.

Until lately Muhammadanism was advancing gradually among the Bhots, as these Buddhists are called. The line dividing the Muhammadans and the Buddhists was still travelling south-eastward. Moorcraft remarked, in 1821, that, about Kargil, Muhammadanism was advancing, and that there was every reason to suppose that before long Ladâkh would be entirely Muhammadan. Dr. Thompson, who travelled over the countries in 1847–8, observed that in the Shâyok Valley an uninhabited tract had acted as a barrier between Musalmân and Buddhist; but that on the Indus and south of it Islâm was gradually, though

very slowly, extending eastward. Now, however, the advance is stayed. The countenance and encouragement which the Maharaja has shown and given to the Buddhist religion, as a branch of his own, has been enough to counteract the tendency to Muhammadan conversion.

The Baltîs, therefore, are of quite the same stock as the Ladâkhîs, who have remained Buddhist, differing from most of these latter in physical characters little more than some Ladâkhîs differ from others. The Baltîs have parts of the Turanian physiognomy marked. The high cheek-bones are generally noticeable, and the eyes drawn out at the corners. Their eyebrows are often brought near each other with a wrinkling of the brow; but the nose not so often has the depressed form as it has with the Bhots, nor are the Baltîs quite so scantily bearded as these are. The Baltîs have disused the pigtail, and they partly follow the Muhammadan custom of shaving the head, only they leave long side-locks growing from behind the temples, which are sometimes lank, sometimes thick and curly, and sometimes plaited.

In stature the Baltîs are less thick-set than most Ladâkhîs, and taller. This difference may be the effect of local circumstances, for in most parts of Baltistân there is a less severe climate than in most parts of Ladâkh, and the life led is somewhat easier; and it is to be noted that in Nubrâ, where the people (classed with the Ladâkhîs) resemble the Baltîs in figure, the physical circumstances approach those of Baltistân. The Baltîs, though wiry, are not equal to their neighbours of Ladâkh in carrying loads; especially they move slower with their weights, but they are particularly good in carrying a load over

difficult ground, where one would think a laden man could not pass. They always carry about a hair-rope or else a leathern thong, fixed to a wooden ring, for slinging their loads, and, when at home, very commonly carry a conical basket at their backs for the same purpose.

The dress of the Baltîs is of a loosely-woven cloth. They wear a coat reaching but a little below the knee, and short pyjamas. They carry one or two wrappers for their waist and shoulders, these sometimes of a check pattern. For the head they have a small round cap, which they wear at the back of the head, and the headmen of villages bind a woollen cloth pagrî or turban over it; men of higher rank will have one of white calico or muslin. The people go barefoot a good deal; but they carry with them, for wear in the colder parts, boots of soft leather, often of goatskin, with the hair left on and worn inside.

In disposition the Baltîs are good-natured and patient. They are not so cheerful as their cousins the Bhots, but they are not without some humour. Less slow in comprehension than the Bhots are, they are somewhat more up to the ways of the world—less generous, more eager in getting.

In embracing Muhammadanism, the Baltîs, to some extent, adopted the custom of polygamy. Though the area of cultivation is closely limited, and there are no means of support within the country for an expanding population, still with the new religion the customs prevalent among Muhammadans in other parts of the world were introduced. I do not think that with the poor people, the mass of the population, polygamy is common;

but there is no customary restriction about marriage, and they are in fact betrothed as boys and girls.*

The result is that Baltistân is crowded; the population is overflowing. Happily they are a people more likely to fare well as emigrants than the Ladâkhîs, for the heat of some of the valleys they dwell in has fitted them to endure the warmer climates that the search for food was likely to lead them to. Accordingly, colonies of Baltîs have been made in several countries, where food is more abundant, and frugality and industry (which are characteristics of the Baltî emigrant) can get their reward. Thus in the Yârkand country is a large settlement of these people; their occupation, I have been told, is in great part the raising of tobacco. Some are settled in Kashmir, and to Jummoo even they find their way. Some hundreds, again, get a livelihood as soldiers in the Maharaja's army, in which has been formed a regiment of Baltîs, a regiment for which has been adopted the Highland kilt and a head-dress that must have been taken from some picture of our grenadiers of a century and a half back.

But at present the great outlet for the Baltîs is the British territory, where, at many places in the hills, works are going on—such as road making and barrack building—at which they can earn good wages; or better, by taking small contracts, gain a profit as well. It is common for the Baltîs, in parties of half a dozen or so, to find their way through Ladâkh to Simla, taking with them a load of dried apricots, by the sale of which they

* With polygamy has been introduced the other Muhammadan custom of restraint of women from mixing freely in society.

provide food on the road, and perhaps a little purse at their journey's end. Joining a gang of their countrymen already at work (for by this time there is established a regular, though slow, correspondence through those going and returning), they will work on steadily, until, after three or four years may be, they have saved what will carry them back to their country and keep them for a while, and enable them to do something for those they had left behind. Then, investing these savings in the goods most in demand in Baltistân, generally copper cooking-pots, they will load themselves to the utmost they can carry, and start on their two months' journey home. There the travelled Baltî takes his ease for a bit, being able to obtain the best produce of his village, till diminishing resources warn him again to look abroad.

In spite of all this emigration, however, there remain in the country more people than its produce can well provide for. The land, or the interest in the land, becomes minutely divided; the workers on it cannot get a full meal; the result is a poor, ill-clad, and unhealthy population. Certainly the Baltîs are much less robust and healthy than the Ladâkhîs.

It is a curious thing that the Baltîs belong mostly to the Shîa sect of Muhammadans. As to their first conversion to Islâm I could hear nothing; but some teachers are remembered—four brothers, it is said, from Khurâsân—who made "good Muhammadans" of the people, who before were but nominally Muhammadan. It may be that these four missionaries were Shîas. There is among them yet another sect division. A number of the Baltîs call themselves "Nûr Bakhsh," which name (evidently

taken from the name of some spiritual leader) implies a slight distinction from the ordinary Shîa, but in the great matters of difference between the Sunîs and Shîas, the Nûr Bakhsh are with the latter.

In the country about Kargil, and from there on to Suru, this same race of Baltîs is to be found. Here they are in contact with the Dârds on the one hand, and the Buddhist Tibetans, the Ladâkhîs, on the other; the various spots of colour on the map show that those races are geographically somewhat mixed; but even if the same village is divided between them, the tribes keep themselves socially distinct. One square of the Baltî colour is to be seen close to Leh; it represents an isolated colony of them, which, four or five generations back, came some from the Kargil neighbourhood, and some from Skârdû. They occupy the largest tract of cultivated ground in Ladâkh, the village of Chushot, by the river bank, only a few miles from Leh.

It would be interesting to trace whether any of those Baltîs who go for work to Simla and elsewhere in the British country will there make a permanent settlement or not. Hitherto, I believe, they have always looked to returning to their much-loved home.

CHAPTER XV.

POLO IN BALTISTÂN.

BALTISTÂN is one of the homes of Polo.* This is so thoroughly the national game of the Baltîs that almost every village has its polo ground, enclosed and carefully kept for the purpose. The people are passionately fond of the game; those of rank look on the playing of it as one of the chief objects for which they were sent into the world; but not to them is the pursuit confined; all join who can get a pony to mount, and the poorest enter thoroughly into the spirit of it; the children from an early age get their eye and hand in accord by practising it on foot—playing indeed the ordinary hockey of our country. It is not surprising that such an active pursuit of the game should produce good players. I have met with young men of most admirable skill. These have been mostly of the Wazîr class, men who, while always able from their circumstances to join in the pursuit, have greater activity and energy than the Rajas whom they serve. The Rajas, indeed, have been all brought up to play, and they also usually have good skill, but they seldom ride with the same pluck, or throw themselves so completely into the game as do the Wazîrs.

In Dârdistân also polo is played. Indeed it is practised from Leh on the south-east to high up the Gilgit Valley

* It can now hardly be necessary to define this game as hockey on horseback.

on the north-west, and even in the Chitrâl Valley beyond; I have met and played with some people from this last country who had come to Gilgit on political business. At Leh it was introduced by the colony of Baltîs who settled at Chushot, close by; it has been adopted by the higher class of Ladâkhîs, but not by the people generally; on the other hand, in every place where live Baltîs or Dârds, the polo ground may be looked for.

For an interesting fact relating to the antiquity of the game we are indebted to an anonymous correspondent of 'The Times,' who, on 12th June, 1874, gave an extract from the 'History of the Reign of the Emperor Manuel Comnenus' (by Joannes Cinnamus), which shows that the very same game was played at Constantinople in the middle of the twelfth century, and that even at that time it was considered an old as well as an honourable game, and was practised by the Emperors themselves.* In the

* I here give a translation from the Latin of that part of the extract which describes the game. It will be seen that it differs not from the polo of to-day except in the form of the stick. "The nature of the game is as follows:—Young men, divided into sides of nearly equal numbers, discharge a ball made of leather, about the size of an apple, into a certain place previously measured out for that purpose. Then on each side they make at full gallop for the ball, which has been placed in the middle, as if it were a prize, each having in his right hand a stick, which is of moderate length and terminates suddenly in a rounded space, the middle of which is filled up with catgut strings fastened together in the manner of a net. Each side then does its best that it may be the first to drive the ball beyond the other (i. e. *opposite*) goal which had been previously marked out. For when the ball is driven into either of the goals by the use of the netted sticks, that is reckoned as a victory for one side. This, indeed, is the nature of the game; it obviously lays you open to a fall and other dangers, for it is necessary for anyone who practises it to lean back continually and to bend to right and left, so as to wheel his horse round and direct his course and his movements according to the varying movements of the ball. In this manner, then, is the game in question carried on."

time of the Mughal Empire in India it was, I believe, common among the courtiers. Strange it is that, dying out in India, till it remained only in two odd corners—Manipûr and the country we are describing—it should now again be learnt and practised by the last new rulers of India.

Englishmen in Calcutta first got the game from the people of Manipûr on the borders of Barma. In the Panjâb they began playing it about ten years ago, the game having been introduced into that province about simultaneously from Calcutta and from the Kashmir country. The English visitors to Kashmir played it, as far as I know, for the first time in 1863; from there it was carried to Syâlkot and other British stations, while about the same time the Calcutta game also spread into the Panjâb.

I have played polo with natives of Baltistân and Dârdistân, and have closely observed their styles of play; as it is a pastime that has now got a good footing in England, it may not be amiss to say something of the way in which it is played abroad.

In these mountainous countries the tactics of polo are modified, or at all events determined, by the narrowness of the ground it is played on. There it is seldom possible to get more than a long narrow strip of level ground—never is there a wide expanse. The length from goal to goal is commonly 200 yards, sometimes it is as much as 250; while the width of the ground is from 30 to 40 yards only; the width of each goal is over 10 and under 15 yards; the goals are marked by white stones sunk into, but showing half a foot or a foot above, the ground. The

surface is generally a fine turf, which is kept in good order by occasional irrigation; the ground is enclosed by loose stone walls, so that the ball seldom goes beyond bounds; the game is better when these walls are smooth, so that the rebound of the ball can be reckoned on, but their rough construction seldom allows of this.

There is no maximum or minimum number of players; in a large ground fifteen a side is considered a full number, but very fair play can be got with six or seven a side. The people consider that it would be impossible for the game to go on properly without music. The band, then, consisting usually of two pair of drums, a fife, and a long horn that one man can hardly wield, first escort the chief personage—the Raja of the place, or whoever he may be—in procession to the ground, and then take their post on a raised platform in the centre of one side. Then the Raja, sitting down, has the sides made up. This is done in a fairer way than by alternate choosing, which gives such an advantage to him who wins the toss. Each man gives either his whip or his polo stick, and these are paired, either by the Raja's advice or by the general voice of the bystanders, so that two equally good players are made into one pair; then is brought forward some little boy, who knows nothing of the relative skill of the owners of the whips, nor even whose they are, and he, taking a pair of whips, shifts them round two or three times in his hands, and then separates them, putting down one on his right hand and one on his left; and so with each pair till two heaps are made, the owners of which represent the two sides. All this is for the sake of equality and impartiality.

Though the goals are appropriated to the two sides, yet

the players do not take up their station at their respective goals, but *all* congregate at one end. Then one player begins the game by taking the ball in his hand, starting off at full gallop, and, when he comes to the middle of the ground, throwing it up and striking it as best he can towards the enemy's goal. In this some are so skilful that the ball sometimes enters and the goal is won without anyone else having had a chance. But the leader is followed not only by his own side, but by all his opponents, galloping close behind; and the struggle comes for the second blow, if the ball has not reached the goal. Now, when one of the other party gets the chance, he does not strike it back in the direction he wishes it ultimately to go, but carries it on *towards his own base*, for the sake of putting it not through, but past, outside, the goal-marks, that is to say, for the sake of making the ball miss the goal and pass behind. If this happens, the practice is for a bystander to take up the ball and throw it as hard as he can in the other direction, so that now the second side have the advantage due to the impetus. And it is the rule that the game is not considered as again started until one of that side has touched the ball, this being done without interruption from the other side.

Now probably will come the time when the ball gets checked and entangled among the horses' legs; then comes a *mêlée*, often amusing enough, when, with crowding of horses, pushing, hooking of sticks—intentionally as well as by accident, for it is an allowed thing—the ball remains for long confined and often invisible; till by some chance it gets clear and is carried away by some nimble-

handed one, when a race again begins, to make or save the goal.

The better players are marvellously good in carrying the ball along by successive strokes on whichever side of their horse it may happen to be; their ponies too, well knowing their duty, follow it in every turn and to the best of their speed. But an opponent coming up may spoil the other's stroke by catching his stick even when unable to reach the ball itself. Others following close take up the game, and so it rolls from one goal back to the other, or to the centre, backwards and forwards often for long. When the ball enters the goal, even then the game is not ended; it is not won until a man of the nearly victorious party, dismounting, picks it up; so that there is yet a chance for the other side to strike the ball out again and carry it away; but it must be struck out as it came, between the goal-marks, else the first side have still the power to pick it up.

The music had been playing nearly the whole time, with especial force on the taking off and on each rush at speed, and now, when the ball is caught and the game won, the band strikes up in sign of victory; and immediately, no breathing time being given, one of the winning side gallops out with the ball—commonly the one who, dismounting, picked it up—and takes off, as before, for a new game. It is this that brings about the custom of *changing goals* at each game; for the winning side, having put the ball through their opponents' goal, in starting afresh from there, make it their own.

In this way the play goes on, without a moment's intermission, may be for a couple of hours or even more, until

one side has scored nine games, which may have involved the playing of seventeen; this makes the rubber, and the reaching to that number is the signal for resting, or more probably for closing the game.

Now comes in another ceremony. The winning side, riding up, collect in front of the musicians, and, while they play the Baltî equivalent for 'See the Conquering Hero comes,' join in with shouts and cheers, and raising and lowering and waving of their sticks; and then, if they are much elated with their victory—if some wager, or some point of credit had been depending on the game—a few of them will dismount and commence a grotesque dance to horrible music, accompanied by wild grimaces and gestures to mark their exultation, the other party meanwhile having slunk off to the farther end. All this shows how thoroughly the Baltîs and the Dârds enter the game and enjoy victory in it.

Once or twice I was especially glad to find myself on the winning side. The stake was a *salaam*, of which the losers had to fulfil the duties by walking the whole length of the ground up to the winners, who were seated at the farther end, bending nearly to the earth in a salaam at every twenty steps or so; at each bow the others raising a cheer. At the last, however, the victors too rise, and cordially return the salutation. This is most likely to be the stake when two villages or districts are the rivals.

Though eager in the game the Baltîs play good-humouredly; sometimes a hard knock is accidentally given, but I never saw any falling out.

The ponies of Baltistân are admirably adapted for polo;

indeed, this is almost the only use they are put to, for the roads are too bad for them to be used to carry packs. It is likely, then, that they have for long been bred and selected chiefly in view of this use, and their form may be said to embody the experience of generations of polo-players as to the right kind of animal for the game; for this reason I will say a few words in description. They stand about twelve hands three inches, or thirteen hands; for their size they are rather large-boned; they are compact in make; they have a broad chest, a deep shoulder, a well-formed barrel well ribbed up, and good hind-quarters, and a small, well-shaped head. They are good at hill-climbing, and at polo they are very active; they are of good heart, going long without giving in, though they are terribly hard-worked at every game. These ponies are ridden on a plain snaffle, and not with the sharp bit that natives of India are so fond of using. The Baltîs do not wear spurs, but they carry a short whip, hanging on the wrist, with which they urge their ponies to full speed.

I wish now to compare the system of polo-playing in Baltistân with that followed in England. There is not a great difference between the two, but it may be useful to discuss some points and perhaps to make some suggestions.

First, for those respects in which I would not recommend the adoption of Baltî ways. The plan of a flag-staff is better than the goal-stone; it enables one to judge better if a goal has been gained or not, and it is equally safe if only fixed so that it will go down easily if ridden against. Next, I see no advantage in the practice of requiring one of the riders to dismount and pick up the

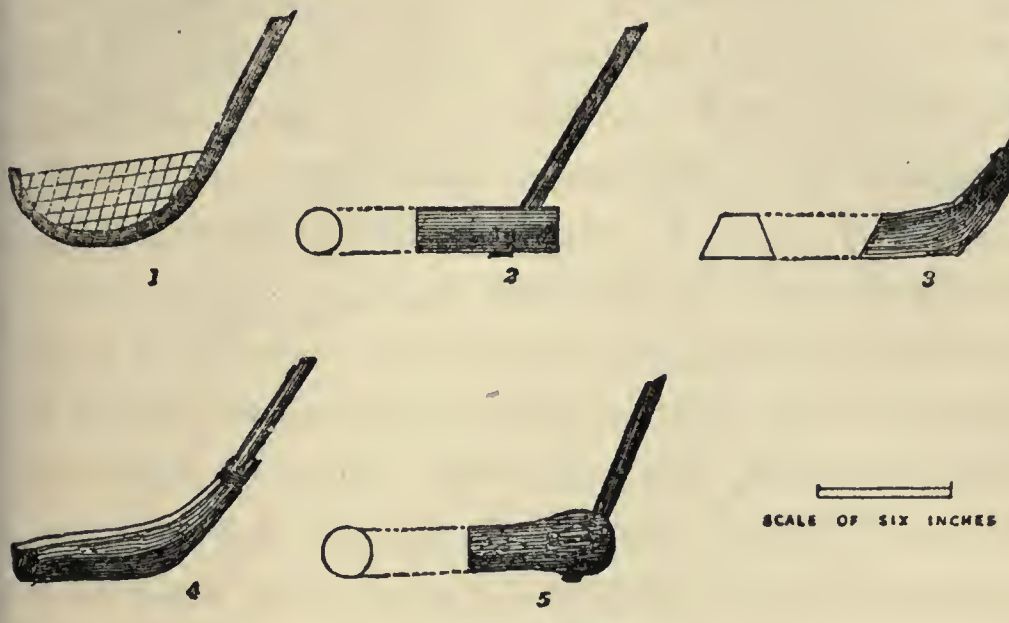
ball before the game be considered won; the game must end somewhere, and the natural time is when the ball is put within the goal; the origin of this Baltî custom was, probably, the struggling among themselves of the men of the winning side to get the ball, in order to take it off for the next game. Again, the giving no breathing-time between the games is not likely to be followed by those so careful of their horses as are Englishmen; it causes a useless strain on the animal's wind.

As to hooking of sticks; the practice certainly is productive of amusement and variety. One sometimes sees a man careering along just ready to give the victor stroke, unconscious of others following hard upon him, when a gentle hook will spoil his aim and discomfit his whole procedure. But I cannot recommend it for Englishmen; their tempers will not stand the interruption and consequent vexation; the practice was tried and disused in Upper India. Whether with the cooler air and the other sedative surroundings at home it could safely be adopted I will not presume to judge.

An important branch of the subject is the question of the kind of stick to be employed; certainly, next to one's pony the stick deserves attention. There is considerable variety, the different sorts being used in different parts. The accompanying cut shows six different forms.

No. 1 may be called the Byzantine stick. I have drawn it from the idea I received from the description given in the extract quoted in the note to p. 227, though perhaps the netted space was more of the shape of a racket; it would suit best, or only, with a light ball. No. 2 is the Calcutta stick, taken, I imagine, from the Manipûrîs; it

is a stiff bamboo, four feet or more long, with, for a head, a cylindrical piece of hard wood. The Baltî sticks (Nos. 3 and 4) have curved heads, the curves being of



POLO STICKS.

1, Byzantine; 2, Calcutta; 3, Baltî (Skârdû, &c.); 4, Baltî (Kargil); 5, Dârd.

various degrees of sharpness, according to the fancy of the player; some of the best players use a short stick with a very slightly curved head; the other differences are that the handle is shorter (being usually $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet in length), thinner, and more elastic; and the head is much heavier in proportion to the handle than that of the Calcutta stick. The head of these Baltî sticks is bored right through for the handle, which is fixed by a tight fastening round the upper end of the head, this being enabled to get a grip on the handle by a slot a couple of inches long being cut in front. It seems that the Calcutta stick is the only one that has been introduced into England. I say with confidence, having tried both sorts and seen them both tried, that the Baltî stick is the better, that more

can be done with it. Very likely it takes more time to learn the use of it; its shortness involves one's getting nearer the ground—the kind of stick thus reacting on the style of riding; for while the Calcutta stick would both be suited to and tend to perpetuate a stiff kind of riding, the Baltî stick would encourage a freer and more flexible style. When one's play is accommodated to a short stick there is a distinct advantage gained, in that the ball wil be more lifted by the blow, and be carried farther; in cross-cuts, again, the Baltî sticks are much more manageable. Their top-heaviness, though awkward for a beginner, helps the blow to be very effective. The Baltîs do not give the stroke from the wrist, but from the elbow or the shoulder. No. 5 is the kind of stick used in the Gilgit country. The section of the head of it is circular, the handle is elastic. With this sort I was not much taken; those who use it—the Dârds—make a very different kind of stroke from what the Baltîs do; they give a short circular stroke from the wrist. This is apt to raise the ball (and knocks on the knee are not uncommon from this cause), but it does not drive it far, and the game generally of these players is closer, more shuffly, more of a *mêlée* than that of Baltistân.

It is almost essential that the head of the Baltî sticks should have the grain of the wood curved with its curve; the piece should be cut from the knee of a branch, or of course it might be bent by steaming. Birch is most commonly used, but probably oak would be as good; for the handle, hazel or ash would do well.

As to the ground, the Baltîs will have it that their long narrow spaces are the best, and they wish for nothing

better. Still there can be no doubt that it is only the character of their country, the confined area available, that brought about the rule of narrow polo-grounds, and, perhaps, the practice of all riding in one direction. I myself think that a square of 200 yards, with the goals in the middle of two opposite sides of it, leaves little to be desired. If, indeed, it were possible to enclose the area by any kind of turf wall, or by boarding, which should be smooth enough for the ball to rebound from it at the calculated angle, then a narrower ground—not so narrow, however, as those of Baltistân—would give opportunities for very pretty play. In any case, the bounds should be conspicuously marked.

We now come to the subject of tactical rules. One cannot help allowing considerable weight to the fact of three, if not four, Englishmen having lost their lives at this game within the first ten years of its introduction into Upper India. Considering the small number of places where it is practised, this is a large proportion. In Baltistân, fatal accidents at polo are hardly known, and it behoves us to examine whether this may not be due to their different way of conducting the game. I have little doubt that this freedom from accident arises from the galloping being done by all in the same direction at one time; there is no meeting; both sides start together and ride together after the ball. This is a very different thing from two sides being drawn up opposing each other, as in a tournament, and galloping towards each other. As to the commencing, the Baltî plan of striking the ball in the air at a gallop is much more workmanlike—requiring as it does some considerable skill—than any other.

I must try to efface an impression that has lately got abroad, that polo is a cause of cruelty to the ponies. It can only be so if racing be cruel to race-horses, and hunting to hunters. The truth is that the game brings out a horse's capabilities, exercises his faculties, and so makes him fulfil the object of his life, in the highest degree. In the heat of the game a blow from the ball on his shin or knee (a joint by no means so tender as our knee, with which it does not correspond in structure) is hardly felt, and this is about the worst that is likely to happen with moderate care in playing, which care should be dictated by a consideration for both man and beast. If one exposes the ponies to no greater risk of injury than we do ourselves at polo, or at football—and I cannot think their risk is greater—then the best friends of animals should be satisfied.

CHAPTER XVI.

SKÂRDÛ TO LEH.

From Skârdû to Leh, the capital of Ladâkh, is some two hundred miles by the road. It is a route little frequented, and it is seldom traversed by any but foot-passengers. Persevering Baltîs are to be met with, who bring this way the sweet produce of their orchards, the dried apricots, which are in great favour and demand in the cold countries of Ladâkh and Tibet; or some may be seen returning from their tour of labour in parts strange to them, high laden with the manufactured things which will find a good market in Baltistân.

Though the valley of the Indus connects the two towns, the way by the river is so hard in parts that the traveller will turn from it to follow the course of the Shâyok, and will afterwards regain the bank of the Indus River, by crossing a Pass nearly 17,000 feet high, over one of the great mountain ridges. But we ourselves will continue in the Indus Valley, and, as we trace it up, notice what changes gradually occur.

The wide valley of Skârdû soon narrows, the river becomes confined to a rocky gorge, and the path leads along between its steep banks and the hill-sides, which are mountain spurs that unite farther back with a lofty range. But sometimes the path leads across a piece of sandy alluvium, sometimes over the great rugged blocks

of a talus, and sometimes on the face of a cliff washed at the base by the river, the road being carried on precarious-looking timbered galleries fixed into small projections of the rock. The scenery is always of stony expanses and rugged rocks; only at every few miles a pretty village at the opening of a ravine pleases one by its thick crops and the foliage of its fruit-trees, which here also flourish.*

Each of these village tracts is situated on what I have called an *alluvial fan;* I may now explain the exact meaning I attach to that term:—When a side stream debouches from a narrow gorge into a wider valley, it is apt to deposit the material it carries down (washed from the mountains behind) in a fan-like form at the mouth of the ravine. This fan is part of a low cone, having its apex at the point of debouchment; the slope of it, which may be a few degrees, is very regular along each radius; the spread of it may vary from a few hundred yards to a few miles; the thickness of the deposit, the height of the apex above the plain or the main-valley bottom, is often many hundred feet.

The fans frequently have become denuded, that is to say, cut up; their remains are sloping plateaus (with a slight curvature of surface) attached to the hill-sides in front of the ravines; these plateaus are commonly divided into halves by a gully, through which the side stream now flows at a low level, and they may end in a cliff towards the main river. The importance of these fans (whether they be whole or denuded ones) with respect to the

* The Shâyok Valley, which branches to the left as we go up, I have not visited in this its lower part; from Dr. Thompson's description it seems to have much the same general character as that of the Indus, but perhaps with greater variation in width.

habitation of the country consists in this, that it is chiefly, though not universally, upon them that (the water of the side streams being led over them for irrigation) the ground is capable of cultivation.*

Every few miles these fans and their accompanying villages occur, on one side of the river or the other. The sloping ground is artificially banked and levelled into narrow terrace fields, and often backed by great rocks that, with a favourable aspect, reflect the heat, and act almost like the walls of our fruit-gardens. They are richly carpeted with heavy-eared crops and crowded with fruit-trees, the bright greenness of whose leaves delights the eye of the traveller who for many miles has wearied under the sameness of gazing at nothing but rock and loosened stones, and the shade of whose boughs is itself a reward for the exposure and toil, as, after the glare that one is exposed to on a summer day's march among these bare mountains, one lies by the stream that ripples beneath them.

One of the largest of the villages is Khartaksho, where, standing high on a rock, is the house of one of the native rulers, who, like his brethren of Skârdû and Rondû, has lost all political importance. A few marches higher we come to the limits of Baltistân, and enter the country of Ladâkh. The political boundary is between the villages of Garkon and Dâh; the colouring on the map shows the ethnographical variations that occur in this part; of physical character there is no sudden change.

* For details about the formation and denudation of fans in Ladâkh I must refer the reader to a paper read by me before the Geological Society, and printed in their 'Quarterly Journal,' vol. xxix. part 3.

Here the bottom of the Indus Valley is a narrow, rock-bound gorge. The river flows in it with an eddied, but not uneven, surface; its depth must be great to allow the body of water to pass along such a narrow channel, for I found that the width was in one place but sixty-five feet, and in another but forty-six. The walls of this gorge are nearly vertical; above them rise other steep, but more broken, cliffs; above these the ground retires, but there are greater heights behind. All this is of granitic rock. Over this rocky ground the path is a difficult one; a laden horse cannot go along it, and with difficulty can an unladen pony be led. It is the same on both sides of the river. This difficulty of the road isolates the villages of this part of the valley and cuts them off greatly from intercourse.

This, as it is the lowest, is also the warmest part of Ladâkh. The level of the river is about 9000 feet; but even at this height the valley in summer time is hot. The unclouded sun heats the bare rocks that slope to meet its rays; the traveller, as he goes along the rugged way, is exposed on one side to the sun's direct rays, and on the other to a strong radiation from the ground, while the pent-up air itself becomes hot and gives no relief. But, after a toilsome drag for some miles over this waste of heated ground, he reaches one of the little villages, a space covered with crops of a brilliant green, overshadowed by luxuriant fruit-trees, in the midst of the barest rocks.

Garkon is the one most curious in its situation. It consists of very narrow strips or ledges of flat watered ground, between separate stages of a great river-cliff, so that on one side there is a precipitous fall, while on

the other vertical cliffs overhang the narrow fields, which, receiving their radiated heat, quickly ripen the crops; even at night the place does not lose its heat. Water is led over the fields from a ravine that comes from the high mountains. Apple, apricot, mulberry, and the vine are cultivated, in company with the cereals, on the narrow space, and flourish well with the combination of moisture and warmth.

In going from Garkon to the next village, called *Dâh*, we pass, as before said, from Baltistân into Ladâkh. The Baltîs were in former times apt to make raids upon their more peaceable neighbours. Dâh, as the frontier village, protected itself by the agglomeration of its houses together to form a sort of fort; on two sides protection is given by a steep cliff, on two by a wall, with a good tower to guard the entrance to the enclosure. Now that all are under one government, and perfect peace has ensued, the dwellings are scattered; but still in winter time the people from the outlying houses and hamlets join to live within the old enclosure, for warmth and for mirth's sake. Within its walls the ground is almost all roofed over, hardly any space is left for alleys, passages from one house to another are led beneath the rooms of a third; the whole is a strange crowding together of hovels.

Besides the villages which lie along the Indus Valley, there are several in the side valleys which join from both right and left. At the mouth of these valleys one sees but a narrow opening; from this they often stretch up for miles, and contain cultivated land and several hamlets. Of these the higher ones endure a distinctly more severe climate than do the villages of the

main valley. Here also strips of cultivated ground alternate with rocky tracts; but the fruit-trees, willows, and poplars gradually disappear. Above the cultivation, the ravines lead up into rocky wastes in the heart of the hills. Those on the right bank lead to the watershed of the Leh Range; sometimes they lead to a more or less frequented Pass, sometimes to a rocky ridge that man never reaches for the reason that there is nothing to draw him, sometimes to ground so precipitous and impracticable that mortal foot cannot tread it.

At Achînathang the Indus Valley begins to be rather less confined, and the road along it is such that one can ride in comfort. Achînathang itself is a neat and pretty village, on a plateau of river alluvium 200 feet above the water. Near this place, in the pebbly alluvium formerly deposited by the river, at a height of 120 feet above it, are to be seen shallow pits, from which Baltî gold-washers had dug earth, which they carried down to the water side to wash for gold. Every few miles, on each side of the river, are seen little tracts of cultivated ground. One was a continuous strip on a narrow plateau, a mile in length, and but fifty yards wide. Sometimes, as at Skirbichan, is a wider expanse. Each tract has on it a collection of houses in proportion to the area, at the rate of a house to three or four acres. These white houses, half hidden by the foliage, and the spread of green fields, contrasting with the bare surrounding country, make each little village a charming sight.

The inhabitants of the villages from Sanâcha to Hanû are those *Buddhist Dârds* whom I described in Chapter XI. From the village of Achînathang upwards,

the people are thorough Ladâkhîs in race and in language. The next chapter will tell us their characteristics, but it may be mentioned in this place that in this part the Ladâkhîs are well grown; they are taller than those who live in the neighbourhood of Leh. This I connect with the somewhat milder climate, and the consequently less severe life experienced.

Next above the part of the Indus we have been speaking of, we come to Khalsî, where the road from Kashmir reaches the Indus Valley; hence, onwards, that road coincides with our own. Four days' journey is still before us.

At Khalsî the Indus is spanned by a wooden bridge, where rocks narrow it up to a width of sixty or seventy feet only. The bridge is commanded by a small fort on the higher bank; the path from the bridge is, indeed, led along the covered way half round the fort. The village of Khalsî is on a plateau about 250 feet above the river. There is here a long strip of cultivated land watered from a side stream; crops and fruit-trees grow on it well, and even luxuriantly; walnuts and apricots ripen, though the height above the sea is something over 10,000 feet.

From Khalsî there are two routes that may be taken, which will unite again one march short of Leh. The first we shall speak of is a road along a series of plateaus, some 1500 feet above the river. We reach them by turning up a ravine to the left, by which we get on to a high plain between an outer, low, range of hills that skirt the river valley itself and the inner, high, mountain range.

This plain is interrupted by cross valleys that, originating in the higher range, pass through the lower one down to the Indus; the plain thus becomes divided up into wide necks of land. The lofty granite range that for a long distance divides the valley of the Indus from that of its great tributary, the Shâyok, bounds these plains on the north. For the greater part of the way, spurs of it only are visible—rugged and bare, brown and yellow, hills, whose surface is much-disjointed rock; but sometimes the eye reaches up the valleys to the lofty central ridge, still of the same character, or else, perhaps, touched with the white of some recent snowfall.

A noted place that we pass is Himis Shukpâ. This is named after a grove of a hundred or two large *shukpâ*, or pencil-cedar, trees which there grow about a stony mound. The girth of several of these trees is six or seven feet, and some that have irregular trunks measure ten feet and more; they taper quickly upwards, reaching to a height of about forty feet; it is a holy grove protected by the gods; disease and misfortune are said to overtake those who commit sacrilege against it. At Himis Shukpâ are remains of a fort or tower, which was built by the Sokpos, who invaded Ladâkh towards the end of the seventeenth century; I was told that they built such towers in many places, and that this was the most westerly of them.

The two routes that had separated near Khalsî meet again at the village of Bazgo. Along the valley route we should have passed larger villages, but not many of them; two on a day's march are as much as one meets. Nurla and Sâspûl are the most important of those we

pass. Of the hills that bound the valley, those on the right bank (on our left as we go) belong to the range of secondary height that intervenes between the river and the plateaus traversed in the other route. On the left bank the prominent mountains are 2000 feet or so high above the valley; these are but the ends of spurs from a range that rises 6000 or 7000 feet higher, namely, to 18,000 or 19,000 feet above the sea.

I have described what kind of travelling it is to traverse the valley below Khalsî in summer time—toiling on foot along rough stony tracks or up rocky slopes under a powerful sun. This present part I have gone over both in summer and in winter; and, in spite of a severity of cold in the air far greater than I have experienced in England, I have been more comfortable on the winter journey. It was in January; the snow was falling lightly, keeping, as it fell, dry and powdery; the river was frozen in more than one place, so that we could cross, and choose which bank to go along, while near Nurla we were able to ride for a mile or two on the ice over the Indus itself. Thus by ice and snow the way was made smoother; lambskin coats and caps and felt stockings kept out the cold, and the best houses of the villages afforded at every stage a shelter that in that season was welcome and comfortable.

Above Sâspûl the river in places flows where the road cannot follow it, in narrow inaccessible gorges. As before said, the valley and the higher roads meet at the next village, Bazgo; this, as one looks down on it from the edge of the neighbouring plateau, has a picturesque and strange appearance on account of the position of some of its buildings, as of the monastery, on a towering rock.

The Zânskâr River, of great volume, here joins the Indus on the opposite side.

As we approached Pitak we came to a more open part of the valley. Pitak is the last village before Leh. All the cultivated spots hitherto met with in Ladâkh were watered from side streams—streams coming almost immediately from the mountains with a more or less steep fall. But at Pitak the land is irrigated from the Indus itself. For we are here at the beginning of a part of the Indus Valley where the bottom is wide and is occupied by a flat of alluvium, over which the waters of the main stream can be brought.

At Pitak there is an isolated rock a few hundred feet high, on which all the older buildings are situated. The monastery is on the summit at one end, and there is a fortification—of two towers connected by a double wall—that must have helped to make the rock a strong position. Formerly all the houses were, for protection's sake, built thus high up; this was very commonly the case throughout Ladâkh, only in the last generation or so have the people taken generally to building in the plain.

We are now but five miles from Leh, the capital; indeed it is within sight from the summit of the rock; let us from here take a general view of the geographical position of that town.

The river is 10,500 feet above the sea; it is flowing with a gentle current in a flat, the surface of which is in great part of pebbles only, but here and there it is of such a fine alluvial soil that the people have been able to bring it under cultivation. On the south-west side this low flat is bordered by a stretch of sloping gravelly ground,

consisting of a number of coalesced fans that have been deposited by streams having their origin in the mountains on the south—mountains which rise up to 20,000 feet. On the north-east of the river there continues the same great granite ridge, at the foot of which we have been passing; the summit of it is about twelve miles from the Indus, as the crow flies. The line of ridge is from 18,000 to 19,000 feet high. The Passes through it are 17,000 and 18,000 feet.

A valley, coming down from this great central ridge, bounded close by rocky branch-ridges, at the distance of four miles from the river, widens, the spurs of the hills both becoming lower and retreating aside, insomuch that there occurs an open space of the form nearly of an equilateral triangle, the side of it five miles in length. The town of Leh is at the apex of this triangle, where the valley begins to widen. Rocky hill-spurs form the sides, the river Indus the base, Pitak being at one end of the base.

This triangular space is not a level; it has a steady, gentle slope up from the river. Advancing from Pitak, we rise, in the five or six miles, about 1000 feet, the altitude of the town of Leh being 11,500 feet. The lower part of the slope (of which the whole consists of a gravelly alluvial deposit) is dry and stony, but as we go on we come within the tract that the side stream has been able to supply with irrigating water, and find a space of several hundred acres covered with crops.

Here, by the farther edge of this cultivated space, on one of the branch spurs from the hills and spreading on to the plain in front of it, is built the town of Leh. The most

conspicuous object in it is the palace of the former rulers, an edifice boldly built up to the height of eight or ten stories from the shoulder of the spur; a slight in-leaning of the massive walls gives it a great look of strength. Higher up, on the same rocky ridge, are the monastery and the towers of an old fortification. Below, in front of the palace, houses cover the slope. On the flat beneath is the newer part of the town. Entering from the direction of Kashmir we pass through a small gateway and find ourselves in a long, wide, and straight bazaar, the houses regularly built and uniformly whitewashed. This has been erected since the Dogrâs took the country, and is now the place that is most frequented. At the farther end of this bazaar one passes into the old part of the town, among houses separated by narrow winding passages. As one rises on to the slope of the hill one meets with a few houses of a higher class; these were built by the Kahlons, or ministers of the former sovereigns, and now for the most part belong to their representatives.

Outside the city are several gardens, or what are here so called; in truth they are plantations of willow and of poplar. These plantations are extremely useful, both for their grateful shade—which is the first thing a traveller will look for in these parts in summer time—and as a reserve of timber for building, a thing in Ladâkh extremely scarce. On the east of the town the mountains are near and there is no cultivation; but to the west, the whole width of the valley, about three-quarters of a mile, is of cultivated land, descending in terraces, with small hamlets scattered over it.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE INHABITANTS OF LADÂKH.

In the word Ladâkh we have again the name of an ancient kingdom; one of those many which have been fused down to make the territory ruled over by the Maharaja. Here we are completely in Tibet, and the kingdom of Ladâkh was, before its annexation to Jummoo, tributary to the Grand Lâma of Tibet at Llâsa. In extent it may be understood as including those valleys marked with the middle and lightest pink tints, and the uninhabited heights between and around them, that are denoted by the grey; this extent is roughly near two hundred miles in each direction.

The two tints just mentioned show that the country is inhabited by two subdivisions of the Tibetan race, the Ladâkhî and Châmpâ; the former are the settled inhabitants, who live in houses; the Châmpâs are nomads, tent-dwellers, who migrate season by season, though coming periodically to the same places, and keeping always within the territory.

The Ladâkhîs have the Turanian cast of feature—that which we are apt to call Chinese, from our having become most familiar with it through the Chinese division of the Turanian family. They have it not perhaps in its greatest intensity, but still unmistakably. The cheek-bones are high; from them downwards the face rapidly narrows; the chin is small and usually retreats. The most per-

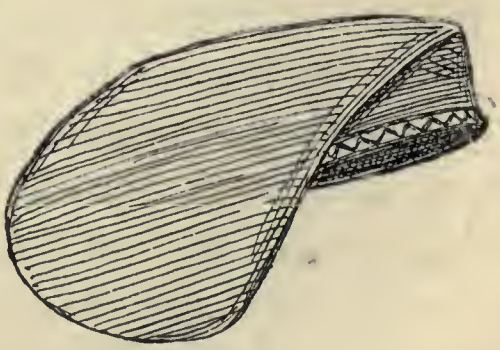
sistent peculiarity is that of the eyes, of which the outer corners are drawn out and the upper eyelids are overhung by a fold of the skin above. The eyes are brown in colour. The nose is pressed, so to say, into the face; and it is often, but not always, depressed at the bridge. The mouth is large and inexpressive; the lips project, but are not thick. The hair, which is black, is cut quite close in front and at the sides of the head; behind, it is collected into a plait or pigtail, which reaches about to the small of the back. Moustaches are always or nearly always present, but they are small, and the beard is very scant.

In stature the Ladâkhîs are short, several inches below the English middle height. Cunningham gives nearly 5 feet 2 inches as the height of the men, and 4 feet $9\frac{1}{4}$ inches as that of the women. Both sexes are broad-made and strong. There is no doubt that they are an ugly race; their best friends cannot deny it. As to the women, the best that can be said of their looks is that some of the younger ones are "not so bad looking."

One is glad, on coming to the subject of their character, to find more to be praised. The Ladâkhîs are cheerful, willing, and good-tempered; they are very ready for a laugh; they are not quarrelsome, unless it be when excited by their intoxicating drink, *chang*, and if over that they do get to wrangling or fighting, no bad blood remains afterwards. They are by no means ingenious; simplicity and clumsiness are characteristics of them. There could hardly be two national characters more opposed than those of the Ladâkhîs and the Kashmîrîs; these latter, quick, versatile, and plausible; the others slow, inapt, and much given to truth-telling. The

Ladâkhîs, however, have by no means poor understandings; they are not muddle-headed, but will learn to understand clearly if given a fair time and opportunity. Major Godwin-Austen has with truth remarked that in one respect the Ladâkhî writers far excel the munshîs, or writers, of India—that is, in the understanding of a map.

Their dress is simple; it is all woollen, of a coarse and thick, but not very closely-woven, home-made cloth, of a natural drab colour. The men wear a *choga*, or wide and long coat, folded over double in front, and confined at the waist by a woollen kamarband, or scarf. They wear nothing beneath this; with boots and cap, and may be an extra wrapper, their attire is complete. As to cap, there is an old and a new fashion. The old sort of cap, still a great deal worn, but chiefly in those parts that are out of the way of traffic from foreign countries, is of the peculiar form shown in the cut. The part that falls over, as far as I could make out, does no good to the wearer. The Kashmîrîs have an absurd story about these caps, that their origin was from the time when a force of Mughal soldiers from Kashmir, under Ibrâhîm Khân, came to help the Ladâkh ruler against the Sokpo invaders. When this force was retiring, one of the troopers dropped his horse's *tobrâ*, or nose-bag, which a Ladâkhî, picking it up, wore for a cap; and the fashion was so much admired that it became general. The other sorts of head-dress are a jaunty skull-cap, which is the newer fashion, and a com-



LADÂKHÎ CAP.

fortable lambskin cap, with large ear-flaps, which in summer are stuck up behind in a curious way, but in winter they make the best possible protection against the severe cold.

To the Ladâkhî his boots are a matter of great importance. The stony ground, and in winter the biting snow, require precautions. A piece of thick leather makes the sole, and is moulded round for the sides of the feet as well; a felt or a cloth top is joined on to this, to reach above the ankle; the leg is further protected by felt gaiters, secured by a tape wound many times round. This *chaussure* is good against cold, and is not bad for rock-climbing where the ground is dry.

The women wear a gown, the skirt somewhat gathered into plaits, of vertical strips of woollen cloth, generally blue and red alternately but sometimes patterned, sewn together. Over the shoulders is worn a kind of shawl, of sheepskin with the wool inside. For head-dress they have only a strip of cloth, ornamented with shells or with rough turquoises, from the forehead back over the middle of the head, and lappets of cloth edged with fur over the ears, but under the hair. They wear the same sort of shoes as the men. The dress of neither men nor women varies with the season of the year.

The only division of the Ladâkhîs—the only caste division—is that the blacksmiths and the musicians belong to castes which are considered low; the blacksmith caste, I believe, being thought the lowest of all. These low castes are called *Bem;* with none of them will the ordinary Ladâkhî intermarry.

The priesthood of Lâmâs does not make a caste; the office is not hereditary, indeed the Lâmâs are celibates.

The *Châmpâs* inhabit the higher country—the valley of the Indus above the villages, the other plains, or flat-bottomed valleys, of Rupshu, and a few outlying places.

They are not very different from the Ladâkhîs. The difference in the face that struck me was that the Châmpâs have rather a projecting chin, while the Ladâkhîs, as before said, have a receding one; the Châmpâs, again, have a more expressive mouth. Their different occupation would be sure to produce some changes; or rather, it should be said, probably, that the settled life of the inhabitants of the villages had changed these last from what their ancestors were, who lived the nomad life, and who now are represented by the Châmpâs. For it is likely that the course of events was this—that, of the Tibetans, spreading north-westward, some reached a country they were able to settle in and to cultivate, while some remained in the higher parts, and kept to their pastoral ways.

They are a most hardy and a most cheerful set of people. Living all their lives in a severely cold climate, and getting a scanty subsistence, they still have the best of spirits. When, after a day's journey, they collect round the scanty fire that is warming their evening meal, their merry laughter shows what a good heart they can keep, in what, to strangers, seem to be the hardest of circumstances. Their lives are spent in tents; they stay for a month or two at a time in one spot, to graze their flocks and herds, and then they move with them whither the advancing season promises better pasture. Some few details of their way of living will be given when we come to describe the country itself which they frequent.

The dress of the Châmpâs is almost the same as that of the Ladâkhîs, only that some of them wear the long wide coat of lambskin, instead of woollen cloth.

As a rule, the Châmpâs and Ladâkhîs do not intermarry. The religion of the two is the same, but it lies light on the Châmpâs. Their young men do not become Lâmâs. The number of these Châmpâs within this territory is very small; there are hardly more than a hundred families of them. Ethnologically they are not different from those who inhabit the next tracts to the south-east-country which is under the Government of Lhâsa.

There are some families who come and go with the summer, and a very few who have settled, of a race called *Khamba*. They are of the country named Kham, far to the east of Lhâsa. By what road they first came from their own country I know not, but now they reach the districts of Zânskâr and Rupshu from, strange to say, the side of India. They are of Tibetan race, and their language, though different from that of our Châmpâs, still can be understood by them. The Khamba are professional beggars, of a very vagrant disposition; they wander about some part of India in the cold months, and find their way up here in the summer, subsisting by begging. It is strange that they should come to such a poor country as the higher parts of Ladâkh for the exercise of their calling; but the Bhots, though poor, are charitable. These Khambas, too, give themselves a religious air, as do most beggars in the East, and that may help them. But, in truth, in their ways they are more like to the gipsies than to devotees. They have their wives and children with them, and these all come round in succession

to beg, as if independent of each other. They live in the smallest of tents; these are only just high enough for a man to seat himself on the ground beneath them. The tent and their other traps are carried on the backs of a few of the load-carrying goats which they always possess. The Maharaja's authorities have tried to persuade some of these Khamba to take to agriculture, and a bit of land has been given for this object by the Pângkong Lake. I saw one family there, who had commenced to till, and had left off their inveterate habit of begging; but they were still in tents, and had not begun to build a house.

Almost all the Ladâkhîs are engaged in agriculture; the number of artisans is very small indeed, and of shopkeepers of that race there are hardly any; the shopkeepers of the town of Leh—the only town in the whole country—are either Muhammadan half-castes or are strangers. Thus the greater part of the population of Ladâkh are connected with the soil. They form a peasantry tilling their own land. The area cultivated by one family is from two to four acres. From the produce of this, and from the incomings of miscellaneous labour which they undertake, they manage to pay the Government demand and to get for themselves a fair living. The sons of a family neither divide the heritage nor themselves separate, but they enjoy the estate in common, in one household; the domestic institution which is necessarily connected with this arrangement will be spoken of farther on. The people of rank also have their interest in the soil; some have grants of land, free, or to a certain extent free, of the Government land-tax; others have

land bearing that burden, which they are able to make some profit out of by employing labourers.

The grain which is most prolific, and which is grown to the greatest extent, is grim, or loose-grained barley, and it is the meal of this grain that the Ladâkhîs mostly eat. Grim is a hardy plant; it is cultivated even at the height of 15,000 feet. This height indeed is exceptional; there is only one place at that altitude where it grows, about twelve acres being there sown with it; but at 13,700 and 14,000 feet there are villages dependent on its cultivation. At lower levels, besides the grim, wheat is grown; but little of this is consumed by the Ladâkhîs themselves; they grow it for the market, for the use of the people of the town, and of the travelling merchants. Wheat does well up to 11,500 feet; it is cultivated, but with less success, even at 12,800 feet. Peas and barley (of the kind common in other countries) are crops that grow at almost as great heights as any. This barley is given to horses.

In the lower parts of Ladâkh, from 10,500 or 10,000 feet downwards, two crops can be got off the same land. I think that barley or grim is, commonly, the first and millet the second crop. Rice does not grow in Ladâkh. Maize has been tried in a garden without much success; the ears of it, which I saw, were only four inches long.

Every crop, as has been said, requires irrigation for its growth; several times has the land to be watered to bring on the plant. In the middle of Ladâkh, if there be a sufficient supply of water, the crop is secure; there sunshine never fails for the ripening of it. In Zânskâr, however, which is near the most snowy range, and in some of

the very high parts, there is sometimes a failure of the sun-warmth necessary to ripen the grain.

Ploughing is done chiefly with the hybrid of the yâk bull and the common cow; this they call *zo* if male, and *zomo* if female. The yâk itself is not good for the plough.* The corn is sometimes reaped with a sickle, sometimes pulled up by the roots from the loose soil.

The universal food of the people is barley-meal, made from grim; it is either made into a broth and drunk warm, or else into a sort of dough, and eaten with butter-milk, if that can be got. They generally have three meals—one an hour or two after sunrise, of the barley-broth; one at midday, of the dough; a third after sunset, of the broth again. In this way they consume some two pounds weight of meal a day. To the broth they put any addition they can get; sometimes it is vegetable, sometimes meat, and sometimes tea.

Unlike the natives of India, the Ladâkhîs are not particular as to their feeding. They obey few restrictions as to what to eat or how to eat it, or as to the method of slaughtering. One way they have of killing an animal for food is to tie up the mouth and let it be suffocated. Another practice of theirs (I am not sure that it is common) is to drain the blood of the animal into their broth, and warm all up together.

The drink of the Ladâkhîs is *chang*, a light beer made without hops.† They have no good vessels to keep it in, so

* The yâk, however, is very useful for carrying burdens. The Ladâkhîs earn a good deal as carriers of merchants' goods with their yâks, their zos, and their ponies.

† For the better brews, a plant brought from Baltistân is used in the same way and with somewhat the same effects as are hops in our beer.

it usually is sour by the time it is drunk. As I have drunk it, it tasted like a cross between home-brewed beer and farmhouse cider. It is not a bad beverage on a warm day; but these people will enjoy it in the depth of a severe winter. There is also a spirit sometimes made—a whisky; but this is proscribed by law. Through the Maharaja's territories generally, the making and the drinking of intoxicating liquors is forbidden.* At one time an order was made that in accordance with this rule the drinking of chang should be put down; but on the representations of the Ladâkhîs that it had been the beverage of their nation from time immemorial, and that it would be impossible to endure the cold of their climate without it, they were allowed the malt liquor; the restriction as to the spirit, however, remains. Tea is another favourite drink in this country, but the poor people—that is nearly all the population—seldom are able to afford it; it is made in a churn, with butter added.

With such food and drink as has been described, the Ladâkhîs are one of the hardiest of races. As coolis, for carrying loads, they are admirable—not only the men, but the women too. I have had women employed to carry my luggage, according to the custom of the country, who have done twenty-three or twenty-four miles with sixty pounds on their back, and have come in at the end singing cheerfully. Against cold, too, they are very strong. Not that they equal in this respect the Châmpâs, who live at still greater heights, and can hardly bear to be as low down as 11,000 feet. Still the people of Central Ladâkh and of Zânskâr are very hardy in this

* Christians are specially exempted from the operation of this law.

respect also; on a frosty night, with nothing but the clothes they go in, they will coil themselves up and sleep comfortably on the bare stony ground. All have a rooted objection to washing. I was told that there was a custom of bathing once a year, but I could never get any satisfactory corroboration of the report. Their clothes, worn next them, are never washed, but are affectionately kept around them until they fall to pieces.

Of the wants rife in a barren country like Ladâkh, there are two which (perhaps without, or at all events in addition to, other difficulties) seem to make impossible either any great addition to the population or increase of their comforts. These are want of fuel and want of timber. For fuel the dung of cattle is carefully stored. This is supplemented in some parts by a bush, which they pull from the hills, that they call *burtse* (Eurotia). This plant is indeed a great resource for travellers in out-of-the-way parts; it is a small, low-growing bush, the woody underground stem of which makes a good fuel. Then, in the high valleys, there is a plant like our furze, called *dâma*. On some hill-sides there is the pencil-cedar, a strong-burning wood; and lastly, in certain ravines, there is willow growing wild. All these, however, from their distance, require much labour to collect; they are seldom used by the Ladâkhîs in their own houses, but are chiefly got by them for travellers and for the town consumption. The timber-trees are willow and poplar. These are planted either along the watercourses between the fields, or now and then in separate plantations. But the growth is not enough to supply all that is wanted. When the new bazaar at Leh was built, a great old plantation, belonging to the chief monastery, was felled for the purpose, nothing

approaching to which is now to be seen in the country. The difficulty in the way of plantations seems to be that there is required for them positions advantageous in point of soil and water which are already occupied by crops. One can hardly increase the growth of timber without diminishing the breadth of land tilled, and of that there is none too much.

The houses are built of sun-dried bricks or of stone. They are flat-roofed, of two or three stories, but these all very low. Except in the very poorest houses there is always a reception room kept neat and clean, the rest not having this character. When a visitor comes they carpet this room with felts, and do all they can to make him and his attendants comfortable. The houses are all whitewashed; the aspect of them — perhaps among groups of trees, or else standing out in relief from the sombre rock on which they may be built, rising one behind the other on the face of it—with their verandah-rooms or with balconies projecting, is often bright and pleasant. The houses of people of the higher ranks have an oratory for the practice of the Buddhist religious ceremonies.

The palace at Leh is probably the finest building in the country, though some of the monasteries may approach it. This palace is curiously contrived. The arrangement of the rooms is very irregular; they are not in continuous stories, but are at all sorts of levels, connected by narrow and low passages. There are two or three large reception rooms, some of them with an opening to the sky in the centre, this plan allowing of a large fire burning in winter on the floor of the room. The roofs of these large rooms were supported by columns

with the wide-extending head or capital which is so marked a feature in Indian architecture; the columns, and indeed most of the woodwork, were gaily coloured, and on the walls were painted sacred pictures.

To a native of India, the complete social liberty of the women of Ladâkh seems very strange. This liberty, I think it may be said, is as great as that of workmen's wives in England; not only do Ladâkhî women go about unveiled, but also they mix where men frequent and enter with them into their pursuits of business or pleasure, and partake too of their toil. I have told what good weight-carriers the women are; in agriculture also they take their share of the work; when the seed is in, the tending of the fields—the watering and so on—is a great deal left to the women, the men perhaps having work abroad.

Thus far we may think woman's position here to be better than in India, but what is next to tell darkens the picture. Polyandry, plurality of husbands, is, except among the few richer people, quite general; it is much more nearly universal than is polygamy in India, and for this reason, that polygamy is a custom itself expensive, practically reserved for the well-to-do, while polyandry is an economical arrangement, one established on the poverty of a barren country, and extending throughout the people as far as indigence itself does.

There can be no doubt that the practice of polyandry in Ladâkh originated from the smallness of the extent of land that could be tilled, and the general inelasticity of the country's resources, while the isolation from the rest of the world—isolation of manners, language, and

religion, as well as geographical isolation — hindered emigration. It was found impossible for the younger ones either to marry and settle or to go out for their living. They naturally became mere helpers in the household—farm servants to the elder brother. From that there came about the curious custom that when the elder brother marries a wife she becomes a wife to all the brothers. The children recognize all as father, speaking of their elder and their younger fathers. As many as four brothers thus may become, and do become, husbands to the same wife; I believe there is no limit at all, but of as many as this I have known instances.

In addition to this form of polyandry, which, as I have shown, stands on economical grounds, there is, strange to say, liberty for the women to choose yet another husband from a different family, a stranger. I have known cases where there were two—and, if my recollection does not deceive me, three—brothers, husbands to a woman, yet she took a fourth husband from outside.

The effect of all this in keeping down the population of the country is very great. Not only are fewer families founded than would be otherwise, but the families are smaller. In spite of the restricted area of cultivation, which it would not be easy to extend, though possible in a few cases, and in spite of there being no importation of grain—except of a small quantity of rice, which is an expensive luxury—the population of Ladâkh, though fairly well filled up, is not redundant. Each person has his own position in connection with the land, and it would be impossible to take many away without throwing some of it out of cultivation.

It seems to me that such a balance is preserved in this way:—The system of polyandry probably would have the effect, if it were fully carried out, of absolutely lessening the population. When it does positively act in that way, when from that cause some holdings of land are, so to say, going begging, then more of simple marriages take place. An heiress of a few acres, say, gets a single husband whom she brings home; or an only son has a wife all to himself. Then the natural increase of population recommences, and the balance is redressed.

Among the curious customs of this country is one of the father and mother of a grown-up family retiring from active life and its responsibilities at a time when they may not be much beyond middle-age. When the son is married and has a child, then the time has come for the grandfather and grandmother to leave their home, to give up the house and the land to their son. They go into a very small house near, taking only one or two head of cattle, and retaining just enough land for themselves to attend to and raise grain from for their food. After this is done they have no more claim on the son, who becomes legal owner of the family property. There is often a house attached to a holding which is put to this very use. The amount of land to be given over is regulated by custom; this, on the death of the old people, comes back to the estate. If there be *two fathers* alive they are both got rid of and provided for in this way.

In the disposal of their dead the Bhots follow the Hindû custom of burning. But whereas the Hindûs seldom or never let twenty-four hours elapse between death and cremation, these Bhots keep the corpse for

many days, feasting their friends round it; the higher in rank the deceased man was, the longer they keep him from the dissolution of fire.

It would hardly be looked for that of these Bhots a considerable number should be able to read and write; but it is the case that a far larger proportion than among their neighbours—the Kashmîrîs for instance, to say nothing of the Baltîs and the Dârds—have these accomplishments. In almost every village there are men who can write freely and accurately. A predisposing cause to this doubtless is the length of time, during the winter, when agricultural work is stopped and occasion for indoor pursuits arises. Probably the practice of one son out of each family commonly being set apart to become a Lâmâ has distinctly aided the progress of this elementary education.

This brings us to the consideration of the religious organization of Ladâkh. In nearly every village is a monastery of greater or less importance; it sometimes holds but one or two Lâmâs or monks, sometimes it is the home of hundreds. The monasteries are the most conspicuous buildings in the country; they are always somewhat apart from the houses of the village; they are often situated in high places difficult of access—on a spur of the mountain or on an isolated rock, or they may lie in a nook, under the shelter of a lofty cliff. At the entrance of a monastery are fixed prayer-cylinders; sometimes a courtyard is fitted with them on all sides. These are cylinders with a vertical axis, turning on a pivot; they are furnished inside with a paper on which holy names are written; the making of these to revolve is reckoned an

act of devotion. In the case of the larger, heavy, cylinders, it is helped by rings being attached, which enable the devotee to give a good impetus to his prayer.* Past these one enters into the image-room; this is generally a fine lofty square chamber, the centre space of which is supported by columns of wood. Here are kept the images to be adored; images of some of their gods, or of Buddha, or of apotheosised Lâmâs. These are sometimes in metal, gilt, sometimes in clay gaudily painted. Often the artist has been successful in giving an expression to the face that well suits the character represented, as for instance the ineffable calm—a calm that, were it less unmoved, would almost express contempt for everything around—on the countenance of Buddha, or Sâkya Thubba as he is called, the founder of the religion, whose devotion was continual contemplation of, and whose ideal was absorption in, the divinity.

The room is furnished with numerous instruments of worship; with bells and lamps, and sceptres and other emblems, with bags of grain and with bowls of butter—these last sustaining a wick which constantly burns. It is hung with banners finely worked in curious devices, and often the walls are adorned with paintings. The Lâmâs periodically assemble in the image-room to worship with prayers and sacrifices, as of grain, and with music. The people occasionally pass in and bow, and mutter a prayer before some of the images. No women, I under-

* These prayer-cylinders are sometimes kept in continual motion by water-power. In a monastery in Nubrâ I saw a cylinder, four feet in diameter and six feet in height, which was made to revolve by a stream of water flowing beneath the floor of the room against floats attached to a continuation of its upright axle.

stood, not even nuns attached to the institution, enter the image-room; they stand and worship at the doorway. This is the more strange as the Lâmâs are not at all jealous of strangers entering any part of the building, which point of liberality surprises one after meeting with so much exclusiveness in this respect as one does from the different religionists of India.

In any large family one of the boys was sure to become a Lâmâ. First, from an early age, the boy is made a pupil at one of the monasteries; from there he goes to Lhâsa to finish his studies and to be ordained. Latterly boys have not taken so freely to the profession; it seems as if the life of mixed labour, study, meditation, and idleness has less charms for the young than it used to have; or, may be, employment in secular walks is more easy to get. When I was in Ladâkh the chief Lâmâs were fearing that the supply would fail.

In a monastery there are two head Lâmâs; one the leader in spiritual matters, the other the manager of its temporal affairs. I had a great deal to do with the *chagzot*, as this latter dignitary is called, of several of the larger monasteries. I found them to be men of genial and amiable disposition, of refined and dignified manners. Some of the *chagzot* had good business powers; to certain of them was entrusted the administration of a small district around their monasteries; the duties of this office most of them performed in such a way as both to satisfy the authorities above them and to keep the people in good heart. The dress of the Lâmâs is the woollen gown or *choga*, dyed either red or yellow according to the sect they belong to; the red sect much predominates in Ladâkh. They shave their heads, and most of them go

without a covering: those of higher rank wear hats of various designs; some have very wide-brimmed red hats made of stiffened felt. Lâmâs very commonly carry in their hands a small prayer-cylinder, constructed so as to turn on its handle by the force given to a bullet attached to it by a little chain; the turning of this is equivalent for them to saying one's prayers or telling one's beads.

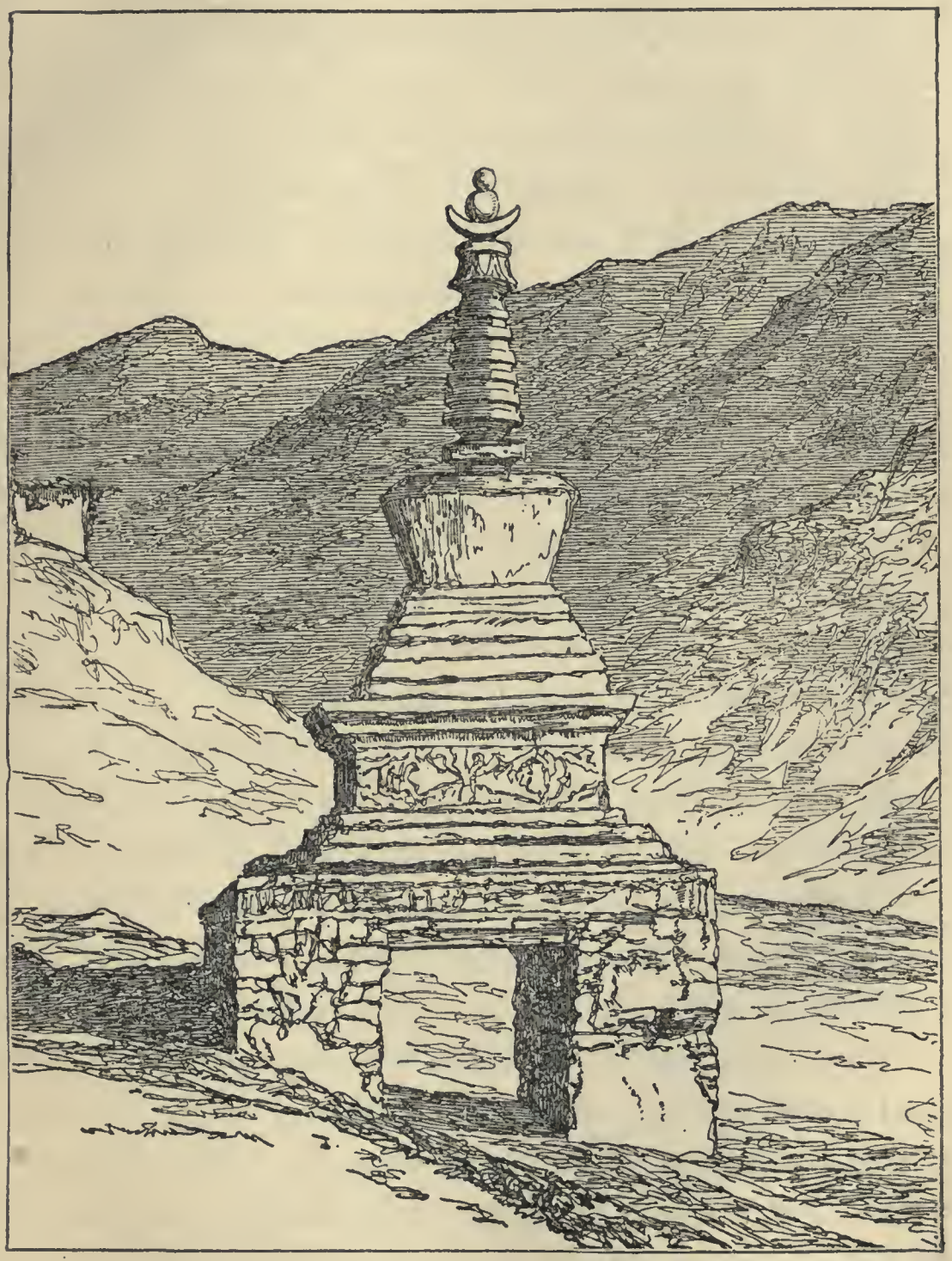
Some of the monasteries are endowed; some, I think, get help from Lhâsa; but the greater part depend on the alms given them by the villagers. At harvest time the Lâmâs receive from the peasantry a goodly, though unfixed, portion of their produce. The monks, in their turn, are always both free in their hospitality to travellers and ready to identify themselves in interests with the villagers.

Besides the monasteries, one is everywhere in Ladâkh meeting with signs of the people's thought for their religion. In a few places are to be seen colossal figures carved in the rock, that represent some god. The sketch, p. 270, is of one of these, over twenty-five feet high, which stands for Chamba; this is to be seen in a valley near Sânkho, above Kargil; it is deeply cut in a schistose rock. But much more general are the long and thick built-up stone-heaps or walls, covered with thousands of flat stones bearing a holy inscription. These (which are called Mânî) one sees at every village, and often also by the roadside where there is no habitation or other sign of man. The path divides and goes on both sides the wall, that the passenger may, going by, always keep it on his right. Then by the larger villages, or in the neighbourhood of the more influential monasteries, one is sure to find some edifices allied in character to the one shown



FIGURE OF CHAMBA, CUT IN THE ROCK; NEAR SÂNKHO.

in the drawing below. They are carefully constructed of brick, plastered over, and painted. This drawing



KÂGÂNÎ, LÂMÂYÛRÛ.

represents what is called a *kâgânî;* it is placed at the entrance to villages and to houses, the way being led beneath it. Others, resembling this in the upper part,

have a monumental purpose; these are called Churten. Another custom, whether connected or not with that of raising such edifices as these, or whether of earlier origin, I cannot say, is to build a cairn at the summit of every mountain pass, and crown it with the horns of the wild sheep, ibex, and other animals, a large collection of which often adorns the heap, while a few boughs rise from the centre, to which a flag is sometimes fastened, with, may be, a holy word or text imprinted on it.

There are certain traits of manners in a people that a traveller is very likely to miss altogether, that one only occasionally—when some unusual events bring them to view—has an opportunity of observing. Such an event was my own coming to Leh in 1871. I had visited the place before, when examining into the mineral resources of the country; but that year I came to take up the Governorship of Ladâkh, to which the Maharaja had appointed me. Thus I was able to observe the way in which these people receive those to whom they wish to do honour.

People of all classes turned out at every inhabited place we came near. The villagers collect at the entrance of the village, with the musicians in attendance playing on flageolet and tomtom. The women in their brightest petticoats and gayest ornaments are drawn up in line, each holding a vessel containing either barley-meal, or milk, or chang, or some other thing to eat or to drink. But these offerings are not intended to be taken as provision; they are not as the *dâlîs* in India, where a very substantial amount of eatables is often given; here they are tokens merely. Lastly, some of the women carry earthen vessels in which burn chips of

pencil-cedar, whose perfume is counted holy and pure. As one comes up, all place their vessels on the ground, and make profound and not undignified bows. At each village in succession that we passed through, for some six days' march, this was repeated. At one part of the journey, as we passed at a distance of a mile or two from a large monastery, a deputation of Lâmâs came down to the road to receive me. Besides these, a band of eight red-gowned monks stood on a rocky spur above and gave a loud welcome with their music. Two played on flageolets; two bore cymbals; other two had drums mounted on standards and held up on high, where long curved iron drum-sticks reached to beat them; and the last pair played on long horns, which, too heavy to be held in hand, rested their curved ends on the ground. With this power of sound the eight made wild music among the mountains; the horns droned in a way melancholy and touching, but this strain was relieved by the clashing of the cymbals and the bold sound of the drums, while, through all, the flageolets brought out a more definite melody.

At Leh itself all the population came out either to meet us or to see the crowd that met us. The hundreds of Ladâkhîs—for numbers that are reckoned by hundreds make an unusual concourse in these thinly-peopled parts—the men of the numerous other races that collect at Leh, the eagerness of all to see me, and their respectful salutations of welcome, made, with the scene of the strange-looking town, with its edging of green gardens and corn-fields, surrounded close by rocky hills, with lofty mountains in the farther view around, in the brightness and freshness of a summer morn a scene which I recall

with pleasure—with pleasure more unmixed than that which a like assemblage gave me on the later day when with regret I said farewell to Leh, to the Ladâkhîs I had for a time ruled over, and to the men I had worked with—a lowering winter's day that not in vain threatened snow—as they accompanied me for some miles down the road on my first march towards home.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DISTRICTS OF LADÂKH.

In this chapter will be described three valleys away from the main Indus Valley, but drained by rivers that are tributary to the Indus—the valleys of Drâs, Zânskâr, and Nubrâ. These, in addition to the valley of the Indus, are the only parts of the country that contain any cultivated spots and support a settled population by their cereal produce; the description of the farther, higher, tracts, where flocks and herds are tended by a nomad population, will be reserved for the later chapters.

But it would be well, as an introduction to the more detailed account of both kinds of country, to give a short sketch of the run of the mountain ranges and valleys of Ladâkh. And to fill this up, the reader who should wish for more detailed information may obtain it by a close examination of the numbers marking peak and valley heights on the map.

Commencing with the north-east part of the map, we see, first, the high table-land of the Kuenlun Plains and Lingzhîthang—these two separated by a range of hills—the whole being surrounded by mountains. The plains are 16,000 and 17,000 feet high; the mountain chains around them reach to 20,000 and 21,000 feet. Those which make the northern boundary are the Eastern Kuenlun Mountains.

West of the high plateaus is a space occupied by a great range of mountains, which is called both "Mustâgh" and "Kârâkoram." This is what intervenes between the line of the Shâyok Valley and the upper part of the valley of the Yârkand River. It consists of great mountain ridges, and of valleys which are never more than two miles in width. In the eastern part the summits are of the same level as those last spoken of—20,000 and 21,000 feet; farther west they rise still higher; in the ridge that separates the Upper Shâyok (as it comes down from the north) from the Nubrâ River, are great peaks 25,000 feet high, rising out of a ridge of 20,000 or 21,000 feet; and among the mountains that lie to the north-west of this are several summits of 25,000 and some even of 26,000 feet. In this range originate many and great glaciers.

As to the valley levels, the Snow Map will show the position of the 15,000 feet level in the Châng chenmo Valley, and of that of 14,000 feet by Pângkong. From these heights the descent along the Shâyok is not recorded till we come to Nubrâ, where 10,000 feet is the altitude of the valley bottom; thence there is a gradual fall to 9000 and 8000 feet, a little below which the Shâyok River meets the Indus.

Next is the space between the Shâyok and Indus valleys. The Indus Valley itself will be seen by the figures on the Snow Map to have a fall closely corresponding to that of the other. Between the two is that great ridge of mountains which I have spoken of as the Leh Range.

Then comes the wide tract between the Indus Valley

and the main watershed range. Here is a mass of mountains whose ramifications are most complicated. As to height, we find the conspicuous summits varying from 20,000 down to 18,000 feet. In the south-eastern part are flat valleys at 15,000 feet; to the north-west there are a few wide openings at 10,000 or 11,000 feet, but on the whole the valleys are narrow; they fall, with various degrees of slope, to the level of the Indus.

Last is the watershed range itself. This makes another region of glaciers. Its summits for a long distance seem to average 20,000 and 21,000 feet, and the Passes through it are at very high levels. As we trace it north-westward, we come to the Nunkun peaks, which are between 23,000 and 24,000 feet; after that the heights gradually lessen, and in this part occurs the Drâs Pass, the lowest opening through the Snowy Range into Tibet.

Now let us enter on the more particular description of successive districts. Commencing with the *Drâs* Valley, we find that the head of it is that Pass which we came to the foot of in exploring one of the valleys of Kashmir. The elevation of this passage through the mountains is 11,300 feet. An important characteristic of it is that there is a great rise to this level from the Kashmir side, and but a very slight fall on the Ladâkh side. The Pass itself—the high-level valley which is reached after the steep ascent from Kashmir—is a level, grassy valley, not much more than a quarter of a mile in width. The mountains bounding it are rugged and rocky; the ridges, of which these are the ends, continuing back, reach to 5000 and 6000 feet above the road, or 16,000 and 17,000 feet above the sea. These mountains belong to the very

central, snowy, range. By this Pass one rises at once into the high-level country, where the valley bottoms are at levels from 10,000 feet upwards.

At Drâs itself, the valley is an opening among the hills, a space nearly flat, with a width of a mile and a half or two miles, and a length of near three; it is not one flat, but consists of alluvial plateaus of different levels. This space is bounded on the north by low, irregular-shaped, spurs of hills, whose higher parts are some miles back, but can often be seen jutting up in rocky peaks or as a jagged ridge. The surface of these hills is thoroughly bare of vegetation; they show a barren brown expanse of stone and rock—furrowed rock, loosened stone, and talus of fallen masses; on the south, tower great precipices of limestone rock. The Drâs River enters the valley by a gorge, flows through it twenty-five feet below the level of the lowest alluvial terrace, and leaves by a similar narrow rock-passage.

To the traveller from Kashmir the contrast is great between the look of the green-clothed, forest-clad hill-sides of that country, and the arid, bare, and stony mountains of Tibet. The feel of the air too is very different; here in Ladâkh is a clear light-blue sky and bright sun, with a brisk keen air; it is more a climate of extremes, in that the sun's rays are powerful, being less weakened in traversing the smaller thickness of atmosphere, so powerful as to heat quickly the rocky ground exposed to them, while, from its rarity, the air both receives less heat from the sun's rays, and in the evening allows of a quick radiation from the day-heated

ground, so that cold nights suddenly succeed to days that have been felt to be hot by those exposed to the sun. As compared with this Ladâkh country the air even of the higher parts of Kashmir is soft and mild.

This Drâs Valley, however, though generally bearing out what has been said as to climate, has not the Tibetan characteristics in the highest degree; the gap of the Pass allows some moisture-bearing air and even cloud-carrying wind to come through; here occur a greater number of slight showers during the summer than in the other valleys of Ladâkh; but this difference is slight as compared with the great difference between the two sides of the Pass, and is most chiefly shown in winter, when the snow lies thicker in Drâs than it does farther to the east. The crossing of the Pass, from the last shelter on the Kashmir side to Drâs, a distance of thirty miles, is generally done in two long days. Horses can traverse it in summer time without difficulty; nor does the first fall of snow (which may happen in the end of October or in November) commonly shut the road for them; but later on, usually by some time in December, the snow has become so thick that for horses to attempt the passage is rash, and only men so hardy and persevering as some of the tribes who live about Drâs, especially those of Dârd race, or else those who get their aid, as I have done —aid that well deserves acknowledgment and thankfulness—can hope to get over in safety. Thus—although in the winter the Drâs people, by watching their opportunity and waiting for some days when necessary, will keep up communication between Kashmir and Ladâkh,

and even carry merchandise over on their backs—the road is not thoroughly open again, ponies cannot attempt it, till the end of May.

From Drâs to near Kargil the main road from Kashmir still follows the valley of the same river. It continues over stony ground, along the foot of great rocky mountains.

Few villages are passed, and even those one goes near are not always visible from the path, for some are situated hundreds of feet above, on plateaus which are the remains of denuded alluvial fans.

Below Tashgâm we come into a granite country; the mountains rise on both sides to a great height; not often are their summits seen from the valley, but from any vantage ground above we look on to serrated ridges of 17,000 and 18,000 feet, the whole vertical height from that level down to the river, which is at little more than 9000, being of bare, irregular, broken cliffs and their débris. The sketch on the next page shows a view up a side valley that penetrates into the mountain mass to one of the lofty ridges; its whole sides are naked, but a narrow strip of watered and cultivated ground lies in the bottom.

The mountains, though at the first glance they show no trace of herbage, yet do bear a little; this is sought out by the small herds of goats that are driven to the more favourable places. Along part of this road two or three kinds of bush occurred pretty plentifully; one is the pencil-cedar (*Juniperus excelsa*), which sometimes grows low and sometimes taller and tree-like; another is a bush called by the people "umbû" (a *Myricaria*); then there



were currant bushes and numbers of red-rose trees, each tree being magnificently furnished with flowers; this was in the middle of June; all these were on the lower slopes among dry stones, flourishing where no grass would grow.

The Drâs stream goes on north-north-westward to join the Indus; another day's march through similar country would have brought us to that river, and this is a road sometimes travelled on the way to Baltistân. But in our route to Leh, leaving the stream, we turn round a corner to the right, and take to and follow up the valley of the Surû River (one of about equal volume with that from Drâs), passing here round a rock in which the road has very imperfectly been cut, so that in places the roadway has had to be constructed of poles lodged in projections of the cliff; these are loosely covered with slabs. A few miles after this, we come to the collection of villages which bear the name of Kargil.

At Kargil is another of the wider openings between the hills; up to this spot the granitic hills had continued—bare, rocky, and lofty; but now on the east there appear lower hills of a softer material, alternating beds of clay and sandstone; and between the Pâskim stream and the Surû River is an alluvial expanse of some square miles, a succession of terraces of alluvial gravel. These plains are uncultivated; hitherto the work necessary for bringing the water of the Pâskim stream on to the lower wide terrace, though once or twice commenced, has not been successfully accomplished; but narrow strips not very high above the two streams are watered by small canals led from them.

The villages here are about 8900 feet above the sea;

partly from this altitude being lower than that of Drâs, and partly from the place being less in the way of the comparatively moist air that steals into this country through the Drâs Pass, there is both less snow in winter and a greater force of sun and warmth in summer to help on vegetation. Here wheat flourishes as well as barley; but the great difference to be observed was the growth of many fruit-trees (chiefly mulberry and apricot), as well as willows and poplars, along the watercourses that are led over the terraced fields.

Thus we have come into country like that of the Indus Valley as regards crops and cultivation, and the aspect of the villages. The inhabitants, who, as the map shows, are much mixed in the Drâs Valley, are here completely Baltî.

The main road to Leh keeps an in-and-out course, over two easy Passes, and up and down the valleys of small streams, enclosed alternately by gentle slopes and rugged mountain sides. It leads us soon into the land of the Bhot. Shargol is the first place where a monastery of Lâmâs is met with; before long Lâmâyûrû is reached, where stands a large one of note. In the next march the road joins (at Khalsî) with the one by which we came up from Skârdû, there entering the valley of the Indus.

Zânskâr is a district of Ladâkh which lies south-west of Leh, towards the Watershed Range; its extent nearly coincides with that of the basin of the large river, tributary to the Indus, which is called after the name of the country. Politically, it has always been in close connection with Leh; it used to be governed by a Tibetan Raja, who was dependent on the Gyalpo or ruler of that capital; and in

race, speech, and character, the people of Zânskâr do not much differ from those of Ladâkh.

Yet to approach Zânskâr, from whatever side, is a matter of considerable difficulty, for it is placed, as it were, in a maze of mountains. To the south-west of it the wide Snowy Range makes a barrier, to cross which must be a laborious and may be a dangerous business. From the north-west and the south-east, indeed, roads lead in from Surû and from Rupshu respectively, to traverse which is less difficult, but these lead over long uninhabited tracts. That way to which first one would look for communication with Leh—by the valley of the Zânskâr River—is quite impassable, except when the winter's frost makes a road over the waters of the river. Instead of this, in summer time, the traveller from Leh has to make a long detour by Lâmâyûrû; he has to traverse fifteen stages, in which several Passes have to be surmounted, before Zânskâr is reached.

By far the greater part of the area of Zânskâr is occupied by the ridges and the ravines of mountains, either of the Snowy Watershed Range, or of the more complicated mass lying between that and the Indus Valley. The inhabited region is nearly all included in the valleys of two streams and of the river they make by their union. These two streams come, one from the north-west, the other from south-east; uniting, they together flow away to the north-east. At their junction is a wide open space, which is the central part of Zânskâr; it includes in itself the most important places. This space is a triangle, with a base of seven miles, and a perpendicular of five; on the three sides it is bounded by bare mountains. But a very

small proportion of this plain is cultivated; the most of it is an expanse of stony ground; the rivers flow through it somewhat below the general level; where water from side valleys has been brought on to the alluvial terraces and fans, there only is land under cultivation.

On the north and east are bare brown mountains 6000 and 7000 feet above the valleys; their surface is in part of irregular cliffs, in part of slopes of loose stones, either simply weathered off and remaining in the same place, or else fallen and formed into taluses. Some of these mountains are wonderfully clear examples of sub-aerial or inland denudation; their naked sides are scarred and cut in lines which mark either temporary watercourses or the path of falling snow and rock, while below lie the heaps and the outspread fans, which are the next stages of the débris in its seaward course. Great and striking objects as are these mountains, the range on the south-west shows over them a great preponderance of height; it has a deeply-cut serrated ridge, a line of sharp peaks rising well above the limit of perpetual snow.

In the open triangular space are many remains of former extended glaciers. The position of Padam, the chief place, now but a village—but perhaps in former days when a Raja ruled there deserving of a higher name—is very curious. It is built on a mound of moraine matter. The mound is about eighty feet high; it is of loose, heaped-up blocks of gneiss, blocks which look as if they had stayed just as they fell from the glacier—the interstices vacant, the whole mass seeming as if it might give way. On the very summit of this heap was the palace of the Rajas, of which some walls are still standing; houses are built on

the masses of stone all over the face of the mound. The place is dilapidated; ruin and decay are shown both in the substance of the hill—the waste of mountains—and in the human habitations that were built on it.

The climate of Zânskâr is severe. The spring, summer, and autumn together last little more than five months, after which snow falls, and at once winter closes in, confining the people and the cattle within doors for the space of half the year. A much greater depth of snow falls here than by Leh. In the spring it causes avalanches from the mountains to such an extent that in the Nunak Valley the people cannot, till a month has passed, get about from village to village for fear of them. To clear the snow from the fields in time for the sowing requires special contrivance. During summer and autumn the people collect earth and store it in their houses in considerable quantities. In the spring, when they deem the time of snow-fall to be over, and the snow in the fields is partly melted and has begun to cake with the sun's rays, they spread the earth, which absorbs warmth from the sun, and melts the snow in contact with it. Sometimes snow falls afresh, and the labour is lost and has to be repeated. In 1869 there were three or four layers of earth and snow thus accumulated before the work was done.

The villages of Zânskâr are not so comfortable nor so picturesque in look as those we have seen in other parts of Ladâkh. Trees are extremely rare; the continuance of snow and the force of the wind are much against their growth; there are a few plantations of poplars grown for the sake of timber, and lately the authorities have

increased their number, but the trees produce nothing more than slender poles.

The people have, as has before been implied, the characteristics which were described under the head "Ladâkhîs." They have, indeed, the best of these in a higher degree than the rest of the Ladâkhîs. The Zânskârîs are the old-fashioned ones among them, retaining their simplicity of manners and their honesty without stain. The language has a slight dialectic difference from that of Leh; even in the various parts of Zânskâr recognisable differences exist; but none of these seemed—as far as I could gather—to be of great importance.

The number of inhabitants is very small. I have a list of forty-three villages, which may contain ten or twelve houses each; the total may be five hundred houses and 2500 souls. There is a trade, small in amount, but still important to the Zânskârîs, which is carried on by three or four routes. First, the people of Rupshu bring salt, and take barley in exchange. Secondly, some of the salt brought by the last-mentioned route goes to Pâdar and Pângî (by very difficult Passes over the Snowy Range), and is there exchanged for rice, butter, and honey, and for skins. Thirdly, other of the salt acquired from Rupshu goes to Surû, whence comes in exchange pattû (woollen cloth), barley, and a little cash. The chief profit seems to lie in the trade for salt; by acting both as carriers and merchants of this they increase its value enough to provide themselves with the luxuries that must come from outside. A fourth line of traffic is with Lâhol, whence traders come with cash alone, and buy ponies, donkeys, sheep, and goats. It is only by this branch of trade that

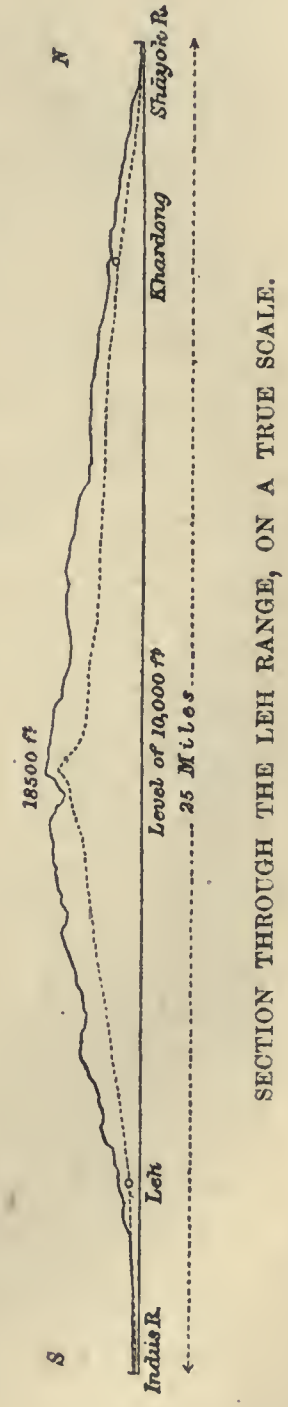
cash enough is introduced into the country to pay the Government tax, which is 200*l.* for the whole district. Nearly all the rest is done by barter: for instance, 7 lbs. or 8 lbs. of salt exchange in Zânskâr for 1 lb. of butter; in Pângî 3 lbs. or 4 lbs. only of salt would be given. Again, in Zânskâr the proportion in value of salt to that of barley is such that 2 lbs. of salt exchange for 3 lbs. of barley.

Let our next visit be to the district of *Nubrâ*, on the opposite side of Leh. This is separated from the valley of the Indus by the great ridge of mountains, the Leh Range, which divides the Indus and Shâyok valleys. Of the summit of this, 19,000 and 20,000 feet is commonly the height, and the line is but little broken through; only down to 17,000 feet do gaps here and there exist which allow of communication.

In going from Leh to Nubrâ (which lies along the banks of the Shâyok River and of a tributary to it) we must of necessity cross the Leh Range by one of two or three Passes. From Leh a direct road leads up along the stream whose waters irrigate the lands about that town. The Pass to make for is the Khardong Pass, which is 17,500 feet high; there is, therefore, an ascent to be made of 6000 feet. Not easily can this be done in one day; a half-way halt is almost always made, either at the last hamlet or farther up in the uninhabited part of the valley. The path is in places difficult for laden ponies; they are generally relieved of their loads and are replaced for the Pass by yâks. The way leads for some miles up the bottom of the valley, rising at an angle of 5°; then it continues in a branch valley of steeper gradient, till it

reaches the watershed, which at this spot is a narrow rocky ridge.

A better idea of the form of the mountain range we are now going over than can be given in words, will be got from the annexed section of it, made through a spot a little to the west of the road. The broken line represents where the path itself goes.



SECTION THROUGH THE LEH RANGE, ON A TRUE SCALE.

On the north of the path, the road crosses a bed of ice which lies on the slope, and leads down a steep descent of some 1600 feet, to a small lake enclosed by a stony barrier which looked as if it might have been formed by avalanches. Thence an easy but long descent leads us for many miles down a valley between spurs from the main ridge. Several more little lakes are passed at different levels, which all seem to have been caused by either fans or avalanches damming the waters; there are, too, old moraine mounds spread over a large space of ground.

As we still descend we come to some grazing grounds in the valley bottom; then to some outlying hamlets, and then to a large village which is named Khardong. This place is on the remaining part of an alluvial plateau that has been much denuded. It is bounded in one direction by cliffs several hundred feet high, composed of alluvial matter. The onward path leads down to the stream at

the foot of these cliffs, and continues along the bottom, where—rare sight for Ladâkh—is a strip of brushwood jungle. From this narrow passage we debouch into the larger valley of the Shâyok River. Crossing that river by a ford (if the season be favourable) we then keep along its right bank for the length of a day's march, till we reach the centre of the district of Nubrâ.

This district consists of the valley of the Nubrâ River—which flows from the north-north-west—and of a portion of the valley of the Shâyok River, with which it unites. There are the wide alluvial flats of the two streams, and the lofty mountains bounding them, with ravines, seldom habitable, that lead down from the heart of those mountains.

At the junction of the rivers the valley of the Shâyok is some four miles wide; that of the Nubrâ River is from two to three. The flat is in part sandy and shingly, in part occupied by jungle-patches of a low growth of tamarisk and myricaria, or umbû. The line at the edge of the plain is sharply drawn; the mountains rise from it suddenly in rocky masses, and they rise to a great height. Sometimes one sees only the ends of spurs, but even these may tower above one with 7000 or 8000 feet of bare rock; sometimes the eye reaches to lofty yet massive peaks, naked or snow-covered, of much greater height, with great spurs and buttresses coming forward from beneath them. The stupendous size and the suddenness of the mountains give a character of grandeur to the scenery of this district.

On looking at the two valleys which make the habitable

part of it, I find a cheerfulness in the general aspect of Nubrâ beyond that of the rest of Ladâkh. This perhaps may be put down to the fact of the valley being so open that the eye reaches from village to village, and is able at the same time to overlook several green expanses of low jungle and of pasture. But it must not be thought that the cultivation bears any large proportion to the whole area. The villages occur each at the mouth of a ravine, on the undenuded fan that projects from it; still it is only a small part of the surface of the fan that is tilled; much of the ground is impracticable for the plough on account of the masses of rock that have been strewn over the surface by the stream-floods. The space occupied by the village is green and pretty. Groups of fruit-trees and many poplars and willows flourish, and there are generally some one or two buildings of a better character than the ordinary peasant's cottage, as a monastery and a village headman's house, which brighten up the place.

For equal altitudes, the climate of Nubrâ is nearly the same as that near Leh, except that probably the winter snowfall is, as regards the valley, somewhat less. Between each fall of snow so much of it disappears by evaporation and by the wind drifting it, that, throughout the winter, the cattle, sheep, and goats are able to graze in the low pasture grounds; only at night are they taken in under cover. Some of the villages have mountain pastures, to which the flocks are driven in summer time; but the climate is so dry that these afford but very scanty pasturage.

Charâsa, on the right bank of the Nubrâ River, is

about the most conspicuous village in the district.* At one time it was also the most important, for here lived the hereditary rulers of Nubrâ, who ruled under the Gyalpo or Raja of Ladâkh. The houses of Charâsa are built on an isolated steep-faced rock, which stands up away from the mountain side; it is some 200 yards long and 150 feet high. All the upper part of it is covered with white buildings; the loftiest of them is the monastery; they were formerly defended by a wall, of which parts still remain, running along the rock at varying levels, and flanked by towers. With the exception of the Lâmâs, the people of the village live on the rock in winter only; for summer they have other dwellings, scattered about their fields, but in winter they come for warmth to their old fortress. Here the buildings are crowded so close together, the space occupied is so completely roofed over, pathways and all, that, when filled with human beings and with cattle, it must indeed be warm.

A great part of the rock on which Charâsa is built is rounded, smoothed, and even polished. It is a *roche moutonnée*. On the smoothed surface there are in several places very distinct grooves or scratches, which most clearly denote the movement over it of a glacier. The grooves are to be seen close down to the level of the alluvium, and up for more than one hundred feet above it. The very summit cannot be examined on account of the buildings; but I have no doubt that the ice of the glacier completely covered it and extended to an enormous thickness above, and at the same time occupied the whole width

* The position of this place is near where the B of NUBRA comes in the map.

of the valley, a width, which both here and for some distance up, is about two and a half miles.

This is by no means the only instance of ice-marks in the valley. Many other projecting rocks and some of the hill-sides show a polished and striated surface; and I have found evidence (in the presence of travelled blocks on the summit of the ridge behind Charâsa) that a glacier once filled the valley to a depth of 4000 or 4500 feet. It will be understood that with this enormous thickness the glacier could not have ended off at Charâsa; it must have reached to the Shâyok Valley, and there probably joined with other ice-masses, and it may have extended far away down.

From every point on the ascent of this ridge, but especially from the summit, I obtained commanding views of the plain beneath and of the mountains opposite; these views gave so much more complete an idea of the form of the ground that could be got from below, that it is worth while to dwell a little on what is seen from that height.

We look down on the river flowing in an extraordinary number of channels, meeting and separating again, so as to divide the bed into hundreds of curve-bounded pointed islands, in form like the lights in a flamboyant window; a spread of brushwood jungle shows where the wandering stream has for some years not reached. Beyond this alluvial flat of the Nubrâ River are the fans at the mouth of each ravine; the completeness of the fan-shape of their outline is beautifully shown in this almost bird's-eye view. Looking to the opposite mountains, we see the peaks of the central ridge between the Nubrâ and Upper Shâyok Valleys, mountains which are not visible from



HIGH PEAKS EAST OF NUBRÂ. THE MIDDLE RIDGE IS 20,000 FEET, THE PEAKS ARE 24,000 AND 25,000 FEET.

below. There is a sharp serrated ridge of a height of about 20,000 feet. From out of this rise peaks which the trigonometrical surveyors have found to be from 24,600 to 25,180 feet high. They are grand masses of rock standing up bold and clear. Each mountain is an irregular mass 5000 feet higher than the lofty continuous ridge. Snow clothes their summits, and lies in thick beds on some of their slopes; while other parts are rocky precipices, too steep for it to remain on. The sketch gives the outline of the peak-masses with some exactness. It does not reach to the foot of the mountains in the valley, as the eye does from some points of view; when it does so, there is in sight, in a distance of eighteen miles, a vertical height of 15,000 feet.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE HIGH VALLEYS OF LADÂKH.

We now will go to that lofty part of Ladâkh where the lowest ground touched is as much as 13,500 feet above the sea, and where there are long flat valleys at 15,000 feet; while the mountains that include these have a height of 20,000 and 21,000 feet.

The first that shall be described of these high tracts is that called Rupshu or Rukshu. It is a district at the south-east end of Ladâkh, lying between the Watershed Range and the Indus. From the side of Leh it is approached by leaving the Indus at Upshî (two marches up) and following the narrow ravine which there joins in from the south. After thirteen or fourteen miles we come to Gyâ, the last village in this direction, a place elevated 13,500 feet above the sea. It is a village of some forty houses, with a proportionately wide area of cultivation; it is one of the most, but not quite the most, elevated of all the villages in the country. At this place we leave houses behind, for at the next inhabited parts we shall come to, tents are the only dwellings.

But to reach those parts we have to cross the Toglung Pass, of 17,500 feet elevation, which we approach by continuing up the same valley for some fourteen miles more. From its summit we obtain a view which gives us some insight into Rupshu. There is a pretty steep slope

beneath us of near 1500 feet, and then a flat valley extending long to the south-east and widening, thus showing us far off, eighteen miles distant, the blue waters of one of the lakes which we shall visit—the Salt Lake. The flat bottom of the valley is bounded by smooth naked hills. It is such valleys as this, varying from a mile to (rarely) six miles in width, and enclosed by mountains rising sometimes 2000 feet, and sometimes as much as 5000 feet, above them, that make what are called the uplands, or sometimes the table-lands, of Rupshu.

With an elevation of 14,000 and 15,000 feet for the valleys, the climate of Rupshu is necessarily extremely severe in point of temperature; it is, at the same time, of an extreme dryness. The character of its summer climate is warmth of sun and constant coolness of the air. At midday the sun's rays are exceedingly powerful; on its decline one experiences cold, which is intensified by the biting wind that commonly springs up in the afternoon. At night, even in the height of summer, except when the sky may be overcast, water freezes; in the beginning of August I have seen ice caking the pools. The snow limit is about 20,000 feet; this great height of it is due to the dryness of the air, to the small amount of snowfall of each year, an amount so small that below that level it all becomes melted during summer. Mountains that rise above 20,000 feet originate glaciers; there are small ones in the hollows of several such peaks, but there is no great snowy area. The surface of the hills is chiefly disintegrated rock, and the surface of the valleys is earth or gravel. Vegetation is extremely scant; here and there is some grass by a spring, or along the moistened bank of a

stream, and on some hill-sides is a thin herbage. It is this herbage that is the support of the flocks and herds which sustain the small population of Rupshu.

In the whole area of the district, which is about 4000 square miles in extent, there are but 500 souls.* These, as will have been understood, are Châmpâs; they are dwellers in tents, or, as the Persian phrase has it, "wearers of tents."† This small tribe, the Rupshu Châmpâs, have about 100 tents, one to a family; they are divided into two camps, which separate in summer, and frequent distinct pastures, but reunite in winter. They make about four moves during the year, with, I think, much regularity, though the time of these must vary if the season be unusually late or early; thus their stay at each encamping ground is nearly three months on the average.

The tents are of a black hair-cloth, made from either yâks' or goats' hair. They are of a peculiar form; they are constructed in two pieces, which are not closely united, but put together so as to leave an opening of six inches all along the top; this allows the exit of smoke, while the fall of rain or snow is so small as to cause little inconvenience, or the space may be temporarily covered with a piece of carpeting. The space within the tents is enlarged by the hair-cloth being pulled out here and there by extra ropes, which are led over a forked stick and then pegged down. The tent is ornamented with little flags and with

* These people practise polyandry as the Ladâkhîs do; to this we must directly attribute their small numbers. The necessity felt for polyandry arose from the number of sheep, goats, &c., being limited by the winter feed.

† *Khîma-posh.*

yâks' tails fastened to the poles. I have no measurement, but from memory should say that the tents are about 14 feet long, 10 feet wide, and nearly 6 feet high; in one of these lives a whole family.

The sheep and goats are very numerous. At evening time one sees the flocks and the herds coming down the hill-side and collecting at the encampment by hundreds, and even thousands. The sheep is of a large kind; it is here made use of for carrying loads; the salt from the lake is carried out of, and grain is brought into, the country on the backs of sheep; a small pack or double bag is made to hang over the back, filled to an average weight of 24 lbs.; the stronger animals will be loaded up to 32 lbs. The larger of the two kinds of goat kept here is made use of in just the same way. The more usual kind is the shawl-wool goat, a small long-haired species; the kids of this sort are beautiful little animals. The wool that goes to make the soft fabrics of Kashmir is an under-growth at the root of the long hair of these smaller goats. It comes in winter time, not only to the goats but to the yâks, dogs, and other animals, domestic and wild both, as a protection against the severe cold. At the beginning of summer the wool grows out or loosens; it is then combed out from the goats and sent to Leh, where it is picked free from hairs and either worked up or sent on to Kashmir. It must not be supposed that the greater part of the shawl-wool used in Kashmir comes from Rupshu; the greater quantity and that of better quality comes either from the Chinese districts beyond the boundary of Ladâkh, or from the country of the Amîr of Kâshgar.

The horned cattle are all of the yâk species. In Rupshu, as far as I know, there is neither the cow nor any of the hybrids of yâk and cow. The yâk is a half-wild, not easily tractable, beast; his numbers are not very large in Rupshu; there may be 400 or 500 head. The yâk's duty is that of a load carrier. The Rupshu people do not carry loads on their backs like the Ladâkhîs, they depend entirely on their cattle, on their sheep and goats for merchandise that is easily divisible, on their yâks for that of larger bulk.

In this way the Rupshu people are great carriers. Between Central Ladâkh on the one hand and Gâr in Chinese Tibet or Lâhol in the British country on the other, they are kept well employed in helping forward merchants' goods. For this service they get good payment; sometimes it is in cash, sometimes in grain; with one or two slight exceptions, all the farinaceous food they consume is imported, Kulû and Lâhol supplying the greater part of it.

The intermediate position of Rupshu is such that many travelling merchants come through the country. The tea-merchants of Lhâsa—a shrewd and eager set of men—yearly come this way with their venture of brick tea for Leh; their merchandise is carried free by the Rupshu people, according to an old arrangement between the authorities of Lhâsa and Leh, but for their riding and light baggage they have with them a number of fine mules of rare pace. From Kunâwar in the Sutlej Valley come the Kunûs, a people of mixed Tibetan and Indian breed; from Lâhol and Kulû come others of pure and of mixed Tibetan blood; these have in many cases their own

sheep to carry their merchandise. Of late years there has been a greater through traffic from the Panjâb to Leh, and even Yârkand, by the road that goes through Rupshu. Panjâbî, Pathân, and Yârkandî merchants have all passed this way, which, indeed, as far as the road is concerned, is now the best by far between Eastern Turkistân and the Panjâb. The objection to the route is that the Pass over the Snowy Range may close before the circumstances of the trade allow the merchant to get away from Leh for the downward journey.

Although, then, Rupshu possesses so inhospitable a climate, though it is at one and the same time both parched and bleak, though its hills are barren and its valleys desolate, yet a busy life exists at times in certain portions of it. After travelling for some days without seeing a trace of man, one may come on an encampment of traders with some hundreds of sheep to carry their merchandise, their loads carefully piled up and protected by white tent-cloths; or one may meet on the road the merchants on their ponies, jingling with bells, accompanying their heavy-laden and somewhat unmanageable flock.

For people who are natives of temperate climes, the air of Rupshu in summer, though somewhat trying, is not too severe when the constitution is strong and the system in good order. The extreme cold of winter also could probably be endured if one had the appliances one is used to where it is much less intense. But the Châmpâs weather it in their tents. The hardiness of these people, the way in which they enjoy rathe rthan endure their climate, is an instance somewhat remarkable of the power of

adaptation that the human race possesses. These men consider Leh as a place that should only be approached in winter, and Kashmir as a country hot and unhealthy, much in the same way as we, on better grounds, look on the Gold Coast.

There is one characteristic of Rupshu that is always making itself felt by those who are used to dwell at lower altitudes. This is the rarity of the air.

In the valleys water boils at about the temperature of 187°, which corresponds to a barometer-height of 17·8 inches; hence the amount of air—and of oxygen—taken into the lungs with an ordinary inhalation is only $\frac{7}{12}$ths of what would enter them were one at the level of the sea. How this is compensated in the case of the Châmpâs I do not know for certain; I think, for one thing, that there is less waste of tissue in their bodies, as compared with those living in lower and warmer regions; they do not use such an amount of muscular exertion as the people of some of the neighbouring countries; walking it is true they are good at, but they are not always practising it, and loads they will not carry. The tending of flocks and herds is not an occupation that brings the muscles into powerful use. Still this will not account for all; there must be some compensating habit which enables them to take in a large volume of the thin air; probably they have an unconscious way of inhaling deeply.

With us the system tries in the simplest and most direct way to make up its wonted supply of oxygen; the breathing becomes both quicker and more powerful, that is to say there is an effort to increase both the number of inhalations and the volume of each. At first, doubtless,

there is an increase insufficient to produce a consciousness of change; but when once the effect is felt, it is intensified with every rise in altitude. At the greater heights, besides the feeling of oppression and shortness of breath, there comes on a headache and feeling of sickness such as one often has at the beginning of fever or sea-sickness, but this is not accompanied by either increased heat or cold of the body. With some, at the higher levels, vomiting comes on, but serious results do not seem to follow, and relief is felt almost at once on descending to a lower level.*

The height at which these effects are observed varies much, and it is not always easy to trace the cause of the irregularities. A great deal depends on habit of body; a man in good condition will hold out to a greater height than one who is unused to exercise. One first notices it when using some more than ordinary exertion, as when running or when walking up hill; in this way, for people who live below 6000 feet, the effects generally come on between 11,000 and 12,000 feet. At 14,000 and 15,000 feet one is liable, at times, to have an attack, as it were, of shortness of breath even when in repose. When I first visited Rupshu (15,000 feet), this came upon me when lying down at night and lasted for half an hour or so; but after a week I got over that liability, and never afterwards, when at rest, felt a want of breath, even when the camp was 2000 or 3000 feet higher still.

* This is only true if the organs are thoroughly sound; the rarity is very likely to find out any defect in either the lungs or the heart. Dr. Bellew speaks highly of the good effect of potassium chlorate (a compound that contains oxygen easily parted with) as a medicine for the sickness.

Again, I have known a native of the Panjâb—one it is true little used to physical exertion—have a like attack at 11,000 feet.

But though one may get so far used to the rarity of the air as not to feel it thus, yet any but the most ordinary exertion will surely remind one of it. At 15,000 feet the least slope upward in the path will make one as much out of breath as if one were, at a lower altitude, pressing up a steep mountain side. Talking, when walking, even on a level, soon brings its own conclusion from want of breath. And when one comes to the greater heights—for here every thousand feet distinctly tells—ascending a slope becomes a painful labour. I have crossed a Pass at 19,500 feet (one that lower down would have been an easy walk) where, on the ascent, at every fifty or sixty steps, one was absolutely obliged to halt and pant to recover breath; then, however, I felt neither headache nor other bad effect; the usage of a month or two at high levels had done something to harden one to the circumstances.

The natives whose lot occasionally leads them into the highlands, very commonly attribute these results of rarefied air to some plant, which, for the purposes of their argument, they invest with the power of poisoning the air. Some of the herbs at high elevations give out a smell when rubbed, and these are brought in to account for the sickness. The much-abused onion, which grows wild in some parts at a good height up, often has these things laid to it. Of course an easy answer to this hypothesis is that the effect is greatest at those heights whence all these plants, and even all vegetation, are absent.

The Salt Lake Valley is the widest opening in the

whole of Rupshu; the length, in a direction north-north-west and south-south-east, is thirteen miles, and along a considerable part of that length the valley is five miles wide; the level of it is 14,900 feet. It is a flat surrounded by hills, occupied partly by land and partly by water. The hills are for the most part low in comparison with the mountains we have met with, all are bare of visible vegetation; as a rule they are not rugged, but have smooth surfaces of loosened stones. The surface of the plain is varied; in parts there is sand and gravel; in other parts an expanse of white clay; this again is sometimes caked with a thin covering, still whiter, of salts, various in composition; lastly, a not inconsiderable portion is occupied by two lakes—one of fresh water, about a square mile in extent, and the Salt Lake, seven square miles. This lake originated first in a damming of the water, and then in a change of climate, that diminished the supply, so that it would no longer overflow the dam. It has now become shallow, and the salts are concentrated. At the eastern end I have heard that there is about thirty feet of water, in other parts I have not found more than six feet, while over a great space towards the western end there was but one foot of water. By the northern shore of the lake is a series of small lagoons separated from the main water by a bank of shingle and clay. Here the water, drying, deposits common salt, not indeed pure, but nearly enough so for it to be used for food. The salt is removed from this place by the Châmpâs, and fresh salt forms; the deposit is best and most plentiful when a good dry season succeeds the snow-melting. I saw four such pools separated from the lake

and from each other. The water must ooze into them either from underneath or through the bar. As far as I know it is only in this part that common salt is deposited; the different salts in solution are thrown down in different parts, according to the degree of concentration; this last must depend on the shallowness and on currents; these again may be caused by the wind, which is apt to be regular at certain times of the day. The salt thus obtained has an admixture of magnesian salts; it is bitter to the taste, and is not liked by those who have been used to the pure salt of the Salt Range of the Panjâb; it is indeed apt to produce an irritation of the skin. Still it is consumed all over Ladâkh, and is carried as far as Kashmir.

From the south-east corner of the Salt Lake plain, there leads a valley, which, followed up, brings one to an easy Pass, by name Folokonka, about 16,500 feet high, and beyond that one comes into the valley of Pûga, this, followed down, brings us in a few miles to the Indus River which here flows in a wide smooth stream, between banks of alluvial gravel, with a depth that makes it just fordable; the hills rise, in some parts smooth and with a gentle slope, in others bold and steep, on both sides reaching, within a few miles, to a height of 5000 feet above the river. From Maiya, the point where we touched the river, I marched for four days up the valley, to the place marked Dora; what was seen in the fifty miles then passed over may be described in the same order as it was met with.

From Maiya the way lies along the left bank over ground stony and sandy, but with a little grass here and there. The Indus was flowing by in a gentle stream, with a speed that seemed between $1\frac{1}{2}$ and $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour;

the alluvial flat it flowed through widened to a breadth of perhaps three-quarters of a mile, this being confined either by the spurs of the hills or by higher alluvial deposits, as of the fans of side streams. As is usual, one could not well see the hills on the side one was passing along; the hills on the north were a series of irregular spurs connected with the great range which is a continuation of that behind Leh; they were made of stratified rock—shale and sandstone* — sometimes showing the outcrop of beds, sometimes only a surface of earth and loose stones, of various tints of brown, grey, and purple, all, to the eye, perfectly bare of vegetation.

Now after passing over several miles of these stony tracts we come to where there are two or three small villages, which are the highest in the Indus Valley. This bit of the valley is properly out of Rupshu, still it is traversed by the Châmpâs in going from one part of their district to another. The villages are three. On the left bank is Nidar, in a ravine that comes down from the south; it has three houses only. On the right bank are Nimû, of twelve houses, and Mad, of ten. Nimû is about 14,000 feet above the sea; it shows a tract of brihgt green át the edge of a great stony expanse; naked barley and peas are sown here, but only the former ripens. Of trees there are a few large willows of great age. I have two or three times noticed that in the villages near the upper limit of trees, where few grow, there are some of more than usual size; this probably is from more respect being paid to, more care taken of, them; there is also a newly-made plantation of willows. At Nimû little snow falls,

* Farther back, towards its centre, this range is of granite.

and what comes does not stay long on the plain; in winter the cattle and the flocks graze on the plain by the river, but are brought under cover at night. The people of Nimû are not Châmpâs, but are nearer the Lâdâkhîs both in look and language; they are, however, to some extent nomadic, since some of them take their flocks to other pastures in winter and live in tents while tending them.

Leaving these last villages we follow up the valley of the Indus. It has widened to a plain, some four miles across, sandy at the outer portions, but covered with pasture about where the river flows through it. Then the valley narrows, where it takes a great bend, here cutting through the prolongation of the Leh range of mountains. At the second bend we find ourselves (where *Alluvial Plain* is marked on the map) on a flat of an average width of two miles, that stretches far to the south-east. Near where flows the river is a thin growth of grass, which makes this plain by far the most important pasture ground in Rupshu. Farther from the water the flat is sandy, dotted, in places, with clumps of Tibetan furze. The plain is so even as well as so straight that the horizon of the curvature of the earth can be distinctly seen in both directions, hiding the bases of the distant hills.

The mountains, which on both sides bound the valley, rise, uncapped by snow, to 19,000 and 20,000 feet; that is to say, they are about 6000 feet above the flat.

I went about twenty miles farther, south-eastwards up the valley, along the alluvial plain between the mountains. After that, as I could see, the space between the mountains narrowed; in the line of the valley there seemed

to be an opening like a gateway; it is through this that the road goes into the Chinese territory; the river is deflected to the north-east, flowing in a narrow space, but, after another twenty miles up, the two valleys or hollows reunite.

Our farthest camp was at a place called Dora. This is where the Châmpâs of Rupshu spend the winter. Here are built some low-walled spaces for sheltering cattle at night; there were many small hollows dug two feet deep in the ground with a course or two of sun-dried brick above, in which the tents are pitched ; at one end is a rude house built for the headman—low walls washed over with a glittering micaceous mud and roofed in with sticks covered with turf. When I was there, in August, there was not a soul in the settlement. At Dora hardly any snow falls. This is why the place is chosen for winter quarters, the sheep and the cattle being thus able to graze on the extensive though thin pasture found on the flat.

It is natural that the more favourable circumstances of this part of the Indus Valley should encourage animal life to a greater extent than is common in Rupshu. I saw here some small herds of the Tibetan antelope, and the Tibetan hare is common here, as well as lower down towards Nimû and again towards Chushal; it is a large hare, with much white, the back of a brownish grey. But the animal one sees most of in these parts is the Kyang or wild ass—wild horse it has sometimes been called—an animal which is met with singly or in twos and threes in many parts of Rupshu (as, for instance, the Salt Lake plain), but here is in far greater number

than anywhere else. In a day's march I saw some 300 kyang, as many as 100 at one view. There were several different herds; they all let us come to about 250 yards from them and then trotted off, or if frightened by noise galloped away, often leaving the low ground and taking to the stony slopes. This animal is decidedly nearer the ass than the horse, but in outward appearance is much more like a mule than either. He is like a good mule, such as one gets in the upper part of the Punjâb, about Râwal Pindî.* The colour is brown, but white under the belly; there is a dark stripe down the back, but no cross on the shoulder. Of a full-grown male, a fine handsome animal, that I shot in order to make closer observations, the following are some measurements:

Height	54 inches (13 hands 2 in.).
Length of head (from point of muzzle to root of ear)	21½ „
Length of ear	9½ „
Fore hoof, length	5 „
„ width	4 „
Hind hoof, length	4⅞ „
„ width	3½ „

On getting as near as we could to one of the herds and dispersing it, we separated and at last with some difficulty caught a colt of fifteen days or a little more. He was 35 inches high, his head was 13 inches long, his ear 6 inches; his coat was thick but soft, the mane short and curly, the tail short and bushy. His voice, as well as the voice of full-grown ones that we got pretty near to, was almost exactly like that of a mule—a subdued

* Trebeck, Moorcroft's companion, wrote that the kyang is neither horse nor ass, that his shape is as much like one as the other.

grunt or abortive bray. This little fellow soon lost his shyness and would let anyone come near him without fear; we tried hard to rear him, but he died in two or three days. Several attempts have been made to tame the kyang, but little success has attended them. I have eaten the flesh of kyang in the form of steak, and found it very like beefsteak, but rather coarser; the Châmpâs are glad to eat it when they get a chance.

Turning back from Dora, and travelling north-westwards for two or three days, we reach one of the two great lakes of Ladâkh. Tsomorîrî lies to the south; the one we have come to is Pângkong.

There is a series of lakes in one and the same line of valley, just separated from one another. The lowest, which bears the name of Pângkong, has a length of forty miles, and a width of from two to nearly four.* Its height above the sea is 13,930 feet.

What strikes the eye in coming first in view of this lake is the lovely colour of its waters; especially towards evening is it of the richest deep blue, over the whole expanse; at morning time it is of a lighter, but a very brilliant colour. Close to the shore, indeed, the water is so limpid that the bottom can be seen far down and is colourless; but here too, if it is at all disturbed by the wind, at the rolling over of the waves before breaking, a beautiful sapphire tint is seen in it. In the eastern part, on both sides, high mountains bound the lake, whose bold spurs jut out in succession and, at last meeting, close in the view. These hills, like all those we have so long been

* The upper part of Pângkong, and the lakes above it, are in the Chinese territory.

amongst, are bare, showing nought but rock and loose stones; they are of shades of brown and yellow, only in the far distance is this earthy look modified by the tone which the atmosphere gives. It is but this absence of vegetation, this want of the varied hues which are one great charm of the best scenery, that prevents Pângkong from being ranked for beauty with Lucerne or Killarney. Assuredly for grandeur of aspect, for combination of fine-formed mountains with the stretch of waters, and for the colour of the clear blue sky contrasting with the mountains, neither surpasses it; and indeed, under some aspects, it is difficult to persuade oneself that it is not as beautiful as can be.

The western part of the lake has, on its north-east side, hills like those on which we have been looking. We see long projecting spurs, sharp-edged, with sloping sides in places broken with rocky prominences; at some times of the day the sun, glaring on them, is reflected from the stone surfaces in such a way as to give a peculiar shiny, almost metallic, look. These spurs enclose regular slopes of alluvial deposit—confined fans of gravel. Opposite, to the west, there is a great ridge a little retired from the shore, a great ridge rising to bold rocky and snowy peaks, with snowy beds on the higher slopes and small glaciers in the hollows, the lower part a mass of stony débris.

The water of the lake is salt, with a slightly bitter taste. I had counted it, reckoning by the taste, to be something less than half as salt as sea-water, and this estimate is nearly verified by an analysis of it by Dr. Frankland, given in Dr. Henderson's book 'Lahore to Yârkand,' by which close on 1·3 per cent. of salts is

shown to exist in it, nearly half of which is common salt, and the rest mostly sulphates of soda and magnesia, and chloride of potassium. This sample of water was taken from the western end; as one goes eastward it becomes more fresh; the water of the far end is, I believe, drinkable. This saltness denotes that the lake is without a present outlet for its waters.

Here and there at the edge of the lake, particularly in shallow places, there is a little vegetation. A flat, sea-weed-like plant, in form like narrow tape, grows apparently attached to the sand, that is with the end or root of it an inch or two deep in the sand; one sees small accumulations of this thrown up in company with shells of lymnea and planorbis. The lake, I am told, is frozen over for three months in winter, and can then be traversed. At places along the beach, a little above the level of the water, there are *ice-margin* marks, that is lines which denote the position of the frozen edge of the lake. These have been described fully by Major Godwin-Austen. I did not see such large examples of the effect of frost as he did, but I saw, as it were, turned furrows of the shore deposits lying parallel to the water's edge. These were from six inches to a foot high, and of two forms; first, elongated mounds of loose earth or stones; secondly, where a layer of some cohesion had been bodily lifted or tilted up. I take these to be due to the expansion laterally of the ice on its formation over the surface of the lake.

Let me now say a few words about the manner in which this country near Pângkong is inhabited. Along its western shore are small villages, whose inhabitants

cultivate the few crops, such as naked barley and peas, that will grow at this height of 14,000 feet. From Takkung, going north-westward, the inhabited places met with are *Karkfe*, with three houses; *Mîrak*, a fair village; *Man*, with six houses; *Spanmik*, with one or two houses; and *Lukung*, two or three miles from the north-west corner, with perhaps five houses. On the northern shore of the two long lakes are no houses; but the tent-dwellers, chiefly those who belong to the Chinese territory, frequent certain spots in small numbers. *Tânktse*, some miles from the lake, is a larger village than any of these. There is an open space at the junction of valleys; from out of the space rises a long, isolated, steep-faced rock, crowned with the ruined walls of a fort and monastery. Until the Dogrâs came to Ladâkh, the villagers' houses also were built on the rock; but when the place was restored from the ruin that the wars had brought upon it, they were rebuilt on the plain.

Châng chenmo is the name of a long valley, tributary to the Shâyok, which extends nearly east and west for more than seventy miles as the crow flies. The height of its junction with that river must be about 12,000 feet; at the middle of its length it is 15,000 feet high, and from there it rises gradually to a Pass, which makes the boundary of the Rudokh district.

Between Lukung, or Pângkong, and Châng chenmo, a Pass of over 18,000 feet was crossed. Then the valley stretched straight east and west for far, the bottom of it a stony tract, with the river flowing through it in many channels.

Below this spot, where we first reach it (called both

Pâmzâl and Tsolû), I have not followed the Chângchenmo Valley. I believe it in that part to be a rapid stream flowing between narrowing rocky mountains. Above, the valley is partly occupied by the wide gravelly river-bed and partly by alluvial terraces, all stony and bare. The hills that bound this vary much in height and steepness; some are smooth-sided and comparatively low, others both lofty and steep. A branch from the main valley leads to the north, up to the plateaus that will be described in the next chapter; it contains a stream of as great volume as the other.

The places where the three requisites for travellers in these regions occur together, namely, water, grass, and fuel, are found several miles apart. One is Pâmzâl, already mentioned; here is some pasture, and, close by, a great supply of fuel in the bushy growth of myricaria (umbû) and of tamarisk on the alluvium. Then there is a stretch of over twelve miles before any more vegetation is met with. Then at Kyam, where some hot springs come out, there is a spread of grass extending some way up the valley, and there is brushwood also, and farther up, to the very head, there is grass to be found in places. Again, at Gogrâ, in the side valley, there is fuel and a little pasture. Thus scattered and scant is the vegetation; excepting these far-between patches, the whole surface is a waste of rock or stone. Still the vegetation, scarce though it be, is enough to help on the traveller, and even to support the following of one or two families of tent-dwellers who pass a portion of the year in Chângchenmo.

CHAPTER XX.

THE PLATEAUS.

THOUGH Rupshu, taken as a whole, may be called a table-land, its valleys being 15,000 and its mountains 20,000 feet above the sea, yet the valleys themselves I have preferred to call "high-level valleys," rather than plateaus, thinking the former phrase more likely to convey to the mind a true notion of their form. Now, however, we come to certain tracts to which the words "plateau" and "table-land" may fairly be applied. They are not, indeed, of that complete table form which consists in a mass of high land descending at once on all sides; here, as in every case I have met with in the Himâlayas, the lofty flat is surrounded by yet loftier mountains, the plateau is edged by ranges, or by a ring, of mountains. Still, in the cases we are coming to, as contrasted with Rupshu, the width of the flat is very great, the height of the bounding mountains bears to it a much smaller ratio.

Between the country which drains into the Shâyok and that whose streams flow into the Kârakâsh or into other rivers of Eastern Turkistân, is an elevated mass of ground—plains surrounded and crossed by rocky ridges—whence water finds no outlet, but dries up on the plains themselves. The level of these elevated plains or plateaus is 16,000 and 17,000 feet; the area of the isolated drainage-basin (as near as can be estimated from the explorations

hitherto made) is no less than 7,000 square miles, the space being 100 miles long from north to south, with an average width from east to west of 70 miles.

Our knowledge of this tract is but scant, and of a portion of it only conjectural. It is truly a part, "where mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been."

In the regions through which the reader has hitherto followed me—in the high-level valleys, among the bare mountains, of Rupshu—no great difficulty in providing supplies and means of carriage presents itself to the traveller. The inhabitants of Rupshu, though few, are enough in number to attend to the wants of those who pass through their ground, and their cattle do all that is wanted for the carrying of baggage. Bare as that country is when looked at as a whole, yet, with very few exceptions, there are to be found, at distances which are practicable for a day's march, water, some amount of pasture for the baggage animals, and fuel, either furze or *burtse*, or sometimes (as at one or two of the halting-places in the Indus Valley) the dung of the kyang, or wild ass. But now, in going beyond the basin of the Indus, especially in traversing the high plains with their enclosed drainage-area, one is put to straits to provide carriage for the necessaries of one's camp, and to procure food for the beasts of burden themselves. For at some stages fuel is wanting, at others grass, at others water even. Hence special arrangements are necessary to accomplish the journey; and even with these some loss of baggage animals may be expected.

Tânktse is the place whence a start should be made; it is the last large village, and contains a Government store-

house, and is the head-quarters of a *kârdâr*, or manager, under the Governor of Ladâkh. The smaller one's camp, the lighter the baggage, the more likely is one to get comfortably through the journey. With half-a-dozen men of my own, and an equal number of people from the Tânktse and Pângkong region, we took for our luggage and supplies eleven yâks and five ponies, and brought back, after a month's marching, six yâks and four ponies. This and other experience shows that ponies are far better for the work than yâks; for ponies can carry, besides a light load of baggage for their master, barley for themselves, which yâks, not being used to eating it, will not be able to live on; ponies also do the day's march quicker than the yâk, and therefore have so much the more time to graze on the scanty, thin pasture that here and there is found. My own journey was the more trying for the animals in that, after passing through the most desert part to where the valleys begin to decline to Turkistân and to become less bare of vegetation, they had to return over the same desert, without recruiting themselves in the lower pastures.

From Tânktse or Pângkong, the road leads first to the Châng-chenmo Valley. This it leaves by the ravine in which is situated Gogrâ, which is the last place where water, grass, and fuel are all to be found in plenty. I shall not trouble the reader to follow me through each day's march as I made it, but shall rather try to give him an idea of the character of the country such as I myself derived from observing it in the outward and homeward journeys.

The southern boundary and watershed of the high

plateaus is a line of rounded hill, of a height of 19,500 to 20,000 feet. The Passes over it are not cut deep; the one that we crossed, as I found by means of the Boiling Point thermometer, which gave 178·9° as the temperature of boiling water, was 19,500 feet, this being but a hundred or two feet below the general level of the ridge; one or two other Passes are somewhat lower. Even at that high level the Pass was free from snow; there were some snow-beds near, but these were not permanent ones. The difference in the character of the form of the ground on the two sides of the Pass was very striking. On the north side there were low hills of rounded form, down-like; to the south the summits were no higher than these, and the rocks were the same, but, the ground being cut into deeply by steep ravines, it had the ruggedness, and the degree of elevation above the immediate valleys, which give the more usual mountainous character.

Over the watershed, for some miles to the north, extend these hills, rounded at top, and gently sloping to the valleys, not deep, which lead away northwards. On rising to the summit of the last low ridge, we suddenly acquire a wide view over an immense plain, which begins a few hundred feet below us, and extends, without a break, in front, from south to north, for sixteen or more miles, and from right to left for a distance that must be fifty or sixty miles. This plain has of late years been called by the Ladâkhîs *Lingzhîthang*, and the name has been adopted by other travellers, and may well be continued. It is the southern division of the plateaus which lie between the ridge north of Châng chenmo (the watershed we have just been looking at) and the Kuenlun Mountains. For the

northern division, which we shall come to later, separated from thisby ridges of hill (which I call the "Lokzhung Mountains"), I propose the name "*Kuenlun Plains.*" These reach to the very foot of the Kuenlun Range; they consist not of one wide open plain, but of a plain a good deal divided, though not absolutely separated, into tracts by long branch ridges. These three, Lingzhîthang, the Lokzhung Mountains, and the Kuenlun Plains, we will now successively examine.

The lateral dimensions of Lingzhîthang were given above. Its elevation is 17,300 feet on the southern side, and 17,100 feet on the northern. There is a very gradual slope from south to north, one imperceptible to the eye, but marked by the course of the streams. The plain, indeed, is wonderfully even. In character it is bare and earthy; in colour it is brown and white in alternate spaces, according as the whitish clay which is the foundation soil of the whole is exposed on the surface or is strewn over or covered with stones. It is indeed "a weary waste, expanding to the skies."

If, from upon this plain, we survey the mountains around, we see that on the south, the side we have come from, it is bounded by low-sloping hills. On the west rise bolder hills and even snowy peaks; in these there is a gap, to follow which would lead one down to the river Shâyok. All along the north of the plain is the range of the Lokzhung Mountains, whose direction is west-north-west and east-south-east; this begins on the west with two peaks between 20,000 and 21,000 feet, and continues at from 18,000 to 19,000 feet, a range of irregular hills, steep, rocky, and peaked. To the east-

south-east the plain at first seems boundless, but again, from some points, summits of mountains become visible, which probably belong to an enclosing ridge.

The climate of this high plain is one of almost daily extremes. The sun may rise in a clear sky, and, as it climbs, warm the ground with a speed proportioned to the thinness of the air that the rays have to pass through, increasing its warmth till two or three hours past noon; the air being still, the lowermost layer of it becomes somewhat raised in temperature, but the traveller feels chiefly the double effect of the direct rays and the radiation from below, and he labours over the desert plain oppressed by the heat. When the sun has declined but half-way to the horizon, there springs up a wind from the south-west or west-south-west, a keen and searching wind, that quickly makes one suffer from cold more than before one did from the heat. So it continues till nightfall, then gradually the wind dies away; in the still night the ground loses its heat, and a severe frost occurs by morning. On the 26th August 12°, and on the 11th September 10° Fahr. were the temperatures recorded by my minimum thermometer. This, I think, is the usual course in summer time, but, exceptionally, cloud, or a storm of wind, comes on that tends to lower the day and perhaps to raise the night temperature.

This wide plain, dry and bare, and exposed at noonday to rays of the sun untempered by thick air, is well calculated to produce mirage, which depends on the differing temperatures (and therefore differing densities) of different horizontal layers of air. The first time I crossed it, a striking and somewhat puzzling mirage prevailed.

Eastwards the plain seemed to end in a boundless ocean, in which were strange-shaped islands, some bearing masses of snow; the inverted image of them was reflected from below, and a repetition of the double image beneath that. As one stoops low to the ground the ocean seems to ripple to but a hundred yards from one; sometimes the appearance of water was very distinct to us as we were seated, but disappeared on our rising. From other points the mirage made the plain look like a beautiful lake with steep banks, backed by high snowy mountains.

The area of the plain itself and of the inner slope of the surrounding mountains makes an isolated basin of drainage. In the western part the waters flow towards a temporary lake, some very probably drying up on the way to it; in the eastern part they go to the larger lake marked on the map, which has, I believe, been viewed from a distance by some member of the Great Trigonometrical Survey. The isolation of the basin was the last considerable physical change that occurred; that a lake, whether of enclosed drainage or communicating with the sea, existed for a great length of time, is proved by the composition of the ground; the whole soil that covers the flat *has been deposited in a lake.*

The Lokzhung Mountains are a complex range of mountains running in a west-north-west and east-south-east direction from the western to the eastern bounding-ridge of the Plateaus. Its length is sixty miles, its width from fifteen to twenty miles. It is a region of rocky hills with flat dry stony valleys between them. It is not one range with branching spurs, but it may be spoken of as a tract occupied by parallel hill-ranges (running from west-north-

west to east-south-east) of various outline, according to the kind of rock each is composed of; these ranges are broken or cut through by valleys which lead from the southern-most edge of the hill-tract towards the north-east; the breaks in the different ranges are not opposite to each other but are in échelon, so that each valley zigzags, now flowing south-east between two ranges, now breaking through one to the north-east, again turning south-east, and ultimately leading out to the Kuenlun Plains.

I have put in a sketch of one of the widest of the stony valleys among the Lokzhung Mountains; it leads up to the western range, in which is a conspicuous peak of 21,000 feet, a peak too steep to bear snow, except a little in the saddle-like hollow.



A WIDE VALLEY IN THE LOKZHUNG RANGE.

I said that the different ridges vary in character according to the rock they are composed of. There is an older encrinitic limestone, dark grey in colour, which usually is dipping high; this makes hills not the most rugged. Ferruginous sandstone, and above that a limestone that contains hippurites, lie unconformably on the

older limestone; these sometimes make isolated hills of various forms, sometimes, with a high dip of the strata, make a rugged serrated ridge. Some portion of this newer formation gives, in the weathering, a reddish-brown surface; other portions, of a light-coloured limestone or crystalline marble, make conspicuous white rocks.

The path traverses this range for two days' march, in and out among the mountains. The road does not follow one valley, but passes from one to another by crossing low necks. More than one of these necks which I crossed were accumulations of rounded material, coarse shingle that perhaps was the beach of the ancient lake that once covered the plains.

The Kuenlun Plains is the name I give to that part of these uplands which lies between the Lokzhung and the Kuenlun Mountains.

The level of the Plains is 16,000 feet above the sea, that is 1000 feet below Lingzhîthang. The variations of level are greater than any we met with there; from one upper plateau there is a fall of sixty feet to a lower water-course plain, and numerous small ravines, cutting through nearly to that depth, make very irregular ground. Partly from these ups and downs and partly from the yielding character of the dry loamy earth (which certainly increased the labour of walking by one-half), we found the way very laborious; for here also, one must recollect, any increased exertion immediately makes the rarity of the air to be felt. The upper plateau is in parts covered with fragments of a brown calcareous cake, an inch or less in thickness—biscuit would be the more descriptive word. At the lower levels there are shallow saline lakes here and

there. From the wide flats many ramifications extend; a branch runs up between spurs to the Kuenlun, with a width of some five miles; this again branches to the west and opens out into the most saline portion of all, by Patsalung.

At the head of these branches are the slopes of the Kuenlun Mountains. The foremost ridge of the Kuenlun is a bold dark line some 4000 feet above the plain; behind it is the lofty snowy range that reaches to close on 22,000 feet. On the southern face of the highest ridge the easternmost branch of the Kârakâsh River has its source, a river that flows into Turkistân; but the drainage of the Plains does not communicate with that river. The Kuenlun Mountains make a continuous ridge, with some higher peaks covered with permanent consolidated snow-beds; these tower 6000 or 7000 feet above the valley of the Kârakâsh; just north of the high peak at the corner, a glacier, pure white, comes down in a hollow to a level some 3000 feet lower than that of the ridge.

We have now considered these uplands in their separate divisions of the two plains and the dividing mountains. There are yet a few more general observations to be made.

In the description hitherto, little has been spoken of but earth and stones and rocks; but in this I have been guilty of hardly any omission, so few are the traces of either animal or vegetable life. Vegetation exists but here and there; generally every ten or fifteen miles is to be found some *burtse*, or Eurotia, the plant that serves for fuel; though at one halting-place moss is obtained in its stead, and at another neither *burtse* nor moss can be got. Pasture is still rarer. On leaving the last halting-place in the

Chonglung branch of the Châng-chenmo Valley we had to pass over sixty or seventy miles before reaching any grass; the first find was at Lokzhung, a halting-place in the middle of the mountains of the same name. On the Kuenlun Plains grass is equally scarce, and it is only when one gets well into the Eastern Kârakâsh Valley that this cause of difficulty in keeping one's baggage animals alive disappears.

Of wild animals, one would think from the foot-prints that great numbers must live in the plains and the surrounding mountains; but one sees few, and on reflection it appears that the many foot-prints are the work of a comparatively small number of individuals, for in this country a mark made may stay unobliterated for years. I saw kyang, the wild ass, but only singly, at Thaldat, which is a watering place of his; a track had been made straight to it for two miles, beaten and cleared of stones by continual passage. Hare also are now and then to be seen, and foot-prints of antelope were observed at various places on the plains. Beyond, on the Eastern Kârakâsh, kyang, and antelope, and hare were more plentiful. A beast I had not before seen was the wild yâk; him I met among the Lokzhung Mountains, a solitary bull, an animal in form exactly like the domesticated yâk, but of larger bulk; from his sides hung long hair, but his back was comparatively bare. At first, on seeing us, he went away with a short quick trot, but he afterwards broke into a heavy lumbering gallop. It has been doubted whether the domestic yâk comes from this wild one, or whether the wild yâk may not have sprung from some that have escaped from the camps of travellers, for

every now and then these beasts of burden are overcome, and, unable to carry their loads, are relinquished; these may, perhaps, recover, and, finding subsistence on some scant pasture, live and reproduce their kind in a wild state.

There is one other phenomenon that deserves a moment's attention before we leave this interesting ground. There are at least two instances of *ice-beds*, or, as some have called them, *snow-beds*, occurring in the plains. I prefer the former name, as being more truly descriptive, although at first sight they look just like beds of snow. Colonel H. Strachey described two or three of these in Rupshu and Pângkong, but gave no explanation of their origin. Mr. Johnson mentioned the one at Thaldat, which was the first I ever saw. On the plain, a mile or two from the nearest hill, a space about a mile long and a quarter of a mile wide is occupied by the ice-bed; it lies in the bed of a stream, with the water flowing beneath part of it. The greatest thickness that I saw was four feet; some of it was like *nevé*, and some was more icy. A similar bed which I saw in Rupshu (one of those noticed by Colonel Strachey), I find described in my notes as being made in great part of layers, from a quarter inch to one and a half inch thick, of prismatic ice, the prismatic crystals being, of course, at right angles to the surface of the layers; there, too, was some that is described as like *nevé*. At other parts, again, the length of the prisms (and therefore the thickness of one layer of ice) was as much as eight inches.

I think that these ice-beds are the unmelted ice of the streams, formed especially in spring, when the successive

rising levels of the water that flowed from the melting snows would make layer after layer of ice, as the still severe cold at that time froze the surface at night, until a thickness had accumulated too great to be made to disappear by one summer's sun, and so the bed had become permanent. The limit to its vertical increase would be the impossibility of the water reaching to a higher and higher level beyond some certain height; only as it wasted away, as in summer it must waste, from the sun melting its upper and the stream its lower surface, would, when the mass of ice settled down, additions again be made to it from above in the same way as before. It may not unlikely happen that snow fallen on the surface sometimes becomes enclosed and consolidated by the overflowing water.

I have now taken the reader through every district of these territories. He will be able to judge, from the facts laid before him, to what degree and in what sense they constitute a Barrier for India on this its Northern Frontier. Let us sum up these facts in brief.

The country is a great mountain mass, into which valleys have been cut, of such a character and in such directions, that, to cross from the northern countries—Badakhshân and Eastern Turkistân—into India, one must pass from valley to valley over the intervening ridges, by Passes which always take long in the traversing, and are pretty sure to be impassable for some months in the year.

In the eastern parts, the valleys lie less deep in the mountains, and the great plateau extends, giving a level road for a length of several days' march; but these

advantages are counterbalanced by the aridity and desert character of the land, where fuel and pasture, for a small camp even, can hardly be found. On the west, where the valleys lead down into warmer air, one has to rise to greater heights in passing from one valley to another, while the steepness of the mountain sides gives to the roads along them a character of extreme roughness.

With one exception all this mountain country is thinly peopled and little cultivated. Stretches of snow-field, wastes of stones, or else hill-sides that bear forest untenanted by man, these occupy the chief space; that which is cultivated makes a very small portion of the whole. The one exception in Kashmir, which, set in the midst of the mountains, exhibits a fertile expanse, inhabited by an industrious people.

The roads through these territories by which a bold invader might dream of attempting to reach India are three.

The easternmost would bring him across the high plateaus, over ground where a horse has little difficulty, and where even the camel of Turkistân (of the hardy two-humped breed) might find his way. But this way would be over that waste and desert ground which has lately been described, where neither inhabitants to aid, nor cultivation for supplies, nor yet pasture for the support of the cattle, would meet the eye. And after this wide tract was passed, there would remain many a day's march in the mountainous districts of Kulu and Lâhol, in the British territory, which, if less barren, are steeper and more confined.

The middle road would be by the Kârâkoram Pass to

Leh, and thence to Kashmir. Here the ridges to cross are numerous, the roads rough, and at scores of places the passage is difficult and narrow. Line after line, either of mountain or of river, could be defended. A handful of men well posted could hold many in check; and here a few weeks' check would probably mean starvation for the invader.

The third, the western road, by Gilgit, is one which could be reached by the Passes (now held by tribes independent of us) over the Mustâgh Range, into Hunza, Nagar, and Yâsîn. From the Gilgit territory to Kashmir we have in a preceding chapter traced the route nearly stage by stage. We have seen that here also defensible positions could be chosen, but that there is often a possibility of their being turned by an adventurous enemy who should gain the country-people to his side. But along this road also the path is rough; steep rises, stony tracts, slippery descents make it, for beasts of burden, even worse than the last. Hardy hill ponies may carry a rider who can dismount at the dangerous spots, but they often succumb under the dead weight of a load.

Kashmir, when reached, could afford forage and supplies for a large force; but a large force could yet more easily be poured in from the other side by the power who holds the Panjâb, and unless the invader could advance to, and command immediate victory in, the Plains, his position in Kashmir would soon become precarious. The Passes he came by would close behind him; snow would be his enemy, to cut off his retreat, while in the early spring his opponent might, over the less lofty mountains, advance from the Panjâb before aid could arrive from the north.

Hence it seems to me that an invasion of India itself through these mountains would be one of the wildest of undertakings. A small and lightly equipped force, if well armed, might indeed find their way far through the hills, and overcome the troops of the Maharaja if they remain in their present state. But such victories as would bring the invader as far as Kashmir, if he did not quickly give up the fruits of them and retire, would cause his destruction. Our Northern Barrier is one through which but two or three passages lead; and the gates that guard them, if opened by a stranger, may close behind him, while the door in front might prove too strong to be forced.

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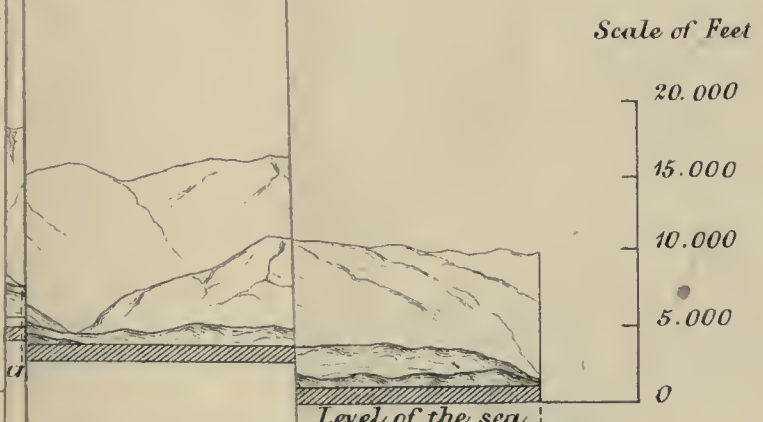
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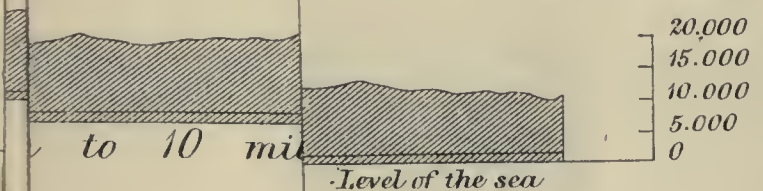
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