

1900 had enabled me to secure that series of fine photo-theodolite panoramas of which I was now carrying with me reproductions, since published by the Royal Geographical Society in a separate volume, a haze of aggravating constancy hid all the more distant snowy peaks on the main range southward. Still it was an interesting experience to let my eyes wander over the maze-like succession of fantastically serrated ranges, to study the extraordinary surface formations etched out by erosion, and to be able at the same time to record on faithful reproductions of this strange mountain waste whatever information about topographical details within the actual horizon could be gathered from my Taghlik guides.

On approaching the Yagan-Dawan, the second pass crossed by the route, I was delighted to find among the coarse grass covering the loess slopes a fair display of Alpine flowers, the first I had seen since Kashmir. Among them were edelweiss, bluebells, and a few other familiar flowers, known to me, alas! by look only and not by name. The tracks leading through the fantastically eroded gorges and over the boulder-strewn approaches of the passes were as trying for animals and baggage as before. But whether it was a result of the 'lifting of the Purdah' effected by my previous passage through these mountains, or due to more stringent orders from the Amban which overawed these hill-men, suspicious by nature and averse from all foreign intrusion, the tiny semi-nomadic settlements we met with in the valleys of Mitaz and Chash seemed 'tamer,' and yaks were duly forthcoming for the baggage. Thus Nissa was reached without delay or mishap by the afternoon of August 15th.

At the point where the gorge descending from the Brinjak Pass debouches upon the Nissa River, and a short distance above the collection of twenty mud hovels which form the winter quarters of the hill-men grazing and cultivating in this high valley some 9000 feet above the sea, I was obliged to halt for a day in order to make preparations for the work I had in view. It included two main tasks. In the first place, I was anxious to supplement our survey of 1900 by ampler topographical details about the great