

is separated from the Kashmiri population by language as well as by physical characteristics. The relation between the language of the Dards and the other Indo-Aryan vernaculars of North-Western India is by no means clearly established. But whatever the linguistic and ethnic affinities of the Dard race may be, it is certain that it has held these valleys since the earliest time to which our historical knowledge can reach back. Herodotus had heard of them in the same region they now inhabit; for he mentions the gold-washing operations still carried on by them within modest limits on the Indus and the Kishanganga. There is little in the Dard to enlist the sympathies of the casual observer. He lacks the intelligence, humour, and fine physique of the Kashmiri, and though undoubtedly far braver than the latter, has none of the independent spirit and martial bearing which draws us towards the Pathan, despite all his failings. But I can never see a Dard without thinking of the thousands of years of struggle these tribes have carried on with the harsh climate and the barren soil of their mountains. They, like the Afridis, who also are mentioned by the Father of History, have seen all the great conquests which swept over the North-West of India, and have survived them, unmoved as their mountains.

Gurez was once the chief place of a little Dard kingdom which often harassed the rulers of old Kashmir. But I confess, when I approached it at the close of my fatiguing double march, this antiquarian fact interested me less than the comfortable shelter which I found for my men and myself in Mr. Mitchell's new bungalow.

The following day was a halt, for my people needed rest and my baggage drying. There were besides fresh arrangements to be made for the transport ahead. In Srinagar I had been told officially that the Burzil Pass, which had to be crossed between Gurez and Astor, would, owing to the deep snow, be open only for coolie transport. However, from the