

NODE

28691





The Aga Khan and the Begum leaving Deauville Casino.

STANLEY JACKSON

THE
AGA KHAN

PRINCE, PROPHET AND SPORTSMAN

NODE
28691
ISLANDIDE



2
922,9789.
AGA.
J



ODHAMS PRESS LIMITED

LONG ACRE, LONDON

PREFACE

Abyssinia, yet was impressed by Adolf Hitler. His horses won the Derby five times, but he was cheated of his lifelong ambition to win an open golf championship.

Few men have so strenuously attempted to make the best of two worlds, East and West. Whether or not the Aga Khan succeeded is for the reader to judge. Even in his own lifetime he has become a charming anachronism. I have set out to record the details of his career before he becomes a legend.

CONTENTS

<i>Chapter One</i>	ROOTS	page 11
<i>Two</i>	EAST MEETS WEST	31
<i>Three</i>	GANDHI AND THE CALIPH	62
<i>Four</i>	AMBASSADOR WITHOUT PORTFOLIO	85
<i>Five</i>	STATESMAN AND SPORTSMAN	127
<i>Six</i>	EPSOM TO GENEVA	148
<i>Seven</i>	DIAMOND JUBILEE	186
<i>Eight</i>	YAKYMOUR	206
Envoi		235
Index		237

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

THE AGA KHAN AND THE BEGUM LEAVING DEAUVILLE CASINO	<i>Frontispiece</i>
LEAVING THE RITZ HOTEL, LONDON	<i>page 80</i>
TERESA MAGLIANO, THE SECOND BEGUM	81
ANDRÉE CARRON, THE THIRD BEGUM	81
YVETTE LABROUSSE, THE FOURTH BEGUM	81
WELCOMING MAHATMA GANDHI AND MRS. NAIDU TO LONDON	112
AT A RACE-MEETING AT CHANTILLY	112
PLAYING GOLF	113
LEADING IN BAHRAM AFTER THE DERBY IN 1935	113
AT HIS GOLDEN JUBILEE AS IMAM OF THE ISMAILIS	176
WEIGHED AGAINST DIAMONDS	176
ALY KHAN AND RITA HAYWORTH	177
THE BUFFET FOR THE WEDDING RECEPTION OF ALY KHAN	177
WITH THE PRESIDENT OF BURMA IN 1951	208
FAMILY GROUP AT YAKYMOUR	209

ROOTS

THE AGA KHAN WAS born in Karachi on 2 November, 1877. To give him his full title, spiritual and temporal, he is Moulana Hazar Imam, Sarkar Saheb His Highness the Right Honourable Aga Sultan Sir Mohammed Shah, P.C., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., G.C.V.O. LL.D. (Hon. Cantab.). He is the ruler of ten million people who yield him unquestioning allegiance, yet he has no territory and flies no flag over the many palaces which he occupies in Asia, Africa and Europe.

His decrees are obeyed automatically without the backing of an army or police force. A cable from Aga Hall, in Bombay, to some remote village in Zanzibar will make a whole community twitch into sudden life. To the millions of his followers who have never seen him but gladly send him their annual tithes he is the Imam, or spiritual leader, the living incarnation of Mohammed and forty-eighth in the direct line of descent through the daughter of the Prophet.

To arrive at the sources of the Aga Khan's power and authority one must canter across thirteen centuries. Mohammed died in Arabia in A.D. 632 without appointing a successor. He left no son, but his daughter, Fatima, had married her cousin, Ali, who had been the Prophet's trusted lieutenant and was first in the order of male succession. Some of the followers, however, held that the Prophet's declared intention had been to make the Caliphate elective.

The supporters of Ali were outnumbered by the electoral group, who chose Abu Bakr, father-in-law of the Prophet, as the Caliph. Ali yielded with reluctance, but, as the territories of Islam spread beyond Arabia, more of his partisans began to argue his cause, particularly in newly-conquered Persia. They became known as the Shiah, or Shi'at Ali, the followers of Ali, and they proved to be so violently active in favour of hereditary succession that he was offered the Caliphate in A.D. 656. Five years later, after a period of intrigue and civil war, he was assassinated while saying his prayers, and his burial-place in Iraq became a shrine of the Shiah.

Ali left two sons, Hasan and Husain, the former being at once proclaimed Caliph by the eager Shiah, who were unfortunate in their choice. The new Caliph was a scholar and a weakling. In exchange for a handsome pension he gladly yielded his title for life to Muavia, the ambitious Governor of Syria, but was careful to reserve the succession to his brother should he survive the Caliph. The latter, having tasted power and conquered much new territory, proved most reluctant to keep his bargain. Before he died he took the precaution of appointing his son, Yezid, as his successor. This was the signal for Husain's followers, who had more religious fervour than military skill, to urge him to seize his rightful inheritance by force.

Across the desert, with only seventy men under his command, the hapless grandson of the Prophet marched towards the city of Kufa, in Iraq. Husain had been assured that thousands of Shiah would rally to his banner, but the hordes swarming from the city walls were adherents of the rival party. His tiny force

was quickly surrounded and every man cut down. His head was joyfully paraded through the dusty streets of Kufa, although a few of the faithful, sympathetic towards Husain if unwilling to do battle for him, noted the exact place of his martyrdom. Here grew a city, Kerbala, which is to this day a shrine and place of pilgrimage for the Aga Khan and his disciples.

After Husain's death the threads became even more tangled. Islam was now split between the Shiah and those who regarded themselves as the orthodox followers of the Prophet, the Sunnis. A further schism was to develop in the ranks of Ali's partisans, who had become reconciled to the loss of the Caliphate but were nevertheless determined to maintain their separate religious identity. This they emphasized by including in their prayers curses against Abu Bakr, the first of the usurpers, and those who followed him.

Husain, the third Imam, was succeeded as leader of the Shiah by his son: the title then passed without incident until the death of the sixth Imam. This resulted in the formation of two groups, the Seveners and the Twelvers. The eldest son of the sixth Imam was Ismail, who died during the lifetime of his father, who had previously withdrawn recognition from him as successor, appointing in his place his second son, Musa.

A sect, which became known as the Ismailis, recognized Ismail's son as the seventh and last of the "revealed" Imams and declared allegiance to his successors until such time as Ali should return to earth and judge the world. The opposing sect of Twelvers, on the other hand, were equally emphatic that Musa and his descendants were divinely appointed Imams

and that the office ended with the twelfth Imam, Mohammed ul-Mahdi, who died in A.D. 873 and would also reveal himself as the world's deliverer. It is from this sect of Seveners, who regard Ali and the successive Imams as reincarnations of God, that the present Aga Khan holds office by lineal descent as the forty-first "unrevealed" Imam.

Strange occult societies developed from the Seveners, with adherents gradually filtering into Egypt, across Africa and through Asia Minor. A section of the Hindu group of Khojas in far-off India was converted to the Ismaili faith, but the stronghold remained in Persia, where, in a valley known as "the Eagle's Nest," deeply entrenched in well-guarded fortresses, the Ismailis formed a secret order called "The Assassins." They were under the command of a Grand Master, who exercised a religious reign of terror in Persia until the order was finally broken and dispersed by Hulagu Khan in the mid-thirteenth century. Many of the Ismailis then made their way across the mountains and settled in Sind, the Imam himself finding refuge in Cairo.

With the dawn of the nineteenth century Shah Khalilulla, the forty-fifth Imam, according to the faithful Ismailis, was peacefully settled in southern Persia as ruler of a province. He was a man of great piety, but his preachings angered fanatics of opposing sects. He, like so many of his predecessors, paid the penalty by being murdered. Angry and vicariously contrite, the Shah of Persia tried to make amends to the victim's son, Mohammed Hasan, who had succeeded as Imam of the Ismailis. He was appointed Governor of the rich province of Mehelate and given

the affectionate and lordly title of "Aga Khan," which means "Lord Chief."

Pleasing of speech and gallant in his manner, Mohammed Hasan became such a favourite in Court circles that few women could resist him, but he had the foresight to woo and marry one of the Shah's daughters. A lusty warrior, with considerable prowess both in the boudoir and on the battlefield, he owned to three thousand children and proudly declared that every man in his household cavalry of eight hundred could rightly claim him as father.

Aga Khan the First possessed great military flair but little judgment. On the death of his father-in-law, the Shah, he was unwise enough to become involved in various intrigues and campaigns against the successor to the throne. Making a bold bid to force his claims, he was defeated in battle and lucky to escape with his life.

With a band of fast-riding cavalry he rode out of Persia and crossed into Afghanistan, then in the throes of a war with the British. In the province of Sind he was delighted to find numerous members of the Ismaili sect, who laid treasure at his feet and offered him both their prayers and their swords.

For a brief instant he toyed with the possibility of launching an invasion against Persia, but was dissuaded by the British General, Sir Charles Napier, who was being much harassed by the Afghan tribes on the Frontier and saw in this warlike religious leader a much-needed and potentially useful ally against the Amirs of Sind. The Aga Khan was soon equipped to form his own cavalry regiment. With his assistance Napier was able to rout twenty thousand Baluchis at Miani with only three thousand men, and he paid

generous tribute to the Aga Khan, whom he described as "a good and brave soldier and a clever man . . . he is a god, his income immense." It was this victory that helped the Viceroy, Lord Ellenborough, to annex the province and send Whitehall his famous punning telegram: "Peccavi" ("I have Sind").

The British proved not ungrateful, and for his part the Aga Khan remained a staunch friend, transmitting his loyalty and allegiance to his descendants. He was rewarded with the grant of a pension of 3,000 rupees (£75) a month and given the hereditary title of "His Highness." Offered every encouragement to settle in India, but warned by the Persian Government that his presence in Sind was too embarrassingly close, he finally decided to take up residence in Mazgaon, a suburb of Bombay, where he built a handsome house and some finely-appointed stables.

The first Aga Khan was greeted with the greatest reverence by the Khojas of Bombay, who, unlike most of their fellow-Moslems, had learned money-making habits from the Hindus and did not despise commerce. Many of them had prospered as traders and lawyers, and to the mansion in Mazgaon soon flowed rich tribute which the old warrior was shrewd enough to invest profitably. He built himself a palace in Poona for £40,000, bought further property in the Bombay area, including a fine house on Malabar Hill, and showed much skill in organizing the funds which reached him not only from the local Khojas but from Ismailis scattered as far away as Turkestan and Arabia. To these remote territories he sent religious guidance, at the same time approving the administration of affairs, spiritual and economic, through local officials,

or mukhis, over whom he exercised complete control.

The Imam had not forgotten his own zestful days as a leader of cavalry; soon his stables were filled with fine Arab horses; others he imported from England and France. When he was visited by the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII), he proudly displayed the many cups he had won and described each of the races with a detailed knowledge that much impressed the sporting Prince.

In his last years this love of racing came to be a passion and he grew somewhat easy-going about the tortuous ritual of his faith, delegating more and more responsibility to his studiously-minded son, Ali Shah, who had established a curiously varied reputation as an authority on the Koran and a deadly shot. He was credited with having killed forty tigers, which he had stalked entirely on foot. But his businesslike, pleasure-loving father, now advanced in years, insisted on his spending much time out of India, touring the many Ismaili communities which were to be found throughout Asia and Africa.

One of the present Aga Khan's earliest and most vivid memories is of his fiercely-moustached grandfather, then well over eighty, driving with him on to the Bombay racecourse in a dashing coach and four. To the day of his death the old man retained his love of horses. Mounted on a favourite charger, he would insist on riding round the courses before each meeting, listening to the familiar sounds and still trying to judge the fine points of the animals from almost sightless eyes.

He was succeeded, in 1881, by Ali Shah, who ruled only four years as Imam. With the present Aga Khan,

then only a child and scarcely able to walk, he travelled thousands of miles by horse, mule and camel, to visit his followers in far off Sind and the mountainous Hunza. It was said that he died of a broken heart, having lost two of his sons, one through being thrown from his horse at a point-to-point.

His heir, Aga Khan III, was but eight years old when he succeeded to the Imamate. He was born into an India of savage contrasts. The India of T.B. and the Taj Mahal; of two hundred and twenty-five languages and the most hopeless illiteracy; a land in which children were blinded by their parents to become profit-making beggars, and a Maharajah could use living babies for bait at his tiger shoots; a land of five hundred princes and sixty million "Untouchables." But all this was hidden from the little boy in the perfumed isolation of the house in Mazgaon. He picked up the rich scraps of life with silver tongs provided by his mother, a determined woman who rigidly maintained purdah all her life and whose own existence was interwoven with ritual.

The Lady Ali Shah, a former Persian princess, had the strictest views on the responsibilities which her son had inherited with his exalted position. Her thin, brown fingers fluttered restlessly through every phase of his early education. It was a role which she tried to maintain, but with limited success, even when he was a grown man with children of his own. A woman of striking appearance, with great lustrous eyes and thick black hair, she always wore long, baggy trousers, tight at the ankle, and saris of rich brocade. She rarely left his house, and then only to visit Ismaili community centres, but the few ladies who were privileged to be

received came away enchanted by her delightful courtesy and spoke with amazement of her collection of Persian china, perhaps the finest in the world. With her priests and mukhis she directed the affairs of the Ismaili world, carefully nursing the inheritance that weild soon pass into the hands of her son. Meanwhile he was subjected to a religious and educational curriculum that would have numbed a mind less active and able.

Apart from the teachings of the Koran, which in later life he would be expected to expound and interpret with all the hereditary authority of the Imam, the young Aga Khan was thoroughly grounded in the works of Hafiz and other classical Persian poets. Only the more decorous of the poems were given to him for study, but he was not slow to sense that Hafiz had a passionate love of wine, women and song. From these Persian lyrics he turned to Shakespeare, whom he was soon able to read in the original. Relentlessly his mother insisted that he should master five languages, other than his own, despite the fact that she herself spoke only Persian and Urdu. To the boy's apartments, richly hung with silken tapestries, came a squad of tutors, including an Englishman, Lady Ali Shah being determined that her son should never forget the ties that bound his family to the great Empire.

The young Aga Khan was fortunate in his English tutor, who went beyond the conventional syllabus. While Gandhi was reading Thoreau and Tolstoi, the adolescent Imam began to taste the delights of Scott, Dickens and Macaulay. Soon, in excellent English, he could recite whole passages by heart. He was a quick learner and the possessor of an unusually sharp memory. In addition to literature he paddled com-

fortably down the broad stream of British history, being carefully steered away from the shoals and quicksands; nothing was to disturb the cosy notion that all was well in India under the benevolent Imperial aunt, Queen Victoria.

In the palatial bungalow at Malabar Hill there was little to disturb the illusion of peace and plenty. Noiseless servants hastened to do the youngster's every bidding. Slippers padded across the thick carpets, and a hundred acolytes bowed in a swish of tussore when the boy Imam walked gravely through the many rooms to the great garden where tropical flowers lolled, drowsy with scent. Here, on the shady veranda overlooking the sea, he often brooded in the warm, indolent half-light with a book resting idly on his knee. Outwardly it seemed that his lot was a happy one.

Life was slow and majestic, winding sedately to his destiny. He had his books, and even the most exacting of his tutors had to acknowledge his diligence as a pupil. He showed a natural aptitude for mathematics and mechanics; he could discuss philosophy and history with fluent ease, and his mother confessed herself delighted with the progress he was making in his theological studies.

She would drive down to Aga Hall, in the suburb of Mazgaon, where all the religious, cultural and economic activities of the Khoja community were centred. Proudly she would point up to the white tower that dominated the house. From here, magnificently arrayed, he would one day call his people to prayer and give them blessing in the holy name of Allah. And yet, during the opaque summer nights when the violet shadows stretched languorously across

the courtyards, he would be taken with a wistful melancholy. His thoughts turned again and again to the England of Shakespeare and Scott, and it seemed as though he were in a scented prison, walled by prayers and echoing with the chantings of tutors. Often he found himself thinking of his dead father and missing the companionship of a brother to romp with in the alleys beyond the high gates.

The carriage would take him occasionally through the dusty betel-stained streets where naked, pot-bellied children clung to skeletons. Soon, in the shuttered splendour of Viceregal Lodge, where he and his mother were received with friendliness and respect, the world would glow again and all the shrivelled misery of the streets seemed to disappear in a haze. The magnificent A.D.C.s, the silver that sparkled on the tables, the leisured sense of power and culture, all conspired to create in him a delighted anticipation of the world outside his schoolroom and an added affection for the great Empire whose virtues were ceaselessly extolled by Lady Ali Shah.

She did not encourage daydreaming. Despite the unflinching good reports which his tutors passed on to her, she ordered him to be chastised at the slightest sign of disobedience. On one occasion he was given such a hard thrashing that a servant, fearful that the boy might suffer serious injury, pleaded with Lady Ali Shah to intervene.

"No," came the reply. "It is better that he should be punished than grow up ignorant. He must learn to fulfil his destiny."

A woman less confined to the narrow world of orthodoxy might have noted many agreeable qualities

in her son which would have mitigated the harsh discipline of his upbringing. He was remarkably tender towards animals and expressed concern at the number of caged birds in the big house on Malabar Hill. On one of his birthdays a relative had presented him with a gaily-hued parrot in a handsome gilt cage. The boy, trained to show perfect courtesy, received the gift with expressions of gratitude, but soon afterwards set the prisoner free and followed suit with all the other captive birds he could find. A year or two later a native prince sent him a singing nightingale. Gravely, but with a heart filled with pity for the trapped songster, the Aga Khan began to recite a lyric which Hafiz had written about the love of two birds in a Persian aviary. With the bird on his wrist, and as if to demonstrate the theme, he opened wide one of the windows. Much to the dismay of the emissary the bird flew away, but the boy continued dreamily to recite the poem, which also had a happy ending.

From his father and grandfather he had inherited a passionate attachment to horses, and in the large stables attached to the house he would find a few minutes of delicious escape from his text-books. The damp-smelling straw and odour of embrocation gave him a pleasure that was almost sensual after the cinnamon-sweet languor of the great rooms in which he passed so many long days. Here, in the warm half-light of the stables, he caressed the sleek satin coats of fine Arab horses and brushed their steaming flanks. A foal would whinny and try to stand bravely on pipe-stem legs, gazing into his face from dark, mournful eyes. Sometimes the far-off call of hooves pawing on cobbles sent him hurrying to see his cousin, Aga Shansuddin Shah,

who looked after the horses and was always studying books on breeding that came to him from England. Together they planned to start a stud that would be talked of far beyond Bombay, and to the Duke of Connaught the Aga Khan gravely confided his secret ambition one day to win the Derby.

He was fascinated by machines as well as horses. Keenly interested in mechanics, he was always eager to translate theory into practice and spent many happy hours tinkering in the small shed he had had built. Toy engines and watches appealed to his practical nature and it was an early fascination which stretched into manhood. To anticipate, he was one of the first men in Indian public life to welcome the advent of the motor-car and, in the face of some opposition, he gave cups and large money prizes to racing pioneers and others who wished to release their country from the domination of the ox- and bullock-cart.

Yet the long years of study and physical indolence had left their mark. When he was only sixteen he became aware of an unhealthy lassitude in his limbs. A short walk in the garden would leave him exhausted and feverish. Worse, so much hard reading had weakened his eyes and he was already forced to wear spectacles. Weak sight prevented him from playing cricket but he made a brave show at football and hockey. With no thought of the thousands of putts that lay before him he joined in the laughter that greeted the first golfers to appear in Bombay.

Another worry, both physical and aesthetic, was his increasing plumpness. The swollen children whom he had seen from his carriage were suffering from malnutrition, but his own corpulence was the result of

rich foods and lack of exercise. Years later, when he met Sandow and started a vigorous régime, he expressed regret at not having played games during his youth. The mischief was done, but later in life he was to try and repair the damage.

New duties soon called him. He was only sixteen when his mother decided that he was fit to undertake the practical administration of the Imamate. Already he had learned the vast ramifications of the Shiaah world. The life of each community centred on the "Jamât Khana," or prayer-house, whether in Bombay or Zanzibar, in Muscat or in the mountain fastnesses of Persia. Through a complicated system of government by mukhis, leaders elected locally, or in some cases by the Imam himself, the Khoja communities tried to settle their religious and economic affairs according to the Ismaili faith. This system of local self-government did not absolve the Aga Khan from supreme responsibility, all serious disputes being submitted to him for final decision, particularly the dreaded power of excommunication.

To Aga Hall came the mukhis and any other follower who sought spiritual guidance. For a fortnight in the year Ismailis from all parts of the world made this pilgrimage, and it was the Imam's duty to attend to their spiritual welfare as well as to feed them and house them within his gates. It was no uncommon event at that time for him to preside over gatherings of ten thousand and more of his followers. After being bathed in a huge silver bowl, he would be dressed in a richly-embroidered coat of brocade with silk pyjamas. From his throne, with a magnificent fez of gold placed on his head, he read passages from the

Koran and expounded points of Ismaili dogma which were solemnly recorded for posterity.

At the time of the full moon and on special days of festival he would lead his followers in the sacred prayers, and the results of his excellent early training became apparent when disputes were submitted to him for decision. His learning astonished the elders, but even more remarkable was the judicial quality of thought which lanced through the many casuistries that had been grafted on to the holy teachings. With quibblers he was patient but decisive, yet always with a princely courtesy that won admiration.¹

To a young man still in his teens the possession of such great power might have become a temptation to autocracy. Was he not the living incarnation of Allah, a godlike being who could forgive sins, sanctify marriage with a sprinkling of holy water, cure illness with a flick of the hand and banish the wicked from all community rights, including that of sacred burial? The faithful touched the rose-petalled floor of Aga Hall with their foreheads and did not rise until their Imam gave the signal. They were men and women of all classes and from many countries; rich Khoja merchants, with heavy beards and dressed in white silk trousers with black tunics tight at the neck; men in sherwanis and men in rags; pale skins from Persia and fiercely-burned disciples from Sind, from Kutch, from Mombasa; scholars and syphilitics; acolytes with

¹ *The Prince Aga Khan* (John Long, 1933), by Sirdar Ikbar Ali Shah, gives a detailed and interesting summary of the Aga Khan's spiritual heritage. It is written mainly from the Moslem point of view. See also *The Aga Khan and His Ancestors*, by N. Dumasia (*Times of India Press*).

shining, fanatical eyes; and blind, dying men who had been led across India from far-off Lahore.

All brought some kind of tribute and laid it reverently on the floor before the Imam. The wealthy traders offered their tithes, the poor herdsmen giving the little they could spare; and every birth and marriage in an Ismaili community was celebrated by the dispatch of a gift. Not all came as donors; among them were suppliants to remind the Imam that poverty and disease sprouted beyond the high walls of Aga Hall.

It was the recital of these miseries and much that was left unsaid that decided him to visit "Jamal Khanas" throughout India and discover for himself what his mukhis were unable or unwilling to tell him. Gorgeously attired and led under a gay palanquin to the prayer-house, he would listen gravely to the many local problems, settling delicate matters with a wisdom and practical insight far beyond his years.

Himself replete with book learning, he was saddened by the illiteracy and brooding fatalism with which his people accepted the domination of the Hindus, who were better educated and more active in trade and public life. He saw the dangers of a narrow ritualism superimposed on ignorant minds, and soon felt strong enough in his position to warn his followers of their danger.

"I have become convinced," he declared at a meeting in Delhi, "that the dark clouds of conceit and the mists of self-opinion have gathered round you. To repeat the words of the Creed, to perform circumcision, or to prostrate oneself on the ground from the dread of the kingly power can avail nothing in the sight of God."

Although his own mother kept rigidly to the veil, he was becoming more critical of what he was later to indict as "the enervating restriction of purdah." In his notebooks he had begun to record impressions which would have shocked the more fanatical of his adherents, already somewhat startled by his vigorously-phrased dislike of all forms of bigotry.

"The strong mystic influence that permeates Moslem nations cannot be mistaken for any other spiritual force than that of the Koran," he noted for a book which was to be published some years later. "There is the less agreeable phase, too, of a certain other-worldliness and coldly calculating devotion which is perhaps inevitable where millions devoutly believe that this world is nothing but a bridge towards Eternity."

He was still only a youth when an opportunity was presented to demonstrate his views on fanaticism. While he was in Poona he learned that, during a communal riot, two of his own servants had been murdered by Hindus. Not only did he avert serious bloodshed by ordering his mukhis in Bombay to check their followers, but actually exhorted them to give sanctuary to any Hindu who might seek shelter in Aga Hall to avoid retaliation by the mob.

Occupied as he was with the affairs of his followers apart from the plight of Moslems not of his own sect, he was not yet completely aware of the wider issues that were taking shape in India. His approach to general political problems was comfortably based on absolute faith in the wisdom and justice of British rule, a faith in which he had been suckled from birth. He could not appreciate the legacy of race hatred left

by the Mutiny, nor was he disposed to take too seriously the meetings of malcontents. He was only eight years old when Congress met for the first time in December, 1885, with only two Moslems among the seventy-two delegates. He became more critical of the speeches made at later meetings, quickly swollen by hundreds of Hindu delegates.

"England has moved us from our ancient anchorage," declared one speaker. "She has cast us adrift, against our will, upon the wide waters of a seething proletariat, and we turn back to England, and ask her to grant us that compass of representative institutions by which, amid a thousand storms, she has steered her prosperous course to the safe haven of regulated political freedom."

The Aga Khan was also suspicious of the mouthings of Congress delegates who were trying to make political capital out of the alleged insults and disabilities inflicted upon Indian settlers in South Africa. The name of a young lawyer, M. K. Gandhi, who had settled in Natal and was becoming something of a spokesman for his compatriots, had not yet impressed itself upon his mind.

There were other and more pressing problems closer to hand. In Bombay and Kutch people were dying of famine, and the Imam of the Khojas declared it his duty to feed not only members of his own sect but any family that was destitute. He poured out much treasure on this rescue work and was ready when an even more terrible disaster had to be faced. Millions were dying of plague rather than submit to the unknown terror of inoculation. In vain the Aga Khan opened relief camps and hospitals, recommending his

disciples to the virtues of a serum which the Government was distributing. For the first time he grappled at close-quarters with the twin terrors of fear and superstition. To the moneylenders had gone ploughs and precious seed, and the mouths of parched wells gaped to the brazen skies. Even more painful was the sight of men, women and children offering prayers to an unanswering Allah and recoiling from the phials of serum which a Dr. Haffkine had brought from the West.

The Imam decided that example should follow precept. To an assembly of his Khojas he lectured on the scientific virtues of the vaccine, but, realizing that words alone could not dispel terror, he suddenly seized the needle and plunged it into his own arm. Others followed, and soon he was touring distant provinces demonstrating to his disciples that the white man's magic carried the hope of recovery.

Throughout India he had begun to earn repute as a spiritual ruler who spoke for others beyond his own community. When Queen Victoria celebrated her Diamond Jubilee he was nominated by the Moslems of India to convey their respectful greetings to the Queen-Empress. To the Viceroy in Simla he delivered an address in their name, together with a casket of gold, and Lord Elgin was suitably impressed by a young prince who seemed to lend an easy grace to the compositities of a State occasion.

Soon afterwards, not yet twenty, he was betrothed to his cousin, the daughter of the Aga Jungshah. The wistful Princess Shahzadi was almost a stranger, but the Aga Khan's mother saw in this union a benediction from Allah. The celebrations in Poona lasted a fort-

night and twenty thousand of the Ismaili sect joined in high revelry. For sixteen days there was feasting, and before the great tents erected to house the guests, jugglers and performing bears entertained those who had come from all over the world to do honour to their Imam. It was said that the nuptials cost the Aga Khan £50,000, but much of this money was spent on gifts to the poor.

EAST MEETS WEST

THE MARRIAGE WAS AN unsuccessful affair that soon crumbled into separation and divorce, and the young prince eagerly accepted an invitation which reached him from England, possibly through the suggestion of Lord Curzon. The new Viceroy had recently made a speech into which many read a tribute to the youthful Aga Khan:

"The princes of India sustain the vitality and save from extinction the picturesqueness of ancient and noble races. They show in their persons that illustrious lineage has not ceased to implant noble and chivalrous ideas, fine standards of public spirit and private courtesy."

The Imam of the Shi'ahs was enchanted by his first visit to England. Queen Victoria, then eighty years of age, received him graciously and sat him beside her at table in Windsor Castle. She was animated in conversation and attentive to his needs, and in turn he was most impressed by the presence of the Indian servants who attended at dinner. He found himself answering many questions about the famine and plague in India and, to his surprise, was given a respectful hearing by a distinguished company, including Princess Beatrice and Lord Salisbury, who had been summoned to greet him.

No mean trencherman himself, he was startled by the appetite of the diminutive hostess who ate her way

through the entire banquet without seemingly missing a single word of the conversation and adroitly turned the talk with a flick of the heavy bracelet which carried a medallion of her dear Prince Albert. He would never forget that dinner or his pleasure at being invited by the Queen to stay a few days at the Castle before braving the delights and terrors of *fin de siècle* London.

Twenty years later we find the Aga Khan still savouring the memory of his visit. "Victoria," he wrote tenderly, "in the course of her long reign, came nearer to the hearts of the Indian subjects she loved so well than any of the Emperors the great peninsula had had in the last thousand years of her chequered history. The many princes who visited the Court of Windsor during Her Majesty's reign took back to their territories, both personally and through their entourage, memories of her sincere and maternal affection for her Indian subjects. Her consideration and kindness for such ordinary Indians as came near the presence, her employment of Indian personal servants, the pains she took to acquire a working knowledge of Hindustani—all this became widely known and appreciated in India. To cold casuists, hair-splitting in their studies, the Indian feeling of warm affection for the Sovereign may seem illogical; but it is one of the great formative forces of the world."

The young prince had been invested with the K.C.I.E., but equally gratifying was the welcome extended to him by London Society. At Devonshire House and Lansdowne House lavish parties were given in his honour and he charmed everyone with the elegance of his manner and the fluent ease with which

¹ *India in Transition*, 1918 (Philip Lee Warner).

he talked on any subject. Short of stature and a little corpulent, he wore pince-nez and twirled a neat black moustache which gave him an appearance more academic than military, but there was a sparkle in his conversation that titillated a London influenced by Wilde and Beardsley. A decadent, hedonistic capital, rakishly nourished on paradox, seemed to enjoy the company of this prince who could intelligently discuss Kipling or Maupassant and obviously had a civilized taste for brandy.

Reports of his fabulous wealth, exaggerated in transit, had reached a capital avid for novelty. Many found themselves ecstatically repeating Wilde's passage in *Salome*:

"I have topazes yellow as are the eyes of tigers and topazes that are pink as the eyes of a wood-pigeon and green topazes that are as the eyes of cats. I have opals that burn always, with an ice-like flame, opals that make sad men's minds, and are fearful of the shadows. I have onyxes like the eyeballs of a dead woman. . . . I have sapphires big like eggs, and as blue as blue flowers."

If Society fawned on him and welcomed him to its *salons* and croquet lawns, the Aga Khan was no less intoxicated by the magic of volatile London. He saw around him a proud and apparently prosperous people. To his eager palate London came as nectar after an India of verminous beggars and virulent caste feuds. In the drawing-rooms, bristling with lorgnettes, he floated on peacock phrases, but in the streets he dodged among the horse-drawn buses and dog-carts and took a penny steamer at Blackfriars. For a shilling he rode in a hansom to Trafalgar Square and threaded his way to

supper at "Monico's" and thence to the "Ritz," which was to be his home in London for so many years.

Wearing a cravat, stiff "masher" collar, silk hat dandyishly brimmed, with a morning coat and white waistcoat of blameless Savile Row cut, he would join the fashionable Sunday morning church parade in Hyde Park. He found pleasure at Henley and the Eton and Harrow cricket match, while at Covent Garden, in the box of an elegant hostess, he listened with delight to the lovely voices of Clara Butt, Patti and Melba. At night, in the brilliantly-lit mansions of Park Lane, he paid compliments to the hour-glass beauties whose heads swayed like tulips. He saw his first Derby at Epsom in 1898 and cheered the gigantic Jeddah on to win at 100 to 1.

Reluctantly he left London for Paris and soon became enslaved by the gaiety of that brilliant city. The great Exhibition attracted him, and in wheel-chairs thoughtfully provided to cover the vast distances he was trundled to the many pavilions which spilled from the Pont Alexandre III. He enjoyed the artistry and beauty of some of the pavilions, but was sharply critical of the scientific exhibits which seemed to him tasteless and put together without any real idea of educating the masses.

Soon he was on his way to visit his followers in German East Africa. Here he found that his faithful Khojas were being denied certain civic rights by their rulers. Tactfully, but very firmly, he pleaded their cause and was assured that they would be given concessions. Anxious to secure his influence and goodwill, certain local officials were eager to impress upon him that in German East Africa his followers would

receive far better treatment than in South Africa. It was suggested to him that room might easily be found for a thousand Indian farmers who would receive free grants of land and exceptional privileges as members of the community.

He was considering this very generous offer when he arrived in Berlin at the invitation of the Kaiser, who conferred upon him the Prussian Order of the Royal Crown, First Class. At the Wilhelmstrasse he brought up the question of Indian immigration, which had been so pleasantly broached in East Africa. It seemed that there was only one condition: the immigrants would be required to renounce their allegiance to Britain and become German subjects. With the greatest politeness the Aga Khan changed the subject in the vain hope that the Kaiser would see the unreasonableness of his demand. The wellbeing of Indian immigrants was never raised again by the Germans except with the transparent intention of making trouble for England.

In the years immediately preceding the First World War the Aga Khan was to meet middle-class Germans in many parts of the world. While the Fatherland was nominally enjoying good relations with Britain, he was shocked to discover the jealousy and hatred that lay not far below the surface. "They did not conceal their intense longing for war," he recalls, "and usually they blamed the weakness of the Kaiser, derisively calling him 'The Pacifist.'"

Soon he was to see the Kaiser again, but in very different circumstances. He was still in Berlin when the news reached him that Queen Victoria had died at Osborne. He sent messages at once to all Ismaili com-

munities ordering them to go into mourning for three days and to suspend business during that period as a mark of respect. He also directed his mukhis to remind their followers of the good work done by the Empress, for whom they were asked to offer up prayers. He himself went to London and followed the *cortège* to Windsor with the many kings and princes, among whom was the German Emperor.

From London he returned to Paris, where he spent several days in discussion with the Shah of Persia. Apart from protestations of goodwill, the Aga Khan saw fit to mention diplomatically that he was disturbed by the reports of ill-treatment suffered by refugee Indians who had fled to Persia and were being converted to Islam against their will. Those who refused had been subjected to indignities, and the Aga Khan, himself a leader of the Shiah, pleaded for tolerance. It is said that the Shah, impressed by such earnest intervention, promised to remedy these abuses.

Another break with convention was his visit to Constantinople as the guest of the Sultan, Abdul Hamid, Caliph of the Sunnis. As the Ismaili Imam he was received at the palace of Yildiz with courtesy, if with some surprise, since the two great sects of Islam had rarely met for centuries except on the battlefield.

The Aga Khan used the occasion to make a fervent plea for tolerance. He hinted about reports of repressive treatment of orthodox Shiah in Arabia and, with the audacity of youth, reminded the Caliph of the Prophet's love of the lowly. Abdul Hamid listened gravely and informed his visitor that, as this was a period of fast, during which he was not permitted to smoke, he was unable to express an opinion on such

serious affairs, since he never settled matters of importance without the consolation of his hookah! But the wily Caliph, perhaps seeking to allay the suspicions of his Anglophile visitor, expressed great admiration for England and said he could always rely upon the British Navy if things became difficult in the Middle East.

The Aga Khan's boldness and initiative in making this visit impressed not only his followers in India, but shrewd politicians like Lord Cromer, who saw in him a potential leader who might one day reconcile and unite the numerous warring sects of Islam.

Meanwhile, as he discovered immediately on his return to India, such a golden dream was well over the horizon. He was dismayed to learn that a number of his followers had taken the law into their own hands and murdered some who had changed their faith to that of the Sunnis. It was a sad blow after his recent impassioned pleas for tolerance and he decided to take strong disciplinary action.

To his house in Bombay he summoned the leaders of his community and sternly ordered them to bring the murderers before him. Without mincing his words, and speaking with a passion that surprised his followers, he denounced the murderers and pronounced the dread decree of excommunication. He then made a violent denunciation of all crimes committed in the name of religion, reminding his audience that any further acts of that kind would force him to give up his position as Imam. In the weeks that followed nearly one hundred thousand of his followers broke away and formed their own sect known as "Ishna Asri," but they did so peacefully and with no further reprisals from the orthodox.

Within a few months the Aga Khan again crossed the sea, this time to attend King Edward VII's Coronation, which had been postponed because of the Monarch's sudden illness. Again he was delighted to be received in the gaily decorated capital which seemed to him the friendliest place on earth. He attended a special ballet which was presented at the Empire Theatre in London, and, with the other Indian princes who had been invited to London, dined with the new King and Queen at Buckingham Palace. He drove in the Coronation procession, and in later years often recalled the splendour of the Yeomen of the Guard and the emotion with which he heard the cheers of the people. Four days later he was given audience with the King-Emperor, to whom he presented, in the name of his followers, an illuminated loyal address in a handsome silver casket.

Several times in the days that followed he was summoned to the Palace by the King, who expressed great interest in the affairs of India. With the Prince and Princess of Wales (later King George V and Queen Mary) he also had many talks and was graciously invited to accompany them to various social functions.

In the Coronation List the Aga Khan received the honour of a K.C.S.I., but this was no merely formal distinction. His friendship with the Royal Family dated back to a meeting at Epsom in 1898, when the Aga Khan so impressed the Prince of Wales that he at once proposed him for membership of the exclusive Marlborough Club, at that time regarded as a passport to the most intimate Royal circle. More than once he was invited to the Palace by King Edward, with whom he had many private after-dinner talks on political

affairs. They could not agree on one subject: tobacco. When King Edward offered him a cigarette the Aga Khan took one puff and then laid it aside with an apology. He never touched another cigarette.

He was soon caught up in the gaiety that seized Edwardian London. At the houses of Mrs. Ronnie Greville and other brilliant hostesses he was a welcome visitor, and on the mantelpiece of his *salon* as the "Ritz" stood scores of embossed invitations to dine, dance and hunt. His nights were gay, but after lunch he would usually be seen in the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery at the House of Commons, listening to the debates with a sound knowledge of the issues that surprised the Ministers who greeted him. Still fully he would bring the small-talk round to the discussion of Indian problems, particularly to the uncomfortable question of racial segregation in South Africa.

On his return to India he was invited to become a member of the Viceroy's Council. He quickly demonstrated that his role of nominated Member was not merely to bow respectfully to every measure of legislation. He admired Lord Curzon's strong character and sense of justice, but, like most men of intelligence, he had to smile behind his hand when the Viceroy committed such pomposities as banning the hymn "Onward, Christian Soldiers," because of the potentially seditious verse:

"Crowns and thrones may perish,
Kingdoms rise and wane."

While second to none in his loyalty, the Aga Khan was by no means unaware of the dangers of Viceregal ostrichism. Without approving Congress excesses he

could sense the dynamic urge for self-government that was too easily shrugged away as "sedition," and in the speeches of G. K. Gokhale he read a passionate plea for cast-ridden India. Already much disturbed by the indignities suffered by Indian settlers in Natal and Kenya, he began to see for the first time that the Government was playing into the hands of the extremists by ignoring unpleasant truths.

"As a member of the Viceroy's Legislature during Lord Curzon's time," he recalled later, "I saw at close-quarters how foreign the Government was in spirit and atmosphere, and how, on the other side, dissatisfied at not having succeeded in obtaining the earlier demands, Indian leaders began to clamour not so much for administrative reforms as for the control of their political destiny."

After his travels in Europe the ignorance of his countrymen was thrown into sharp and tragic focus. Among his fellow-Moslems he found that only seven per cent could read, while only one in a hundred of the women were able to write their names. He reminded the Viceroy that illiteracy was a danger both to the people and the Government, and began to take practical measures to improve the education of his own people.

In 1875 Sayyid Ahmad Khan had founded a Moslem College at Aligarh, but it was the Aga Khan who nourished it with money and started the £200,000 fund required to translate the dream into reality. He was to make Aligarh develop in later years into a great university to which Moslems would come from all over the world. Sadly he recognized a people split by sects and a narrow parochialism which could only be

penetrated by the light of a learning beyond religious teaching. It is noteworthy that he insisted on including a study of Sanskrit and Hindu philosophy in the curriculum at Aligarh.

Again and yet again he urged the Government to remember that India's poverty and disease were the inescapable legacy of mass ignorance. And here, with a pleading that was not only for his fellow-Moslems but for all India, he addressed himself bluntly to the Viceroy.

"My Lord, has not the time come for the commencement of some system of universal primary education, such as has been adopted by almost every responsible government? The extreme poverty of this country has recently been much discussed both here and in England, and all sorts of causes have been found and given to explain this undoubted fact. But, my Lord, in my humble opinion, the fundamental cause of this extreme poverty is the ignorance of the great majority of the people. . . . Has not the time come for taking a bold and generous step towards some system of universal education suited to the conditions of the various provinces of the country?"

For a while, serious political matters were laid aside for the pageantry of the Coronation Durbar in Delhi. It was a spectacle which the Aga Khan, in the body-guard of princes, would never forget. Forty thousand troops, headed by Lord Kitchener, marched past millions of loyal subjects who had crowded into the city to pay tribute to the King-Emperor's representative, the Duke of Connaught. As the magnificently caparisoned elephants of Assam plodded majestically

¹ East India, Financial Statement for 1903-4.

through the sun-baked streets, bedecked with flags, all India seemed to be united in devotion to the new Emperor.

In this festive atmosphere the Aga Khan presided over the Mohammedan Educational Conference that met in the city. At once he made it plain that he was speaking for all Islam and not merely for a sect. He pointed out to the delegates that, under the British Raj, their co-religionists enjoyed benefits and opportunities denied to Moslems in Turkey and other countries. He was sharply critical of the moral apathy and inertia which had overcome so many of their faith. Prayer and pilgrimage were admirable, but they were no excuse for a fatal preoccupation with the faded glories of the past. Again he attacked the "terrible cancer" of the purdah system, which meant the enslavement of half the people. The splendid concept of Aligarh must be encouraged. With hands outstretched in eloquent pleading, he drew a picture of a great university for Moslem youth developed on the lines of Oxford.

It was a bold speech which startled the more orthodox, particularly those among the Ismailis who regarded the Imam's views as too critical of their own narrow doctrines, but many outside his audience realized that a new leader had appeared in the Islamic world. Enlightened members of the Viceroy's Council appreciated that here, at last, was a unifying influence which could be a profoundly useful factor in counterbalancing the more unruly Congress elements. Moderates like Gokhale became aware that the Imam of the Ismailis was emerging as a force for Indian progress; that even if he seemed to be excessively

impressed by the virtues of British administration and opposed to any idea of self-government by his countrymen, his spiritual authority might be enlisted in the common cause. So it was that the great Congress leader met the high-priest of the Shiah for the first of many friendly discussions on such problems as the "Untouchables."

Soon the Aga Khan decided to make another tour of Europe. As he laid aside his robes and fez and became the exquisitely tailored man-about-town of the "Ritz," his two worlds seemed to split like the halves of an apple. Gay dinner parties, visits to the ballet and the racecourse, and all the diversions open to a favoured member of the Royal set, were his. We see him at the races with many friends, including the late Lord Rosebery, who that year won the Derby with Cicero, so making good his treble boast that he would wed an heiress, become Prime Minister of England and win the Derby.

More important was the Aga Khan's first meeting at that time with Colonel Hall Walker (later Lord Wavertree), who invited him over to Ireland to visit his famous Tully Stud on the outskirts of the Curragh. This was later to become the National Stud. The Colonel was an eccentric and a martinet, claiming that much of his success as a breeder was due to astrological deduction. At all events he was most knowledgeable about horses.

In the Aga Khan, Hall Walker saw a fellow-enthusiast, and the two men had many impassioned and technical arguments about breeding. It seemed to the Colonel that there could be no finer hobby for an Indian prince with enormous wealth and excellent

horse sense than the breeding of classic winners. The Aga Khan listened gravely and assured his mentor that if he ever decided to set up a stable in Europe it would be among the fine, sweet pastures next to the Tully Stud, a promise he was to keep with startling results, though not for many years.

Meanwhile he resumed his Grand Tour. In Russia, buried among the remote Pamir Mountains, he found loyal Ismailis who had fled from Persia, centuries before, but still clung to the faith of the Shi'ahs. He saw much in the land of the Tsars that was disquieting. In Poland, Galicia and the Ukraine he met subject peoples seething with hatred of Romanoff domination and eager for the promise of liberation. The libertines and courtesans of St. Petersburg seemed to be living in a barbaric frenzy of extravagance that was not to his fastidious taste after Edwardian London. He visited the Czar, who invited him into the Imperial Box at the ballet but ruined a pleasant evening by his peevishness and curt manners to his courtiers.

He was even more shocked by the degraded brutishness of the Russian masses. In village after village he saw a semi-savage peasantry, living in squalor and without any moral standards, reeling in drunken madness through a jungle of icons and samovars. He foresaw the breakdown of the régime and could not share the views of his Indian friends who had so long feared a Russian attack on Afghanistan and Constantinople as the first steps towards Slav world-conquest.

If he disapproved of the extravagance of the Grand Dukes who cavorted so restlessly in the sunny playgrounds of Europe, he was not immune himself from criticism as an absentee landlord, even though he

owned no territory. His "tenants" were the spiritual followers who looked to him for guidance and, though he travelled with an imam and conducted a prodigious correspondence by mail and telegraph, leaving the financial affairs of Aga Hall to his most capable mother, it was not always possible to administer the heritage of Allah from the wagons-lit. He had invited further responsibilities, which could not be delegated, by accepting the unofficial role of spokesman for the hundred million Moslems in the British Empire, who now turned to him for a lead against the increasing domination of the Hindus and needed someone to ventilate their grievances, particularly over racial disabilities in Africa.

For his part, the Aga Khan saw no incongruity on the part of an imam waltzing in Mrs. Ronnie Greville's ballroom or attending a rally of pioneer ballooning at Hurlingham. With his priest, valet and secretaries he would follow the smooth line that led rigidly from the "Ritz" in London to the "Ritz" in Paris and down to the luxury hotels of Cannes and Biarritz, taking the waters *en route* at Evian or Aix-les-Bains. As in the years to come he spent less time in India this social formula became increasingly settled; he was able to say in perfect seriousness to Gertrude Bell, who came to visit him in Cannes before setting out for the Orient: "Do not fail to visit the shrine at Kerbala, which my uncles look after. A card to the Marlborough Club in London always finds me."

He was reinforced in his cosmopolitanism by a deep-rooted faith of his followers in the principle that "The King can do no wrong." Neither he nor the orthodox Ismailis saw anything strange in the Imam

savouring the bouquet of France's more potent pleasures. An oft-repeated story best summarizes this apparent paradox. A French novelist touring Syria was surprised to see a group of worshippers paying reverence to a framed photograph in a small wayside shrine. "Why, that is the Aga Khan of the Paris Ritz!" he exclaimed. "I have often met him at the races."

"Why should not a god go to the races if he so wishes?" replied a priest with simple dignity.

In Paris he was enchanted by the theatre, the ballet and a society even more gay and cosmopolitan than he had known in London. Very well read and with a wit not lacking in Gallic spice, he became a lion of the fashionable *salons*. Legends began to cluster around his name; it was said falsely that his bath water was bottled and sold to the faithful; that he had £600,000,000 in gold bars buried in the vaults under Aga Hall; and that boat-loads of his favourite foods, particularly mangoes, followed him to Europe. His courtly attentions to beautiful women and his undoubted enjoyment of their company also led to that alliance of witty exaggeration and malice which is the traditional gift of the Parisian.

In the bright summer of 1905, and still on the youthful side of thirty, he began a friendship with an American young woman whom he had met recently at the house of the Baron de Rothschild. Evelyn Nesbit, deservedly known as "Angel Face," had the misfortune to be married to a man of jealous temper, Harry Thaw, a railway magnate and an international playboy with a dangerous flair for making scenes in public. The Aga Khan wisely decided that Thaw should be avoided and reluctantly abandoned his friendship with Evelyn

Nesbit, who did not lack admirers, despite her husband's reputation for violence.

On his only visit to the United States of America, a few months later, he was an interested spectator of the final chapter in the drama of Evelyn Nesbit and Harry Thaw when he attended a sensational murder trial. Mrs. Thaw had been indiscreet enough to tell her husband that before her marriage she had been seduced by the famous designer of skyscrapers, Stanford White. The latter had apparently given her drugged champagne when she visited him in his luxurious apartment which he had whimsically called "The Love Nest." This confession sent Thaw into a homicidal rage, particularly as he suspected that White was still pursuing "Angel Face." One night, on the dance floor of the Madison Square Roof Garden, White was waltzing with a new conquest when Thaw walked over to him and fired six shots into his body.

The Aga Khan was present throughout the long trial which cost Thaw a fortune in legal costs and resulted in his escaping the electric chair on the grounds of insanity. He was released eighteen years later.

More pleasant were the numerous invitations from many friends who wined and dined the Aga Khan during his American visit. He was fêted by the members of the exclusive Four Hundred set, and New York society still recalls nostalgically the lavish ball which Mrs. Ogden Mills gave in his honour. From Fifth Avenue he went to Washington, where he was received by President Theodore Roosevelt, with whom he discussed, among many other topics, the problem of the Moslem population in the Philippines. He

showed great interest in the system of federal government and applied this knowledge to Indian affairs when he came to work out his own theories.

In the United States he became fascinated by the workings of Wall Street and demonstrated his own capacity for business by investing in oil shares which were later to pay handsome dividends. He was one of the first to see the possibilities of the oil deposits of Arabia and greatly multiplied his investments in both oil and real estate. Here it is necessary to point out that even such a vast and continuing income as the Aga Khan's would have been soon exhausted had he failed to show caution in handling it. From many parts of the world came incessant demands on his purse, calls for spurious charities as well as pleas for schools and hospitals, which had to be examined carefully from local reports and by personal investigation. Inevitably there were fortune-hunters, confidence tricksters and crackpot inventors on the track of a prince whose Arabian Nights' procession through Europe attracted much publicity. Sirdar Ikbar Ali Shah says: "To make an impression upon the Aga Khan and his cheque-book it is necessary to convince him of the money-making possibilities of a scheme within the space of five minutes. No matter how large the holding which he may have, His Highness leaves those in charge of these concerns well alone, as long as dividends are forthcoming. Should these show signs of slackening off, he causes an investigation to be made."

Soon, with so many vivid and contrasting impressions in his mind, the Aga Khan was back in India. It was the year 1906. In Natal, Mr. Gandhi had

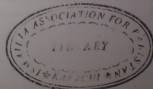
'The Prince Aga Khan, page 220.

raised an ambulance corps to assist the British Government in its trouble with the Zulus, but was rewarded by being sent to gaol when he became too pressing in his demands for better treatment of the Indian community who were being finger-printed as if they were criminals. Meanwhile, in Delhi, the Aga Khan headed a Moslem deputation to the Viceroy and submitted an eloquent case for giving his people increased participation in the political life of the country. Again speaking for all Indian Moslems, he urged the insistent need to create better facilities for education. Writing letters to the London *Times*, and long essays for important journals, he tried repeatedly to warn the British public that complacency was dangerous.

While Gokhale and other Congress moderates approved the Aga Khan's interest in social progress, there was some suspicion that he was, on the one hand, playing the British game and, on the other, becoming too militant in the cause of the Moslem minority.

It was a period of confused issues in which the more dynamic elements inevitably gathered momentum. Curzon had been forced to yield to Kitchener. British hypocrisy was being indicted over the Boer War, which was supposed to have been fought on the issue of tolerance and had resulted in independence for the defeated but a more repressive policy towards the wretched Indian settlers.

The pro-British Aga Khan now became suspect, particularly when the partition of Bengal seemed greatly to favour the Moslems. This resulted in a Hindu boycott of British goods and a tragic outbreak of mob violence in the course of which two English women were murdered. Fanatical Congress leaders like Tilak



encouraged cults which would goad Moslems and also embarrass a government maintaining an uneasy peace between the two communities. Even Gokhale, who bitterly opposed Tilak's manoeuvres, could not refrain from applauding "Bengal's heroic stand against the oppression of a harsh and uncontrolled bureaucracy."

Not for the last time the Aga Khan's cautious liberalism made him vulnerable to attack. His effective pleading for his people had not altogether pleased some of the diehards in the Government, while certain members of Congress saw in him a dangerous obstacle to winning over Moslem support for the new policy of passive resistance and boycott. He declined to become involved in the dangerous moves and counter-moves that racked Moslem India, continuing to urge his co-religionists to remember that the true message of Islam was one of brotherhood and affection. To his own followers he issued repeated warnings against false ideas and the seductive dreams of pan-Islamism, reminding them of their duty to serve the Government loyally and faithfully.

Exhausted by his work, his thoughts turned wistfully to the sunlit promenades of the Riviera. Europe seemed to have become more of a home to him than Aga Hall. It may be argued that this was self-indulgence; undoubtedly he enjoyed the soft delights of Russian ballet and French cooking, and the warm Mediterranean suited him physically more than the heat of Bombay, or even his palace in Poona, to which he referred modestly as his "bungalow." There was

¹ See *The Reconstruction of India* (Faber & Faber), 1930, by Edward Thompson, for an illuminating account of Congress's transition from moderation to extremism.

another reason for his growing Westernization. In London and Paris his quick and cultivated mind reacted joyfully to a liberal civilization and absorbed new ideas. India was like a sponge that sapped his brain and energies and left him limp, with little apparently achieved.

In Cannes, dressed in a white-silk suit, with a flower in his lapel, he dined at the Carlton Hotel and took his ease on the Croisette. He had not yet discovered the magic of golf and found himself visiting the Casino, night after night, to listen to concerts or watch the wonderful ballets staged there. It was noticed by his friends that he was sending flowers to a young Italian dancer, but this was, at first, interpreted as mere gallantry. Within a few days he announced that he intended to marry the nineteen-year-old girl, Teresa Magliano, and that she would embrace the Moslem faith.

The marriage brought him great happiness and it was another link with Europe. The Begum gave up her career in ballet, but she was a gifted sculptress who had exhibited at the Royal Academy and a new world of culture opened out for the Aga Khan. India seemed to become more remote, and although the bride visited Bombay and charmed all with her elegance and beauty it was not long before the couple were back on the Continent. In June, 1911, the Princess gave birth to a son in Turin and named him Aly. Another son was born, but he died in infancy. Aly was brought up in Italy, France and Switzerland and given a far more liberal, and less religious, education than his father.

The Aga Khan and his wife now began a life of luxurious pleasure such as only a prince of great

wealth could enjoy in pre-war Europe. Always an easy and hospitable host, he was now married to a gracious woman who also enjoyed entertaining on a lavish scale. In half a dozen countries villas were bought and furnished, ready to receive distinguished house-parties at a moment's notice. The Begum, superbly dressed and wearing jewels of fantastic value, was always the centre of every social gathering.

At the "Ritz" in London the couple would give wonderful parties at which Nijinsky, Karsavina and Pavlova danced, and sweet lyrics would pour from the throat of John McCormack. Far into the night England's statesmen, philosophers and wits sat at the Aga Khan's table, joining in discussion with a host who never seemed at a loss in any company or on any subject.

In addition to his wide reading and constant refreshment by the finest minds of the day, the Aga Khan was alertly conscious of the social changes around him. Himself an advocate of the franchise for Indian women, he watched the struggles of the English suffragettes with sympathetic interest. He studied carefully the works of the Fabians and gave much attention to Mr. Lloyd George's new and revolutionary plans for Health Insurance. Above all, he was intensely concerned with British foreign policy and growingly suspicious of Germany's aggressiveness. And, all too clearly, he was becoming aware of the dangerous dreams entertained in Constantinople.

There were times when his activities, social and intellectual, proved too great a strain on his physique. Alarmed by illness and a thickening waistline, he began to play golf with great determination, his quick wrists

and surprising lightness of foot giving him natural advantages which were later to make him a fine golfer, although he was never to fulfil his long-cherished ambition to win a first-class tournament. Back in India, he was often invited by Lord Northcote to play in Poona, and to improve his style he had laid out a short course in the garden at Aga Hall. Here he would play for an hour or two before the more serious business of the day.

During his travels in Europe he had become enthusiastic about sport and its value in improving the physique and morale of the young. Particularly in England he had noted the excellent virtues of team-spirit, not only at the universities and public schools, but among the proletariat, and he thought sadly of the rickety babies in his native land and among his followers overseas. With characteristic enterprise he decided that something could be done to stimulate athletics in countries where it was fatally easy to become sedentary and enervated. In Zanzibar he had been distressed by the prevalence of disease, notably tuberculosis, among the young people who drooped in the torrid heat and allowed themselves to degenerate. Venereal disease claimed many victims, and too-early marriage produced weedy children.

The Aga Khan consulted with his mukhis, who approved his schemes but were uncertain of their execution. Without hesitation he decided that the key to the problem was facilities so attractive that even the laziest would find exercise a pleasure rather than a duty. To this end he transformed one of his palaces into a great sports centre. The lush tropical garden, laid out with so much care, was dug up and converted

into a field for football and cricket, while a cinder track was prepared for the more energetic.

The Aga Khan also offered prizes for various sports, including cycling, and installed billiard tables in the club house so that in bad weather the community spirit might be kept alive. Before leaving Zanzibar he ordered local leaders to keep him informed of progress. In a year or two he was gratified to learn that a remarkable improvement had taken place in health as well as morality.

In India he was an early pioneer in promoting hockey and cricket. He offered valuable challenge cups and spent large sums on equipment where local bodies were handicapped by lack of funds. Needless to add, these benefits were not limited to members of the Imam's own sect but were made available to all who needed help. At a hockey tournament, to which he gave his name, he presented cups to the winning team with words of encouragement which carried far beyond Bombay.

"People in India," he declared, "Indians as well as Europeans, are apt to become effete and played out. The only way to counteract this is by stimulating a healthy interest in sport. The encouragement of sport is of even greater importance in India than it is in England. As my example affects many thousands of people I consider it my duty to encourage sport by example and precept. You may have a healthy mind, but it will not last without healthy, recreative relaxation. What we want to do is to raise the people of India to the level of the Anglo-Saxon, and that can only be done by the people being made to possess healthy minds, healthy morals and healthy bodies. I

firmly believe that the encouragement of sport is a patriotic duty as far as India is concerned."

To Aligarh and other Moslem colleges he sent practical encouragement, but perhaps his most far-sighted act was to break down the social aloofness between races. Whenever possible he would offer facilities for sports meetings at which British and Indians could meet in friendly rivalry. The civil servants and army officers were already on easy terms with rich high-caste Indians on the polo ground and across the bridge table, but the Aga Khan saw a wider ground for eliminating narrow prejudice.

It was Lord Harris, the Governor of Bombay, who first enlisted his support for cricket. Together with the Maharajah of Patiala they organized the first All-India eleven to visit England in 1911. The team lost fifteen matches and won six, but made a splendid impression with their sportsmanship and were followed by some of the finest stylists the game has ever known. Within a few years crowds of one hundred and fifty thousand were coming to Bombay to watch the eight-day cricket tournaments between British, Hindu, Moslem and Parsee teams.

The long periods which the Aga Khan spent so congenially in Europe had to be paid for in hard, exacting work when he returned to Bombay. His mother, notwithstanding the secluded life she led at Malabar, showed a remarkable understanding of world problems and listened attentively to the detailed accounts which the Imam gave of what he had seen in England, France, the United States and the Ismaili communities in Africa and the Middle East. There was much to claim his attention. He presided over marriage ceremonies,

gave religious addresses to vast assemblies who congregated from Kutch, Sind and Kathiawar. He also arbitrated on problems submitted by the mukhis, apart from acting as a one-man Supreme Court of Appeal from decisions made by local authorities. With an insight strengthened by first-hand acquaintance of the world of affairs he scrutinized the numerous demands for funds which awaited him. He was just and generous in distributing his bounty, but knew how to discriminate against suitors who cloaked their begging with religious arguments.

As soon as he was free he toured the distant provinces of India, visiting communities which could not send delegates to Aga Hall. Questions which his mukhis had failed to submit to Bombay he decided on the spot, always with great tact in order not to undermine local prestige and authority, but with a firmness that dismayed the corrupt and inefficient.

Somehow he found the time also to visit many of the native princes, including the Moslem Nizam of Hyderabad, who entertained him with sweet Persian melodies which he played on his satar, a mandolin-like instrument. He was received not only as a prince, but with the reverence due to a great religious leader. An eye-witness tells us that the Jam of Nawanagar, better known to English readers as the famous cricketer, "Ranji," shook hands with his friend the Aga Khan at one meeting, bowing in the deepest obeisance until he was commanded to stand erect.

With perhaps too generous an eye the Aga Khan saw the ruling princes as "active, hardworking, patriotic and devoted to the welfare of their people." Himself an outstandingly loyal servant of the Crown,

he was impressed by the devotion to the British Empire professed with such sincerity by the princes whom he met. "Looking back on the hundred and fifty years of British predominance in India," he declared with feeling, "I can see scarcely any other act equal alike in wisdom, justice and far-sightedness to Queen Victoria's promise through Canning, on the morrow of the Mutiny, to refrain from the absorption of any Native States into British India."

Not so impressed with the ruling princes was Mr. Gandhi, who recorded his disgust at their vanity and showiness. Against his will he had attended a Durbar given by Lord Hardinge to celebrate the laying of the foundation stone of the new Hindu university. He recalled: "I was distressed to see the maharajahs bedecked like women—silk pyjamas and silk *achkans*, pearl necklaces round their necks, bracelets on their wrists, pearl and diamond tassels on their turbans and, besides all this, swords with golden hilts hanging from their waistbands."

Fresh from his travels, and more than a little concerned with the prospects of a war which would certainly involve India, the Aga Khan found only an aesthetic satisfaction in the picturesquely feudal military forces which were paraded so gaily before him in the Native States. Lord Curzon's biographer has recorded the Viceroy's and Vicereine's impressions of such a parade in Bhopal and it may serve to underline the Aga Khan's own misgivings:

"Soldiers in every conceivable variety of *opéra bouffe* uniform, some saluting, others brandishing swords, others armed with ancestral weapons; camels,

¹ *An Autobiography*. Phoenix Press.

elephants, horses, streamers, flags, arches, guns letting off on every side. . . . The way was lined with Imperial Service cavalry, and, when these gave out, with State infantry, aged veterans with orange beards and orange trousers, holding rusty muskets before them."

It was the Aga Khan who proposed to the Viceroy and the princes that such military bodies might enhance the glory of ceremonial occasions but were hardly likely to reduce an enemy to anything except mirth. He urged the desirability of sending British officers to train these forces on modern lines so that, in emergency, they might be of some use. Through his earnest pleading a start was made to scrap the muskets and replace the trumpeting elephants by more lethal weapons. When war came in 1914 some at least of the princes were able to put useful, well-trained forces in the field.

The native rulers still had an opportunity for the picturesque when the King-Emperor and Queen Mary held an Imperial Durbar in Delhi at the end of 1911. The Aga Khan and other princes pledged their loyalty to the Royal visitors, splendid in their Coronation robes. The sun shone on the pipe-clayed topees of the British soldiers, and, amid great rejoicing, it was announced that henceforth Delhi would replace Calcutta as the capital.

Of more significance to India was the very welcome annulment of the order which had partitioned Bengal and led to violence. The Congress right-wingers were jubilant, but the extremists, who had profited by the unpopularity of the measure, shrugged in the shadows. As a telling reminder that all was not yet sweetness and light, someone threw a bomb into the

Viceroy's howdah while he was riding through the streets of Delhi, wounding Lord Hardinge and killing his attendant.

Not long afterwards another bomb outrage occurred in Lahore, but these were isolated acts of violence in a generally improved atmosphere; Congress was now behaving like a tiger whose teeth had been extracted. The gentle Gokhale, who was soon to be succeeded as Congress leader by Gandhi, would often meet the Aga Khan and discuss problems more concerned with social welfare than political issues. Together this liberal-minded Brahman and the Imam of the Ismailis were able to exchange views on the plans for expanding educational facilities in India and for improving the condition of the Untouchables.

The latter problem they saw as something deeper than a need to help a backward people, forming one-sixth of the population and cursed with the stigma of inferiority. While they were sympathetic to the idea of religious missions, both by Hindus and Moslems, both were agreed that the religious motive behind this work of proselytization should not be over-stressed. What was needed was a genuine effort to raise the pariahs from the misery and degradation into which they had fallen so that they could regain social self-respect.

The Aga Khan was completely unafraid of the effect that his opinions might have either upon his more orthodox followers or upon the frigidly superior beings in Delhi. Writing with a shrewd clairvoyance three years before the outbreak of the First World War, he reminded the Government that a splendid opportunity was being missed.

"Educate, educate, educate," he declared passionately. "Look for a passing moment at the question of manpower. India could put troops into South Africa as quickly as they could be sent from England; she could land soldiers in Australia long before England could do so; and forces from India could reach western Canada almost as soon as from England. . . . If by education the myriads of India can be taught that they are guardians and supporters of the Crown, just as are the white citizens of the Empire, then the realization that India and the self-governing dominions stand and fall together, bound by a community of interests and a common cause to maintain, will have come. It is imperative to give Indians the education to fit them for their future role in the British Empire."

Soon the prophetic wisdom of these words were tragically realized. The war clouds were rolling towards India, as the Aga Khan had feared, and he had no doubt of his own role in the struggle which he had recognized as inevitable when he talked with Germans during his travels in the early part of the century. One evening he was playing billiards in a club in Poona when the German Crown Prince sauntered across the room in his usual arrogant fashion.

"When we fight the English, what are you Indian princes going to do?" demanded "Little Willie" with a smile.

"Fight, too," snapped the Aga Khan, chalking his cue vigorously. "And what's more, take our troops into your country."

Just before the war he returned to Europe to see his baby son, but mainly to view the international situa-

¹ *National Review*, July, 1911.

tion at closer quarters. What he saw and heard was not reassuring, but, like so many others, he was unprepared for the blow when it fell. The news that war had broken out reached him while he was visiting his followers in Zanzibar.

For some days he had been confined to his bed with an internal illness, but insisted on getting up at once, ignoring doctor's orders. He dispatched cables to his mukhis in India and other parts of the Empire, calling upon them to summon meetings at every *jamat* and read his message asking for complete allegiance to Britain. Although suffering great pain, he travelled overnight to London to call upon Lord Kitchener and offer him his sword. "If you will only give me an opportunity," he said fervently, "I will shed my last drop of blood for the British Empire." He returned without comment the insignia of the Prussian Order given him by the Kaiser.

At the age of thirty-seven, and having had no military experience, he volunteered to serve in the ranks with either a British or an Indian regiment. He was medically examined and declared unfit for military service, but was given little time to brood on his disappointment. In a few weeks he organized a field ambulance corps among the Indians resident in England and provided considerable sums for equipment. His faith in Britain was never steadier, but it would be severely tested.

GANDHI AND THE CALIPH

IT WAS NOT EASY for the Aga Khan to sit idly behind the curtains of the "Ritz" and watch the men go by singing on their way to Victoria Station. His wife and child were safe and his mother was already engaged in Red Cross work in Bombay. Lady Ali Shah had heard the news in Baghdad and promptly decided to return overland to India by way of Afghanistan. The Aga Khan was soon called into conferences at the War Office, where the subject of India's military effort and potentialities claimed his attention.

His outlook was cheerful, but he had to voice a warning about the possible effects of Turkey's adherence to the Central Powers. Turkey's disastrous wars with Italy and her Balkan neighbours had created great sympathy among Indian Moslems and it was dangerously easy for Whitehall to overlook the religious bond which united loyal India to the Caliph. Belgium was remote from Bombay, and although there was enthusiasm for the Allies in coming to the rescue of that gallant little country the Aga Khan was disinclined to underrate the influence which the Sultan of Turkey might exert over the Faithful. The spectacle of St. George and the Dragon might soon prove far less romantic than that of a Caliph of Islam threatened with destruction.

India's mood in 1914 was a temptation towards optimism. Memories of the King-Emperor's visit were

still warm and no single act for many years had done more to massage away unrest than the annulment of the Partition of Bengal. Congress had sheathed its claws and was purring patriotic sentiments, even thanking the Viceroy for offering the people of India an opportunity "to fight shoulder to shoulder with the people of other parts of the Empire in defence of right and justice, and the cause of the Empire." Gandhi forgot the humiliations which his compatriots endured in South Africa and other parts of the Empire they were now urged to defend, and forgave those who had sent him to goal. Gokhale, sensing that death was near, had summoned him to return to India by way of London.

Gandhi was already at sea when the news reached him that war had broken out. He arrived in London on 6 August, 1914, but Gokhale was still in Paris and too ill to travel. He quickly called a meeting of Indians resident in London and nipped in the bud any suggestion that England's danger might be exploited. He himself wrote to Lord Crewe offering to help train an ambulance corps, a gesture which was accepted "with some hesitation." Finally he met Gokhale, who urged him to spend a year travelling in India, gaining experience and not making public statements until his period of probation was over. Gandhi kept his promise, which did not, of course, preclude him from addressing many recruiting meetings, and he richly deserved his Kaiser-i-Hind Gold Medal, which was to be returned so dramatically a few years later.

All seemed to be going well. Thousands of recruits were being shipped to Flanders from India. Their morale was high and Ottoman propaganda appeared

to have failed. Within a few weeks of the outbreak of war, however, a *jihād*, or Holy War, was declared against the Allies in the name of the Caliph himself. All true Moslems were urged to join their brothers and destroy the infidels who had dared to take up arms against the Sultan. Learned religious men penned subtle arguments in favour of Pan-Islamism, while newspaper editors like the Ali brothers became active in sedition. Although only a few minor Moslem rulers joined the *jihād*, and were greatly outnumbered by the powerful princes of Arabia who made treaties with the British, a vast potential of mischief was being created under the very noses of the Government of India. Propaganda alleging that the Allies intended to humble the Caliph and defile the Holy Places began to creep into army billets.

Whitehall complacency was soon being punctured by alarming reports. Although the Moslems of the Punjab were loyally mustering for duty to the King-Emperor, dangerous agitators had begun to sabotage the work of recruiting officers. Pan-Islamist agents organized a violently anti-British campaign in the Press, headed by Zafar Ali Khan, while fanatical religious appeals were made to the troops inciting them to mutiny. At a Mohammedan Educational Congress held at Rawalpindi, in that first Christmas of the war, various agitators began to inject Pan-Islam propaganda into the agenda.

In London the Aga Khan was meeting Cabinet Ministers who came to him for energetic and well-informed counsel. Without being an alarmist, he declined to underestimate the mischief which was being subtly engineered from so many directions.

Isolated they could be dealt with as no more than local nuisances, but the cumulative effect might be most dangerous particularly if there was a planned campaign behind them; and this indeed seemed to be the case. Young Moslem students had slipped across the Frontier to Kabul, which was alive with German agents. A Turco-German Mission also appeared there. In a very short time a network of espionage and intrigue was operating throughout Asia and the Middle East.

From Kabul emanated the melodramatic "Silk Letter" plot.¹ Certain spies were given details of a revolutionary plot which they had to convey to interested parties among the Frontier tribes and to leaders in Mecca, Teheran and Lahore. These instructions, written in code, were penned on strips of silk and sewn into the lining of the agent's coat. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, intercepted two of these letters and discovered the full details of a truly fantastic plot.

A skeleton government was framed which would function through an "Army of God" with headquarters at Medina. Indian Moslems would unite to drive the British out of the country with the help of the Frontier tribes and such Hindu extremists as could be enlisted. Russia was to be invited to stab the Allies in the back and join in the "liberation" of India. Even the native princes were not forgotten; they were also to be enlisted in the Holy War, which would at last drive the British oppressors into the sea.

¹ *India As I Knew It*, by Sir Michael O'Dwyer (Constable), gives a detailed account of how the Pan-Islam movement threatened India's war effort.

Ludicrous and crude this plot turned out to be, but it proved to the authorities that many desperate and clever men were still at liberty in India, ready to spread sedition among the troops and make trouble in other directions.

A more serious development was the Ghadr conspiracy designed to foment sedition among the Sikhs. This movement had been responsible for the bomb outrage on Lord Hardinge, and the coming of war offered another and finer opportunity to make trouble for the Government. In the summer of 1914 a ship had sailed for Vancouver with nearly four hundred Sikh settlers aboard in a deliberate challenge to Canadian immigration laws. They were refused admission to British Columbia and had to return to India. By the time the ship docked at Calcutta war had been declared and agitators were quick to point the anomaly of an Empire which refused its subjects permission to land and work and in the same breath urged them to fight in its defence. The frustrated emigrants were in an ugly fighting mood and refused to travel home on the special train provided for them. Many of them were armed and, encouraged by their leaders, clashed with the police. Several Sikhs were killed and the whole affair left a nasty trail of anti-British feeling.

The Ghadr agents continued to urge resistance to the Government, making capital of the "patriots" who had been martyred. When a Japanese ship arrived in Calcutta a month later it was crowded with supporters, who had been rounded up in the Philippines and China, with definite instructions to start trouble in the Punjab. They were promptly arrested and a great

number interned, but hundreds of others slipped out into the country undetected and organized a brief but very grim reign of terror. Police were ambushed and murdered, robberies were carried out very efficiently, and a serious attempt made to sabotage the railways and war factories. To check this terrorism special courts were set up and the strong-armed O'Dwyer finally crushed the Ghadr gangs with a series of hangings and heavy prison sentences. Unhappily, the memory of these courts-martial lingered unpleasantly, doing little to assist the work of recruiting officers.

It had finally become apparent to the British Government, both in London and Delhi, that a counterweight had to be found against the very active Caliph and his agents. In the first months of the war the Aga Khan had become a sounding-board for Moslem opinion. Clear-headed and brief of speech, he was a good conference man, and Britain's war leaders leaned more and more on his opinions for an assessment of the situation in India. In a situation bristling with awkward taboos it was essential to have a spokesman who could address the Moslem world with authority. The Aga Khan was the obvious choice. He had done much to heal the breach between the Sunnis and Shi'ahs and his many welfare schemes had established his reputation as a philanthropist with a vision not limited by narrow sectarianism. His great prestige as a religious leader had earned him the respect of orthodox Moslems, while the students would not soon forget his pioneer work for education.

To India's Moslems he now addressed himself in answer to the Holy War which the Sultan had called for. A tide was running against the carefree patriotism

of 1914, but the great rock of Indian loyalty stood firm. From the millions of war workers he asked for greater efforts, assuring them that Great Britain and her allies would protect the Holy Cities. With strong, bold strokes of reasoning he cut through the calumnies that had spread from Kabul, Berlin and Constantinople.

Manifestos, however eloquent, are best fired at close range. The Aga Khan was the perfect agent for his own propaganda. On his personal initiative, and with the very full co-operation of the British Government, he now undertook a series of most delicate journeys. More dangerous than enemy submarines was the threat of the assassin's bomb or dagger once the Aga Khan left England. To Egypt and Arabia he journeyed, meeting religious and political leaders and stiffening resistance wherever the Pan-Islamic virus seemed to have taken hold. His arguments carried conviction and there was no doubt that his very presence seemed to hearten those who had already become disillusioned.

India had gone gaily to war, but her sons were returning in sombre mood. The Punjab's fighting men, in particular, had made a gallant effort, but at a heavy price. The horrors of Flanders had been followed by Mesopotamia, and the smell of death and defeat was in the uniforms of the men who came back. "Those who remember," says Edward Thompson, "know that never has such a stream of broken and dazed humanity poured into any Eastern port as came steadily into Bombay between November, 1915, and September, 1916." Here were muddled and dejected men who had known dysentery, cholera and malaria, and had to con-

tinue fighting while the Turks placed mullahs in the front lines to exhort their fellow-Moslems to desert or murder their officers.

In this far from encouraging atmosphere the Aga Khan did his finest recruiting work. There was no time now for the soft by-ways of luxury. Ceaseless travelling, often with a doctor in attendance, took him to every part of India, making speeches, collecting funds, enlisting thousands of volunteers and always countering that creeping barrage of anti-British propaganda that came from so many quarters as the war lengthened into years.

Back in London to make his reports and prepare for yet another tour of Africa, he found himself honoured by an award that gave him great pleasure. In recognition of his war services King George V granted him a salute of eleven guns and the rank of First-Class Chief of the Bonibay Presidency for life. Yet a more signal honour, and one which vastly pleased his countrymen, came to him from the hands of the Congress leader. In the early autumn of 1914, and before his return to India, Gokhale had prolonged his stay in London, although he hated and feared the fogs, in order to have many conversations with the Aga Khan. Dressed as always in his silk turban, jacket and dhoti, he was usually in a half-fainting condition. He was suffering from diabetes, the disease that killed him a few months later, but he summoned his strength to expound his views on the future of India to the Moslem prince whose liberal outlook had impressed him.

Together they discussed Gokhale's scheme for establishing Federalism in India as a step towards self-

government. They argued about the problem of protecting the Moslems and other minorities and ranged over the hopes and fears that had racked India since the Mutiny. By the following February Gokhale was dead, but on his death-bed he completed his last political testament which he addressed, not to Gandhi, whom, as we have mentioned, he advised to spend a year on patient probation, but to the Aga Khan, with the request that he should make it public in two years when, as he hoped, the war would be over and his country in a level and healthy mood to work out her destiny. When he published it the Aga Khan added a memorandum in which he pleaded that after the war East Africa should be reserved for colonization by Indians as a reward for war services.

Other hands, more feverish, were to write the codicils to Gokhale's testament. In September, 1916, Mrs. Annie Besant formed her Home Rule League and Mr. Gandhi was endowed with the title of "Mahatma" by his votaries. The strange heady mixture of mysticism and boycott was brewing. Congress and the Moslem League, fortified by President Wilson's righteous doctrine of "self-determination" and the British Government's very cautious handling of the Home Rulers, became more insistent in their demand that India's war sacrifices should be rewarded. On 20 August, 1917, Mr. Montagu, the Secretary of State, was delivered of his historic pronouncement in the House of Commons. "The policy of His Majesty's Government is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible

government in India as an integral part of the British Empire."

The Aga Khan, in his rare moments of leisure, had often considered the idea of writing a blueprint for India's future. In 1917 he had planned to call on Mr. Montagu and the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, and give his views on the proposed reforms with special reference to the legitimate interests of the Moslem community. Another breakdown in health, followed by an operation, resulted in his being ordered to rest in Europe for six months. When he insisted that his presence was required in India, he was flatly told that his health would be permanently impaired unless he relaxed. With much reluctance he submitted to orders, but for two or three hours daily he sat at his writing desk and prepared a review of his country's aspirations and problems.

Published in May, 1918, under the title *India in Transition*,¹ it is a work of remarkable logic and power, and proved to be a valuable source of reference for the drafters of the Government of India Bill. Perhaps its greatest virtue was the strong plea for commonsense and patience on both sides, and a warning of the dangers that might follow impulsive, ill-considered action. In an eloquent passage the Aga Khan issued a solemn warning: "Let me speak, finally, of my conviction that a progressive, satisfied and happy India would be the strongest pillar, next to the United Kingdom, of the British Empire. Britain must remember that for more than one hundred and fifty years she has been the first power of Asia, and that the position of her vigorous daughter partners, Australia, New

¹ Published by Philip Lee Warner.

Zealand and South Africa, would become dangerously weak if the great base of her Eastern authority, triangular India, were ever to fall into other hands."

He had long ago worked out a system of Federalism that might be applied successfully to his country. He had prophesied the growth of "a vast, self-governing and free Asiatic Dominion, attached to Great Britain and the other Dominions by the ties of a common sovereignty and flag." Unhappily, his hopes of patient co-operation on both sides were dashed by the Government's lack of foresight. In order to prepare a friendly atmosphere for the proposed reforms the Viceroy had released Mrs. Besant and other rabid Home Rulers from jail. They promptly enrolled with Mr. Gandhi in a violent anti-British campaign.

Authority became a little unbalanced and proceeded to make one tactless move after another. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report, much of which was later to be incorporated in the Government of India Act of 1919, was published and might have had a working chance had there not appeared at the same time the report of the Seditious Committee, presided over by Lord Justice Rowlatt. This recommended that special machinery should be set up to deal with acts of sedition. It was violently resented by an India already dissatisfied with the cautious promises of self-government, and now ready to believe that the new courts were a threat to liberty. To a country that had suffered much in war it seemed that Montagu was giving and Rowlatt taking away.

As soon as the Rowlatt Bill became law Gandhi at once declared a hartal, or general strike, in protest. India stopped work on 30 March, 1919, and the Aga

Khan was grieved to see the number of formerly loyal Moslems who were joining the ranks of extremism. In vain he called on his followers to exercise restraint. It was his misfortune and that of the Government he had served so well that his calm voice could not be heard above the clamour.

Gandhi had tasted the triumph of one hartal and decided to continue with the same mixture. More strikes were ordered in the Punjab and other parts of India. Inflamed by revolutionary posters and pamphlets, the mobs paraded the streets with black flags and acted in a provocative fashion that inevitably led to broken heads. Serious rioting took place in Ahmedabad, Gandhi's own city, and the Mahatma was turned back as he set out for Delhi and Lahore with the presumed intention of organizing more efficient resistance to the Government. Extremists were particularly active in the Punjab and had made contact with the aggressive Frontier tribes whom they hoped to drive into action against the British Army.

It was at Amritsar, in the Punjab, that the greatest and most tragic blow was struck against Anglo-Indian unity. On 13 April, 1919, General Dyer read a proclamation forbidding all public meetings in the city. At the same time reports of looting and burning were coming in from the neighbouring city of Lahore. Dyer was naturally under tension when he learned that a crowd numbering many thousands was assembling in the Jhallanwala Bagh, despite his prohibition. With a force of Sikhs and Gurkhas he came face to face with the mostly unarmed crowd and ordered his men to open fire. Trapped in a small area the mob was mown down, leaving several hundred dead and wounded.

General Dyer's action was not improved by his decree that all Indians in Amritsar should crawl on all-fours when passing down a street where a British lady missionary had been assaulted.

The Aga Khan was in England when the news of the terrible massacre reached him. He was profoundly shocked, but urged his followers by cable to exercise the greatest restraint and not to be provoked into violence by extremist agitators. He had already told the British Government that in his view the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms might be made to work if they were interpreted with great generosity and a genuine effort to understand India's aspirations. He called for "a radical change of policy, a new angle of vision, a final break with a Government deriving authority wholly from without, and the commencement from the lowest to the highest stage of full co-operation with the people."

Amritsar dealt a hard knock to his hopes of reconciling moderate Indian opinion with British policy, but he went to India and used his calm reasoning technique to keep the Moslems out of the arms of the more extreme Congress elements. After what had happened in the Punjab it was like trying to stop a juggernaut with a pea-shooter. General Dyer had been retired and many of the agitators released from jail, but the Report of the Hunter Committee was too friendly to the authorities to do anything but still further inflame Indian sentiment. Brutality seemed to be condoned and Gandhi replied with the deadly weapon of Satyagraha, or non-violent non-co-operation. He returned his medals to the Viceroy, organized a memorial commemorating Jhallanwala Bagh and boycotted

British goods. India was called back to the spinning-wheel.

It is not, I think, uninteresting to contrast the mentalities of the Aga Khan and Gandhi over one revealing incident. Gandhi may have been perfectly sincere in inviting the Aga Khan, a tested friend of Imperial Britain, to contribute to the Amritsar memorial; or there may have been a cynical edge to the invitation and even a subtle attempt to discredit the leader of the Ismailis. The Aga Khan's reply was more direct, yet made with characteristic diplomacy. He declared himself ready to subscribe handsomely for the relief of innocent victims of the tragedy but would not give a penny to a memorial which might perpetuate hostility between the peoples of India and Great Britain.

The Aga Khan was far from idle while Gandhi and the Ali brothers were twitching the strings of Congress. He was saddened by the war, exhausted by his incessant travels and completely disillusioned by what was taking place in India, but nothing could prevent him from raising his voice against the dangerous counsel which Gandhi was weaving into his home-spun philosophy. He was confronted with a situation that had caught him between two unhappy lines of thought. He had been the first to drive a wedge between Indian Moslems and Turkey in wartime, but always on the assumption that the Sultan had elected to join Germany in a military adventure. With profound conviction he had assured his Moslem followers that the Allies had no religious quarrel with the Caliph of Islam. He now found himself profoundly disturbed by Britain's "vague policy of Asiatic adven-

ture," a policy that seemed to be based on permanently crippling the power of the Sultan.

The Aga Khan saw ex-Servicemen returning to India with the bitter conviction that all their sacrifices had been made only to dismember the great Islam State. He reminded the Government that they were courting unpopularity by using Indian troops to occupy Mesopotamia and Palestine when they should be sent home. Again and again he pointed out the injustice of inflicting such a heavy social and financial burden on his countrymen.

"A discontented India, mistrustful of British promises," he wrote, "is Bolshevism's only chance." The treaty negotiations dragged on, trailing with them rumours that Turkey would be driven out of Constantinople and the Caliph reduced to the status of a vassal. Great Britain was indicted as the enemy of Islam, and Moslem extremists could point contemptuously to the British Government's encouraging support of King Constantine's military attacks upon Turkey.

He found himself in a dilemma from which he could only emerge by taking a bold, if unrewarding, line. He openly reminded the British Government of the folly and injustice of its attitude to Turkey. "Give the Turks fair play," he said bluntly in a letter to *The Times*; and this was typical of his tone in discussions with Cabinet Ministers in London. With emotion he spoke of the loyalty and devotion with which Indian Moslems had served the King-Emperor during the war, and urged those in Britain who were flirting with Greece to beware of the resentment which an unjust treaty would arouse throughout India. Meanwhile,

with shrewd political wisdom, he warned his fellow-Moslems of the dangers of developing a persecution mania which would be exploited by the more unscrupulous elements.

Congress was not slow to act. While the Aga Khan was trying to keep a balance between a myopic British Government and the thoroughly exasperated Moslems, Gandhi came out in favour of the so-called Khilafat movement, joining hands with the Ali brothers, who had humbly apologized for their subversive activities and been released from jail by the well-meaning Mr. Montagu! For Gandhi, as he himself admitted, it was such an opportunity for uniting Hindus and Mohammedans as would not arise again in a hundred years. Here was a strategical chance to strike at the British Raj, but Gandhi paid dearly for his unusually naive attempt to throw the cloak of non-co-operation over what he called "a splendid manifestation of religious faith."

Non-violence soon showed itself in a most peculiar light. The Khilafat agitators became so intoxicated with their own propaganda that, in Malabar, they fell upon their Hindu neighbours and offered them the grisly alternative of becoming Moslems or digging their own graves. The women were raped. Thousands were brought to trial and the terrible rebellion finally crushed, not without much severity. Gandhi, still delighted with the possible Hindu-Moslem *entente*, issued a series of tut-tuts and held up his hands in dismay, but he was careful to express admiration for the Moslem terrorists of Malabar who had been temporarily led astray "by what they consider as religion"!

The Aga Khan, horrified by these excesses and shrewdly aware of Gandhi's disingenuous policies, kept up his two-pronged attack on the Turkish problem. In London and Delhi he returned again and again to his plea for a generous treaty. "Great Britain is still the moral trustee of India," he reminded the Government. At the same time Moslems were urged to show restraint and rely on the British sense of justice, a course none too easy when agitators were ready to point to the unhappy misadventures in Greece. Fortunately, fair-minded men like the new Viceroy, Lord Reading, boldly defied the Whitehall diehards by openly advocating a modification of the harsh Treaty of Sèvres.

Strenuous propaganda by the Aga Khan had the practical result of reviving pro-Turkish feeling in England, but the activities of the Ali brothers and their friends were still a source of danger. Against the advice of the Aga Khan, who had impressed most of his fellow-Moslems with the hope that Britain's attitude to Turkey was softening, twenty thousand of the devout left Sind on a pilgrimage which was to record their protest against the Government's policy. Inflamed by propaganda and fanaticism, they decided that it was no longer possible to remain a true Moslem and continue to live in British India. They sold up their homes and possessions, often at ridiculous prices, and began the long trek to Kabul.

With some success the Aga Khan exhorted them to stay, and with his vizirs tried to counter the seditious nonsense which had driven them to this terrible exodus. Thousands of emigrants left in the blazing heat of August and many died on the dusty roads,

including most of the women and children. Only the young and strong reached Afghanistan, but they were turned back. A very small number of pilgrims, half-crazed and sick, survived the return journey to their villages, only to find themselves homeless. The dead could not be brought back, but the Aga Khan assisted the Government in helping to re-house the survivors of this misguided trek. From his own pocket he provided funds to buy back land, where this was possible, and spent great sums to furnish new homes and issue farming implements to those who needed them.¹

Although Gandhi had failed to achieve much success as a Hindu-Moslem Messiah, his campaign for passive resistance was still gaining ground, more especially among the students and professional men. Numerous undergraduates had walked out of Aligarh, announcing that they would not resume their studies until India gained her full independence. The Aga Khan, whose work for the university had endowed it so richly, appealed to the young men to think twice before sacrificing their careers for a slogan. Many took his advice.

Back and forth across the country he travelled, urging his followers to give the new reform scheme a chance to operate. At his every appearance extremist agitators slid into the background; and though it was sometimes awkward to answer questions about Britain's policy towards Turkey, his prestige and reputation enabled him to win support for a counsel of patience.

In retrospect, the Khilafat movement with its absurd demands and crude methods seemed doomed to

¹ *The Prince Aga Khan*, chapter IX.

failure, but the part of the Aga Khan in keeping moderate Moslems out of the Congress net must not be overlooked. His persistence in advocating restraint when his own sympathies were so deeply engaged in the cause of Turkey proved to be one of the strongest factors in defeating what could have been a powerful reinforcement to the Swarajists.

His intervention in an unpopular cause made him an easy target from many angles. In England there was a growing resentment that the Aga Khan should so openly attack the Government, and it was whispered that he might be better employed in sponsoring the spiritual welfare of his own people. His open championship of Turkey was regarded as both tactless and prejudicial to an issue that was still under discussion. In expressing the misgivings of the Moslem world, particularly over the fate of Turkey's historic mosques, he had spoken with a bluntness that surprised a Government inclined to accept him complacently as a willing Imperial servant. "British policy in the Near East," he declared, "has puzzled and pained the loyal Mohammedans of India. We now think that a definite settlement should be made. . . . Years ago Great Britain promised that she was keeping Constantinople for the Turks. The time has now come to show that the promise was made in earnest. Constantinople and Adrianople should be given back to the Turks as soon as possible." In London and Deauville he met Lord Beaverbrook, who had stigmatized the Coalition Government's support of the Greek Imperialism as "a monstrous error." Both he and the Aga Khan worked strenuously behind the scenes to puncture Mr. Lloyd George's Greek balloon.



Leaving the Ritz Hotel, London, which has been the Aga Khan's headquarters in England since his first visit to this country over fifty years ago.