

away at the beginning of the Christian era, and was the time indicated in the legend when Kashmir was too cold to be inhabited, except in summer, by nomads. Even to-day the snowfall of Kashmir is so great that agriculture cannot be carried on at an elevation of much over 7000 feet; and on the plain itself, at an elevation of from 5000 to 6000 feet, early snows sometimes cause disaster by destroying the rice crop. It would need but a slight increase in cold or in snowfall to render the whole country unfit for agriculture and habitable only for nomadic shepherds, who would drive their flocks southward in winter, away from the snow, to the warm, low plain beyond the mountains. Such we may reasonably believe to have been the condition of Kashmir before it appears in history near the opening of the Christian era.

By the sixth or seventh centuries of that era, as history shows, Kashmir had acquired nearly its present prosperous character, and not long after was suffering from the filling of the channel of the Jhelum with detritus from the mountains, and the consequent expansion of the lakes. Such prosperity and such disaster would naturally result from a relatively dry or warm epoch like that which appears to have occurred during the first six or eight centuries of the Christian era. On the one hand, agriculture would be stimulated, and on the other, fans of boulders and gravel would be deposited in the river bed, causing the lake to rise, and perhaps to submerge villages.

As to the possible succeeding mediæval epoch of somewhat lower temperature and greater rainfall, there is little to be said. The deepening of the channel of the Jhelum and