

the head and the hair hanging down behind in wild tresses suggested the semi-barbarian. The anthropometric data I could collect were mainly of interest as proving the close affinity of these Kafirs with the more civilized Dard tribes farther east, as already suggested by linguistic evidence. But what a rich harvest could be gathered here by the student of old customs and folk-lore! Most of the refugees still adhere to their old 'heathen' creed, an inheritance probably from the days when the Dard tribes separated from the Iranian race, to be 'shelved' as it were for ever in the inaccessible valleys of the Hindukush.

Want of time and of knowledge of their language rendered it impossible for me even to touch this rich mine of anthropological lore so temptingly ready at hand. But by Captain Knollys's kind care I was treated on the eve of my departure to a Kafir dance, in some respects the weirdest spectacle I have ever witnessed. It took place late at night in a grove near the Agency, by the light of a huge bonfire. The dance was performed by about fifty men and youths, some clad in their proper dancing robes of deep red, others just as the Mehtar's summons had found them. All carried small axes, the rhythmical twirling and switching of which is an essential accompaniment of the dance. How I wished I were possessed of sufficient choreographic knowledge to have kept a record of the quaint steps and gyrations which followed each other with almost automatic precision! Whether moving forward and backward in a big circle, filing off into rows which swung round the bonfire, or resolving into pairs as in the chain of Lancers, the men kept wonderfully exact time.

Yet the music seemed scarcely to mark any change, consisting of the simplest set of tones curiously recalling a pheasant's call. For days this 'melody' haunted my ears; but quite unmusical as unfortunately I am, I cannot attempt to describe it more closely. Performed in their own villages on specially constructed sounding-boards the effect must be still greater. For nearly an hour the dance went on, practically without the men ever stopping. By