

CHAPTER VIII

KINGS AND QUEENS

King George, as seen by Princess Maimoona—The Begam meets many friends—Entertaining accounts of the English Press—A rebuke for some newspapers—Views on English sanitation—Sharing a bath with tadpoles—English ways of expressing pleasure—A visit to Constantinople—The holy relics—A three thousand pound cheque—A reward from the Sultan—A visit to Cairo shrines—A sanitary inspector wanted—A problem for Lord Kitchener's staff—What happened—Lord Kitchener visits the Viceroy's Council—He makes a request—The Commander-in-Chief is angry—The result of council's short-sightedness—Dangers not visible to civilians' eyes—A frantic search—Peculiarities of councils and committees—A request in 1914—How it was met—Magnificent generosity and loyalty of the Begam—Death of two princes—A question of succession—A second visit to England—Fifteen months of waiting—The Begam at Queen Alexandra's funeral, and at the Cenotaph—A hunt for Lord Haig—£5,000 for ex-soldiers—A future Begam plays football—The Begam's grandchildren at Buckingham Palace—Roses for Queen Victoria's tomb—The Begam's views on Viceroys and Ghandi—A mistake in pronunciation—Good news at last—The Begam abdicates.

PRINCESS MAIMOONA'S diary says :

“Our Emperor George V. was born in 1865 at Marlborough House in London. After going through a course of literary and political training, after the manner of royal princes, he entered the Navy as an ordinary cadet, and had to do every little thing for himself. Are you not surprised, my dear sisters, to know that the Crown Prince, though not then heir-apparent, his elder brother being alive at the time, had such a training?

“All the princes and future kings of England are brought up in this way, in order that they may have a

first-hand knowledge of the needs and circumstances of the everyday life of the country.

“ His full names and titles are : His Most Excellent and Imperial Majesty George V., King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Sea, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India.

“ The British Empire extends over more than one-fifth of the globe, and is larger than any other Empire in the world. Its population is about 4,000 millions. British possessions are scattered all over the world and are found in Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and Australia, comprising all the religions of the world.

“ The gross revenue of the Empire has been estimated to be about £ 3,750,000,000. Her Majesty the Queen was born in 1867 at Kensington Palace, the birthplace of Queen Victoria. The Queen Empress's name is Victoria Mary, and her pet name is May. She knows French and German very well and is highly educated. . . .”

Then followed a long and very accurate description of the Coronation, which could not fail to bring the imposing ceremony vividly to the minds of those the diary was intended for. The Buckingham Palace Garden Party which followed the Coronation gave infinite pleasure to Sultan Jahan Begam, for there she met many she had known in India who were pleased to see her again.

A Coronation banquet was given by the Lord Mayor. The two Bhopal princes went to it, and were cheered on entering the hall. There is a reference to this in the diary : “ It is customary in England for the people to show their appreciation of anything or to express their delight by clapping hands, which is called cheering.”

A little further on she says : “ Articles about Her

Highness appeared in the newspapers the very day we arrived at Redhill. The Indian papers published in our country are not half so rich or influential as their contemporaries in Europe, which play an important part in the political life of the country. All the officials and Ministers of State, and even the King, have a great regard for the views of the Press. The editors of these papers are of great ability and responsibility. Even the reporters and correspondents are selected from amongst men of high attainments.

“The English Press has special correspondents all over the world, who send news by post or telegraph; they even go to the seats of war, and they are present at all important functions. Some newspapers are published daily, some weekly, fortnightly, or monthly. Fresh news can be had every day, and the papers are in great demand, as no individual from the King down to an ordinary workman can do without them.

“Some newspapers are illustrated, and beautifully got up; some are humorous. *Punch*, for instance, publishes very humorous pictures called ‘Cartoons.’ This humour is polite and decent, and is even resorted to as a means of expressing opinions on important political questions.”

Some of the remarks in this diary on newspaper proprietors are entertaining, I read: “A newspaper is usually owned by several persons, in partnership. The entire body of such owners or proprietors is called a Joint Stock Company. Some proprietors are very rich, and their incomes would compare favourably with the revenue of a small state in India. In spite of all this, these newspapers sometimes publish things very silly and amazingly ridiculous.

“For instance, while describing our journey a certain paper said, among other things, that Her Highness had with her a large supply of Indian water

for performing her ablutions with before prayers. The newspaper went on to say that as the water was much in demand, Her Highness had to observe economy in using it, so that it might last until her return to India. Then this water was described as a religious necessity, as Her Highness was held sacred by her *Hindu* subjects and could not pollute her body with unclean water."

The sanitary arrangements in this country seem to have pleased Princess Maimoona. In the diary she says: "Great attention is paid to sanitation in Europe, and the mode of living is nearly the same all over the Continent.

"The climate in England is, of course, a priceless gift of nature. The cost of living is at least two hundred rupees a month for a family. In India this would be considered luxurious living, but in Europe a family can hardly live on less.

"A maid-servant who in India would not be given more than two rupees a month, with ordinary food, cannot be engaged in Europe for less than a guinea a week, besides food. But one European maid would give you more comfort than ten Indians.

"Every bathroom has two taps, one for hot water and the other for cold; the water is heated by gas or electricity. Water-closets are scrubbed daily with soap and water. There are separate brushes and brooms for sweeping away cobwebs. Some of these things are used in places like Bombay and Calcutta, but they are not universal yet in India."

Yes, indeed, I know to my cost that clean bathrooms are not universal in India. Never shall I forget my first bath at an Indian hotel. It was half a barrel, which had been divided into two; my half was slimy and full of warm water, in which horrible little wriggly things were swimming about like baby tadpoles. The

bathroom was in reality an exceedingly dirty cupboard cut off one end of a large room, and it was inhabited by many beetles and cockroaches of nightmare size.

All that was desired from the English visit having been accomplished, the Begam wished to return to her own country, visiting Constantinople, Cairo, and other places en route. The Sultan received Her Highness and her two sons in Constantinople. He was standing in a frock-coat and fez. He took the Begam to see the Sultana in the harem; this entailed a journey up many stairs and through many passages, until they came to a place where there were an imposing array of notices "Khawaja saru," meaning that no man must go any further.

During her visit in Turkey, Sultan Jahan counted it one of her greatest privileges to have been allowed to see the Holy Relics kept in the Imperial Toshikhanaa, among them being a cloak which she believes was actually worn by the Prophet, and a manuscript of the Holy Koran written by the Caliph Osman himself. Next in profound interest came the green banner of Islam, used by the prophet at the Battles of Badr and Ukd, bearing the word "Allah" here and there.

In one room Her Highness saw being prepared the Sultan's cover for the Prophet's tomb, which is made fresh every year. A man of holy appearance sat in a corner, reading aloud the Koran, swaying slightly to its rhythm and the emotion it awakened, the workers listening as they weaved the carpet. The Imperial jewels were also shown to the Begam, comprising some of the finest stones in the world.

Geneva was the next place visited, and while there news reached them of a terrible fire in Constantinople. The Begam at once sent a cheque for £3,000 for the relief of the suffering Musalmans; the princes also sent

cheques. This is referred to in Princess Maimoona's diary. She says: "As a reward the Sultan gave Her Highness a hair of the Messenger of God, the value of which gift can only be appreciated by those who have a genuine love for Him who was the greatest of mankind."

Before going any further on their travels the Begam's secretary was sent home to Bhopal with the sacred hair, for its safe keeping, fearing it might be lost.

Much in the Mohammedan religion seems strange to us, but ours must seem equally strange to them, when they find our bishops and clergy quarrelling over the question of whether bread is bread or not.

On their way to Cairo some of the party suffered a good deal from sea-sickness, the Judicial Minister somewhat severely: he lay on his bed with the Koran upon his chest, offering prayers for Divine forgiveness.

Lord Kitchener, who was in Cairo, on hearing that the Begam was about to pay a visit to that city, told the Khedive, who at once sent his own saloon for her use. While on this visit Lord Kitchener arranged for her to see all the things most likely to interest her. She was anxious to see some of the historical shrines. This was arranged, and some of her party went with her.

The diary says: "We said Fateha (prayers for the departed) over the burial-place of the greatest of great martyrs, Iman Hussain; also over the tomb of Bibi Sakina, and others whose names are familiar to every student of Mohammedan history. There is a place in Cairo where Bibi Sakina said her prayers. It has been said that a deep cavity has been formed in the stone which she used to touch with her forehead in her prostrations, and it is popularly believed that the sick are healed by licking this mark.

“ My brother-in-law and Hamid Sultan went to see this place. They said that people kept on licking until their tongues and lips began to bleed : one person after another in quick succession, after wiping off his predecessor’s blood with lemon-juice. The belief is so strong that no aversion is felt to licking the cavity, which is never entirely free from human blood.”

Evidently there was no sanitary inspector in the neighbourhood, for there could hardly be a better way of contracting and spreading disease.

When the party returned once more to Bhopal the diary ceased, but there are one or two more reflections in it I would like to quote. Here is one :

“ We have a foreign Government in India, and its members belong to a different religion to ours, but ever since we came under the protection of British rule we have made steady progress under the just and sympathetic Governments of that great nation.

Though India cannot yet hope to compete with Europe, yet the progress, both educational and economic, that India has made is nevertheless marvellous, and we hope some day the kindly endeavours of our rulers will place us on the same level with Europe.”

I think we can see the teaching of the Begam throughout this diary, for Her Highness says : “ The way Europeans acquire knowledge is through their mothers ; every European boy learns at his mother’s knee during childhood the things worth knowing, and acquires a taste for knowledge ; and the value of British government is brought home to us by visiting other countries.”

I agree with the Begam : it is the mothers of men who have built up this Empire by their love and teaching.

All will allow that the quotations that I have made

from the diary of this child-wife, aged fourteen, are remarkable. She very modestly and very truly says that all she knows is the work of her kind mother-in-law, "who has taken infinite pains to explain everything to me." She certainly has had exceptional opportunities for forming mind and character. Not many Indian ladies cross the sea; they are born, live, and die in the small atmosphere of their secluded homes.

Before treating with the time when we all became involved in the Great War of 1914, I must go back for a moment to 1905, when Lord Kitchener was Commander-in-Chief in India. At the moment about which I am going to write he was at Simlā. He, no doubt having future eventualities in his mind, sent the following problem to be solved by his staff, by way of exercise in military strategy, pretending it was a war game.

I may mention this was at a time when the disturbed state of Bengal was causing some anxiety. The problem sent to Lord Kitchener's Headquarters Staff (among whom were friends of mine) ran as follows:

"Imagine the following situation:

"Bengal is in revolt.—The Japanese have taken Calcutta.—We have lost the Bengal coalfields.—The Russians are on the north-east frontier.—How am I to get my troops from Bombay to Peshawur?—I want coal: go ahead and find it."

Several young officers on the General Headquarters Staff went flying down the hill to see what they could find out about coal. One of these officers, a friend of mine, happening to know the Colonel Cunningham to whom I have already referred, whose coolies had made fire "with stones," tore off to Lahore to try and find him. This he succeeded in doing, but was told the coalfield was in the hands of Messrs. Shaw Wallace

of Calcutta, to whom, however, he gave my friend a letter of introduction.

Off to Calcutta he hurried, found out all he wanted to know was back in Simla within the week, and presented his report. Lord Kitchener took an early opportunity to walk into the Viceroy's Council, and informed them that he wanted two new lines of railway one to connect the ports with Nagpore, the other on the west from Parasia to Itarsie, on the Great Indian Peninsula Railway.

He was simply laughed at. No member of Council would contemplate such a thing. It was absurd; a preposterous idea; it would not pay, and—where was the coal to come from for the railways?

“I can find the coal,” replied Lord Kitchener, “plenty of it, and believe me the time may not be far distant when the railways I am suggesting may be of the utmost importance.” Still the idea was laughed at and refused, so the Commander-in-Chief turned on his heel and left the room abruptly in disgust, saying as a parting shot: “Then your blood be on your own heads.”

This attitude was so unexpected that the members of Council were left staring at one another and deprived of breath. Probably each wanted to blame the other for the awkwardness of the situation. So frightened were they, that they then and there sanctioned a narrow gauge line from Parasia to Nagpore. However, not until 1912 was the survey of the railway to Itarsie carried out, and then found to be very expensive, owing to the hills that had to be encountered; so the matter remained in abeyance until the Great War, when the very situation which had been depicted on a supposed lesson in strategy actually came to pass, only not quite under the camouflage headings given in the problem to be solved.

Before the war coal was brought from Calcutta to Bombay in ships. When war was declared the fat was in the fire, as there were no ships; they were being used as transports or being sunk by the Germans, and there were not sufficient railways to enable coal to be carried to where it was wanted—not enough coal for the use of the Navy, transport, or hospital ships.

Troops could not be moved, men-of-war, steamers, etc., could not put to sea, for they could not be coaled. All the Government officials were now scratching their heads by way of inspiration. What was to be done? Then some brilliant person attached to the Indian Government had a brain-wave: he remembered Lord Kitchener's scheme of some years before. A good many tides had washed the shore since then, and where on earth could the papers be connected with the original scheme propounded by Lord Kitchener? They must be found at all costs.

Everything was turned upside down, dispatch boxes ransacked, drawers thrown on the floor, pigeon-holes probed. After a prolonged and feverish search the papers were found, and at once a broad-gauge railway from Itarsie to Parasia was pushed through in frantic haste, at enormous expense, costing quite fifty times what it would have done if carried out as originally suggested in times of peace, when good workmen and mechanics were plentiful.

I think I can now say, without any fear of honest contradiction, that the scheme was carried out regardless of cost, it being so urgent; but now there was extreme difficulty in collecting either workmen or necessary equipment. Verily a case of penny wise, pound foolish.

What excuse can be made for the Viceroy's Council, who turned a deaf ear to Lord Kitchener's far-seeing Empire needs? Only that dangers not visible to the

eye of the civilian are usually dismissed as academic, but it is not fair to judge any country by its political leaders, for they seldom represent the best brains.

Some there are who see no roads until they are made, others see them before they are made, and Lord Kitchener was one of them. Swift said, "Life is a tragedy, at which for a while we sit as spectators, and then take our part in it." We taxpayers have certainly had to take our part in paying for the mistakes made by those in authority who declined to be prepared for the inevitable war: who could not, or would not, see the writing on the wall. In consequence of which, we have been bled white.

There is a Latin writer who says, "Those who wish to appear learned to fools may appear fools to the learned." Quite so!

Committees and councils are often queer bodies. I was amused during the war at the Italian Minister, who, when asked what had taken place at the last meeting of the "Big Four," replied: "Wilson, Clemenceau, and Lloyd George all talked English, and as I do not understand it, I said nothing, and now you know as much about it as I do."

It is unfortunate that there must ever be disparity between intentions and achievements, but it is inevitable.

In 1914 we quickly became more and more involved with the troubles of other countries. The natural feeling of all Mohammedans was one of sympathy with the Sultan. The Begam of Bhopal, being ruler over a large Mohammedan population and being of that faith herself, was placed in a trying and difficult position.

When the Indian Government asked the rulers and chiefs in India to help us with troops and in other ways, she saw that, unless there was a very tactful manage-

ment, it would mean that most terrible and far-reaching thing a holy war, when every man, woman and child would be up in arms, and we would then have to grapple with trouble in India as well as elsewhere.

The Begam, I know, begged the Viceroy to leave the matter of troops, etc., in the hands of the rulers of the different States for negotiation, as she was sure the necessary help would be forthcoming if the orders came from their own rulers, rather than from the British infidel, which would be their way of looking at it, and who would think, if ordered to fight against the Sultan, they would be for evermore accursed.

From the first moment that war was declared, before there had been any question of help being asked, Sultan Jahan Begam placed herself on the side of Great Britain and her Allies. So tactfully did she speak to her subjects, that they were ready to follow her advice in everything, so great was their faith in her judgment. As in the dark days of the Mutiny when Sikander helped the British, so again in 1914 Sultan Jahan did what she could for the Empire, helping us morally, financially, by her influence and her troops.

So great was Her Highness's loyalty that not only did she give £ 333,000 towards our war expenses, but also all the men, horses, and equipment, with the exception of the guns, for two batteries of Artillery. There was no delay: they were presented at once. In addition to this, the Begam and her sons had hundreds of horses trained ready to replace those that were killed or put out of action.

The troops she sent to fight for us suffered heavy losses. More men were trained and sent out in reserve. In a hundred ways she helped, and her sons did the same. One, besides giving lakhs of rupees, presented the Government with the use of the whole of his motor-

cars, some twenty or thirty in number. Another gave the whole of his racing stud, while the youngest gave all that he possessed.

The eldest son, Nawab Nasrulla Khan, went with the Bhopal battalion with the first army that left India. He was in very bad health, and against all advice insisted on going to share the same fate as his men whatever that might be. But on reaching Aden he was so seriously ill and in such agonising pain that the doctors ordered him back to Bhopal, pointing out to him that they would have to spend their time looking after him instead of his men. So the brave sporting Nawab returned home, and before long he died—from cancer, I believe.

The second son, Nawab Obaidulla, whom we remember going to Nauheim for his health, was too delicate to leave home, but did what he could in keeping open the lines of communication, and training men and horses for the front. He also died within a few months of his brother, to the grief of everybody, for he was exceedingly popular and had his mother's charming manners.

The Begam, in addition to her other help, joined with the Maharajah of Gwalior in giving and fitting out with every necessity and possible comfort a hospital ship, which was named *Loyalty*. It worked throughout the war carrying wounded from Gallipoli and in the Persian Gulf.

The Bhopal rulers are a brave and loyal race, to whom we owe gratitude, and I regret that so little is known of their history and loyalty. Many other princes were splendid and loyal during the war, but at the moment I am not writing about them.

Truly India is a land of vivid contrasts. Romance of the past and present-day civilisation walk hand-in-hand. There is a mysterious something in the East

that quickens our pulses, that appeals profoundly to our feelings—the land where things we do not put into words seem very near, where we feel we have only to stretch out our arms a little further to reach its mysteries, but so illusive withal, always just out of reach.

Sultan Jahan, pitying the widows and children of the men who fell fighting for the Empire, did everything possible to ameliorate their condition, and she opened a school for the poorer classes, where they could be taught to make useful household things and so learn to help themselves. She was too wise to pauperise them by giving the dole.

It was a terrible grief to the Begam to lose both her elder sons within a few months of one another. She was now very lonely, her husband gone, and all her children, except the youngest, Hamidulla Khan. But she would not allow her sorrows to interfere with other people's pleasure, and as many wished to visit Bhopal as her guests, she allowed them to come all the same.

Of course, her guests do not stay in the palace, but in guest-houses provided on purpose for them, and very charming these houses are—beautifully furnished by a well-known English firm, luxuriant sofas and armchairs, silk and satin curtains, plenty of kind and attentive servants, everything the heart of man could desire. Her Highness once, when talking to me, said, "Indian royalties are not proud, but they do not mix"; and unless special audiences are granted the guests do not see the ruler.

Sultan Jahan's second visit to this country in 1925 was made with the view of conferring with the British Government as to her successor as ruler of Bhopal. It frequently happens, when there are large interests at stake, that there is more than one aspirant, and

while the Begam looked upon her only surviving son Hamidulla Khan, as the proper person to succeed her, the son of Colonel Nasrulla Khan, the Begam's late eldest son, considered he was the proper person to inherit.

The Begam often told me her view of the case, and I gathered that under Mohammedan law a surviving son takes precedence over a grandson or his own nephews. She also told me that she had the right to appoint her successor under former treaties and the Queen's Proclamation. But I am no lawyer, so this must not be taken as a weighty pronouncement. Presumably she was correct, as the Government acceded to her request, that being one of Lord Reading's last acts as Viceroy.

It was to gain the approval of her choice that the Begam came on this second visit to England. She had to wait about fifteen months for their answer to her request—very anxious months for her, because had the Government for any reason not approved of her choice, she could not, and would never have, returned to India, as her prestige would have been gone. She also wished to abdicate in favour of this youngest son, as she felt she was growing old, and she would like to see him firmly established before she was called upon to leave this world.

The subject of succession is one of vital importance in India, and was one of the side-issues, and a very big one, in the cause of the Indian Mutiny. Few people seem to be aware of this. It was not entirely a question of greased cartridges by any means. The native princes bitterly resented the practice introduced by the East India Company of depriving the rulers of States of the power of appointing their successors when there was no immediate lineal descendant. This caused great agitation and rebellion over a great part

of India, and was undoubtedly one of the causes of the Mutiny

After which the India Act came into being, transferring the powers and territories of the East India Company to the Crown, and the Proclamation of Queen Victoria was posted in prominent places notifying to all concerned that the British Government would not interfere with the ruling princes in the matter of succession, which was simply affirming the previous treaty.

While the Begam Sultan Jahan was here waiting for an answer from the British Government, other rulers in India were watching with interest what would be decided, with an eye as to what they might expect themselves. Indian princes are as observant as other people, perhaps more so, and they had seen the way loyalty had been repaid in Ireland, and the treatment of the Irish loyalists did not inspire them. They had also seen Great Britain pat on the back, and financially aid, those who repudiated our Sovereign. None of this has been overlooked by those who have been loyal to our Crown.

It is not for me to say whether it is right or wrong to interfere with the ruling Indian princes as much as has been done of late years; probably it has become necessary after the mischievous teaching of some in authority a few years ago. But I cannot help feeling anxious about the future, for, though it is now considered policy to say "All is well in India," this is a mistake.

One of the reasons why I am anxious is because before long there is going to be a great struggle between the Mohammedans and the Hindus, and then will come the opportunity for princes who feel aggrieved. They may not consider it necessary to suppress revolution, though they may not to all

appearances take any active part in the conflict. Then history will repeat itself.

It may be asked, Why will there be friction between the Mokàmmedans and the Hindus? There are really three causes. First, of course, their religious differences; secondly, the Hindus now outnumber their one-time conquerors, and revenge is still in their hearts; also they are a much more go-ahead race than the Mohammedans, and have taken advantage of education in a way that the Mohammedans have not. Consequently, the Hindus are better in business and more prosperous, and the jealousy and ill-feeling between the two castes is growing daily. The third reason why trouble is brewing lies in the political seeds sown by Montagu and Chelmsford preachings.

During the weary time while the Begam was waiting for an answer from the Government our dear Queen Alexandra died. It is forbidden by Islam for Musalmans to wear black, but Sultan Jahan attended the funeral in our national garb of mourning. Instinct and good taste told her it was the right thing to do, and that it would be out of keeping if she were to appear in white or colour. She realised that if you go to Rome, you must do as Rome does. But it was a plucky and enlightened stride to take.

Again, on Remembrance Day, when all gathered, first at the service held on that occasion, and afterwards at the Cenotaph, the Begam wore black. How could she do otherwise, among all those broken-hearted people? I think it would have hurt her to appear in colours, for she is most sympathetic.

A window facing the Cenotaph was placed at Her Highness's disposal by the India Office. Her mother's heart went out to the many mourners who had lost all that made life lovely to them—the children bringing drooping posies in their hot little hands to lay round

the Memorial in remembrance of "Daddy"; the stern-looking men, grey from agonised self-control; the widows; the poor old parents supported by some members of their family, who felt they must come, though they hardly knew how to bear it.

So acutely did the Begam feel all this, that the moment she returned to her temporary home in London she sent for her military secretary and adviser and asked him, "Where can I find Lord Haig? I want to send him a cheque for five thousand pounds for his ex-soldiers, and it must be done at once." This was on a Saturday night, and the military secretary had no idea where to find Lord Haig, but seeing how anxious Her Highness was that the cheque should reach him at once, he said: "If Your Highness will give the cheque to me, I will see that it reaches Lord Haig at once."

Being a resourceful person, and devoted to the Begam, he started off at once. Where he went, I do not know, but he succeeded in carrying out the Begam's wishes. She then felt happy that she had been able to do something to show her sympathy: help some of those who had been through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and now in want—more to be pitied, in many cases, than those who had died.

On Queen Alexandra's Rose Day, Prince Hamidulla's three little daughters sold roses in the streets of London; their winsome manners helped them to do good business.

The eldest of the three is a bright, intelligent-looking child, whose chief pleasure up to the present has been in playing football. Next year she will be fourteen, and she is then going to be married to a Nawab of a neighbouring State to Bhopal. He has been educated in England.

From what I have seen of this little lady, I imagine that she inherits a good deal of her grandmother's brains, and in the ordinary course of events she will some day be the ruler of Bhopal.

Noticing one evening after dinner that the father of this bride-to-be was smoking a cigar, I asked him which he preferred, a cigar, cigarette, or pipe. He replied that he liked a *hooka* best (*huqa* is, I believe, the correct way of spelling this word), and that when in his own country he always smoked one.

During his visit to England, Prince Hamidulla had learnt to dance, and accomplished it quite nicely; the new steps are not difficult to learn. He had been to a good many dances while in this country, and went to the big ball at the Albert Hall that was held in aid of the Northern Hospital. It was only at the last moment that he said he wished to go to it. One of his staff then went off to try and get tickets, only to find all had been sold. However, he heard that the Prince of Wales, who was going to attend the ball, had said his box might go to the highest bidder for the good of the hospital. An offer was made for it; £150 had already been offered. The Prince went one better and, I believe, secured it for £200.

Prince Hamidulla hopes to bring over his polo team from India this year (1907) to play in the International. We shall have to look to our laurels, for Bhopal is celebrated for its good polo.

The Begam was anxious that her grandchildren should see as many interesting things as possible while in this country, and when they were asked if they would like to go over Buckingham Palace, she gave them permission to go. Colonel Ottley, the Begam's Military Secretary, took them.

I have permission from Buckingham Palace to say that the King, who was away at the time, gave special



For the History

NAWAB HAMIDULLAH'S THREE DAUGHTERS.

orders for these children to see anything that interested them. While they were wandering about the Palace Queen Mary, who was in residence, heard they were there, and kindly came to greet them. Her Majesty asked how much they had seen, and was told by Colonel Ottley: "Not much so far, Your Majesty."

The Queen, who loves children and is always kind to them, then said: "But they must see more. Take them down to Windsor. I will send instructions that they are to be shown everything likely to interest them," and the Queen at once made the necessary arrangements.

This was again on a Saturday, and when the party returned home it was found that the arrangements had been made for the following day. When the Begam heard of the arrangement she said that she would like to go as well, and that Colonel Ottley must get her some rose-trees to take with her, as she wished to plant them by Queen Victoria's tomb.

It seemed almost impossible that rose-trees could be found between Saturday evening and Sunday morning, but they were forthcoming, and Her Highness took them and saw them planted.

I once asked the Begam which of the Indian Viceroys she thought had done best for India. With her usual kindness and tact, she replied: "I think that all have done their best; they are in a delicate position, for what may bring happiness to one person or party may mean unhappiness and distress to another."

Personally, I think that Lord Dufferin, Lord Minto, and Lord Hardinge have been the most popular, while all the Indian chiefs and rulers that I have known agree that the Conservative Party have done the most for India.

I also asked the Begam if that remarkable man

Ghandi, with a soul too big for his body, had done much harm by his agitation, and was told: "No; it was of no importance." I have often thought what a mercy it was that Ghandi's operation for appendicitis, in a British hospital under the hands of an English surgeon, was successful. It was just touch-and-go, as the poor man was very fragile and weak. He was asked if he would rather have an English or a native doctor to attend and operate on him. He said he would prefer to have an English doctor and English nurses.

Just think what an outcry there would have been if the man had died! We should probably have been accused, or at least suspected, of having murdered Ghandi. It was an anxious time for the doctor, and during the operation the electric light failed. A small hand-lamp in the hands of his assistant was all the light available for the doctor, and there was not a moment to lose.

However, during the war there were many terrible operations carried out by the light of a piece of candle stuck in a bottle; but then, if the patient had died, we would not have been accused of causing their deaths.

I have a soft corner in my heart for that spiritually-minded man Ghandi. He is so sincere; he does not agitate out of hatred to British rule, but from a mistaken form of love for his own people; and when he found that his preaching and teaching caused riot and bloodshed, he ceased agitating, owned that he had made a mistake, and when made prisoner said, without the least resentment, that from the British point of view it was the correct thing to do.

Since the Great War, I think that the feeling, the civilisation and the progress of India has advanced a good five hundred years. It is remarkable. The



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THE SPIRITUAL-MINDED AGITATOR, CHANDI.

outlook of the people is entirely different in more ways than one.

When talking to the Begam about the possibilities of the future, and I said, “What do you think the effect will be when the Communists and Socialists come into power, and how will it affect India?” she discreetly answered, “I think all extremes are bad.”

I have been amazed at times at the tolerance and patience of this great lady. She never makes a harsh remark about anybody, so I was surprised a short time ago, when speaking to her about Lord Reading’s Viceroyalty, and after saying in a most kindly way that his judgment could be relied upon, she suddenly said with great emphasis and looking earnestly at me: “He is a liar! He is a liar!” I was about to pass this statement over, and talk of other things, when I discovered that what she wished me to understand from her remark was that he was “A lawyer, a lawyer,” and therefore well trained in weighing and balancing for and against. I felt relieved, though some unkind people say the two are synonymous.

The Begam speaks English fairly well, and understands it perfectly; but, like some of our French, her pronunciation is not always exact, as may be seen from the little story I have just told. No doubt our French is equally surprising sometimes, without our knowing it.

We have had occasional doctrinaire Viceroy—*in other words, theorists, inclined to carry principles to unworkable conclusions.* Great social changes have taken place of late years requiring fresh focussing of our mental retinas.

Viceroy has to depend in a great measure on what the Political Agents tell them. The Indian rulers know this, and that the Political Agents are at times

to blame for what an unfortunate Viceroy may do in perfect good faith.

I have known a good many Political Agents who have been splendid, faithful workers, and much appreciated by the rulers, but these have generally been men with previous diplomatic training. Others there have been who were neither liked nor trusted, and do not appear to have had the interests of the people of the country at heart. Indeed, I have heard it stated, both by Indians and Englishmen, that occasionally they have had fish to fry of their own. It is to be hoped that this is not true.

I have heard some of the Indian chiefs say: "Why should newly appointed Political Agents, often young men from the Civil Service expect princes, maharajahs, nawabs, or whatever they may be, to call upon them, instead of their calling on the rulers?" They think this would be more dignified.

It is an old-established custom in India for the newcomers to call upon the residents, or those who have been on the place before them; and in the case of princes owning vast properties and who are of noble birth, often more experienced than the youthful political officers, it would be more becoming if the latter called upon the landowners whose interests are at stake.

Ever since the Chelmsford-Montagu days there has been a feeling of independence growing up among the rulers, and some of them have been badly advised in getting rid of all English officials about their courts and staffs, and employing entirely Indian people. It has been found that this does not answer, and we have lately seen unsatisfactory results from it. In their own interests it is not wise, and may lead, as it has already done in some cases, to unpleasant consequences.

Among the many things I discussed with the Begam

While in this country on her last visit was the present fashion in women's dress. I asked her if she was shocked at the short skirts to the knees, the bare arms and necks in the daytime, and the painted faces. She said: "It suits some people, but it would be impossible for Indian ladies, and I would not allow any of my women relations or retainers to smoke in my presence." The painted faces did not seem to shock her at all, but then Indian ladies use dyes round their eyes, on their hands and their teeth, so she was not surprised at the present-day make-up.

After all, it is not a new idea: the Egyptians in the days of Pharaoh knew all about it. The Queen of Sheba practised it successfully, while we learn that Jezebel was an expert in the art. Yes, aids to beauty is an old custom, only in the olden days we do not read or hear of these decorations being done in public as is the embarrassing fashion to-day. There is, of course, no harm in "making up" for those whom it amuses, or, indeed, for the sake of friends and relations where it is very desirable. But young girls with happy faces have a beauty all its own; it is only later in life that tired faces may require a little help.

It must seem strange at first when Indian nobles land in England, and they must feel very lonely, in a democratic country where nobody bows down to anybody else, the working classes least of all showing any respect; for in India the rulers' subjects are simply abject, pitiably so, going so far as to throw themselves down in front of their rulers' cars, prostrating themselves before their idols. One would imagine that being flattened out by a car would not be inspiring, and it cannot be a question of seeking favour, as no favours would be of much use after that experience. It is pure adoration of their idols.

I think the Begam prides herself on being like Queen Victoria in appearance. Once when she was holding a reception in Bhopal, Lord Chelmsford told her, when she was in full dress with her crown on her head, that she reminded him of Queen Victoria, and she was very pleased. In some ways they were alike, for both had the interests of women at heart, both dearly loved their people, and both were plucky.

Queen Mary I. said that when she died "Calais" would be found engraved upon her heart. I think "Bhopal" will be found engraved on Sultan Jahan's heart, and I hope that when her time of kindness and usefulness here is over, her good influence will live after her through the coming generations.

When the news at long last reached the Begam that the British Government approved of her appointing her son as her successor, and allowed her to abdicate in his favour, she was alone. Prince Hamidulla was out, but when he returned in the evening he was told that Her Highness wished to see him in her private apartments. We will not follow him into his mother's sanctum; it was too great and sacred a moment, after their long and anxious waiting, for other eyes and ears—too emotional a moment in their lives. But this I may say, they remained together most of the night talking, rejoicing, and giving thanks to the Almighty for their happiness.

It was not generally known that the Begam wished to abdicate, but I knew it, and was in a measure sorry, for she has been a splendid ruler, a real mother to her subjects, and at all times loyal to the British Crown.

All who knew her, however, will rejoice that she has been able to return to her people a happy and contented woman after her many years of troubles and trials bravely borne—trials enough to bring many wrinkles

any brow. But she has never allowed any wrinkles to reach her heart, and she is never bitter; on the contrary, always ready with excuses for people's mistakes, and forgives with both hands all who have brought trouble upon her.

I doubt if it would be possible to find a more suitable successor to Her Highness; for Prince Hamidulla Khan has all his life been under his mother's eye and influence. He is popular in the State and a good all-round sportsman, which is healthy, mentally and physically, and I hope in time that he may acquire his mother's charm of manner and courtesy.

Being a mother of Empire and sharing the world's work is no easy task: there are always so many bewildering conflicts with circumstances; but as time goes on age brings its compensations with it, the dying down of emotional fires producing a state of more or less calm. What once were mighty passionate waves then become gentle ripples.

I do hope that no new trouble will arise for the kind and gentle Sultan Jahan and her son, such as spoiled the life of her mother through the Indians around her court keeping things from her. It is difficult for an Indian ruler, especially for a purdah lady, to grasp all that is written to her in English, for she has to depend on the translation given to her; and if we may judge by what happened in Shah Jahan's time, a good deal may be suppressed or distorted; then trouble may arise, and from no wish on the part of the ruler to be discourteous.

The following lines of Sheridan, I think, represent the Begam's views:

“ Believe not each accusing tongue,
As most weak people do,
But still believe the story wrong
Which ought not to be true.”

I would like to add the following lines—I do not know who wrote them :

“ Have you had a kindness shown?
 Pass it on.
‘Twas not meant for you alone—
 Pass it on.
Let it travel down the years,
Let it wipe another’s tears,
Till in heaven the deed appears—
 Pass it on.”



H.H. NAWAB HAMIDULLAH KHAN, THE PRESENT RULER OF BHOPAL.