

The people, too, as I came to know them, proved to be particularly attractive. They are a manly race, with a hard, resolute look about them, and they are devoted to games and sport. They play polo with extraordinary zeal and energy, their chief being one of the best and keenest players, and they love dancing and music. At the same time, there is none of that aloofness and sullen hidden suspicion and hatred which often characterizes Pathan tribes, and they are ready and willing to attach themselves to British officers. They are undoubtedly the pick of the frontier, and every officer who has lived amongst them likes them.

For about two and a half months I lived in this delightful country, till the winter was approaching, and the beauties of the place were day by day increased by the wonderful autumn tints which the apricots and poplars take on, and the warm hues of red and yellow and gold contrasted with the glittering white of Rakapushi and the deep clear blue of the sky above. Then, as I was engaged in building rough quarters for the troops and myself for the winter, and converting the piles of old matchlocks, which had been collected after the war, into rude hoes and spades for the people, turning their swords into ploughshares, news arrived that trouble had occurred in Chitral, and Colonel Durand wrote to say that the Mehtar had been killed, and that he wished me to come at once to Gilgit with some Hunza levies.

On the frontier "at once" means at once, and in a little more than two hours after receiving Colonel Durand's letter I had packed up my things; handed over what little "office" there was to Lieutenant Gurdon; arranged for the Hunza levies to follow, and started on my ride of sixty-five miles to Gilgit. During daylight there was little difficulty, but after the sun had set, and when no stars appeared, and the night was pitch dark, the task of finding my solitary way along a mountain path by the side of steep cliffs and over troublesome rocks was