

refreshed us while the match proceeded at a rate which would have tired out any but the wiry hill ponies that Chitral still manages to secure from neighbouring Badakhshan in spite of Afghan export prohibitions. Half the population of the villages which make up the capital seemed to be gathered on the green slope behind to watch its progress. When at last the conclusion of the match was announced with great din by the local band on long curiously shaped horns and kettle-drums, there followed the dance of the defeated side for the delectation of the victors and onlookers. Needless to say that the performance, prescribed by ancient custom, is little cherished by those who have to partake in it, and a few capers perfunctorily gone through was all to which we were treated. The Chitrali dances by selected young men which followed were far more interesting. There was plenty of rhythm and verve in the movements, which at one time seemed to recall the steps of the Hungarian Csárdás, at others again the gyrations of a Khattak sword dance. An avowedly Pathan dance closed the entertainment, clearly suggesting that influence from the south may well have had its share in shaping this national pastime.

But for the presence of the small group gathered round the Mehtar's tea-table, all before my eyes, I felt, might have been witnessed by a visitor to Chitral centuries ago. The airy beings with which popular belief fills all the valleys and heights of Chitral seemed to have felt the same; for plenty of fairies were said to have been seen flitting round the polo-ground at the previous match played two days before in Captain Knollys's presence. Their appearance was the great topic of Chitrali talk, being held to forebode deaths and violent events at the Mehtar's castle. But this has at all times held factions divided by bitter feuds, and the young Mehtar himself was not shy in talking composedly about the fairies' latest visit. If it was to bring evil to those around him, might it not fall on those least desirable in his *entourage*?

The same evening I had an opportunity of appreciating the young Mehtar's sociable adaptation to European ways at Captain Knollys's dinner-table. It was pleasant to chat