

only been there in the late summer and early autumn ; but I found ice in the basin inside my tent in August, the thermometer at zero (Fahrenheit) by the end of September, and eighteen degrees below zero at the end of October. Lord Dunmore found his thermometer at five degrees below zero *inside* his tent in November. Strong winds, too, are very frequent, and increase the discomfort arising from the cold very considerably, and this is further augmented by the lassitude and weakness brought on by the elevation. So that the cold, the winds, and the elevation together, render life on the Pamirs anything but cheering.

In spite of this severity of the climate, however, the inhabitants of the Pamirs remain there the whole year round. They are almost entirely Kirghiz, with a few refugees from Wakhan. These Kirghiz are a rough, hardy race, as they must necessarily be ; but they have little character, and no aptitude for fighting. They are avaricious and indolent, and possess few qualities which would attract a stranger to them. They live in the same felt tents which I have already described in the account of my journey from Peking.

At Aktash we found three or four tents and a "beg" or headman appointed by the Chinese. He was very civil to us, and made no difficulties whatever about our proceeding round the Pamirs, which at that time were considered Chinese territory. We accordingly struck off almost due west across the range on the western side of the Little Pamir to the valley of Istigh River. In all this eastern part of the Pamirs the mountain ranges are low and easily crossed. No snow-peaks, like those to the west of the Victoria Lake, or the Lake of the Little Pamir, are to be seen. They appear to have all been worn down and rounded off. We had no difficulty, therefore, in crossing first into the valley of the Istigh, and then from there to Chadir Tash, on the Alichur Pamir. On the way there, at a place called Ak-chak tash, we found some hot springs, the temperature