it could well spend some little money on the exploration of Arabia and Somali land.

A plan could be devised which would answer all purposes,—sanitary, military, political, and geographical:—The summer months in Aden are dreadful; we know not which is the hardest to bear, its heat or its dust. Let them march half the garrison out for three months every year, and make a promenade in the hills, with no other object than to get in cool country, give exercise to the soldiers, paying for everything, demanding nothing but full respect. One year to Taezj, another to the coffee hills of Yaffe, another to Nisab, and so on. The troops would enjoy it exceedingly, the expense would not be immoderate, and I need not say what a beneficial impression such a peaceful but powerful march through this virgin soil would produce on the simple but logical children of Ishmail and Hazra-Mawit.

*3rd October*, 1870.

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## IX.—*On the Himalayan Valleys:—Kooloo, Lahoul, and Spiti.*

By Captain A. F. P. Harcourt, Bengal Staff Corps.

*Read* June 26th, 1871.

The Himalayan valleys of Kooloo, Lahoul, and Spiti, covering an area of over 6000 square miles, and containing close on 100,000 inhabitants, form a portion of the Kangra district, one of the thirty-two into which the Punjab is divided, and lie on the north-east frontier of that province, being bounded on the east by Ladakh, in the possession of the Maharajah of Cashmere, and below that again by Chinese Thibet. It is thus the extreme limit of our dominions towards Central Asia; the name Kooloo, I may add, being a corruption of the old term Koolunt Peeth, "the end of the inhabited world," which it always was considered to be by the Hindoos of the Plains.

Apart from the fact, which geographically is not unimportant, that the Beas and the Chenab, two of the great Punjab rivers, rise in the subdivision; that a third river, the Sutledj, runs for 30 miles along its borders, and that the Ravee, a fourth river, springs from the mountains which close in the Upper Beas Valley—it is to be remarked, that the main Central Asian trade-route winds its way through the districts of Kooloo and Lahoul towards Ladakh and Yarkund, so that, commercially speaking, it cannot be denied that these distant tracts are not unworthy of being brought to the notice of the Members of the Royal Geographical Society, who, from their interest in Central Asia, can hardly be altogether indifferent to a country,

A Map to illustrate
*Captain Harcourt's Paper*
on THE HIMALAYAN VALLEYS of
# KOOLOO, LAHOUL & SPITI
with a Sketch Map of
## THE PASSES from INDIA to EASTERN TURKISTAN

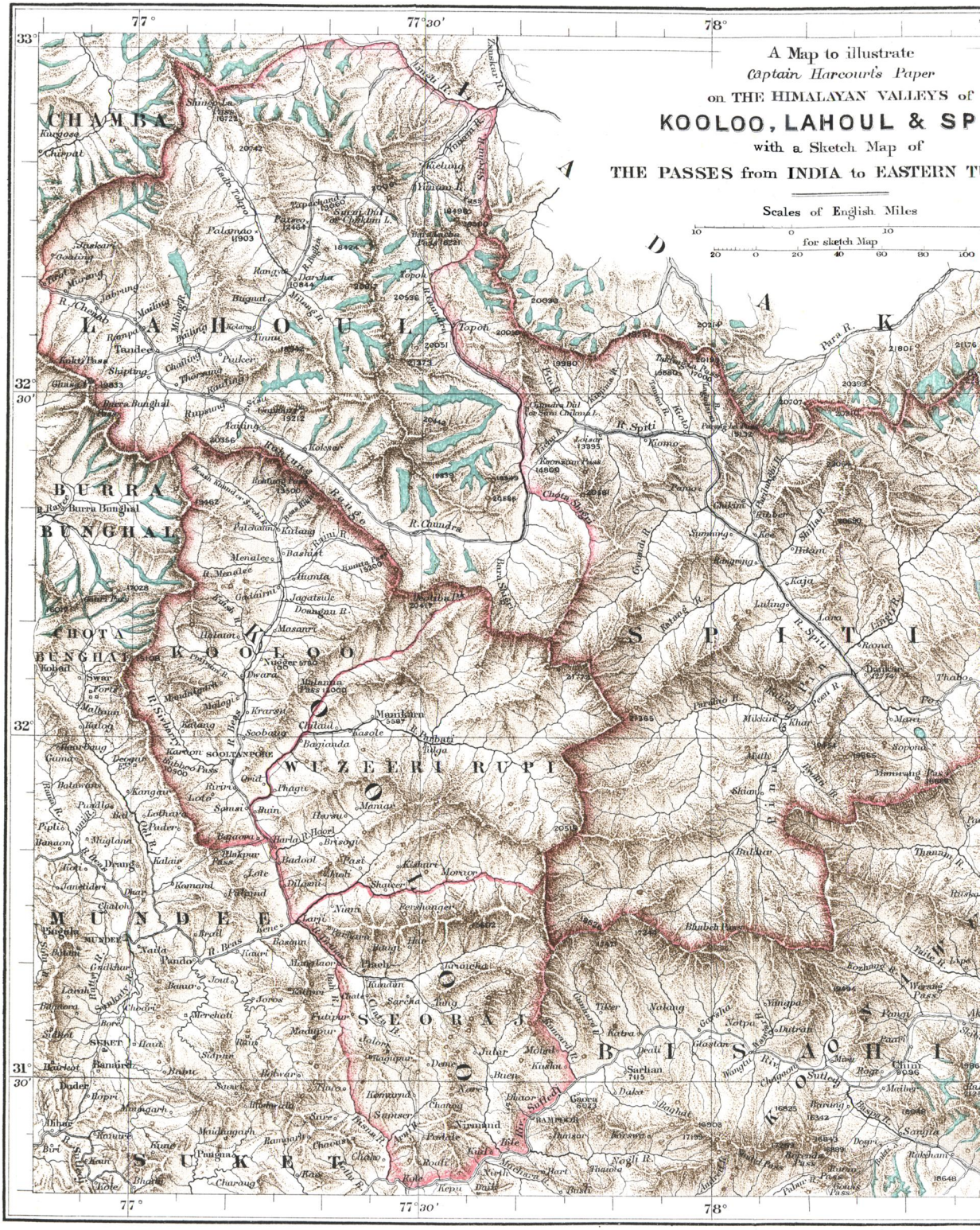
Scales of English Miles

for sketch Map

The Region above 5000 ft. elevation is tinted

*Published for the Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, by J. Murray, Albemarle Street, London. 1871.*

*Johnston's Geographical Establishment 74 Strand, London.*

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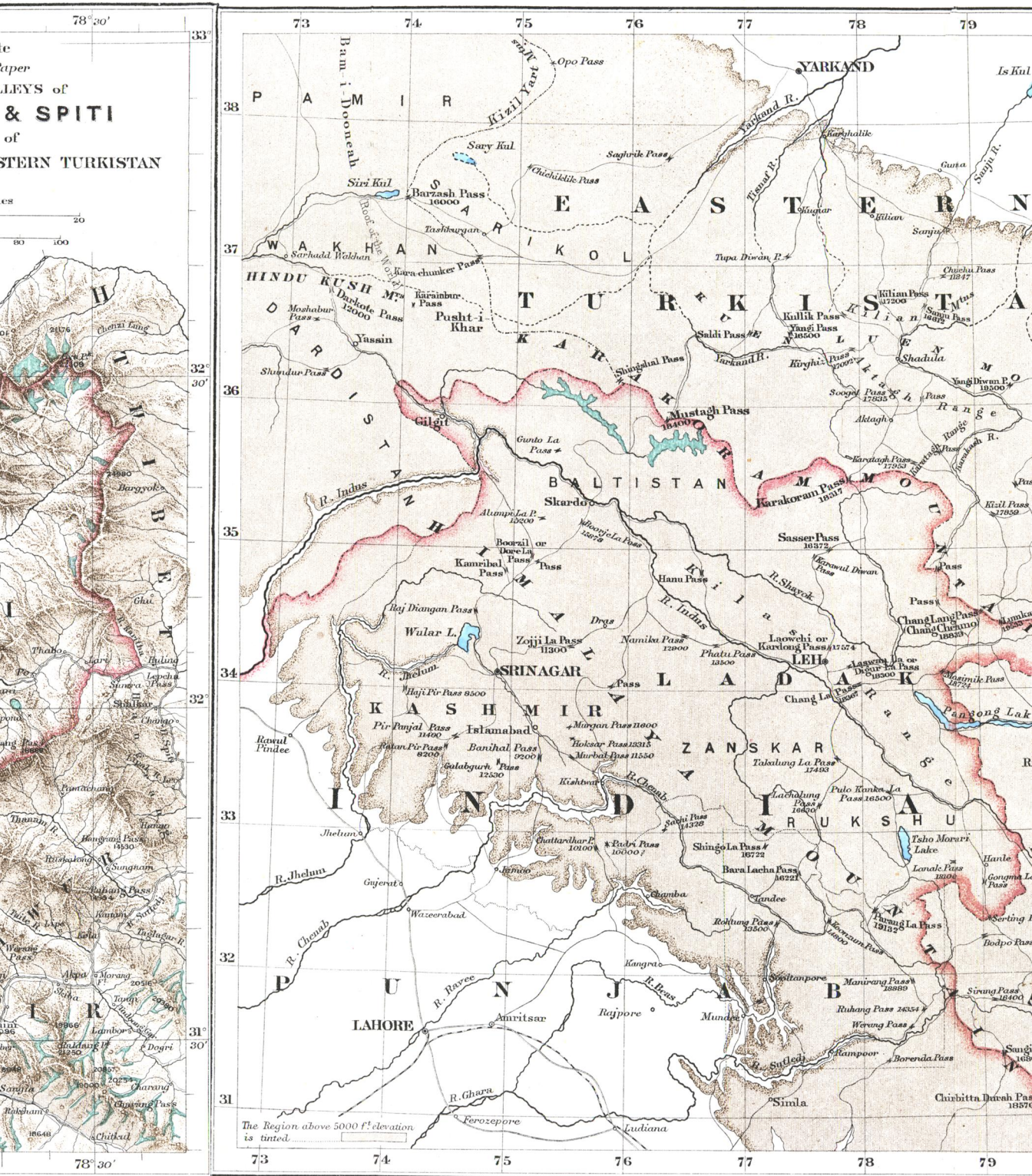


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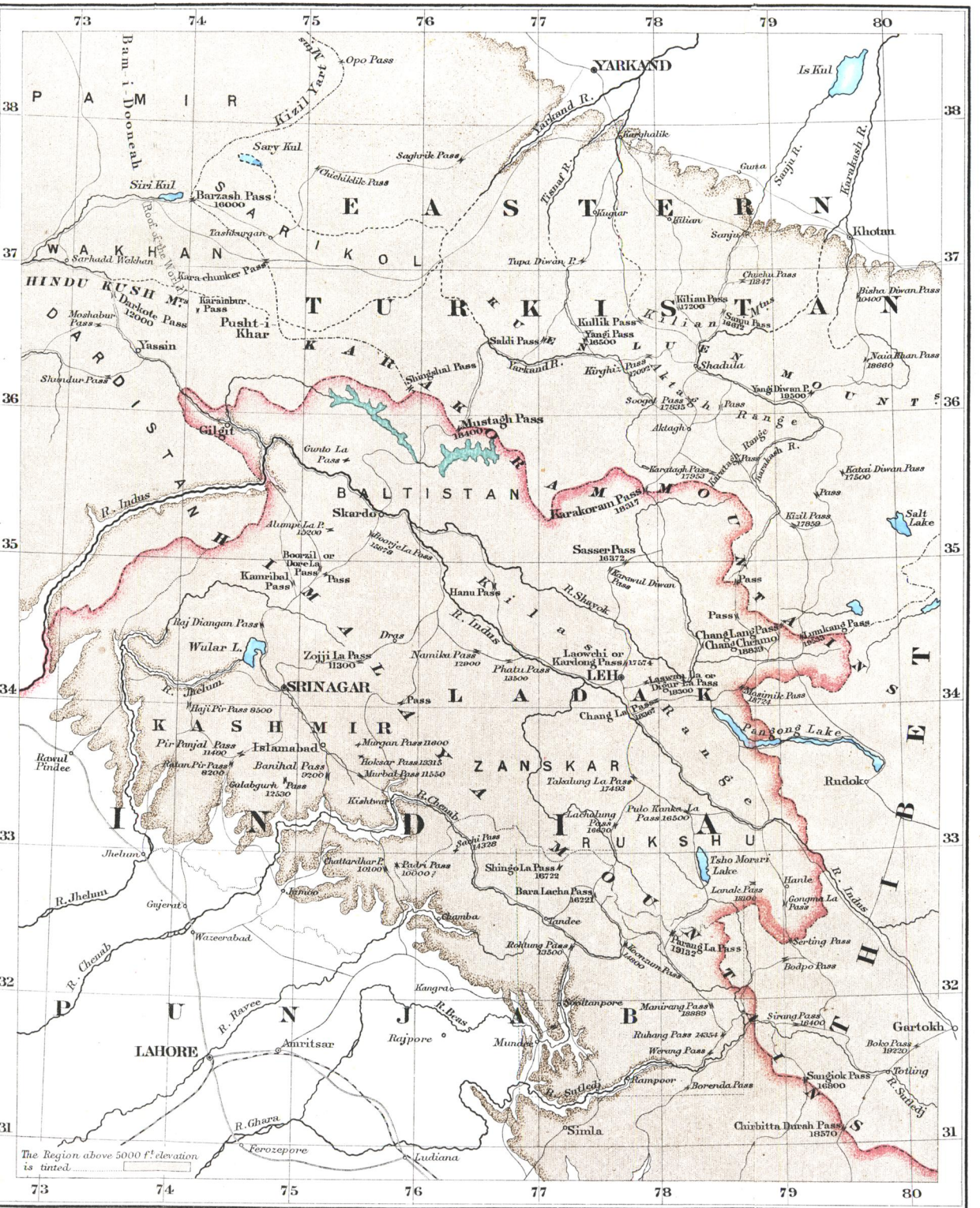


Johnston's Geographical Establishment 74 Strand, London.

Murray, Albemarle Street, London. 1871.

through which filters nearly all the intelligence that reaches us of what is going on in Eastern Turkestan. But if, geographically and commercially, Kooloo is deserving of attention, it possesses other claims to our recognition. Its climate, varying considerably, is totally unlike anything to be found in the Punjab, and probably in India. Its inhabitants, their customs, languages, and costumes, have each and all their special peculiarities; its scenery—here so soft and bewitchingly beautiful, and but a few miles on so stern and rugged—is certainly unmatchable elsewhere in Hindostan; and the religious belief of its people presents but few points of affinity with the creeds that are followed in other portions of our dominions in the East.

In the Punjab the winters, as a rule, are cold, temperate, and bracing, while the heats in summer are nearly unendurable, and the rainy season is moist and most disagreeably hot, except towards the south-west portion of the province, where the fall averages but 3 or 4 inches in the year. Then the various races that inhabit the Punjab present no very great dissimilarities in physique, feature, costume, or language; and though the Hindoos, the Mahomedans, and the Sikhs (these last being only 2,000,000 of the 19,000,000 who inhabited the Punjab in the census of 1867), have all their separate characteristics, yet these are by no means obvious to the casual observer. Again, if we come to the matter of scenery, there is not much that can be advanced in favour of the land of the five rivers. From Delhi to Peshawur stretches a vast plain, fairly covered with arable soil, thriving hamlets, and flourishing gardens; but there is little to relieve the sameness of the extensive table-land, which towards Mooltan, and indeed over a very considerable proportion of the country, fades away into a waterless and unprofitable desert.

The subdivision of Kooloo is made up, as I before remarked, of the subdistricts of Kooloo, Lahoul, and Spiti; all placed under the immediate charge of an Assistant-Commissioner, who has the administrative care and is also entrusted with certain judicial functions.

The three minor divisions of Seoraj, Wuzeeri Rupi, and the Upper Beas Valley, form what we may term Kooloo; but I propose to confine my remarks for the most part to the latter, namely, the Upper Beas Valley. Not that Wuzeeri Rupi and Seoraj are not also worthy of note—for indeed they are—but because they are perhaps less so than the other tracts I shall touch on; and I must perforce condense as much as possible.

A glance at the map will show how either side of the Upper Beas Valley is hemmed in with mountains, which gradually attain a greater elevation as they near the Rohtung

Range that runs athwart it towards the north. The direct road from the plains of the Punjab, which is also the Central Asian route, winds from Kangra, at the foot of the Himalayas, through the Kangra district, across the state of Mundee, and descends by the Bubboo Pass (10,500 feet) into the town of Sooltanpore, from which point we ascend the Upper Beas Valley. The Bubboo is a wealth of richest forest to its summit; but in the other passes, which are more lofty, such as the Malanna (12,000), and the Humta (15,200), even the scrub-jungle that has fought for place as long as vegetation was a possibility, dies away altogether, and is succeeded by mighty crests of rock, battlemented with eternal snow. On the left or west side of the river-way there are also passes over the mountains, but these are seldom used even by the people of the district.

The general aspect of the valley is, as you will imagine, something very unlike what one may find in the plains of India.

The River Beas, springing from a huge rock of limestone on the summit of the Rohtung Pass, tears down the mountain side with impetuous fury, and descending lower, plunges into a deep chasm, flanked by precipitous barriers of rock, not 20 feet apart, and often almost touching. Below, at a depth of over 100 feet, roar the wild waters, as they dash with impotent fury against the sides of the almost subterranean passage that extends for some 300 yards. At the actual foot of the pass the Beas is joined by the Beash Khund, called the Serohi in the maps, and from this point to Sooltanpore, some 25 miles in all, its volume is added to by many feeders.

The river and the valley are in perfect harmony. Sweeping down in grand lines come the mountains, covered almost to their summits with dense pine woods, while ever and anon are to be seen the hamlets of the peasantry, embowered in groves of mighty cedars, the Swiss-like architectural details of the houses bringing to one's mind scenes very far remote from the East. From the river's bank rise successive terraces of cultivated fields of rich green rice; but the sameness is relieved by the luxuriant growth of underwood that breaks the hard lines of uniformity, and thus the waving crops become but an additional feature in the landscape. On every side the giant mountains rear their snowy peaks. To the north, over the Rohtung Pass, can be seen the jagged twin crests of Gaphan, 19,000 feet above the sea; to the north-east are the Humta Spurs, lorded over by Deotiba, 20,417 feet in elevation; and to the west the Burra Bunghal heights, never entirely divested of snow throughout the year. Below, bisecting the valley, sweeps the Beas, bounding over rock and boulder in noisy strength, its silvery tide frequently quite concealed by the umbrageous forest that adorns

its banks—here pausing in peaceful quiet or gliding onwards with a murmuring ripple, and anon racing round some pretty sylvan island, joining its waters again on the further side; and rolling, tumbling, and frothing in many an eddy, whirlpool and rapid, it fights its way past Sooltanpore, where at last it moderates its impetuosity.

Looking down the valley from Menalee, most enchanting views meet us on every side. Mountains rise over mountains, the great army of cedars becoming more and more scattered as the higher altitudes are approached, till there they disappear and snowy ridges break the skyline; nearer, are thick forests of pine and oak, that hold their own with a tenacious grasp on every knoll and coign of vantage, descending in serried phalanxes into the vales beneath, broken or rather relieved by splintered masses of rock, or more pleasantly by picturesque villages hiding like coy beauties in the woodland, that veils and yet enhances their rural charms. Forest, waterfall, headland, and river are blended together in the happiest manner by the lavish hand of nature, which seems to have swept all the most winning aspects from the surrounding districts, but to lavish them on this fair land.

Leaving the Upper Beas Valley we ascend the Rohtung Pass—the first serious opposition that meets the traveller on his journey to Ladakh, or Eastern Turkestan. The ascent from the Kooloo side is steep, but one can ride the whole way, the passage occupying about four or five hours. The summit of the pass is a flat level, half a mile in breadth, and it is the march across this, over a mile in all, which, at such an elevation, 13,500 feet, becomes so very trying at certain seasons of the year. It was on the Rohtung that, in 1863, about a hundred labourers engaged on the works on the Lahoul side, were caught in a terrible storm when returning to their homes. Numbed with the icy cold, and buried in the freezing drifts, no less than seventy-two victims miserably perished. I do not, however, desire to give an impression that this pass is a dangerous one. Far from it; I have crossed it with ladies several times in ease and safety, and, with common precautions, there is no cause for alarm.

We must now enter Lahoul, a very different tract of country to the one just quitted. Looking downwards from the top of the Rohtung we see a sterile land lying at our feet, through which courses the Chundra or Chenab, that seems, at this height, with its chalky tide, to be a mere wreath of snow in the vale below us. The forests, the hamlets, the terraced fields, have all disappeared, and in their places are precipitous hillsides, for the most part even destitute of grass, and furrowed

deep with the accumulations of ice, which have lapped over from the tremendous glaciers that join the peaks together with their adamantine hands.

The mean elevation of Lahoul is about 11,000 feet above sea-level. A glance at a good map of the region will show that there are two rivers springing from the Bara Lacha Pass—the Chenab and the Bagha, the latter joining the Chenab at Tandee after a course of 45 miles. The whole of the interior space between these streams may not inaptly be termed a vast ice-bed, broken here and there by lofty heights of impassable rock and snow. And here the mountains attain to a very considerable height, one of the peaks standing 21,373 feet above the sea-level, and below this towering pinnacle stretch out two glaciers, each over 12 miles in length.

But on both sides of the Bagha, as also of the Chenab, the mountains completely hem in the vales; and, perhaps, to impart a correct idea of the country, I cannot do better than follow the course of the Chenab as it sweeps through Lahoul. The Chenab or Chundra, as it is called up there, rises in the Bara Lacha Pass 16,221 feet above sea-level, takes first a south-easterly course of over 30 miles, and then turns to the north-west to meet the Bagha at Tandee, 80 miles from its source. Leaping from a bed of snow on the south-eastern slopes of the Bara Lacha, the Chundra is, from its commencement, a stream of some size. It passes through a totally barren land, where there are no signs of life, the solemn mountains clad in eternal snow lying on its either flank; and thus ushered into existence under such awe-inspiring auspices, it dashes its foaming waters by glacial banks of snow, vast reaches of grand and decomposed rock, and here stretching into a mighty flood, again subsides to a more stealthy strength, as its icy tide flows onward through a country famed but for sterility, and that colossal grandeur that can only be imparted by vast mountains. Here no villages adorn its banks, no attempts at cultivation, no signs of human life, are to be met with, and nothing greets the eye but the never-ending and monotonous cliffs, which are lapped by the fierce stream as it rushes in wild fury against its banks. Now widening out, the Chundra passes the remains of the Shigri glacier, which some eighty years ago spread across the river and dammed it up, causing what is known as the cataclysm of the Chundra. Leaving the Rohtung peaks behind, some signs of man's habitation are at last to be seen, and, as we advance, villages squalid and forlorn appear, which, on our nearing the junction with the Bagha, become more worthy of remark, surrounded as they are by scanty trees, and a fair proportion of arable land.

The scenery along the banks of the Bagha is so similar to

that of the Chundra Valley, that it need not be here specially referred to. We have now seen two of the valleys, and there remains but a third, which I will also briefly notice. Crossing the Humta Pass from Kooloo, we find ourselves in the Upper Chundra Valley; and marching up this bleak country, taking with us supplies of firewood and provisions to last for a week, we ascend the Koonzum Pass, 14,800 feet, and, emerging from that, enter Spiti, a valley, if anything, more hemmed in by mountains than even Lahoul—not one of the seven passes leading out of the country being under 14,000 feet. In Lahoul trees are to be met with, and, indeed, it can boast of two pine-forests, while the pencil-cedar and the willow are not uncommon; but in Spiti we must be prepared for an almost total absence of arboriculture. The chief stream is the Spiti, which, with a very broad bed, and in many channels, flows far below the alluvial terraces, that can be fed above by ducts brought from the beds of snow on the hill-sides. The main elevation of the Spiti Valley is over 12,000 feet, and several of its villages stand 14,000 feet above sea-level. The landscape views are very grand and striking. From the valley, which is more open than Lahoul, the mountains ascend in gentle slopes, the long reaches of river and bare hill-side dying away into indefinable distance, or being lost in a superb back-ground of snow-capped heights. Such an extent of barren desolation, so totally wanting in all the tenderer aspects to be met with in Kooloo, cannot but forcibly impress the imagination of the tourist, who seems, on entering this land of apparently utter sterility, to have at last penetrated the remotest regions of the inhabited world.

One of the most curious features of Spiti is its inaccessibility, for it can only be entered by passes; and one of these—the Parang La—is the loftiest, I believe, in British territory, standing, according to the measurement of Mr. Theobald, junior, who crossed it on August 13, 1861, at 19,132 feet above the level of the sea. This pass is much used by traders between Ladakh and Spiti, and occasionally by tourists proceeding from Simla to the Pangong Lake. "The crest of the Parang La is," says Mr. Theobald, "a rocky ridge of vertical limestone strata, forming a gap between high snowy peaks on either hand. Below stretches a fine glacier, that fills up the valley beneath; but few crevasses exist in this glacier, which can be crossed without difficulty, the track afterwards creeping along the chasm that yawns between the mountain side and the glacier. The Parang La is open from June till October, but is dangerous at all times, being very liable to sudden and severe snow-storms."

*Climate.*— The climates of the three valleys, as may be

conceived, differ materially. In Kooloo the spring, summer, and autumn are remarkably genial and agreeable seasons, and although the winter-snows fall heavily in the upper parts of the Beas River, in the lower portion of this district the inclemencies of winter are hardly known. The soil in Kooloo, except in the higher tracts, yields two crops annually. The main crops are opium, rice, tobacco, wheat, Indian corn, barley, and amaranth; but almost any description of grain or vegetable grows to perfection. Fruits—such as the apricot, peach, quince, apple, walnut, and strawberry—are common, and are all good; and there are many others that grow wild, and are held in favour by the people. Nor should I forget to mention the Kooloo tea-plantations, covering about three hundred acres in all, the out-turn of these gardens being justly held in high repute in India, the leaf produced having a flavour quite equal to the best China samples.

In Lahoul spring commences in April, but the snow lies deep in the loftier valleys till near the close of that month. The summer is hot while it lasts, and the rainfall is always very trifling. In September the winter frosts set in, and from the end of December till April the entire country is covered with snow, and almost completely shut out from the rest of the world. The climate of Lahoul may be considered a very dry and bracing one, but towards the sources of the Bagha and Chundra the winds are bitterly cold, blowing like a hurricane all day, and subsiding altogether at night. There is only one annual crop in Lahoul. Wheat is but rarely reared, barley and buckwheat being the commonest cereals. The Moravian missionaries, whose mission-house is at Kielung, where they reside all the year round, and to whose kindly hospitality all travellers can bear the most willing record, have introduced nearly every kind of vegetable. But the people are too lazy to profit by this good example, and are content to put up with the tap-roots, and such-like esculents. Of fruits, there are a few wild strawberries, cherries, and gooseberries; and apricots are sparsely grown, as are walnuts, in the lower Chundra Valley below Tandee.

In Spiti the seasons are very similar to those in Lahoul, but here the winter is longer, and the cold more intense; and, being out of the range of the regular monsoons, the rainfall is quite nominal. The climate is a singularly invigorating one, and at first somewhat trying to those unused to it, and the fierce icy winds make travelling anything but a pleasure in the more northerly portion of the district. The main crops in Spiti are a fine hexagonal wheat, peas, mustard, and two kinds of barley. Of fruits there are none.

*Language.*—In Kooloo the dialect in common use is formed

out of Sanskrit, a hill patois, and Oordoo. In Lahoul there are four languages—1st, the true Thibetan; 2nd, Boonung, half Thibetan, but having a grammar of its own; 3rd, Manchat, made up of Thibetan, Hindee, and a local patois; and 4thly, Teenunn, in which are Thibetan, Manchat, Boonung, and a few Hindu and Persian words. Each of these languages have their separate localities. In Spiti the dialect is pure Thibetan, hardly ten men speaking or understanding Oordoo, the common language of the Punjab. And even the head man, or Nono, of Spiti (whose likeness I sketched whilst in his district), can only express himself in Thibetan.

*Physiognomy.*—The people of Kooloo partake largely of the distinguishing features of the Hindus of the Plains. The men are of a medium height, and are strongly built, with intelligent and rather pleasing faces; but in character they are for the most part crafty, dissolute, and lazy. The women are in many cases remarkably pretty, and their picturesque dress sets off their good looks to great advantage.

The Lahoulees are not a comely people; both sexes are short, and the females may be said to bear off the palm for ugliness, the Mongolian origin of the race being evidenced in many cases by the oblique eyes, flat face, and large mouth. In Spiti the men are stout, well-built fellows, and the women are also strongly framed. The great majority of the Spiti folk resemble veritable Calmuks, and are, according to our views, hideously ugly.

*Dress.*—In Kooloo, the men wear a loose grey woollen coatee, with wide trousers, and a cap of rolled cloth that frequently has a patch of red at the top, and this description of cap is in use also among the women in some of the higher villages. In the Upper Beas Valley the costume of the females is sufficiently peculiar to be deserving of description. The body dress consists of a large plaid gathered in at the waist by a smaller cloth, and fastened across the chest by skewers connected by chains. The use of the chignon is not yet appreciated among these simple mountaineers, but neither do they despise all adventitious aids to showing off their good looks. The hair of a rich brown is swept from the face, gathered into a roll at the back, and then bound round with fillets of red worsted. What hangs below is woven into a long worsted tail that reaches to the ground, and ends in a sort of tassel, but this tail is caught up and carelessly wound round a small light-coloured cap that is jauntily placed on the head. The women of the highest castes never wear the cap, their head-gear consisting merely of a brilliant red, yellow, or blue kerchief; but in either case a great profusion of ornaments in the way of

silver jewellery, and rough stones, are worn. In the summer neither sex wear shoes. In Lahoul and Spiti the costumes in use are, as might be expected from the greater rigour of the climate, much warmer than those adopted in Kooloo. The Lahoulee men and women dress in a long loose dark-coloured cloth, and both sexes wear trousers. The women are bare-headed, but have, by way of ornament, on the top of the head, a curious small silver saucer, garnished with silver and gold beads, and with turquoises.

In Spiti the clothing, although rough, is of the very strongest and firmest material. The men go about in a long grey coat, turned up in some instances at the sleeves with red, and a crimson shawl is commonly fastened over the shoulders, the head-dress being either a skull cap or a species of bag; specimens of all which I brought home. Trousers are worn by both sexes, and the ends of these are tucked into very clumsy-looking leather boots of home manufacture. The women affect a darker cloth than do the men, and they wear a very large quantity of jewellery, besides the *perak*, a loose flap of red cloth extending from the forehead to the waist; this is studded with coarse turquoises or coral. The hair of the Spiti belle demands a great deal of her time, and there, instead of it being the fashion for the ladies to invite each other to spend a long morning and bring their work, they combine the sociable and the useful, and profitably spend their spare hours in arranging their locks, a somewhat troublesome task, consisting as it does in plaiting out innumerable braids, which are deftly arranged over the forehead and then caught up behind. Over each ear is worn a lappet or flap of cloth covered with dyed wool, this apparatus being fastened to the braids of hair. The Buddhist monks in Spiti and Lahoul wear a red or yellow dress, according to their sect, and are generally bareheaded. Each Spiti peasant carries his steel pipe, brass strike-light called a chuk-muk, and tobacco-pouch, and in the folds of his coat are to be found his wooden cup, used in eating, and a sheathed knife.

*Houses.*—In Kooloo a farmer's house, made in alternate layers of timber and stone, is a very picturesque affair, with its gabled roofs of slate or wood, and overhanging verandahs. Usually there are only two storeys, the lower one being kept for the stalling of cattle, a system also adopted in Lahoul and Spiti, the upper rooms alone being reserved for the proprietor and his belongings. In the early summer the cut corn is to be seen lying loosely about the courtyards, or dangling in great sheaves from the verandahs, which are crowded with the overplus of the ricks below. As summer changes to autumn, the rich green

grass is strewn over each roof and flat surface, mixed with the yellow Indian corn, that is spread in ruddy layers on every house-top. Crowding up from the enclosures, and climbing the rude scantling, come the pumpkins with their vast emerald-green leaves and enormous golden flowers, and pausing on the roof-tree to deposit their tribute fruit, they pass over and descend by friendly poles and verandahs across the road, to meet some other greenery of wild beans or vines that may have trailed up the adjoining tenement. Within, the women and children are to be seen engaged in household duties, or leaning over the quaint verandahs eyeing their friends below employed in turning about the hay, or pounding with a will at the rice cleansing, or pressing oil from the kernels of apricots, peaches, or vegetable herbs.

In Lahoul there is but little to deserve notice, the houses as a rule being poor and meagre-looking, and so we may pass on to Spiti. In this bleak valley, where the snow-fall is so heavy, we find the houses exceptionally comfortable and substantial, the walls being of sun-dried bricks, 1½ feet long, 8 inches wide, and 6 deep. Below they stall the cattle and stack the supplies of fodder for the winter, and in the upper apartments reside the goodman and his family. The roofs are all flat, and are covered with layers of dried brushwood for winter use, these accumulations of bushes presenting a curious appearance, something like an *abattis*. The Spiti men are very kind-hearted, good-humoured, and hospitable, and rank highest of all the hill people I have met with in good-natured simplicity, thrift in conducting their affairs, and in faithfulness to those who have occasion to utilize their services.

In Kooloo we find a debased Hinduism built up on a superstructure of Buddhism and snake and tree worship. The temples that for the most part have their regularly-feed priests, are of three different sorts: the cone-shaped stone temple, the pagoda-roofed temple, and the pent-roofed temple. The former are very similar to what may be seen in the plains of India; and, although of stone, but few can claim an age of more than 250 years; the pagoda temples are, as are probably the pent-roofed ones, but relics of Buddhism, as is abundantly manifested by the lofty poles erected without their walls, that answer to the same Buddhist symbols in the Ceylon temples of the present day, and by the Buddhistical carvings of wheels, animals, and snakes, the worship of which it is known Buddhism incorporated with its own religious services. These two last descriptions of temples are of great age, and are not a little curious in an artistic and archæological point of view, being

very massively put together, and run up with a skill which no longer can be said to exist in Kooloo, where, indeed all handicrafts are in a very backward condition.

In Kooloo, Buddhism has quite died out, leaving, as I have said, a substratum of tree and serpent worship engrafted on Hinduism. In Lahoul, however, there is Buddhism and Hinduism mixed, and with these two creeds is commingled a species of demon worship termed long paechos, in the rites of which neither Brahmins nor Buddhist lamas will assist. But in Lahoul the Buddhist believes in Hinduism, and the Hindu in Buddhism, and in the event of any of the better class requiring the aid of the supreme power in the matter of a good harvest or a fortunate speculation in trading, the ministers of both creeds are called upon to invoke the deity. The priests in Buddhistical countries are, as I suppose most know, termed lamas, or more properly *lambas*, and while the eldest son succeeds to the estate, every other son becomes a *lamba*, so that the priestly class must always be in the majority. These lambas are supposed to be celibates; but in Lahoul, Buddhism is not strictly acted up to, and many of the younger sons marry. In Spiti, pure Buddhism reigns, and here every younger son is a lamba.

In Lahoul there are only seven real lambas who devote themselves solely to religion, but there are 1100 lambas in all, who for the most part are married and are "religious" only in name. In 1868 there were over seventy nuns in Lahoul, and one of these could actually calculate an eclipse! The parents decide when the girl is young if she is to be a nun, and if she enter a religious order, her hair is cut short and she wears a red cap, and resides during the winter in the monastery, generally ending by marrying one of the monks!

Marriage in nearly every country is connected with religion, but in Kooloo marriage is merely a civil contract. In one house you may find a man with only one wife, in the next there may be three wives to one husband. Marriage, in fact, resolves itself in the main into a question of means; those who can afford it have more wives than one, for women in the hills are valuable as farm labourers, and the greater the number of wives, the more work can be got through.

In Lahoul, polyandry is a custom in full force, and three or four brothers as a rule have only one wife between them, as is the case in most Buddhist countries, though strangely enough not in Spiti, where the husband has only one wife whom he marries by a regular religious ceremony, whereas in Lahoul there is no ceremony at all.

I have referred to the Kooloo temples, and I cannot altogether omit mention of the Buddhist monasteries in Lahoul and

Spiti. In the former district these are few in number and small in size, but in Spiti there are five large *lamaserys* besides numerous offshoots. The monastery of Kee, for instance, accommodates nearly 250 monks, who reside within the sacred walls in winter, and stay during the summer with their parents or brothers, working in the fields, or employed in carrying travellers' goods. These monasteries have their regular heads or abbots, and the higher ecclesiastical titles can only be obtained by the candidates proceeding in person to either Shigatzee or Lhassa. The symbols of this strange religion, which inculcates peace and goodwill to all men, and prohibits all destruction of life, are numerous and interesting, and some of these I brought away with me, together with a somewhat curious box of Buddhist gods which I purchased in Lahoul, and which I was informed was brought from Lhassa, a city three months journey from Spiti.

In close connection with the religion of the people of Kooloo, to which tract I again turn, are the fairs or melas held in honour of the local gods, which fairs are however utilized more as a means of affording amusement than from any deep sense of religion. At these gatherings, nothing is sold except a few bright beads or coloured scarfs; people do not attend the melas to spend money, but to dance and sing and thoroughly enjoy themselves; and, as far as my experience goes, I can affirm they all manage to do that in such a manner that there is no room for the reproach launched against us Britons, *i. e.* that we take our pleasures sadly.

The scene is a highly attractive one. The village divinity is brought from his temple or god-house, decked with a gold mask and tricked out with petticoats, peacocks' feathers and flowers; then, placed in his *rath* or sedan-chair, he is carried through the dense woodland preceded by men beating drums and breathing villanous music from enormous trumpets. Behind follow the males in procession, every one being decorated with garlands. Arrived at the temple, generally situated in some beautiful dell in the forest, and lying under the giant cedars, the rath is placed on one side and a space is cleared for dancing within the sacred precincts. The musicians set themselves in the centre, and the dancers move round them in a circle, and as the noise of the pipes and drums increases, the performers work themselves into a proper enthusiasm, and all following the motions of a fugleman, commence a species of nautch-like movement, the wands with which they are all provided being waved simultaneously as the leader may direct. The gestures are not ungraceful; they are the contrary—grace carried to absurdity, and every dancer endeavours in the most

ludicrous manner to excel in pose and the elegance of his attitudes. All are dressed in their very best clothes, and the women don every particle of finery they can lay their hands on. Both sexes are literally covered with garlands, and it is altogether a very brave show and brilliant spectacle. As the men dance, the women and children in evident admiration sit gazing down on them from every house-top whence a good point of view can be obtained, and a more striking picture than is at this time presented can hardly be conceived. Meanwhile the priests, *i. e.* Brahmins, are not idle. They take off their upper garments, advance with a sidelong step, going through certain mummeries with incense and naked swords, and after gently chastising themselves with chains, taking very good care not to hit too hard, they are then supposed to be properly inspired, and stand like Delphic oracles, ready to answer any questions the gaping crowd may put to them.

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X.—*Expedition from Burma, viâ the Irrawaddy and Bhamo, to South-Western China.* By Major E. B. Sladen, H.M. Political Resident, Burma.

*Read* June 26th, 1871.

THE Expedition which I had the honour to command left Mandalay by steamer on 13th January, 1868. One of our objects in proceeding by steamer was to test the navigability of the Irrawaddy for steam-traffic beyond or above the capital. Hitherto no steamer had ever ascended the river as far north as Bhamo, and the Burmese Government had publicly declared that no steamer could possibly do so at that time, or during certain seasons of the year, when the river was said to be at its lowest depth. Our steamer, however, the draught of which did not exceed 3' feet, reached Bhamo without difficulty of any kind in river navigation; and the result of our trip proves generally that the Irrawaddy is navigable for steamers of moderate draught at all seasons of the year, as far north as Bhamo, a distance of 900 miles from our starting-point at the Port of Rangoon, and 300 miles above the royal capital of Mandalay.

Throughout its whole course from Mandalay to Bhamo the river presents fresh scenes of ever-varying beauty; but the geographical interest of the journey culminates at the gorges or defiles which occur at two points in this portion of the Irrawaddy's mid-course through Upper Burma.