

and for fully forty-eight hours the pouring rain continued with more or less violent thunderstorms. More depressing even than the actual discomforts of a badly leaking roof and sodden mud floor was the uncertainty as to the length of this detention. To move to the foot of the pass, one march ahead, would have been worse than useless. Any attempt to cross while such weather continued or immediately after its cessation would have meant imminent avalanche risks. So there was nothing for it but to use the time as well as I could for accounts and plenty of 'office' work still remaining, and to collect what local notes could be gathered. I managed to get hold of some Kohistanis from Garwi, still speaking one of the little-known Dard dialects which have receded to the high valleys about the head-waters of the Panjkora and are fast disappearing before the onset of Pashtu, and to secure, not without difficulties, my first measured 'heads' in anthropological interests. Old coins, too, going back to Indo-Scythian times, were obtained from a Hindu trader.

But my thoughts were ever travelling ahead to the pass and to Chitral, from which it barred me. On the evening of May 2nd there came at last a short break which I used to escape for a walk up the valley. But the rain had not damped the watchfulness of the sentries, and I had scarcely emerged from my shelter when two of the Levies faithfully attached themselves to my heels. Heavy clouds still filled the side valleys and prevented any view of the pass and its approaches. All the more delighted was I, when turning into the wretched courtyard about midnight, to see the mist completely lifted and the stars shining brightly. The sturdy little mules which had brought up my baggage were picketed close by, and it was easy to arrange for a start early next morning.