

but a very small proportion, perhaps not one-tenth, of the area awaiting cultivation.

It did not take me long to realize that I had here before me by far the most extensive stretch of fertile ground within the whole of the Yarkhun Valley, offering room for settlements quite as large as, if not larger than, those forming Chitral proper. The information I gathered from the intelligent Hakim of Miragram and other local attendants clearly indicated that these recent colonists had reclaimed ground of earlier cultivation, and the sight of old-terraced fields above the fertile strips of ground taken up first by the new settlers fully confirmed it. As I rode for miles past these abandoned village lands now gradually undergoing reclamation, the sight brought back forcibly to my mind a passage of the Chinese Annals which mentions *A-shê-yü-shih-to* as the chief place of the small mountain territory of Shang-mi, or Mastuj, in the eighth century A.D. There could be no doubt that this name, which I had long vainly tried to locate, was but the Chinese transcription of an earlier form of the name *Shuyist* still applied to the whole of this large stretch of arable land.

My guides, including Kurban, were disposed to attribute the former abandonment of these lands to the increasing cold brought about by the advance of the glaciers. And the latter, indeed, began to play from here onwards a very prominent part in the landscape. Just opposite to Abdullah-lasht a huge river of ice, known as Shayos, was pushing its dark snout almost down to the river-bank. Even without this chill neighbour the climate of Shuyist, about 10,500 feet above sea, was bound to be cold, though barley and oats would grow well. But whether or not this part of the Mastuj Valley has been affected by important climatic changes during the last twelve hundred years, there remains the interesting fact that the main cause now leading to the reoccupation of this tract where cultivation had ceased for centuries, was the incipient pressure of the population, a direct result of the British pacification of the country.

Another equally extensive glacier, stretching down from a peak over 21,000 feet high, faced us from the south