

Chilas and from Punyal furnished me with more than one curious fact bearing on the earlier social and religious condition of the tract. Muhammadanism is a comparatively recent growth here, and the traditions as to former worship and rites have survived in many a valley. One grey-bearded village headman from Gor in particular seemed full of old-world lore. He had investigated the relics of an old burial-place near his home, where the burnt bodies of his ancestors in pre-Muhammadan times used to be deposited, and was not shy about relating the drastic punishment which as a boy he had received from his mother when disturbing the spot. In these mountains, as elsewhere throughout the world, it is the women-folk who act as the best guardians of all old lore and tradition.

The close contact with the Far West into which modern political conditions have brought these once secluded valleys was illustrated by the fact that I could read at Captain Manners Smith's table the latest Reuter telegrams just as if it had been in the Club at Lahore. But the presence in camp of my host's pretty little children offered an even more convincing indication how far European influence has penetrated across the mountains. Bright and rosy-cheeked, they were worthy representatives of the British Baby which in the borderlands of India has always appeared to me as the true pioneer of civilization. I have come across it in many a strange place, and its manifest happiness amongst surroundings which often seemed incongruous with the idea of a nursery has ever forced me to admiration. The British Baby has never been slow to follow the advance of British arms in India. Occasionally it has come early enough to see some fighting: witness Fort Lockhart and the Malakand. But on the whole its appearance on the scene marks the establishment of the pax britannica, and for this mission of peace and security it well deserves that thriving condition which it usually enjoys in the mountains around Kashmir.