

whom the Jamadar's forethought had ordered ahead. By 9.30 P.M. the mud-built little stronghold safely received us and our baggage equally belated.

Double marches for the next two days took us up the Panjkora Valley to the capital of the Khan of Dir. His authority, somewhat doubtful in Talash and nearer to Bajaur, was, for the time being, well established above Saddo. Hence there were no small towers and Levy patrols en route to remind us of the force which keeps the road clear between Swat and Chitral. Yet at the posts held by the Levies along it special precautions for the European traveller's safety were still thought needful. The sentry posted outside the door of the room I occupied seemed, indeed, harmless. But the other placed outside under the window might well have attracted the rifle thief during the night instead of increasing one's safety. Nor was it altogether convenient to find oneself shadowed at every step outside the walled enclosure by a couple of Levies. The posts themselves which served for the nights' halts or else for my brief half-way rests, curiously reflected in their construction the stage of political settlement reached in this region. Against raiding parties from outside the Khan's territory they would, no doubt, offer useful shelter; but in case of a general tribal rising their defence could not be attempted. Seeing that the Levies themselves are raised entirely from the Khan's men, and scarcely as yet proof against fanatical outbreaks, it would be manifestly risky to provide them with strongholds such as guard Frontier routes entrusted to more reliable elements.

The road we followed offered pleasant glimpses of the snow-covered ranges towards Asmar and Swat, and here and there views of picturesque fort-villages. But of striking scenery there was little until we drew close to Dir. The green of the corn-fields, covering the broad alluvial fans and terraces capable of irrigation, looked delightfully vivid below the brownish slopes of bare rock on the spurs running down to the river. Spring at an elevation gradually rising from 3000 to 4000 feet was already far advanced, and red poppies brightened all the fields.