

CHAPTER VII

A PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA

Wonderful organisation—Rituals of Islam—Encounters with Bedouins—Entering the holy shrine—Peculiarities of Mecca—Arabian husbands and wives—A Bhopal servant's experiences—Education of princes in India—Eton College's ancient charter—Some popular Indian princes—The Maharajah of Gwalior's joke—Fire in a palace—Some royal snap-shots—Prohibition in Bhopal—Fires at Durbars—The King's good example—Some of the Begam's sporting guests—Lord Reading has a toss—A piqued elephant—The Begam visits England—Princess Maimoona's diary—Experiences in Paris—Some political explanations—The Begam attends a levee—Queen Alexandra's "Last Parliament"—Indian *versus* English servants.

AT last the time came when the long looked forward to pilgrimage could be undertaken, a brief account of which may be of interest, as there may be some people as ignorant as I was for a long time on the subject of pilgrimages. In my mind, or what I am pleased to call my mind, I had pictured pilgrims travelling for miles and miles on their knees, clothed in sackcloth and ashes, then bathing in a deep pool among many others, mostly lepers, after which all were forgiven their sins and told "Thy faith hath made thee whole."

How I came by this nightmarish idea I do not know; it must have been a mixture of stories read to me when a child, some about fairies, others about pilgrims to Lourdes and Mecca. Instead of travelling on hands and knees Sultan Jahan went in great state, taking with her three hundred people, forty horses, and other live stock. The correspondence concerning this journey had been prodigious; there were so many to be consulted—political agents, railway managers,

shipping companies, governors and representatives of other countries, as well as postal authorities.

Considering that the Begam had never left her country before, her organisation was wonderful; nothing was overlooked. Programmes were prepared showing the duties of all accompanying her; it took some weeks before all were in marching order. Were the orders not so lengthy I would give them in detail, for they are a lesson in organisation. Each individual had instructions as to what had to be done and what not done, special emphasis being laid on showing consideration and courtesy to everyone they met, no matter in what country.

The party, or caravan, as it was called, was divided up under different headings: The head of the caravan, special orderly officers, commanding officers of her troops, deputations to Arabia, office to confer and negotiate with consular officers, State accountants, accountant of privy purse, magistrate, superintendent of treasury, transport, postal superintendent, superintendent of equipment, account clerks, purveyors of camels, drivers, preëis writer and copyist.

A statement was issued showing the duties of the managing committee, to whom all appeals were to be made. Those responsible were—(1) Embarkation and disembarkation of passengers; (2) quarantine management; (3) Customs; (4) conveyance in Arabia; (5) travelling kitchen; (6) guards and patrols; (7) arranger of sacrifices; (8) provisioning the steamer; (9) purchases and sales; (10) reception of sheikhs.

At last all was in readiness, and after long and tender leave-takings a special train conveyed the party to Bombay, where the steamer *Akbar* awaited them, having been chartered by Her Highness for the voyage.

Now all the ritual began. As they put to sea, on

all lips were the words "Bismillah Majriha-o-Mursha," which, according to the Koran, means "The voyage of Noah's ark begun." The majority of the party were seasick, but the Begam kept well. On passing the rock named Yalamlam, in the sea near Jeddah, the ritual of Islam had to be attended to. This consisted of putting on sacred clothes, performing the *ghusal* (bath or total ablution), and the *waza*, or partial ablution. The men cover the upper part of their bodies with a sheet and arrange another round their lower limbs, keeping the head bare.

The women after bathing continue to wear their ordinary clothes, but do not cover their faces with a veil. For them the following things are now forbidden: the use of perfume, eating of spiced food, cutting the nails, oiling and combing the hair, painting the eyes with *surma* (powdered antimony), applying *missi* (a powder prepared from vitriol, used to blacken and so beautify the teeth), dressing in gay clothes edged with gold or silver, beautifying the hands with henna, conjugal intercourse, indulging in any mirth or amusement.

As far as I can gather, the men come off more lightly, having fewer restrictions.

When animals had to be sacrificed, for some days before it actually took place the poor things were highly fed and clothed in gorgeous coverings, often having jewels hung round their necks. One can only hope they appreciated this delicate attention.

Jeddah itself is the seaport of Hedjaz, Arabia, standing in the Red Sea west of Mecca, and is where the disembarkation of the pilgrims takes place. Here the Governor came to pay his respects to the Begam, bringing a message from the Sultan to say that he had sent urgent orders for adequate arrangements to be made for the protection of the Begam and her party

After leaving Jeddah, the Begam was carried in a palanquin, guarded by a small escort of her own troops, while Turkish troops constituted the outer ring and surrounded the whole of the caravan. Every few minutes Turkish bugles ran out orders to the whole escort, and when halting for the night the latter formed a cordon round the whole camp. At nine o'clock, after sundown, a gun was fired, after which no one was allowed to enter the camp.

As the caravan passed through the hilly country, it was fired upon several times by Bedouins hiding behind the rocks. Several bullets came unpleasantly near, and the camel next to the one Prince Obaidulla was riding was shot and sent head over heels. The Turks rushed the hill, and the mauraunders fled.

Her Highness received a notice from the Bedouins telling her that unless she sent them a handsome sum of money she would not be allowed to continue her journey. No notice was taken of this. They, however, did hold her up, and a sharp fusillade, lasting a couple of hours, took place; but the Turks dropped a shell amongst the Bedouins, after which there was peace.

Notwithstanding all the care taken for the comfort of the Begam, it was a journey of considerable discomfort for her; but she was filled with fervour and did not mind, for she was fulfilling the great desire of her life.

On arriving within sight of the Holy City, all were much excited, for to a Musalman even the dust of the city is sacred. When the valley burst into view, the Begam said there was a strange and mysterious perfume pervading the air, in a way that she could not account for; she described it as "a perfume that not only pleased one's sense of smell, but delighted and refreshed the innermost soul." All sense of dis-

comfort now vanished. The guardian of the Holy Shrine at once visited the Begam, after which she entered the holy precincts.

The rules for those entering the Kaabah, or Holy Shrine, are that the individuals first wash themselves at home, then go direct to the sacred boundary, where there are apartments and all the necessary things for more washing kept, and after more bathing white garments are put on, and an entry is made into the house of God.

Standing before the door they repeat voluntary personal prayers, accompanied with prostration, followed by more prayers for their families and for all Musalmans throughout the world. In each corner of the rooms of the Shrine more prayers are offered and portions of the Koran repeated; the curtains and hangings are then taken into the hands and pressed to the head and ears. At this point it is customary to give a present of money to the shebi sahib (head beadle).

So ends the ritual of the pilgrimage. It sounds very simple, yet it is a great institution, drawing at least ten thousand people together yearly from all parts of the world. Islam's doctrine teaches that "the faithful are brothers." Pilgrims to the Holy Shrine are regarded by their co-religionists with special veneration.

There are two ways of performing the Haj—namely, either, as most people do, by making the journey to Mecca, performing the Haj, and then returning to their homes, or, as a few do, going with the resolve, which is considered very pious, of leaving their homes for ever and residing entirely in Mecca.

The cleansing of the Shrine, which must be very desirable, is carried out three times a year. The sherif and the pasha fasten shawls round their waists,

which answers, I suppose, to our aprons, and with two or three slaves proceed to wash the walls, pillars, and ceiling twice over, the third time with rose-water. The walls are then rubbed with sandalwood and attar, followed by fumigation with incense.

The water that runs from the walls during the washing process is collected by the people in bottles, and preserved as a charm, or kept as gifts for friends and relations at home.

When a Sultan dies, on the accession of a new one fresh hangings and curtains are sent from Constantinople for the Shrine; the old ones are then cut up into pieces, which the pilgrims take home with them as souvenirs.

Mecca is a wild, desolate-looking place, destitute of trees and surrounded by hills. In the country round the city there are neither rivers, streams, nor lakes, only springs of water, and in these no travellers are allowed to bathe except at a price. When the poor people go to the springs for water they are beaten and driven away by sentries placed there for that purpose. The water is sold at so much a skinful; by this I mean an animal's skin, which forms a carrier for the water.

The houses are tall. Some run to seven stories, none less than three; some have doors and some have not, only door frames. When doors are found, they have neither hinges, locks, or bolts. Occasionally there is a piece of wood made in the shape of a cross with which to secure privacy, though from my own experiences I can say there is no such thing as privacy in the East, and one has to become hardened to the fact.

The sanitary arrangements in Mecca are appalling; I wonder the inhabitants do not all die of some fever. There is a fort mounted with guns, but the latter are as dirty as the Turks themselves, and the ammunition

faulty. All things considered, the fort is in no way alarming, being incapable of doing much harm.

Donkeys, mules, dogs, cats, mosquitoes, and kites abound, and so do beggars. But I do not think there are any rats, which is curious amongst so much dirt; perhaps the dogs see to it.

Locusts have been found in the road near Amrah in such quantities that the road could hardly be seen. The Bedouins, who have curious tastes, gather them up in baskets and use them in some way for food.

The women look melancholy, have no sense of humour, neither dance nor sing; but the more spritely whistle, snapping their fingers as an accompaniment. Altogether Mecca is an uncomfortable sort of place. A good many of the bad characters that are driven out of India find their way there, so there must be attractions that I have not discovered.

Perhaps it is the women. They contract as many as ten marriages without a blush; it is quite exceptional to find a woman who has not had two husbands. When one sees her husband growing old, or she sees someone she admires more than her man, she goes to the sheriff and settles the matter with him. Marriages seldom last longer than two years, and it is by no means uncommon to be married and divorced within a month. Let us put this down to the climate; it has broad shoulders.

Arabic is the language used in conversation, and business is carried on in true Oriental style, much more being asked than the value of the goods tendered, and the vendor is quite prepared to take much less than he asks; but when less is offered he throws mud and dirt of sorts at the customer, and not infrequently spits in his face. After a noisy, lengthy argument the price offered is accepted, or something near it.

When paid the vendor puts the money into his mouth no matter whether it is copper or silver; there is no till, cash-box, purse, or bag visible. In the long run, I suppose, the money finds its way into some other receptacle. There are no fixed tariffs in the bazaars; everybody asks what they please.

One of the Bhopal servants had some curious experiences. He says he went to bathe in the tank, which is small and the only one in Mecca, and found there a great many men and women assembled to bathe, among them a Bedouin and a native of India. The former asked the Indian to lend him his soap; this he declined to do, soap being a luxury that had to be paid for. The Bedouin immediately brought forth a fierce-looking knife, and struck the Indian with it on his head and shoulders, but was prevented from doing any more harm by the other bathers. The ruffian then approached the Bhopal servant and asked him to lend his soap; again this was refused. Violent language followed, after which he filled a bucket and came to help in the washing of the Bhopal servant's clothes, for which he was rewarded by what soap was left after the washing was finished.

Another story from the same Bhopal servant. An Egyptian went into a baker's shop and asked the price of some bread that he wanted. The price was stated; the Egyptian offered less, so the baker seized a broomstick and struck the would-be purchaser in the face with it. He retaliated by throwing stones and upsetting everything he could lay his hands on in the shop on to the floor! These are everyday experiences; nobody interferes.

Arabia as a country is interesting; some of the authorities put the population down at twenty millions. The Arabians are, and have been for generations, divided into two classes: those who

dwell in cities and those who roam carrying their worldly goods about with them; these latter are termed Bedouins, and they have curious theories that regulate their lives.

For instance, a guest must be treated with hospitality, but is only considered a guest for two days and a night; what happens after that varies according to circumstances. Should any unfortunate traveller fall into their hands under circumstances they do not count as "guests," it is quite likely that he will be murdered for any small benefit, such as the horse he is riding or the boots on his feet.

Yet they are by no means a savage race, and in the past, long before we used anæsthetics to relieve suffering, the Arab surgeons performed skilled operations using anæsthetics. They are a clever race, and we have much to thank them for, such as the discovery of alcohol, nitrate of silver, and other useful things.

There are not many families in Arabia that have not a member named Mohammed. They were the founders of Islam, and are very proud of their ancestry. The leading nobles have their pedigrees recorded in the celebrated Mecca Mosque, which is built of black stone.

The desert is a wonderful place, with its speaking silences, and tends towards meditation. There is no such thing as a rush to amass wealth. The Arab only wants enough for his very simple needs; when that little is procured, he is content with the Biblical locusts and wild honey.

The Haj having been carried out and some of Arabia seen, the Begam of Bhopal returned to India, the pilgrimage having taken five months and ten days. When she reached Bhopal she said: "How sweet are the pleasures of home."

After riding camels, being jolted about in palan-

quins, and being shot at, it must indeed have been restful, besides the happy feeling of being again amongst those who loved her, there is nothing in the world so satisfying as that.

She found her judicial department improving, but still not quite all she wished it to be; the people had not that confidence which is a *sine qua non* of good government, therefore she decided to hear the appeals against the judgment of her Ministers. This changed the whole atmosphere; the people felt sure of justice being done, also those who administered the law were more careful in their decisions. It is, of course, impossible to please both plaintiff and defendant, but justice has a way of winning confidence.

I do not think that some of the funny things that have occurred in official England would have passed unnoticed by the Begam of Bhopal; she would have wanted to know all about it. The case, for instance, when some carpentering work had to be done in some Government offices, a bill for which was rendered amounting to £7 odd shillings. It was some time before a cheque was received, and then it was made out for either £71 or £17—I forget which. The firm wrote back saying there was some mistake, as that was not the sum demanded. In answer to this came a letter saying it was no use their asking for more money, as not another penny would be paid! But that was in the Coalition days, when all sorts of odd things happened.

Some idea of the work done by the Begam on her return to her State may be gathered from the fact that no less than 34,213 papers passed through her hands for sanction and signature within a few weeks.

Very wisely the Begam educated her sons in India, for she as well as others have seen unsatisfactory results after Indian nobles have been educated in

England. The princes get out of touch with their own people, and when they return to their own country their English ideas and ways are apt to cause resentment; besides, at times some of these princes have been rather extravagant while over here, and their subjects think the money would be better spent in their own country.

Some of the Indian princes who have come over here, either to be educated or on visits, have found it agreeable, and have been so charming that we would have been sorry not to have known them, and it has been a real pleasure to be able to return a little of the hospitality they have shown to us when in their own country. The ever popular Maharajah of Cooch Behar for one, the hospitable and generous Gwalior, the sporting Patalia, and others. Cooch Behar was one of the most simple-minded of men, and had charming manners, which some of the young Indian princes of to-day might with benefit copy. Considering his position in India and his wealth, he might have considered himself almighty, and given himself airs which would not have been tolerated; he might have expected everybody to fall on their faces before him, as his subjects did in India. Instead of that he was almost apologetically humble.

Once when he and his delightful wife were staying in this country he came to a dance I was giving. He admired a very pretty girl who was staying with me, and he asked if I thought she would dance with him. I told him I was sure she would like to dance with anybody who danced as well as he did. I introduced them, and my friend, accustomed to making curtsies to our own royalties, made a graceful curtsy to him. Later, when the prince was talking to me, he said: "Oh, please ask Lady—— not to curtsy to me; it makes me feel so uncomfortable. I did not know

what to do, and thought that I ought to go down on one knee or something of that sort.”

Sultan Jahan Begam brought her eldest son up to deal with the civil side of administration, the second son on military lines; in the course of time he became commander of the Bhopal forces. Nawab Obaidulla was a sportsman, and that to the English mind means a great deal and is a passport anywhere. He also had his mother's charming manners.

The Maharajah of Gwalior was a real sportsman and exceedingly popular, both in his own country, here, and in France, probably also elsewhere, but of that I cannot speak from personal knowledge. He died a short time ago in Paris. He dearly loved a joke, and was happy amongst a cheery lot of soldiers. Once when he had been dining at the mess of a certain regiment in Northern India, and all were feeling comfortably replete and happy, when it came to the time for his departure he stepped into his Rolls-Royce car, and then asked some of his hosts who had come to see him off if they would mind giving his car a shove off, as, being cold, he might have some trouble in starting her up. All applied their shoulders with a will, but the car did not move an inch. They nearly burst themselves with their efforts, and then discovered their guest sitting inside at the wheel, laughing heartily at them, for he had crammed on all the brakes. When he saw his joke had been discovered he thought it wise to hurry away.

The enlightened Indian princes do not now often have chauffeurs to drive them; they do it themselves in the same way that English princes and nobles do.

This kindly Maharajah once lent us one of his palaces for a few days when we were in India; in return for his hospitality we managed to set fire to the place. It happened in this way: My English

maid and nurse, wishing to air a mattress, lighted a fire in one of the rooms, and while they were away unpacking it took the opportunity to fall into the fire, making an alarming blaze and smoke.

I ran to the sentries walking up and down outside the palace, and in my best Hindustani asked them to come and help us. They gave me to understand that we might all be roasted alive before they would leave their posts. I then tried the bhesties (water carriers); they also thought it was no business of theirs. In despair I ran back to see what was happening, and found that our own servants had succeeded in putting out the fire, and no harm was done of much consequence except to my mattress, which did not matter. I would gladly have slept on the floor for an indefinite period rather than injure the property of the Maharajah.

The room was rather dirty from the smoke, but we soon had that put to rights, and I never heard anything more of the alarming episode. The sentries, I thought, eyed me with suspicion afterwards, thinking, no doubt, that I was a dangerous person to be allowed on their master's property.

When the Prince and Princess of Wales (our present King and Queen) visited India in 1905, His Royal Highness reviewed the Bhopal troops, and while so doing the Princess sat and chatted with the Begam. Seeing the Nawab Hamidulla standing near his mother with his camera in his hand, the Princess of Wales said to him: "Are you taking snapshots?"

He answered: "I am just learning."

Having a mother's heart, and knowing what pleasure it would give, the Princess said: "Do take a photograph of me and send me a copy."

A snapshot was taken and another as she entered the carriage on her departure. Unfortunately, neither

of these efforts proved successful, which is a way snapshots often have, so no copy was sent to the Princess.

Bhopal was dependent at this time for all its water supply on rainfall, for the wells and other means of irrigation had suffered through the policy of drift which had been the fashion before Sultan Jahan's day. The farmers themselves destroyed the means of irrigation when it suited their purpose, for then when any new settlement was in contemplation they hoped to get their land under value on account of there being no water. This was quickly put to rights, and means taken to provide and keep a proper water supply.

The Excise department also had to be overhauled, the liquor shops on the borders being a constant source of complaint. A liquor shop answered to our public-houses. A good many of these houses were done away with, but still there was trouble, so the entire control of them was taken over by the State, and the consumption of intoxicants discouraged as much as possible.

Now prohibition is the order of the day in Bhopal. Musalmans do not touch wine or intoxicants of any kind. The chief intoxicants of the people of India are *arak* and *mhawa*. The former is made of linseed and cotton, and is highly intoxicating; the latter is made from the fruit and leaves of the mallifur-tree, which sounds innocent, but is much the reverse. Bears, by the way, are fond of this fruit, but I never heard of any having been tipsy.

When Lord Minto became Viceroy he appointed Colonel Obaidulla one of his aides-de-camp. This gave much pleasure in Bhopal, it being considered a great honour.

There are many gatherings in States in India passing under the heading of durbars, which is rather mixing, but there have up to the present been only

three big viceregal Durbars—(1) In 1877, when Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India; (2) Lord Curzon's, in 1903, to celebrate the accession of King Edward VII; (3) the Coronation Durbar on the accession of King George V. Great precautions are always taken at these big functions in case of fire, which is serious amongst a mass of inflammable canvas tents; but in spite of all the care taken fires do occasionally occur.

At the time of the Coronation Durbar, when our present King and Queen visited Delhi, a few days before their arrival a large handsome durbar tent lent by one of the Oudh chiefs had been put up and decorated. A rehearsal of the State procession was taking place. Suddenly there was a cry of "Fire!" and in a few minutes the reception tent ready for their Majesties was a heap of ruins. Another was quickly put up in its place.

After the arrival of the King and Queen, while the former was holding an Investiture in a tent packed with hundreds of people looking on, and while the Queen was also present, the fire whistles were suddenly heard all round the camp, the electric light flickered, and went down.

The word "Fire!" passed from mouth to mouth in a whisper; the red glare of the fire could be seen through the entrance of the huge tent in which all were assembled. Many rose to their feet, preparing to try to escape before it was too late, for had the fire spread to the tent they were in there would have been little chance for anybody.

At this moment a loud voice was heard commanding everybody to "Sit down." The order was obeyed, which was rather wonderful, considering all present knew the odds were against them.

I think the King saved the situation, for he con-

tinued to p:n on the decorations perfectly calmly, without the flicker of an eyelid. He took no more notice of the fire whistles than if they had been street hawkers crying "Watercress."

Thanks to the example of the King and Queen, combined with the efforts of the fire brigade and officials, the fire was subdued and no lives were lost; but all around and close to the tent in which were their Majesties and hundreds of people, lay heaps of ruined or burnt-out tents.

The fire originated in a telegraph messenger leaning his bicycle against a tent, to which his lighted lamp set fire.

Sultan Jahan Begam has entertained a vast number of people in Bhopal; some of her guests' came with introductions, others have asked themselves, and the kindhearted Begam will not turn away or disappoint them if they are possible and proper people for her to entertain.

Some have been well-known and great sportsmen, others have thought they were until the crucial moment arrived, as will be seen from the following story.

A party of very rich people who were globe trotting invited themselves and were allowed to come and stay in Her Highness' guest houses. They arrived by special train with an enormous retinue, meant to be impressive and show how rich they were. This man and his wife talked very big about their prowess with gun and rifle, clamouring for some tiger shooting, for which Bhopal is famous.

Very good-naturedly a shoot was arranged for them. The sporting couple were safely ensconced in a *maichan* (rough platform) in the trees, waiting for a tiger to be driven towards them. Having to wait a little time, the heat being great and the good things

provided for them before coming out, proving too much for the gentleman, he went fast asleep with his head in his wife's lap!

Presently the shikari in attendance on them nudged the sleeper, saying softly: "Tiger, sahib." The sleepy individual was at once alert and petrified with fright, thinking his last moment had come. Pulling himself together, he pushed the rifle away, saying: "Oh no, no; I have never used such a thing in my life. Take it away. Do you hear? Take it away." Then, feeling rather ashamed of himself, he seized hold of the rifle and fired at the tiger, which was now standing broadside on, about thirty feet away. By a fluke he succeeded in hitting the animal's tail, and it went away, laughing.

Another sportsman came on a visit. I must not mention his name, as he is rather a mighty person from a foreign country. He also was anxious to shoot a tiger, but did not like to ask for permission to do so. He therefore told his wife to see what she could do about it. Tactfully she told some of the Nawab's secretaries that it had been the wish of her life to shoot a tiger. This was conveyed to Nawab Hamidulla, who replied that he was very sorry, but it was not the time of year for shooting them.

This conveyed nothing to the minds of the guests, and they continued to clamour, so at last, rather than disappoint his guests, Hamidulla did arrange a shoot for them, though much against his inclinations and sporting instincts.

This would-be sporting couple could not understand his reluctance; to them a tiger was a tiger, and should be shot at any time of the year. The fact that the tigers might be busy with their private domestic affairs and should not be disturbed never occurred to them.

When all was in readiness and the couple were safely in their *maichan* in the trees, a fine panther was driven towards them. Both refused to shoot, saying they did not wish to hurt or kill the poor things, but only to see one. Both husband and wife were trembling with fright and their teeth chattering. The man said it was too dangerous for his wife to run such a risk. The panther continued its stroll, and I expect Prince Hamidulla was not sorry, though his servants had been put to a good deal of trouble for nothing.

When it was time for these brave people to descend from their *maichan*, they could hardly be persuaded to do so, for they thought the panther was round the corner somewhere waiting for them, though, for the matter of that, they did not feel very safe up in the trees, thinking the panther might change its mind, return, and climb up the tree after them. Altogether they were very worried.

When Lord Reading went to Bhopal to open the new law courts built by the Begam a shoot was arranged for him; he had not been well, and it was thought that a few days in the wonderful air of the Bhopal jungles might do him good. I believe it did, but a strange thing happened, for not a single tiger went anywhere near His Excellency—a most unusual thing in the Bhopal jungles.

When speaking at the opening of the law courts and thanking the Begam for her hospitality, Lord Reading said that he had had a very pleasant visit, notwithstanding the fact that he had no luck in seeing a tiger; but he knew that every effort had been made to show him one short of taking a tiger by the whiskers and leading it past his *maichan*. Evidently tigers are afraid of Viceroys.

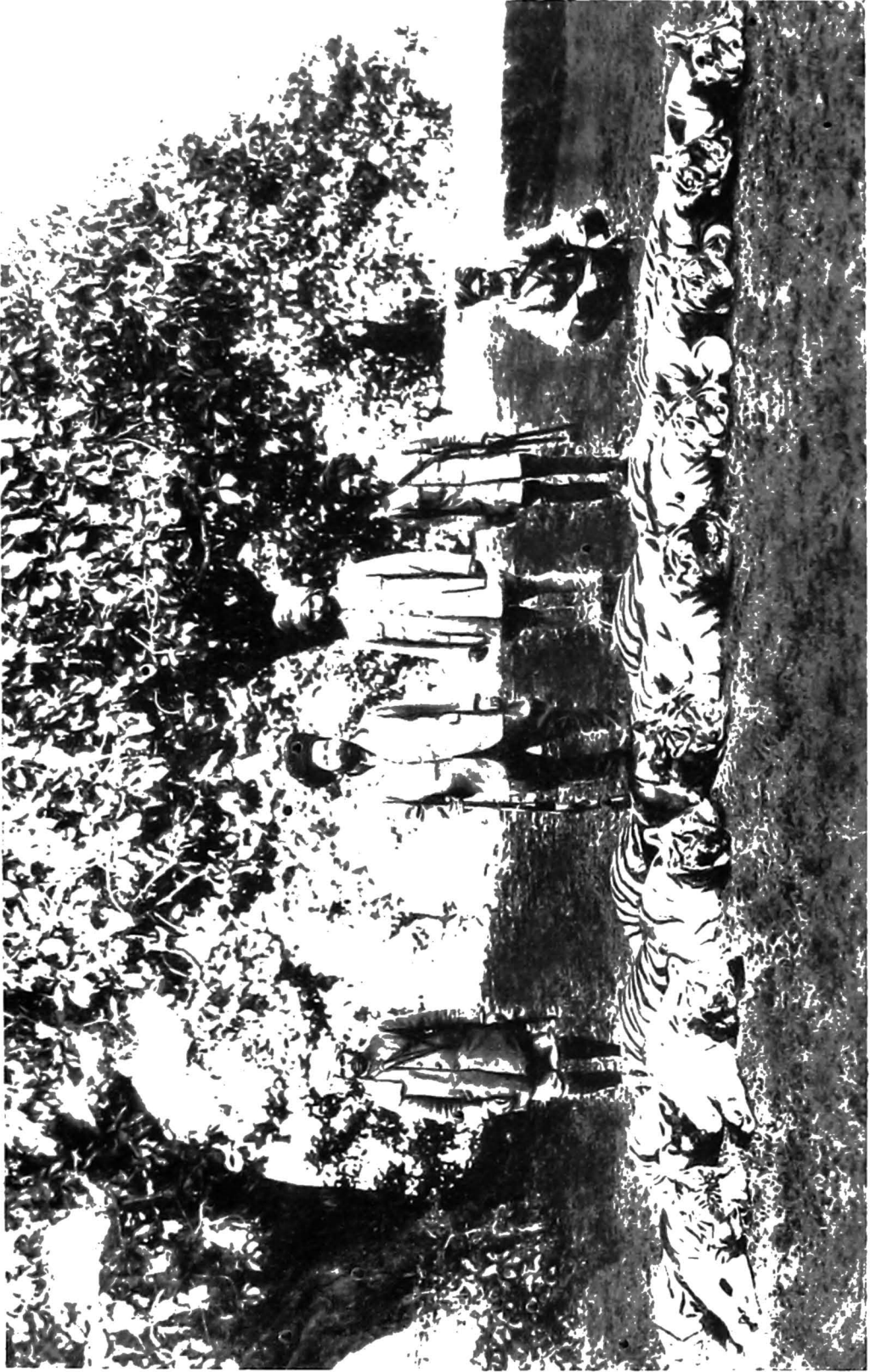
From Bhopal His Excellency went on to visit the

late Maharajah of Gwalior, and again he went shooting, hoping for better luck. . Knowing that the Viceroy was still far from well, the Maharajah had a chair placed in His Excellency's *maichan*, and everything made as comfortable and restful as possible for him. Behind this platform there was a perpendicular rock many feet high.

During the beat the Viceroy was sitting in the chair that had been placed in the *maichan* for him, holding his rifle at the ready, when with a crash the legs of the chair went through the floor of the *maichan*, throwing its occupant backwards. His rifle flew up into the air, and his finger being on the trigger one barrel went off; the bullet hit the rock behind his head, sending splinters of it right and left, some of which reached one of the aides-de-camp a hundred yards away. He was not much the worse, but must have thought Viceroys as dangerous as tigers.

At another hunt in Gwalior one of the Viceroy's staff remained on the ground in the hope of being able to take photographs of any animals that came in view. One of the elephants being used in the beat became piqued about something, and went "mast," as it is called, and bolted out of the jungle. Seeing the individual with the camera, the elephant went straight for him, despite his mahout's threats and entreaties—an awful moment. An angry elephant on the warpath is not pleasant to encounter, especially when on foot with no weapon more deadly than a camera.

There was nothing to be done but to run for his life; this he proceeded to do, the animal thundering along closer and closer behind him. Dropping the camera in his haste and agitation, the elephant put his foot into it, which fortunately delayed him a little, but did not improve his temper. The Maharajah,



A ONE-DAY'S "BAG" IN BHOPAL.

who was up in a *maichan*, saw what was happening, and that the unfortunate man was certain to be killed, so he levelled his rifle and shot the animal dead.

That was saying good-bye to £700, but His Highness cared nothing for that, being only too thankful that he had been able to save the life of his guest. The Maharajah was a great sportsman, and will ever be remembered and missed by all who had the pleasure and the honour of knowing him.

When our present Prince of Wales was in India, he was the guest of the Begam of Bhopal. Several shoots were arranged for him, but I do not think that shooting is his favourite sport; hunting, polo, racing, and tennis come first.

The Bhopal princes' love of big-game shooting is hereditary. Dost Mohammed, the first Nawab, about 1726, had a coat made of sanbour skin, the result of his own shooting. This same coat of mail is still kept in the armoury at Bhopal, and the bloodstains that mark the cause of his death are even now visible.

Nawab Nasrulla Khan during his short life shot one hundred and thirty-eight tigers, his bag of other game being too numerous to mention in detail. He once shot nine tigers in one day. On hearing this, I was so surprised that I asked if all the tigers on the State had been driven into one corner for him, and was told: "By no means; the Nawab was driven from place to place where it was thought tigers would be found." Anyway, it was a unique performance.

King Edward's death was felt very much by the Begam. At that time her son's (Nawab Obaidulla) health was causing considerable anxiety, and she thought she would like to consult English specialists. Soon after this she received an invitation to the Coronation of King George, and a notice saying that commanding officers of Imperial troops would be pre

sented to His Majesty, so she thought she would combine a visit to the specialists about her son's health and he could be presented at the same time. After her visit to England she wished to travel in Europe, so that she might gain knowledge which would be useful to her in advancing the welfare of her own people.

The account of the Begam's first visit to England has been written in a diary by Princess Maimoona (wife of the present ruler). She accompanied the Begam on this visit, and though she was only then fourteen years old; she gives clearly her impressions of people and things. Never having been out of India before, it is interesting to see what impressed her most.

She says that at first on leaving her home she felt very homesick, and it was in consequence of this depression that the Begam suggested that she should write a diary of all she saw, so that on her return to India she could let her less fortunate sisters, who had never left India, know all about her travels.

Sultan Jahan knew that the best cure for the dumps is work, and before long Princess Maimoona was quite happy writing her diary, but unfortunately forgot to put in any dates, which makes it difficult to follow.

She begins by saying "travellers are afforded every comfort on this ship, and the officers on board are very attentive, only there are no separate food arrangements for Musalmans. This is indeed strange, but the Mohammedans themselves do not seem to mind at all; they eat the food supplied without making any objection. We have our own cook with us, and the captain ordered special arrangements to be made for the preparation of our food.

"We arrived at Aden (no date), which is 1,664 miles from Bombay. Aden formerly belonged to the

Turks, but it became a British possession nearly seventy years ago (this was written in 1910), and it is said to have improved a great deal since then.

“ At Port Said the King and Queen of the Belgians boarded our ship. After leaving this place, bad weather was encountered, and the portholes had to be closed. The stewards dare not come into the cabins of the ladies, so Hamidulla had to come in and tighten up the screws.

“ Many on board were seasick; those who had never been to sea before were frightened. I, too, became nervous; I thought the ship was going to sink, and burst out crying. Her Highness comforted me, saying there was no danger; that hundreds and thousands of people sailed every week; and that Europeans went home and returned to India throughout the year without any fear. She drew my attention to the belts, which are to be found in each cabin, and which are meant for times of danger, when by putting on one of them one would be safe from drowning and float until help came.

“ Besides, I was told that there were lifeboats on the ship capable of holding fifty to sixty persons in each. They are very useful in saving life, but I do not think that they would have sufficed for all the passengers on board. Being satisfied by Her Highness that there was no danger, I went to sleep.

“ When off Stromboli Her Highness was told that the Queen of the Belgians would like to see her, and might she come to her cabin?”

The reply to this was that the Begam would rather go to the Queen's cabin, and this was arranged. In the diary is the following remark :

“ Her Majesty is very amiable and simple in her ways. Most princesses are noted for their simple and charming manners.”

On arrival at Marseilles they found the quay was packed with photographers and newspaper reporters, who had heard that the Begam and her party were expected. "But," says the diary, "Messrs. Cook and Sons, who were acting as our couriers, soon cleared the platform of these gentlemen, telling them politely that their presence was not required. Even the officers of the ship were sent away while we disembarked.

"A special train with sleeping cars awaited us. We went at once to our compartments, where we found beds and everything clean and nice . . . the windows were large, and hung with luxurious curtains like those found in high-class landaus in India."

In Paris the writer of the diary was horrified at the prices of edibles. "A lamb cost forty rupees, a chicken six rupees, and a cauliflower ten annas," adding quaintly: "The bigger the hotel the more expensive the things. . . . We stayed two weeks in one hotel, and had to pay about ten thousand rupees." But the diary does not state how many people were provided for, and if it was for the Begam's whole retinue, I think it was cheap, for she has an endless following of officials and servants.

The diary continues: "France is a republic. There is no King; the several groups of people elect their representatives, and they in their turn elect a President. About the same state of things exists in the United States of America. Other countries of Europe, such as Germany, England, Russia, Italy, Austria, etc., have their Sovereigns, who rule through Cabinets and Houses of Parliament, and are themselves bound by the laws and regulations of the constitution. But these Sovereigns have prerogatives which they can use independently, although it is very seldom that these powers are used.

“ In the republics people enjoy absolute freedom. A remarkable thing about these countries, particularly noticed by Indians, is that they have no one on whom to centre their affections.

“ Her Highness, who is indefatigable, has visited, amongst other places of interest, the palace of Napoleon Bonaparte, now the residence of the President. It is known as the Palais de Élysée.* Louis XVI. and his Queen were kept prisoners there before being put to death. My brother-in-law went to see Napoleon’s tomb; he brought us a picture post-card of it. He also related to us the instructive history of Napoleon, who gained his unperishable fame by his military genius. His motto was that there was nothing impossible in the world, and the word ‘impossible’ should be removed from the dictionary.

“ Napoleon died in exile at St. Helena, but his body was restored to the French, and they buried him with great honour. The English General who defeated him was the Duke of Wellington, whose remains were interred at St. Paul’s, London.

“ Some of the pictures in the French galleries are exquisite. One of these represents Abraham preparing to take Ismael† to the forest to offer him as a sacrifice, in obedience to the command of God; and Ismael is shown clinging to his mother, and innocently asking the cause of her grief. This picture, though only an effort of human imagination, looks very life-like, and makes a wonderful impression on the mind.”

Had Princess Maimoona been born under different circumstances and been obliged to seek a profession to earn her living, what an admirable teacher she would have made! I wish I had been taught history as she would have taught it instead of from my dry-as-dust old governesses, who made nothing interesting.

* Quoted from the diary. † The writer must mean Isaac.

The diary continues with a delightful little essay on Versailles, which I would like to quote, but want of space forbids, and I must hurry on to the time when the party arrived in London and were met at Victoria Station by a messenger from the King, who came to say His Majesty hoped they were all well and had a pleasant journey.

To this the Begam replied: "Thank His Majesty for his kind message, and say since I was coming to have the honour of attending the Coronation of the Emperor, the sea has received us most hospitably, and the Channel has been very courteous." A special train took the party to Redhill, where a house with nice grounds had been engaged for them, and where they found flags flying in welcome, which made the Begam feel at home and happy.

The India Office at once notified her that the King would be pleased to give her an audience at Buckingham Palace, and, to use her own words, "also an invitation to attend the levee."

Unfortunately, her son, Nawab Obaidulla, was feeling so very ill that he had to go at once to Nauheim on the advice of Dr. Mackenzie.

On the Begam's return from Buckingham Palace she gave Princess Maimoona an account of her experiences. She writes in her diary: "Her Highness told me that the palace is very magnificent, and that there are several passages and anterooms leading to the hall. When Her Highness arrived she saw officers of the royal household, in rich uniforms, posted here and there, and each one of them escorted her up to his limits.

"All the ladies who were attending the levee were to be seen walking about in Court dress and wearing precious jewels. The palace was a blaze of light, and presented a brilliant appearance.

“On the walls were historical paintings depicting glorious scenes from the history of the British Empire. The floor was covered in rich carpets, and the double alabaster and marble colonnades, with golden friezes overhead, produced a wonderful effect.”

Then follows a minute description of what everybody wore, how everybody stood, what everybody did, winding up with: “It took three hours for the foreign Ambassadors, the British peers and high officials of the realm to be presented. . . .”

The day after the Court festivities the Begam and her son Hamidulla visited the Queen-Mother. The diary describes this visit: “Queen Alexandra is the widow of His late Majesty King Edward VII. She is sixty-nine, but looks quite young, and is very beautiful, with great charm of manner. There is natural humility in her ways. Her Majesty takes great interest in India.

“It is against English etiquette to condole with a person a long time after the bereavement. Her Highness knew this, and had made up her mind not to make reference to the death of His late Majesty during the conversation. On arrival at the palace (Marlborough House), Colonel Dunlop-Smith and an old nobleman, who is a veteran of the Indian Mutiny, came forward to receive Her Highness, and conducted her to a reception room, where she was received by a lady-in-waiting.”

Here the diary gives a description of the duties of the royal household, which I need not quote, as most English people know all about it, but the princess continues in an interesting manner:

“The Mistress of the Robes is changed only with a change of Government. The Ministers who manage the affairs of the kingdom are together known as the

Government, and are selected from amongst the members of the House of Parliament, the Conservatives and the Liberals being the most prominent. All of them have the welfare of the kingdom equally at heart, the difference of opinion being only about certain important administrative affairs.

“Queen Alexandra seated Her Highness on a sofa beside herself, where they had a pleasant though sad conversation, for both had lost husbands and precious children. Before leaving the Queen-Mother gave Her Highness a signed photograph of herself and King Edward, underneath which was written “Our last Parliament.”

That same afternoon the energetic Begam paid visits to some old friends who had stayed with her in Bhopal or been known by her in India, calling on Lady Minto, Lady Antrim, and others, and then set off for Nauheim to see her son. I fear she did not find him much better.

When first the Nawab had arrived at Nauheim he had taken rooms at a private hotel, where he was comfortable, and the landlady seemed pleased to have him and other members of the family; but when she saw the servants, she declined to put them up, saying they would make her house dirty. She was asked to wait and see if they were dirty, and at last to this she agreed, and in the end said she had nothing to complain of—in fact, she praised them. I am sure she must have found them much more obliging and more content than many English servants she had been obliged to entertain.

There is no denying that some Indian servants are dirty, but so are many from other countries, including England. Princess Maimoona is flattering to English servants, and I wish I could agree with all she says about them: “In Europe servants have a strong

sense of obedience and duty, in addition to very clean habits. They are truthful and work faithfully as long as they are in your service.”

Thirty years ago many of us would have endorsed this statement, but so-called education, combined with parties prepared to do or say anything to gain the vote, has altered all the old happy relations between employers and employed.

Princess Maimoona's description of King George and how she wishes him to be pictured to her people in India deserves a new chapter.