

reached Chitral, the valley up to within a few miles of that place narrowing to little more than a gorge, with occasional open spaces where villages had been built. But about three miles above the fort of Chitral the valley widens out, and is here about two miles in width. The weather, too, in the lower parts was considerably milder, and we were able to ride into Chitral in our uniforms, without great-coats. The new Mehtar, Nizam-ul-Mulk, met us about three miles above Chitral, with a great cavalcade of his principal men, and we all rode in together. This was my first acquaintance with the prince, at whose side I was to remain for nearly two years. I found him to be a handsome man of about thirty-four years of age, very European in appearance, intelligent, and well-mannered; of medium height, thick-set, and strong. He was dressed in a suit of clothes intended to represent a British uniform, and he wore on his head the round cloth cap common in the country. About a mile outside Chitral the whole cavalcade halted, and we were shown some firing at a popinjay. At the top of a high mast an earthenware pot had been hung, and men galloped past firing at it. As we reached the fort, a salute was fired. The Mehtar, having accompanied the mission to the quarters which it was to occupy, then took leave of them, after declaring how warmly he desired to welcome them.

We had now had some opportunity of observing the Chitralis, and I cannot say that my own impression, at any rate, was a very favourable one. They seemed a gloomy and depressed people. They had about them none of the hard, determined look which the men of Hunza have; and, after coming from Hunza, I felt little attraction towards these rather sulky-looking Chitralis. These first impressions I had afterwards to modify, as I shall relate further on; but I record them, as they serve to show that the first impressions of these people are not always what will be subsequently proved correct. The country, too, now in the depth of winter, was as depressing as the people.