

## CHAPTER V

### BHOPAL FAMILY DIFFERENCES

Her Highness the Begam of Bhopal—Sedition and loyalty in India—Kudsia Begam's life in danger—The brave Sikander Begam holds the gates of the city—Barracks built by the Duke of Wellington—A fire made "with stones"—A treaty between Bhopal and the British Government—A stern disciplinarian—Help during the Mutiny—Loyalty rewarded—The origin of firing salutes—Difference between Nawabs and Maharajahs—A valiant first minister—An unsatisfactory second marriage—Husbands on approval—A Purdah interview—A letter from the Viceroy—Intrigues and persecutions—A wedding ceremony—Settlements and promises—The Prince of Wales visits India—What he said to Sultan Jahan—Family differences—The Delhi Durbar—Lord William Beresford's new swear words—A sad Christmas Day—Sidik Khan's swelled head—A warning.

ONE of the most arrestingly interesting people that I have had the pleasure of knowing is Her Highness Nawab Sultan Jahan Begam of Bhopal. To give a satisfactory account of her life and character would fill a volume—a big volume.

There is no room here for more than a brief sketch of her life, but too little is known of her loyalty, goodness, and charm. She has lately abdicated in favour of her only surviving son.

We hear a good deal about sedition in India, but little of the loyalty of some of its rulers and inhabitants. This is a pity, for we have mothers of Empire out there as well as in Great Britain. For the purpose of making her history clear I give a list of the chief characters that may have to appear in my little sketch.

Most Indian titles and names are a little difficult to English people, therefore I hope I may be forgiven

and not considered disrespectful for having abbreviated them at times so as not to weary my readers.

#### CHARACTERS

My subject : Her Highness Nawab Sultan Jahan Begam of Bhopal, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., G.B.E.

Her husband : Nawab Ahmed Ali Khan (died 1902).

Her mother : Nawab Shah Jahan Begam (died 1901).

Husbands—

(1) Biki Mohammed Khan,

(2) Sidik Hassan Khan.

Grandmother : Nawab Sikander Begam (died 1868).

Her husband : Nawab Jahangir Mohammed Khan.

Great-grandmother on female side : Nawab Kudsia Begam (died 1881).

Her husband : Nazar Mohammed Khan.

Sons of my subject, Sultan Jahan—

(1) Colonel Nawab Sir Mohammed Nasrulla Khan (died September, 1924, leaving two sons and one daughter).

(2) General Nawab Obaidulla Khan (died March, 1924, leaving two sons).

(3) Nawabzada Hamidulla Khan, the present ruler.

His wife, Princess Maimoona Sultan Shah Bano Begam.

Three daughters.

Her Highness Sultan Jahan Begam, mother of the present and lately made ruler, is a remarkable woman, clever, agreeably broad-minded, has considerable knowledge of ancient history, especially Arabic and Persian, while her knowledge of the Old Testament puts most of us to shame.

She is most lovable, dear to all who know her, and should be dear to Great Britain, if only for her loyalty and that of her ancestors to our Crown. Her life has been full of difficulties : oppression in her early days, sad bereavements later in life. All met with pluck and religious faith in the Ruler of all.

Her Highness has written several books; in one she gives some account of her own life. But it is not

easy to judge the merits or demerits of a picture that is too near; a little distance is required to appreciate its lights and shades.

It is somewhat invidious writing about the living, but I always think it is better and more Christlike to say kind and appreciative things about people while they are with us (when we truthfully can) rather than wait until they have gone and it is too late to raise a grateful smile or heal a hidden wound, and then to shower kind words, tears, and flowers in extravagant profusion. So let us say kind and healing things while the folk are still with us.

Her Highness thinks the history of her life and of Bhopal will not be interesting to anyone outside Bhopal, but there I differ from her. To understand all that the rulers of that State have done for the Empire and how past history has affected Sultan Jahan we must glance back into history to the work of her ancestors.

Bhopal is the second largest Mohammedan State in India, lying south-west of Allahabad, owning a population of 660,000 and an acreage of 7,964 square miles, the revenue being 75 lakhs of rupees, or, in English money, £ 562,500 per annum.

The history of this State should be divided into two periods: the first commencing with the life and conquest of Nawab Dost Mohammed Khan, the founder of the dynasty in 1723; and the second covering the period when the British Government took over control about 1820. But all that is necessary for my purpose is to go back to the time when Sikander Begam, grandmother of my subject, reigned. This must be done in order to understand the atmosphere, rules, and etiquettes which helped to form the character of Sultan Jahan Begam, also to realise the loyalty of the Bhopal rulers.

The decay of the Mogul Empire in 1803 was followed by a period of war, murder, and oppression. It was during this time that Nawab Kudsiā Begam, great-grandmother of Sultan Jahan, was born, and amidst all this strife she was reared and reigned, her life being anything but secure. Twice her own relations tried to assassinate her.

Once the would-be assassin went into the room where she slept, and, turning out the light, went towards the bed. The Begam guessed what was coming, and, crouching down in her bed, threw her arms up over her head by way of some sort of protection. Hardly had she done this when a sword came slashing down on her arms. She knew that if she cried out the man would know that she was not killed, and would finish her off, so she made no sound, and was left bleeding and supposed to be dead. Only her astonishing pluck saved her.

Sikander Begam was daughter of this brave woman. Everybody knows at that time and up to 1857, though India belonged to Great Britain, and we were nominally rulers of it, the administration was left in the hands of the East India Company, which consisted of a number of merchants who formed themselves into a company, under a Charter granted by Queen Elizabeth in 1600. This Charter was exclusive, prohibiting the rest of the community from trading within the limits assigned to the Company. In 1612 they obtained permission from the native princes to establish factories in numerous places—Calcutta in 1645 and Bombay in 1665.

Charles II. had, in 1662, given the Company permission to make peace or war on the native princes—a privilege of which the Company certainly availed itself for about two hundred years. This Company remained in power until the time of the Mutiny of



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1857, after which the British Government took over control.

Bhopal is in the centre of the Mahratta country, and the Mahrattas cast covetous eyes upon the State soon after the dynasty had been established. At first they delivered a few pinpricks, and then besieged the city. In fact, the Mahrattas were becoming a menace to the whole of India.

There was no peace for anybody until the Duke of Wellington, then Sir Arthur Wellesley, with ten thousand men broke up the Mahratta power by the Battle of Assaye in August, 1803. At the same time Lord Lake defeated another Mahratta army in the Battle of Lashwari, near Aligarh, in the United Provinces. And so Bhopal was saved by the British army.

At that time Sikander Begam was ruler, and all that Bhopal could muster by way of defence were a few brave Pathans (pronounced Patarns). So she gathered together her ladies-in-waiting and female attendants; with them she personally held the gates of the city against the enemy until help came.

After the Battle of Assaye, Wellington, wishing to recruit the health and strength of his exhausted army, chose Betul as a place of rest, about one hundred miles from Bhopal. There he built barracks in which he summered his troops. These same barracks are used to-day by the civil police. There was evidently no "jerry-building" in those days.

This place Betul seems to have been lost sight of up to 1902, when it became famous, and in a curious way. A certain Colonel Cunningham, civil surgeon at Lahore, a big-game shot, having obtained leave, betook himself for a shooting jaunt to Parasia, in the Chindwa district of the Central Provinces.

One night, when far from camp, he found it necessary to bivouac; it was very cold. Before long he

saw his coolies making a blazing fire without the usual pile of wood and sticks, so he asked them how it was done, what the fire was made of, and was told, "With stones."

The next morning he asked to see the stones that had made such a good fire, and then discovered it was coal, and that out-cropping coal was spread over a large area. He at once took out a prospecting licence, formed a small syndicate, and joined up with Messrs. Shaw Wallace, a well-known firm of Calcutta merchants, who organised and started the Pench Valley Coal Company, which proved highly satisfactory, paying 50 per cent. for a long time, and is, I believe, at present paying 20 per cent.

This discovery proved of immense value to Lord Kitchener in later years, as will be seen presently.

But to return to Bhopal. The first ruler who succeeded in restoring peace and order was a woman, the wonderful Sikander Begam, and we need not go further back to find Bhopal's loyalty to the British Crown. It is the only State in India ruled by a woman, and the only State that has never fought against the British forces.

Sikander Begam's father had died when she was only a little more than a year old. Some say his death was caused by accident, others that it was by design; in either case, it was a bullet that ended his life. He had only reigned three years and nine months, and left Kudsia Begam a widow aged eighteen, with an only child, the Sikander Begam, who defended the city gates.

It was this father who made the 1818 treaty between Bhopal and the British Government, which is of value, and it is now before me, but too long to quote in full.

There is a curious inscription on the tomb of this wise man who secured the treaty, and it is still quite

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plain to see; it runs: "Nazir-ud-Daula, the incomparable, died an instant martyr to the discharge of a pistol."

It will be allowed that this is fairly vague, and implicates nobody.

With Sikander Begam's husband we have nothing to do. He was, we are told, a worthless person, and his young daughter, Shah Jahan, became ruler; but being very young her mother, Sikander, acted as Regent, and continued to do so up to the time of her death, as Shah Jahan refused to rule in her mother's lifetime.

Sikander was a stern disciplinarian and keen reformer, living in dangerous and anxious times, born during the darkest days of Indian history, surrounded by men who, though brave, were ignorant and illiterate. The first thirty years of her life were spent amid scenes of conflict and clash of arms, when the air was hot with war and rumours of war, at a time when, for the permanency of the Administration, it was necessary that bodies of armed men should be employed whose loyalty could be relied upon.

For this reason the early rulers gathered round themselves a number of military chiefs and nobles, each of whom supported a band of armed retainers, who in peace times were their personal servants, and in times of war fought under their leadership.

Sikander Begam thought it desirable to alter this, for the State was a nest of warlike and quarrelsome feudatories, who regarded the new era of peace and order under her rule with displeasure, wishing nothing better than to be allowed to live the same wild and exciting lives that their fathers enjoyed before them.

The remodelling of the State army was no light task for a woman, but she achieved her object. Out of a scattered, rebellious force of disorderly men came

a proper State force, in which every man was a servant of the State instead of being servants of the nobles they might be serving. They were paid directly from the Treasury, and military instructions were given on the lines employed by the British army. The artillery, which had been badly equipped, was also reorganised.

It was due to this wise reform that in the calamitous year of 1857, when bloodshed, murder, and devastation consequent on the mutiny of the native army filled the greater part of Hindustan, the Bhopal State maintained itself in almost undisturbed tranquillity, and proved a valuable asset to this country. There certainly was at one time during the Mutiny a little wavering amongst some of the troops, owing to the bad example of other States; but the plucky Begam called her troops together and addressed them in person, telling them, with much earnestness, to be loyal and carry on the traditions of the State, after which she had little trouble with them.

The new army had not, however, been remodelled long enough entirely to withstand the evil influences which were abroad, and two nobles went over to the mutineers. Orders were at once given for their capture; one was secured, and his punishment was of such a nature that he had no further opportunity of treachery. What his punishment was I am not certain, but have several times been told that the man was impaled. Possibly he was, but whatever it may have been it had a most salutary effect. Together with that example and the Begam's address to her troops all now went well. The other noble traitor was never caught, but neither he nor anyone of his family has ever since been seen or heard of—and no questions were asked.

The firmness of Sikander Begam's rule and the faithfulness of her commander-in-chief not only

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quenched the smouldering unrest, but kindled a spirit of loyalty to the British Government. She did not cry peace, peace at any price, as has become the fashion in Great Britain, causing her to be laughed at by other countries, or the history of the Indian Mutiny might have borne a different complexion.

Not only did the Bhopal forces keep order at home, but they also crossed the frontier to help elsewhere. It was owing to the pluck and loyalty of this woman ruler that hundreds of European lives were saved that must otherwise have been lost in the wholesale massacre. All who had the chance fled to Bhopal for protection—and found it.

These faithful and kindly services were appreciated by the British Government, and were rewarded by gifts of land from rebel States and honours of various kinds, including a battery of horse artillery.

When this land was being handed over to the State of Bhopal, a salute of seven guns was fired to announce the honour and transfer. This saluting of guns is highly prized by Indian potentates, and I find that many people, including the potentates, State officials, and military men, both in India and elsewhere, have no idea how this honour originated.

The custom of firing guns by way of salute was originated at Augsburg, the authorities of which town ordered one hundred rounds of cannon to be discharged to salute the Emperor Maximilian on his triumphant return after his second campaign.

The artillery commander miscounted, with the result that one hundred and one rounds were fired; so Nuremberg, not to be outdone, also fired the same number (one hundred and one) of times when Maximilian visited that city, and thus a precedent was established, and one hundred and one guns became the recognised salute.



Salutes of fewer rounds for less exalted personages must have come into fashion soon after, for in the Elizabethan period the guns salute had become general, and was adopted in our navy, the regulations as to the number of guns to be fired quickly becoming a hard-and-fast rule.

Whether the custom spread from Europe to India or independently originated there does not seem to be quite clear, but it has been practised in the East for nearly three centuries, and each Indian prince or ruler can claim a salute by established custom. They are very jealous of the honour, prizing it highly, the number of rounds fired depending upon the status of the individual saluted.

The present salute for princes was decided and approved in Queen Victoria's Order in Council dated June 26, 1867. Sultan Jahan Begam of Bhopal is entitled to a salute of twenty-one guns within her own territory and nineteen in British India; that is to say, on official occasions. The highest salute for any Indian ruler is twenty-one guns, the Viceroy's salute being thirty-one guns.

I may mention here what I did not know until I went to India—namely, the difference between Nawabs and Maharajahs. It is important to understand this, for though always courteous when mistakes are made, the princes do not like being misnamed, and any mistake shows our ignorance.

All Maharajahs and Rajahs are Hindus and all Nawabs Mohammedans. No doubt many may think this a distinction without a difference, but it is really important.

There is so much of interest attached to Bhopal and its rulers that I am tempted to linger too long on its past history. But Sikander Begam must be my excuse, she was so wonderful a woman, and we must



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never forget all she did for us during the Mutiny and the loyalty she instilled into the hearts of her subjects.

This Begam had considerable help in all her reforms in the person of her First Minister, who answers to our Prime Minister. At that time railways, bicycles, and motor-cars were unknown in Bhopal, and this valiant First Minister, though by no means in his first youth, used to take long journeys, often to places like Sehore or Ashta, some hundred miles away, to attend to business of the State, and he always went riding on the back of a camel, starting at nine o'clock at night to transact his business, and making the return journey at three o'clock the following afternoon, reaching Bhopal the same night.

It speaks volumes for the camel, also for the back of the rider, remembering some of my own experiences on the backs of those sad, uncompromising-looking animals. It seems incredible, but it is a fact that this journey was sometimes undertaken twice a week!

Sikander Begam was carefully training her daughter, Shah Jahan, for whom she was acting Regent; and when the child was old enough, according to Indian ideas she selected a husband for her. It was then, and still is, the custom for Indian parents to decide who their children shall marry. The gentleman chosen on this occasion was Nawab Biki Mohammed Khan, and he was approved by the Indian Government, which has to be consulted. The marriage was celebrated on July 26, 1855.

This individual had already been married twice. His first wife died a year after her marriage, and there were strange stories of how it happened. The second wife presented him with four children; she was still living when he married Shah Jahan. An allowance was given to the discarded wife of one thousand rupees, and, as far as I can gather, she felt fully compensated.

Biki Mohammed Khan came of a famous clan in the Tirah country who had migrated from Afghanistan. He died comparatively early, leaving two daughters, the elder being Sultan Jahan, mother of the present lately appointed ruler. The other sister died when quite young from smallpox, though she had been vaccinated. An Indian doctor attended her, and mistook her very obvious malady for something else, and treated her for what he imagined might be the matter.

Shah Jahan, up to the time of her second marriage with Sidik Khan, had been very fond of her daughter, Sultan Jahan; but Sidik's influence was bad, and he did all he could to make his wife believe that her daughter wished to usurp her mother's rights. He also behaved badly to Kudsia Begam, his wife's grandmother. He wished to keep Sultan Jahan away from her, fearing the old lady might give and leave some of her property to her great-grandchild. Also he disliked Kudsia, knowing that she had not approved of Shah Jahan's second marriage, and neither had she approved of him.

So there was displeasure all round, the only people presumably who were pleased being Shah Jahan and Sidik.

Sikander was still Regent and devoted to her grandchild, looking well after her education. Remembering the unpleasant complications that had arisen in the past over some of the marriages in the family, she determined to be very particular in her choice of a husband for Sultan Jahan. Finding no suitable youth among her relations in the Bhopal State who were highly born, she had some likely children sent on approval from all parts of India. Their parents or guardians brought them for inspection. Eventually a highly born noble named Ahmad Ali Khan was selected as a husband for Sultan Jahan, both families were agreed as to the desirability of the alliance.

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To our English ideas the arranging of the marriages of these children seems strange, but the present Begam tells me that she considers it answers, as the parents know best what is likely to lead to happiness and be suitable in many ways.

Some of these betrothed children never see the proposed husbands until the wedding day. Sikander Begam had more enlightened views on this point, and when she had found the youth that she considered desirable for her grandchild, she brought them up together; they played together and were educated together. So they at any rate were not strangers.

There are many things to be taken into consideration when Mohammedans marry. The men are by law allowed four wives, thereby proving that the Prophet was a wise man, understanding the ethics of life better than our law-makers of to-day, for he realised that man is polygamous by nature and woman monogamous—by instinct.

At the present time (1926), owing to education and social reforms, not many Mohammedans have more than one official wife. Among the upper classes in India it is considered more important that the husband should be of good birth than that he should be rich, as they think good birth a surer guarantee for becoming conduct, and that inherited traditions will save him from many evils. It is for this reason that a son-in-law's pedigree is so carefully looked into. This is not always pleasant in the doing, but apparently it is one of the laws of Islam and must be obeyed.

Among the lower classes in India I have seen many betrothal ceremonies, when the poor little mites were walking solemnly and wistfully at the head of the procession, looking the picture of mystified sadness, their eyes painted round in black, caste-marks on their foreheads, jingling bangles on ankles and arms, with

beads round their necks, tied together for life, though probably not meeting again until years of puberty are reached, when with a crashing of tom-toms and other music they become man and wife. Love, sentiment, reciprocity, have nothing to do with the arrangement, not having been taken into consideration. These processions have often made me feel sad.

When only five years of age the daily routine in education was very exacting for one so young as Sultan Jahan. She had special teachers for English, Persian, Pushtu, handwriting, daily reading of the Koran (over which there were many tears), painting, riding, fencing, and many other things. The result is Her Highness is a highly cultivated and accomplished woman.

Sikander Begam died when Sultan Jahan was ten years old; after this she lived entirely with her mother, Shah Jahan, who now became ruler.

When Sultan Jahan was fifteen years old, her mother thought it was time that she should marry Ahmad Ali Khan, to whom she had been betrothed for so long. Endless correspondence passed between Bhopal and the Viceroy's Political Secretary concerning this marriage, for the Viceroy had to give his approval, and, as usual with Government offices, Shah Jahan had to wait a long time before she received any definite answer to her request for the Viceroy's approval of the marriage. At last the Political Agent wrote :

“Since this is an important affair, and one with which the welfare of Sultan Jahan Begam is closely connected, I should like to have an opportunity of hearing her approval from her own lips. The Viceroy is anxious that I should converse with her personally on the subject.”

“That,” said Shah Jahan, “is my wish also, for although her seal and signature have already manifested her wishes, it is better that you should meet her and gauge her sentiments yourself. I will retire, and she shall speak with you from behind the purdah.”

This was arranged, and Sultan Jahan was addressed through the curtain, where she could not be seen but could see who was speaking to her. The Agent, after a few ordinary remarks, said: “The document relating to your proposed marriage has been sent to me. May I ask if your seal and signature which it bears were placed there of your own free will?”

Speaking of this meeting later, Sultan Jahan said: “Although a verbal reply to this question was a considerable shock to my Oriental sense of modesty, yet, since my mother had told me that amongst Europeans and Mohammedans it was not a matter about which the least shame need be felt, I answered frankly that it was of my own accord, will, and pleasure that I had affixed my seal and signature to the marriage proposal.”

“Is it your wish that I should forward this document to His Excellency the Viceroy?”

There came in reply one little word, “Yes,” followed by silence.

The Agent then asked if there was anything else she wished to say?

“Only I request you to be good enough to convey my compliments to His Excellency and his daughter.”

The interview was thus ended.

Shortly after this came a letter from the Viceroy to the Begam in his own handwriting:

“To my well-beloved and respected Nawab Begam Sabaha. May Almighty God keep her under His protection.



“I much regret that owing to heavy work I have been unable to reply earlier to your letter of October 21, 1872, in which you request sanction for the marriage of your daughter Sultan Jahan Begam with Ahmad Ali Khan. I should have been glad, and I think it would have been for the advantage of the State, if a suitable choice could have been made from among the nobles of your own family. But inasmuch as you assure me that you know of none better fitted to be your son-in-law than Ahmad Ali Khan . . . and since Nawab Sultan Jahan herself approves of the choice that you have made, and has signified the same to my Agent at the personal interview which took place by my instructions—taking all these facts into consideration, I have no hesitation in giving my consent to the marriage, and I trust Ahmad Ali Khan will by his wisdom, his learning, his manners, and his habits show himself to be worthy of the high position he will occupy as the husband of the heir-apparent to the State of Bhopal, and that he will so conduct himself as to win your daughter's affection and respect, for it is only with this assurance that this important step meets with her full approval that my assent is now given.

“It is my earnest desire that this union may realise the advantages you anticipate from it, and that it may conduce to the lifelong happiness and prosperity of your daughter and the welfare of the State.

“Be assured that I am solicitous for your own health and welfare, in regard to which I beg you will from time to time keep me informed.”

So at last the matter was settled, and notice to that effect was sent to all concerned. Congratulations and presents poured in. Ahmad was now regarded as an important person; an orderly and a sowar (mounted



soldier) had to be in constant attendance on him. Shah Jahan gave orders that the wedding was not to take place for a year, so that the bridegroom might be watched and tested as to his character.

No doubt this order was given with the best intentions, but it did not lead to happiness for Ahmad, as Sidik, Shah Jahan's second husband, made the poor man's life a burden to him—he was, in fact, a sort of State prisoner, not allowed to see anyone or go out of doors without permission, allowed no recreation, either riding, hunting, or walking. Everything seemed to be done to annoy him, but it was borne with exemplary patience and self-control. A high price to pay for being engaged to the future ruler of Bhopal, and even then not from his own choice in the first place.

From the time that the engagement became known the usual Indian intrigues became abundant, and Sidik was highly mischievous.

When at last the wedding day arrived it was full of excitement for the bride, although, according to Indian custom, she took little part in the ritual and merriment; but there was the interest of watching the arrival of the guests, and the decorations could be seen from her private apartments in the palace.

When all the guests had arrived, they were taken into the guest chamber, where the gentlemen had seats on the right-hand side of a screened doorway, behind which the bride was seated. Only ladies were allowed to pass behind the screen.

The bridegroom then arrived in great state; servants in gorgeous liveries, covered with gold lace and with gold sticks in their hands, preceded him into the presence of the assembly. They announced his approach by chanting in a loud monotone his name, titles, and virtues, during which the band played the Bhopal State National Anthem.

Everybody arose from their seats to greet him. Their salutations were acknowledged with dignity. Like the male birds in the mating season, his was the finery and beautiful plumage. His coat was made of brightly coloured silk, and on his head a highly coloured turban. Round his neck hung pearls of great price, diamonds, and topazes. From a jewelled belt hung a splendid Isham sword. This dress was presented to him by the State of Bhopal, according to custom.

A melancholy chanting went on until the bridegroom was seated on a golden throne under a canopy of cloth embroidered with gold and silver.

After the reception the bridegroom and a half-brother went into the bride's apartment, she not being in purdah to them. According to Mohammedan law, they asked her if she were prepared to take Ahmad Ali Khan as her husband. Hearing that such was her wish, they withdrew, and as soon as the bridegroom was again seated he was asked the same question as to whether he wished to have Sultan Jahan as his wife.

He answered in one word, "Kabul," which means agreed. The marriage agreement was then read to him, and certain religious ceremonies followed. The bride's settlement was then announced, amounting to the sum of two crores of rupees; in English money, say, two million pounds.

All then cried aloud "Bismillah!" raising their hands above their heads, praying for happiness and prosperity for bride and bridegroom. Following this Ahmad had to sign a lengthy marriage settlement or agreement, which was witnessed by the Political Agent. In this document he had to promise all sorts of things, many of which could not be enforced and others quite unnecessary.

It is too lengthy to give verbatim, but amongst other things he promised that if he infringed any of its stipulations he would hold himself answerable to Her Highness the ruler, the Ministers of the State, and the political officer.

1. Under no circumstances would he change his religion, and if he did his marriage would be null and void.

2. He would not take a second wife without the approval and permission of Sultan Jahan; and all matters concerning the children, if any, were to be left entirely in the hands of their mother and grandmother.

3. That he would treat the officers of State and the nobles with respect and courtesy.

4. That he would pay two crores of rupees on demand, and to the best of his ability would be a good husband and love and cherish his wife.

5. He would endeavour to keep his expenditure within his income; failing this, his debts to be liquidated from his own property and not from the State.

6. Should there be any disagreement between himself and his wife, Her Highness should arrange for a decree of separation without any public proceedings.

After all that and a good deal more besides, the husband must have felt a very small person; but probably he understood how much was meant by it and how much it was worth.

He was of a happy nature; his wife described him as "gentle, courteous in manner, a simple and contented disposition, full of courage, a firm friend and generous foe, ever ready to succour those in distress and forgive those who did him wrong."

He was handsome, and displayed considerable tact in dealing with the many family quarrels, and these

often assumed large and complicated dimensions. But he kept himself aloof from them, and advised his wife to do the same.

The expenses of the wedding festivities were made up as follows: The bridegroom's outfit, Rs.1,63,787-7-9; the bride's trousseau, Rs.4,38,926-14-3; general expenses, Rs.59,796-14-3.

Kudsia Begam arranged a big gathering to greet the young couple and had beautiful presents ready for them, but Shah Jahan would not allow the invitation or the presents to be accepted.

Towards the autumn of 1875 India was excited by hearing that the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII.) was coming to visit the country. All vied with one another to make a good impression on His Royal Highness. More than a century had passed since the English had laid the foundation of the Eastern Empire, and during that time no King of England or Heir-Apparent had visited India.

Eastern races have from time immemorial been accustomed to see authority in the hands of a single individual, and look upon these individuals as the embodiment of power and dignity—in fact, their ideal. This forms part of their religious belief—an hereditary instinct, so to speak. Though British rule has brought in its train more freedom of thought and more latitude during the last fifty years, still, to the people of India the King is a hero and to be worshipped.

The Viceroy, then Lord Northbrook, arranged opportunities for the rulers and chief nobles to meet the Prince, for this was looked upon as an historical event. Lord Northbrook was nearing the end of his tenure, and was succeeded by Lord Lytton a little later

During this royal visit there was to be held at Cal

cutta on January 1, 1876, a Chapter of the Star of India. Her Highness Shah Jahan received an invitation, due to her as having the Grand Cross of the Order. The Political Agent engaged a house for her in Calcutta, and informed her that the rent would be paid by the Government, and they would supply all the necessary furniture. Rather a big order, as Her Highness took with her two hundred and fifty people, besides horses, carriages, elephants, etc.

Naturally, the question of purdah had to be considered. The Begam stated that she wished to adhere to Oriental etiquette, but the Viceroy pointed out through his Agent that if she remained in purdah the visit of the Prince of Wales and the Viceroy would be deprived to a great extent of its official significance. So she rather reluctantly agreed to appear on official occasions in a burka (veil).

Sultan Jahan went with her mother; the latter insisted upon it, though it was but twenty days since her first baby, Bilkis Jhan, had been born. On arrival at Calcutta they were most hospitably entertained. Sultan Jahan, being very young and so far inexperienced in these big functions, was much impressed. I should like to give her account of the ceremonies and her description of them, but space forbids. However, when she and her mother were introduced to the Prince of Wales, and the latter, when speaking to Sultan Jahan, said to her, "You see, I am in a similar position, for you are the Crown Princess of Bhopal and I am the Crown Prince of England," she was delighted with his kind manner and courtesy. No detail of the ceremony escaped Sultan Jahan's notice. She was even then very observant, and this gift has enabled her throughout her life to do great work without hurting people's susceptibilities, and has made her beloved by her people.



She early learnt that the essence of success in life lies in our management of humanity.

During this visit to Calcutta Sidik Khan tried to get himself made Regent of Bhopal, raising the point that his wife, the Begam, being purdah, seriously hampered the proper administration of the State. But this plea was unavailing.

Sultan Jahan was glad when all the ceremonies were over and she could return to her baby in Bhopal. In December of that year a son was born, and great were the rejoicings, as four generations had passed since a male child had been born in the family. Kudsia Begam was so delighted that she ordered the firing of guns round her palace. Shah Jahan at once sent orders they were to cease. She never lost an opportunity to annoy the old lady, never having forgiven her for expressing disapproval of her second marriage and for having pointed out that it was contrary to the customs of the Afghan race for a widow to marry again, and, what made matters worse, was her having chosen a man of alien family.

Mohammedan laws, however, did not forbid it, so Shah Jahan felt that she was within her rights, and might please herself. This feeling regarding second marriages was shared by both men and women, even among those who had modified their views in accordance with Western education. So there was something to be said on both sides.

Family relations were very strained all round, and there was perpetual unpleasantness for Sultan Jahan and her husband, who were now forbidden to have any sort of communication with Kudsia Begam. Being fond of her and always having received kindness at her hands, they regretted this and felt it very much.

It is the custom when a baby is seven days old to perform the ceremony of Akika, which means the



infant's head is shaved and animals are sacrificed—two sheep for a boy and one for a girl. This is Mohammedan law, and is observed in all parts of Islam. This Akika answers to our christening day, for the child is named, the lately born son being called Mohammed Nasrulla Khan, the names being chosen by the grandmother.

The next thrill was the Delhi Durbar declaring Queen Victoria Empress of India, on January 1, 1877. The entourage of the Begam of Bhopal on this occasion consisted of five hundred people, and would have been more, but owing to cholera being prevalent at the time the Viceroy limited the number of the retainers of the chiefs attending the Durbar.

The excitement over this Durbar was great; it was to last fourteen days. Nothing else was talked about for weeks before it was held. The heads of every departmental Government were to be present, besides seventy-seven ruling princes and chiefs. No less than 68,000 people were actually staying around Delhi to attend it.

Numbers of people came from England with their best Sunday-go-to-meeting frocks and hats to take part in the festivities and witness the spectacle. Many, I know, enjoyed it exceedingly, which is more than the Government officials could say. For them it was a most anxious time, and they were truly thankful that the Queen was not declared Empress every day.

Viceroy's always have anxious times, and need capable and sympathetic helpers, who will relieve them as far as possible of unnecessary worries. Think what it is for one man with a handful of councillors to keep in touch and sympathy with vast bodies of Hindus, Mohammedans, Sikhs, and Janns, not counting the original tribes whose religion I do not know. Think of all the grievances, superstitions, and

traditional etiquette to be considered—almost a super-human task.

That comparative contentment has reigned for so long is eloquent of the amount of thought and care devoted to the smallest details of government, and all this while each ruler naturally thinks himself of paramount importance.

Lord William Beresford was a pillar of strength to Lord Lytton and to several successive Viceroys, doing his utmost to help them. During this particular Durbar he worked very hard. He told me that at this time he had sworn harder than in all the rest of his life put together; had quite exhausted his vocabulary, and had to invent a few new swear words!

The amount of preparation and concentrated thought required to carry out a Durbar of this description in all its details, providing everybody with programmes of the part they had to play in the ceremony, can be better imagined than described; but those who even in a humble way have had to study the rules of procedure amongst royalties, nobles, and big-wigs will perhaps understand. The smallest error, which everybody is looking for, means little short of battle, murder, and sudden death.

Lord William had a wonderful memory, which was a help to him, and a most courteous manner. When he had to reprove anybody his language was pithy; but for all that I have been told by men more than once that it was a pleasure to be hauled over the coals by Lord Bill, he did it so charmingly, while leaving them in no sort of doubt as to his views.

In spite of his good memory he had a habit of making notes on his shirt-cuffs to remind him of some of the many things he had to see to. I have told this story, I think, in one of my previous books, and if his duobi, or washerman, had been able to read English

and hieroglyphics, he could have compiled a remarkable book.

Seeing some of these notes on his shirt-cuffs one day, I asked if I might know what they were. He shot out the cuff for my inspection. Not finding them easy to decipher, I asked his assistance. He read: "Viceroy's bath—Sack syce—nineteen guns—pacify Mrs. B."

I asked him if it was part of his duty to give the Viceroy his bath. "No," he replied, "but his bath leaks, and I must replace it with a sound one." "Sack syce" meant there had been slackness in the stables, so a certain syce (stableman) would have to be dismissed. "Nineteen guns" sounded a big order, and rather mysterious. This had to do with some prince, who considered he had not received enough rounds fired for his salute, or there had been too many—I forget which—and Lord William had to pour oil on troubled waters. Then came "pacify Mrs. B." I gathered that this lady had been much pained at the way that her name had been spelt on her invitation cards. An important *e* had been left out of her name, making it look commonplace, and she felt it had been done on purpose.

All these little matters, as well as many big ones, had to be attended to by the officials, and the last week or two before the Durbar everybody was becoming irritable and peevish, saying, "I told you so," which is an aggravating expression at any time.

I think also that the supply of Government note-paper must have been running short, judging by the number of chits (notes) that were flying round between the different departments responsible for the show.

At last the great day arrived for which such elaborate preparations had been made. At ten o'clock in the morning the Begam of Bhopal proceeded from her

camp in her state carriage drawn by four horses, surrounded by her nobles, retainers, and a detachment of her state troops, her elephants adding dignity and picturesqueness to the procession.

The assemblage was held in an enormous pavilion standing at the foot of the famous ridge from which the British forces bombarded Delhi during the Mutiny. The seats of the ruling chiefs were arranged on a semicircular platform, facing the viceregal throne, and divided into thirty blocks, each flying the flag of the State to which it belonged.

As the pavilion filled up, the many handsome uniforms, combined with the glitter, jewels, and barbaric splendour of the East, formed an impressive picture; while in the hearts of many present there surged memories of the past and hopes, perhaps prayers, for the future.

All the European members of the Assembly were in their best frocks and coats, the ladies covered with jewels, all they possessed, in the vain hope of outshining the native princes. It was really remarkable in such a crowd the way that everybody found their way to their allotted seats without losing themselves or their tempers. The A.D.C.s and political officers worked hard, meeting each detachment or procession as it arrived, marshalling all to their proper places.

At noon a fanfare of trumpets announced the approach of Lord Lytton, the Viceroy. All present were on tiptoe from expectation and excitement. The show was about to commence. The massed bands played the National Anthem. No stone had been left unturned that could add to the dignity and impressiveness of the Durbar. All this pomp and show is dear to the hearts of the people of the East; little would be thought of us without it. Lord Lytton was a dis-

tinct asset; he looked well in his robes, being a tall, handsome man. He approached with measured and dignified tread, and seated himself on the throne. Indians are highly appreciative of dignity of bearing, and at all times quick to diagnose a real sahib. They read character very quickly.

The chief herald was now commanded to read the proclamation of the assumption of the Imperial title by Her Majesty Queen Victoria as Empress of India. This was delivered in English, followed by a translation in Urdu read by the Foreign Secretary. The Royal Standard was hoisted, and received a royal salute of one hundred and one guns, with a *feu-de-joie* thrown in, while again the massed bands played the National Anthem. Only the elephants were undisturbed by all this noise; many of the horses saw nothing impressive or amusing in it.

Lord Lytton made a speech delivering the Queen Empress' message to her subjects. This concluded, loud cheers, led by the troops, came from most of those present. Some attending the Durbar who had not been violently loyal before this, now became moved and exalted, thinking that perhaps it would be well to be loyal after all and bow to the opinion of the majority.

The chief rulers of States now expressed their feelings of loyalty in the courteous, pleasing manner peculiarly their own. Indeed, so pleased were the princes with themselves and the Government that at the end of the proceedings each wanted to present a jewelled crown to the Queen Empress. Lord Lytton had to point out with delicacy that it was forbidden for expensive presents to be given, and even if this were not so the Queen would have a crown for nearly every day in the year, which would be embarrassing

This seemed to be conclusive and devoid of offence.



I hope that nobody felt hurt, for it was a charming kindly thought that prompted the offer.

One very sad thing happened on Christmas Day, just before the Durbar. Everything being in readiness and working order, a few of the officials, who were polo players, thought they would get up a game by way of relaxation. Lord William Beresford and Captain Clayton of the 9th Lancers, who were lifelong friends; were playing, and during the game their ponies came into collision. Captain Clayton's pony fell on him. He was picked up unconscious, and died the same night. He was one of Lord William's greatest friends, and though, of course, it was the purest accident, poor Lord William felt that he had killed his best friend, and was terribly upset.

The funeral was next day, all the troops collected for the Durbar taking part in it. A most moving sight. Captain Clayton was buried behind the ridge held so long by our troops during the Mutiny; he lies with the 9th Lancers who fell at that time.

Lord William tried to bear up and carry on his duties; but it was altogether too much for him, and he fainted while sitting on his horse at the Durbar and had to be carried away. Though there were many sad hearts, the Durbar had to be carried out all the same, and those who had come out to see the fun meant to have it.

There were parties of all kinds, race meetings, dinners, dances, and every kind of jollity. The hospitality of the chiefs and rulers knew no bounds, and the visitors from over the water had the time of their lives.

On her return to Bhopal the Begam was anxious to make her people see the wisdom of being vaccinated, as there was always a heavy cloud of smallpox hanging over India. Sultan Jahan asked her mother's permis-



sion to have her little son vaccinated, thinking it would set a good example, and prevent the people from being frightened at the idea. But, as might have been expected, the Indian public regarded it as little short of witchcraft, unpleasant and unnecessary. Some years later, after a severe epidemic of smallpox, a few reluctantly allowed themselves to be vaccinated. To-day it is universal in Bhopal.

About this time Sidik Khan was suffering from a swelled head, having, at the earnest entreaty of his wife, received from the Government of India the same titles and distinctions, with the same salute, as had been granted to Shah Jahan's first husband. Now, with all his new honours he became too big for his boots, which, combined with a swelled head, was a dangerous combination! He entirely ignored the fact that the husbands of the rulers of Bhopal were not allowed, by enactment of Government, to interfere with the affairs of the State, and he took much upon himself with which he had no business to deal.

Being clever and unscrupulous, he began making speeches, abusing the Government and the fine old Sikander Begam, telling the people that they had suffered, and were suffering, from injustice, thereby making the people discontented and tending towards mutiny. The Government, on hearing of this, warned him that he had better be careful and cease these speeches, or there would be trouble for him.